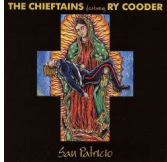


The Chieftains featuring Ry Cooder - San Patricio (2010)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 15 March 2010 00:21 - Last Updated Monday, 29 August 2016 21:02

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01. *La Iguana*
02. *La Golondrina*
03. *A La Orilla De Un Palmar*
04. *Danza De Concheros*
05. *El Chivo*
06. *San Campio*
07. *The Sands Of Mexico*
08. *Sailing To Mexico*
09. *El Caballo*
10. *March To Battle (Across The Rio Grande)*
11. *Lullaby For The Dead*
12. *Luz De Luna*
13. *Persecucion De Villa*
14. *Cancion Mixteca (Intro)*
15. *Cancion Mixteca*
16. *Ojitos Negros*
17. *El Relampago*
18. *El Pajaro Cu*
19. *Finale*

"In equal measure a curio, a lament, a history lesson and a hoedown, San Patricio is one of those albums that happily transcends its parts. If you only buy one Irish-Mexican album this year, in fact, The Chieftains and Ry Cooder should do you nicely.

The Californian guitarist and the Irish folk heavyweights are seasoned collaborators as well as inveterate globetrotters. It was while they were recording together in Havana in the 1990s that

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the Irishmen introduced Cooder to the musicians who would star in his nostalgic world music bestseller, the Buena Vista Social Club.

This time, though, the focus is on another historical gem: the little-known story of the Irish conscripts who deserted from the American army to fight with Santa Anna's Mexicans in the 1840s border war. And while the first hearing of tin whistles with Mexican guitars is a little disorienting, Chieftains founder Paddy Moloney brews up a winning mixture.

Bumping cheeky mariachis up against Celtic ballads, and abutting the warm warble of Cooder's tenor with the stately harmonies of Los Cenzontles, the stellar cast includes Linda Ronstadt (with a song learned from her Mexican grandfather), legendary arranger Van Dyke Parks, the sensational Mexican singer Lila Downs, Moya Brennan from Clannad, and battalions of crack instrumentalists.

Among the highlights are the ribald capering of Latin Grammy winners Los Tigres del Norte, and the mournful, sashaying bolero sung by 90-year-old Chavela Vargas. And if the production doesn't attain the all-embracing smoky ambience of the Buena Vista record, it fiercely affirms that "Guinness or tequila" these are two musical cultures that know how to party.

It's a coming thing, too, this business of music as narrative documentary. Moloney first tried it in the 1970s, addressing matters Irish-French on the 15-minute Bonaparte's Retreat. At an hour, though, the Irish-Mexican theme could frankly do with more storytelling; Liam Neeson's effective but brief reading, March to Battle, is no substitute for the sort of explanation Cooder superbly wove into his earlier Chavez Ravine.

Still, this is a transatlantic musical campaign whose virtuosity, verve and sheer eccentric heart make it hard to resist." ---BBC Review

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