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SONGLINES

BEMUSED BY
WORLD MUSIC?

Andy Palacio and the Garifuna Collective *Wátina*

Cumbancha CMB-CD-03

Full Price (50 mins)

★★★★★

The African sound of the Atlantic coast



This CD of music from the African-American Garifuna people of coastal Belize is a delight from beginning to end. One might imagine it to sound similar to that of Jamaica or to be infused with Cuban rhythms. But whilst the Garifuna – who live along the entire Atlantic coast of Central America – have adopted reggae in their bars on the cays of Belize and the beaches of Costa Rica, this is mainly for the European tourists. The music of their own communities is far closer to West Africa. West African languages still infuse the Garifuna tongue; together with Carib and Arawak Amerindian, French and Spanish. And – at least on this CD – the rhythms and vocal style, together with the echoing women's voice chorus sound more West African than anything you will here in the Americas (including Bahia). Each song here is based on a traditional Garifuna rhythm and is sung in the Garifuna language but whether they are gentle laments, warm, lilting ballads or funky, tight dances they feel far closer to Baaba Maal or Youssou N'Dour than Bob Marley or Buena Vista and the singing and musicianship is similarly consummate throughout. A real surprising treasure, which is as rich and multi-layered as it is easy on the ear.

Alex Robinson

TOP
OF THE
WORLD
ALBUM

