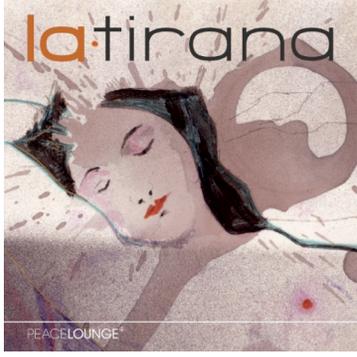


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LA TIRANA – Homage to the „Queen of Latin Soul“ (and much more)

„A new heart, dancing to a new, different beat, though speaking the very same old language, is what we´re trying to give the songs.“

(Marcelino Galan – LA TIRANA)

The musical components and personnel of La Tirana are easily explained: A bittersweet, modern (though at the same time ancient) female voice, a sensitive sounding guitar, oscillating between Bolero, Tango, Son, Jazz and Lounge, and a warm, deeply human double bass foundation – all enriched with "tragic" samples and minimalistic keyboard sounds. The set-up may be reminiscent of early Portishead, however, musically Patricia de Lorenzo and Beth Gibbons are distant cousins, at best. To explain LA TIRANA we will have to go way beyond mere comparison...

Despite the distance of several thousand nautical miles, you can practically smell the scent of Buenos Aires tango in the Galician port of A Coruña, on the north-westernmost corner of Spain. At least when the wind blows from the west which is often the case. This impression at least is conveyed by this unusual trio, consisting of **Patricia de Lorenzo** (vocals), **Marcelino Galàn** (guitar and sampler) and **Xacobe M. Antelo** (double bass).

Right at the beginning they pay reverence to tango poets Homero and Virgillio Exposito with "**Vete de mi**", by taking their time-honored song smoothly into modern times. Dancing in a Galician sailors pub you don't pack up your instruments until the early morning, to drive down south for a couple of hundreds of kilometers, to Portugal, home of the *Fado* which also has left its traces in La Tirana's work. Or we go straight to Cuba, trailing Guadalupe Victoria Yoli Raymond a.k.a. "La Lupe", who became immortal with numbers like the bolero style "**Que Te Pedí**" and the title inspiring "**La (Gran) Tirana**". Legend has it that Fidel Castro himself banned *La Lupe* from performing after some sort of pre-historic "Nipplegate". What had happened? During a concert fans had literally torn the clothes off her body, preserved for the after world by officious socialist paparazzi performing their informational duty. After

her subsequent immigration to the U.S., La Lupe was endorsed and supported by Mongo Santamaria and soon became known in the USA as "The Queen of Latin Soul" throughout the 1960s and 70s.

In Rio De Janeiro life in general seems easier and more relaxed than elsewhere - at least musically, and from there Tom Jobim's beautiful "**Retrato Em Branco e Preto**" is seemingly wafting over to us as if through an open window. We'll encounter Jobim again half an hour later - this time together with Vinicius de Moraes for "**Eu Sei Que Vou te Amar**".

Patricia de Lorenzo is singing her idols' songs with all due respect while at the same time giving them her very own twist. Her slightly nasal interpretation of Djavan's "**Sorri**" (which in itself is based on Charles Chaplin's composition "Smile") is especially lovely. There may be mean spirited lusophonic critics slamming her Spanish accent in Portuguese, but the slender singer, also a popular film and TV actress in Spain, is definitely not lacking in expression, graciousness and unaffected elegance.

Considering their respectful reworks of these magnificent classics from Cuba, Mexico, Argentina and Brasil, it shouldn't go unmentioned that **La Tirana** also recorded some fantastic compositions of their own guitarist and producer Marcelino Galán on their debut album. And these four songs blend in smoothly between the nine gems of Latin American music history. Consider "**Calimero**" which stands out as a charming midtempo earcatcher which has more than a little dose of flamenco in its blood while also sporting some easy bossa, house and nu jazz elements. The single release actually contains a very deep and groovy "naked house remix" by *peacelounge* label mate m.age project).

The melancholic "**Noria**" masks itself much better, a moody trip hop number with a smooth jazz guitar which, like the concluding songs "**Sen Dicit Adeus**" and "**Anulacion**" rest comfortably amongst the time-honored compositions by Jobim and Veloso. It almost seems as if Patricia's strong, yet fragile vocals and Xacobe's unique bass-playing stand out even more in LA TIRANA's original songs. This may or may not be the case, but these three La Tirana originals – with their minimalistic guitar and sample arrangements – seem to be even more like Latin „chamber music“, when compared to the careful updates of classics like „Baby“ „Que te pedí“ or „Vete de mí“.

La Tirana is no spectacular experimental „mega-project“. LA TIRANA is "merely" three individualists' desirous glance across the Atlantic. It is a look into a painful past of colonists and immigrants and at the same time a look into the future of Europe and Latin America. In the mild morning light on the western tip of our continent, even the sharpest contradictions seem to be reconcilable – at least musically, after an exhaustive night of passionate singing and dancing.

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