

Mp3 Afromantra - Uplifting Spirit



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Exciting latest release from the groundbreaking NYC-based group AfroMantra, led by drummer/composer Alex Garcia. 11 MP3 Songs JAZZ: Latin Jazz, JAZZ: World Fusion Details: Liner notes by Chuy Varela. I smile every time I hear Alex Garcia play his drums. Drawing from Caribbean, South American, hardbop jazz with a strong Afro Cuban influence, he has developed a polyrhythmic balance on trap set full of passion and skill. With his band Afromantra, he has formed a vehicle of expression for the ideas burning within his creative soul. I've always believed that life and its experiences, along with a well-rounded education, is what give identity to an artist. That is certainly true of Alejandro. In 1973, along with his family he had to leave his home country of Chile moving to Peru. In 1979, the family moved to La Habana, Cuba; the place where he received a profound musical education. However, it was in New York City that he was born as an artist. Since the release of Afromantra's debut album in 2000, Garcia has established a firm reputation as a drummer and bandleader with his Latin jazz ensemble. Strong, confident and positive, he's paid dues and gleaned knowledge from the masters. Now on "Uplifting Spirit Espiritu Optimista" he brews a diverse blend of cultural herbs to create good musical medicine for trying times. All the compositions and arrangements are by Garcia with a great cast of collaborators. Ole Mathisen is a seasoned and imaginative voice on tenor and soprano saxophones who provides many bright moments throughout. The pianists, Pablo Vergara, Manuel Valera, and Desmar Guevara, add extraordinary harmonic colors to the pieces. And you can't ignore congero Aryam Vsquez and bassist Waldo Chavez who ground the combo. "Uplifting Spirit - Espiritu Optimista" is an entrancing album full of sonic magical realism. The pieces traverse ideas and moods that stretch from one end of the hemisphere to the other taking the listener with facility and imagination through unlikely plots and connections. Yes, Alex Garcia has given us a gift that's positive, uplifting and got me smiling from ear-to-ear. Good medicine

for trying times. Jesse "Chuy" Varela Music Director - KCSM FM 91, San Mateo, CA Contributing writer to the San Francisco Chronicle, Jazz Times and Latin Beat magazines.

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