

## **YERBA BUENA – Island Life**

### Advance Press Reaction

"the ultimate urban tropical party"

"a Truly Stellar Sophomore Album"

"[Andres] Levin has a sensation on his hands"

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"Island Life is a sizzling jam session."

"4 stars: Just try to keep your body from swaying

"[Island Life] is some hot shit, let me tell you!"

"If a secret fountain of fun exists, producer Andres Levin has found it and is hoarding it for himself and his band Yerba Buena."

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"With its gypsy and cumbia influences and cameos ranging from John Leguizamo to Orishas, this New York Latin funk group creates an original soundtrack for the ultimate urban tropical party"- VIBE

"MUY BUENA: Diverse Dance Band Releases a Truly Stellar Sophomore Album...a dizzying guest list... [a] supreme second album, Island Life gives you an idea of the Afro-Latin group's ambitious eclecticism... Yerba Buena not only look good, but they have talent to boot"

– New York Post

"Great Grooves... [Andres] Levin has a sensation on his hands" – CMJ – cover story

"'Bilingual Girl' is the hottest song in the history of our radio station!  
#1 phones! hot rotation within a week!" – KBAC-FM

"You might need to take a deep breath before trying to describe the music of Yerba Buena... fuses strands of Cuban boogaloo, hip hop, salsa, Brazilian Bahia, Colombian Cumbia, Spanish Flamenco, Balkan gypsy music, Indian Sitar and Manhattan street sounds..  
Island Life is a sizzling jam session." – Wall Street Journal

"If a secret fountain of fun exists, producer Andres Levin has found it and is hoarding it for himself and his band Yerba Buena. On Yerba's second release, Island Life, the group seamlessly blends Afro-Cuban funk, hip-hop, and salsa together for a concoction that is the sonic equivalent of spiked punch. The infectious "Belly Dancer" offers a solitary violin and then an explosive bonanza of hip-shaking percussion and horns. Every song enters your veins, raises your heart rate, and spurs your feet to movement " – Miami New Times

"Combining tropical sounds with bits of native and transplanted music that make up the fabric of New York, the concept album is described by producer/bandleader Andres Levin as "a soundtrack for urbanistic island living." It opens with "Sugar Daddy," which features actor/comedian John Leguizamo and French soul duo Les Nubians. Other guests include Joe Bataan, M1 of Dead Prez, Peret & Ile Aye, Rosie DePalma Fulanito and Orishas, among others." – Billboard

"Andres Levin is a brilliant example of a "master of mixology."

What the guitarist/composer/ producer has achieved with his Yerba Buena collective over the span of three years is nothing short of breathtaking. To say that the group's sound boasts everything but the proverbial kitchen sink ignores the complexities of the musical mix. And writing them off as just a kick-ass party band is to do them a disservice, too. Sure, the music on their new album, *Island Life* boasts a dizzying array of dance rhythms like cumbia, funk and salsa, but it's how they're brought together under one roof that is so impressive. If there indeed is such an animal as intelligent dance music, a special spot should be reserved for a freewheeling, boisterous record like *Island Life*." -*Eye Weekly* (Toronto)

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"4 stars: Just try to keep your body from swaying while listening to this high-energy musical exhibition of cultures mingling through sound and soul, evoking images of city streets rich with heritage, color and languages. Yerba Buena sails from Cuba to Spain to African countries then back to the U.S. where they meld in Manhattan. Along the way flamenco singer El Cigala's passionate vocals spice up "Corazon Bandalero," hip-hop artists Orishas breath an Afro-Cuban spirit into "La Candela (Prendela)," John Leguizamo plays the part of Sugar Daddy on the track of the same name and guests like Fulanito, Les Nubians, Rosie DePalma and more add their flavor. Yerba Buena's funky beats, intercontinental melodies and strong vocal harmonies make daydreams of bare feet, sandy beaches and mojitos seem boring." – *Batanga*

"They're beautiful, they're stylish, they can dance, and oh, they're pretty good musicians too ...and they know it. NYMosaico got its sneaky little hands on a copy of the NYC band's new release *Island Life* (as in Manjatan, get it?) and it's some hot shit, let me tell you!... with a star-studded list of guest artists, *Island Life* has got a little something for everyone: cumbia, salsa, hip-hop, reggaeton..." - *nymosaic.com*

"The second at-bat for New York's Afro-Latin funk orchestra pulls off an admirable feat: It actually makes *President Alien* look conservative. Yerba Buena's debut was a sprawling, kinetic assemblage of hip-hop, merengue, cumbia, rumba, and Afro-beat, with a few Middle Eastern touches. Well, Andres Levin and his crew [have added] vibrant swaths of Iberian color (and more) to *Island Life*. Invoking the sound of '70s Spanish Gypsy pop -- think proto-Gipsy Kings -- tracks such as "El Burrito" and "Te Estoy Amando Locamente" pulsate with flamenco fire. The Gypsy legend Peret even appears on a "Burrito" remix, invoking his hit "Saboreando." For those enamored of less-outré Latin music, there's a healthy dose of merengue, "Belly Dancer," featuring the Dominican rappers Fulanito; a samba-powered "Cityzen Citysoy"; and perhaps the disc's most party-startin' track, a boogaloo helmed by "Subway Joe" Bataan himself -- "Bilingual Girl," stuffed with sexual innuendo and Spanish Harlem soul-swagger. The bilingual rapping and singing that's Yerba Buena's trademark is even better integrated, making sure that everyone will understand the bit of George Bush-bashing on "Bla Bla Bla." With their hyper-inclusive second set, Yerba Buena prove that no matter how far they wander, they always have a home in the polyglot island of New York City."

- Mark Schwartz, *Barnes & Noble* (bn.com)