



Miguel 'Angá' Díaz 'Echu Mingua' (WCD071)

SLEEVE NOTES

Echu Mingua is my saint's name in the Yoruba religion. The 'Echu' is Elegua, the God of crossroads, and the owner of all roads in the world. I wanted to use this title because this album is the realisation of all the ideas that I've gathered over the years. I liken the record to a musical religious service, using sounds to resonate and to invoke the spirits to come down to join us on earth.

I think that to successfully produce this type of music you need to rely on musicians who connect with you, spiritually, who understand what you want to achieve and how it should sound. I found traditional and contemporary musicians to make something new.

The concept of this record is the union between Cuban, Africa, and DJ cultures; that's the basis, although all my experimental mixing and fusing is done the 'Cuban way'. This music is something that I had inside of me that needed to be released. I just did it, without fear or thought, I just had to get it out.

San Juan y Martínez

San Juan y Martínez is the village where I was born. It's a small place in the Pinar del Rio province. The sounds you hear are the village sounds; the noise from my family home and the madness that exists there: TV on, people entering and leaving, and horse drawn carts in the streets. The voice you hear is my brother singing the village's anthem, I wanted to put it on the record as a beginning to it all.

Rezos

The first track moves into Rezos, which I call the start of the religious service, of the spiritual mass. It's an invocation made to invite the spirits down to earth, to communicate with us and to join the party. Rezos is a lament inviting the spirits to tell us the good and the bad news and to celebrate mass with us.

Pueblo Nuevo

Pueblo Nuevo is a *danzón* I learnt from Cachaito López. During Rubén González' tour, he and Rubén played it every day at soundcheck. It belongs to Cachaito's family, and I loved it the first time he played it to me. I wanted to add an African touch to the danzon and make a fusion, using the n'goni (traditional African guitar) to give it a contrast, and of course working with the DJ adds to this. I also used El Guajiro (Mirabal) on trumpet, instead of the danzon's traditional flute, to give it a new colour and to get that distinct

sound. It's about finding a new sound, a new formula within it all, about mixing together percussion with other elements, to create an African danzon.

For me this track is so special because it unites Rubén González and his son. Rubencito played the theme and Rubén the improvisations.

Tumé Tumé

Baba Sissoko offered this song for the album. I wanted to merge all the percussion together, bata drums, congas, shekeres and n'goni too, to give it the feeling of both Cuba and Mali. I loved it when he gave it to me and, well, you can hear the results. We have Magic Malik doing the sound effects, projecting his voice as well as creating effects with his flute.

A Love Supreme

I think that A Love Supreme sums up the entire album, the specific piece that expresses all of my thoughts and ideas. I wanted it to be an anthem. I also feel that the idea of combining Bata drums, mixing in DJ special effects and a chant to the Yoruba god *Babalu*, and everything else on the piece was successful. This is the central track on the album, paying homage to John Coltrane. I spoke to people that knew him, and his last project was to be about Africa. He had planned to include percussion in the harmony, and in his compositions, but he never got to do it. I wanted to do this song and dedicate it to him.

Gandinga Mondongo Sandunga

Gandinga is a famous Frank Emilio tune and a Cuban latin jazz classic. I wanted to give the tune another feel, adding hip-hop into the picture.

Dracula Simon

This was conceived as an opportunity for Malik, Cachaíto and myself to play as a trio. We wanted to make it open, without too many DJ effects, so the sound would be cleaner. The theme was improvised in the studio, it was like "1,2,3,4, go!" The one who surprised me the most was Cachaíto, who seems to be able to play anything! The track is affectionately named after the sound engineer, Simon, one of the technicians who worked on the record. I called him Dracula, everybody did, because he slept very little.

Round Midnight

I listen to a lot of pianists and one of my favourite players is Thelonious Monk. I thought of recording Round Midnight, with the congas playing the melody instead of the piano. This was a challenge as I used 7 congas to pull off this tune, any less and the results would not have been the same. When I embarked on the idea I had not really thought about the outcome, I just went for it and let it happen.

Jerry's Tune

I wanted to look at the *buleria* (flamenco rhythm structure) and combine the *cajón* (flamenco box drum), with congas. Jerry Boys has been a great recording engineer for many years, so I named the tune for Jerry as a sign of affection.

Oda Maritima

Oda Maritima was composed by a musician from Argentina named Pablo Nemirovsky. Here my idea was to blend Argentinian music together with Cuban music, through Cuban

and African percussion . When I was living in Paris I loved this track, and the group I was in used to play it all the time. I asked Pablo if I could modify it for the record.

Freeform

As the title suggests, the style is fun, loose and free. The formula was to blend everything together and to play spontaneously with the aim of achieving something, and to find the right groove.

Conga Carnaval

The ultimate celebration, in true Cuban style. It's the highest moment of the service, and it was written by Chucho Valdés. The most important thing was to record again with my old bandmates from Irakere. To be reunited in a studio and have them on my album was great.

Closing

This is the song that sends all the spirits back home. We are calmly returning to our places, quietly going back home to rest, and the party is over.

Edited by Dave McGuire from Angá Díaz with Sue Steward.