

Russ Hewitt – Alma Vieja (2011)

Written by bluelover

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1. *Pelorhino* 4:14 2. *Samba Samba* 3:48 3. *Pacific Sunrise* 3:59 4. *Dhanyavad* 4:29 5. *Gabriela Mi Corazon* 5:28 [play](#) 6. *Miss Mimi* 4:34 7. *Moonlake Drive* 4:20 8. *Las Cruces* 4:08 9. *Gypsy* 4:12 [play](#) 10. *Tango For Ahn* 5:06 11. *Soldade* 4:40

If you're a Latin jazz or Nuevo Flamenco guitar enthusiast, Russ Hewitt is a name you don't want to ignore or forget. Having been fortunate enough to review his debut release, *Bajo el Sol*, in 2008, I anxiously awaited this sophomore release, *Alma Vieja*, to see if he could match the imagination, the fluidity, and the smooth caress of that first release. Not only has he done so, he has utilized his skills to employ diversity even more, mixing in solid smooth jazz (he collaborates with saxman Michael Lington here, as well) and the exoticism of World music (to which he is no stranger).

Originality seems to be a very definite and integral part of Hewitt's overall appeal and style. There is the mystique and joy of music from lands far away (try "Dhanyavad"), the electricity of the sweet and romantic Latin melody ("*Gabriela Mi Corazon*"), and the more rousing and seductively rhythmic among the Latin numbers ("*Pelourinho*," "*Miss Mimi*," and "*Moonlake Drive*" come to mind). There's also the familiar and irresistible draw of good ol' contemporary jazz ("*Pacific Sunrise*").

Yes, Hewitt has a true handle on Nuevo Flamenco, and he's obviously quite clear on how to merge other genre components that can complement it. He definitely seems to know what makes it all so attractive. It's one thing to demonstrate mastery of the guitar in this fashion; it's quite another to be able to delve into the very soul of this music and extract something that you can mold into a solidly creative production. With the release of *Alma Viaje*, Hewitt has proven twice that he has what it takes to do just that. - Ronald Jackson

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'Alma Vieja' is the latest CD from guitar virtuoso Russ Hewitt. Replete with his rumba flamenco playing and lightning guitar runs, the album follows Hewitt's 2008 debut 'Bajo el Sol' which was typified by fierce Latin rhythms and infectious contemporary jazz grooves. It garnered the kind of critical acclaim to suggest this talented player was already on the road to musical stardom.

'Alma Vieja' features some notable guest artists and among them are Grammy award-winning violinist Charlie Bisharat and, perhaps most notably, contemporary jazz saxophonist Michael Lington. In fact it's Lington who features on my selection 'Pacific Sunrise' which is also the first single to be released to radio. With Lington's status in smooth jazz coupled with Hewitt's fine playing the easy grooving 'Pacific Sunrise' should certainly attract some attention.

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