

Luisito Quintero Percussion Madness

Rapster Records RR0060CD

Mid Price (75 mins)

★★★★

Timbales virtuoso gets the 'Lil' Louie Vega treatment



Venezuelan percussionist Luisito Quintero might not be a household name, but in the small world of New York's Latin

music fraternity he's regarded as one of the hottest *timbaleros* in town. After starting out in the Symphonic Orchestra of Venezuela and following a stint with salsa singer La India, Quintero learnt the finer points of Afro-Cuban drumming by playing alongside legends like Oscar D'Leon and Eddie Palmieri. But while Quintero pays homage to his mentors on some banging tracks dedicated to the late Tito Puente and Ray Barreto, the CD as a whole carries the stamp of house DJ and producer 'Lil' Louie Vega, one half of New York duo Masters at

street musician, and
m. Turning them into the
, and turning himself into
a repertoire of 60 songs
Havana's EGREM studios
at gigs to audiences of
atmospheric Bataclan and

it comes as much with their original versions
e standard tourist fare, washing 'Lagrimas
, 'Dos Gardenias' and 'Yolanda' clean of
ssion, sincerity and humbleness go a long
trancing people. Having spent a large
Cuba recently I expect to be satiated by
long comes something like this which cleans
one's enthusiasm all over again.

Jan Fairley



Mad for percussion – Luisito Quintero with Louie Vega

Work. The deep-house, acid jazz and silky bossa grooves are very much in the vein of Louie Vega's albums *Nuyorican Soul* and *Elements of Life*, both of which Quintero played on. Vega is sometimes accused of over-producing tracks to the point of emasculation, and the breathy vocal by Cape Verdian singer Anané on 'Our Love,' is so smooth it comes close to muzak.

But lightweight? I don't think so. A Fela Kuti number with Cameroonian singer-guitarist Francis Mbappe hits all the right buttons and a faithful reproduction of Ray Barreto's seminal track 'Acid' is a fitting tribute. Overall, the sheer quality of the guest turns by pianist Hilton Ruiz, flautist Nestor Torres and Venezuelan guitarist Aquiles Baez make this a treat for music fans seeking more than the typical salsa *descargas* on offer from many Latin combos at the moment.

Russell Maddicks

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