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AYIBOBO

Vodun Jazz from Haiti

Rosnan | vocals, percussion, dance

Jean-Paul Bourelly | guitar, percussion

Chico Boyer | bass, percussion, vocals

Peniel Geurrer | drums, dance, vocals

Yatande | drums vocals

At the time of the Duvalier regime (1958-86), Roots music was considered subversive on Haiti and was banned as a result. However, groups formed in the island's forests and fought the ban with their music. One such group was Foula, gathered around bassist and bandleader Chico Boyer. In the early 1990s, as repression increased, the musicians left Haiti and founded Ayibobo, together with Jean-Paul Bourelly, in New York. The band's concept combines Voodoo music traditions with the aesthetics of modern urban improvisation. Rosna, the band's singer, is a fascinating figure: the incarnation of gracefulness and femininity within Voodoo culture - Brooklyn style.

Freestyle's fusion of Haitian singing and drumming with jazzy horns and guitar finds Ayibobo's leader, guitarist Jean-Paul Bourelly, looking back to his heritage for some inspired new ideas. The result is danceable, pan-cultural jazz at its most enjoyable, exemplified on songs like "Voodoo Blue".

During the second half of the seventies, a group of very talented and fine musicians initiated serious extensive research to preserve and protect the musical legacy of Haiti. They researched "every aspect of our national musical culture, traditional and contemporary music. Like musicologists, they travel through Haiti to many voodoo temples and played during voodoo ceremonies (2), recording each song they heard so they can work with new rhythms. They studied the chord changes; rhythms and instruments used during the ceremonies" The result was a superb band "Foula" (Breath of Life) which stands out in the Haitian musical experience as one of the most conclusive achievement in terms of originality and uniqueness of cultural/musical expression. Thorn between financial problems and an environment not ready to absorb this advanced concept, "Foula" did not last long and left us with a unique CD which constitutes an anthology of their research and a strong response to the group concerns: to preserve the cultural legacy of our music.

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Most of the members had fled Haiti during the oppressive dictatorship of the early nineties. They ventured into playing other styles of music. Bonga Jean Baptiste has become the well-known and very talented drummer we know. Thurgot Théodat shared his time between France and Haiti and has launched his debut solo CD Badji last year (See review & interview sections). The two great architects of Foula concept, bassist Chico Boyer (CHICO) and Guitarist-composer Wilfred Lavaud (TIDO) went on different projects until their encounter with guitarist Jean Paul Bourelly. This collaboration has given birth to two projects Ayibobo Free Style & Ayibobo Stone Voudou (3) that was added to the discography of this exceptional and practically unclassified guitar player of Haitian descent.

Blues-rock/fusion guitarist Jean-Paul Bourelly was born on November 23, 1960, in Chicago, IL, to parents who were first-generation Haitians. He fell in love with the sounds of our lakous and more colors were added to the broad scope of his already-rich palette of sounds. As a matter of fact, Bourelly has incorporated a new guitar concept to the Foula culture to give it a larger audience. He put voodoo music right in the middle of the international musical scene performing in Germany with his group Ayibobo with special guest voodoo priest Mathias Agbokou, from Benin. Known for his musical odyssey in the black Diaspora, Bourelly is like the pilgrim who cruises various genres and connects hidden dots and uncovers unspoken truth. This former member of the M-Base movement (4) (Steve Coleman & Co) has visited many cultures from the Middle East to Africa, exploring root music and soaking into different traditions to transform his own musical experience. He is known for putting together intriguing bands with original and iconoclast sounds. This is maybe where the convergent point emerged between this guitar wizard-freak and the forgotten geniuses of former band "Foula". The communality lays in their common taste for the pursuance of an incessant reinvention of their own sounds. We nurture a profound respect for the "Lakou Boys" who have given themselves such of great mission; and we are delighted as well to see Miles Davis' former guitarist flirting with the roots of his Haitian ancestors. Ayibobo!