



Featured Review:

Umoja Orchestra

Abre La Puerta

Self-released

As a native of Miami, any disc of salsa and meringue influence certainly brings back childhood memories, and this disc is certainly no exception. Umoja, a Swahili word meaning unity, is certainly appropriate here. This outfit is certainly one tight ship considering its immense size as well as its ability to borrow rhythms from a variety of influences. From vocalist-guitarist Sebastián Lopez-Velazquez to Adam Finkelman on the timbales, Umoja Orchestra stays on point, keeping the dance party moving almost effortlessly.

With over a dozen members that take such Afro-Cuban influences as meringue and charanga and combine them with mainstream Afropop elements such as the singing guitar on "Talkatalk," Umoja arrive at the Afrobeat altar by



its roots as opposed to indie rock like other bands such as Vampire Weekend. These guys probably listen to as much Orchestra Baobab's *Pirate's Choice* and Antibalas Afrobeat Orchestra as they do Tito Puente and Mongo Santamaria in an effort to make sure all the bases are covered.

Not everything here is a grand-scale Latin collaboration, however. There's also the lighthearted, stripped-down voice-and-guitar of "Indocumentado," which sings of the virtues of being anonymous outside of one's home country. Rock also comes into play on the next track, "La Puerta," although guest musician Jesse Hale's cello meets the Santana-style guitar of Scott Clayton early on in the track. Bossa nova and flamenco styles of guitar also duel in the two-part suite "El Verano I" and "El Verano II." As the title suggests, it's truly a celebration of all things summer.

While the lyrics are largely in Spanish (the CD's title translates to "open the door"), it has its Anglo moments, such as the rap break near the end of the mambo workout "B.D.D." courtesy of Amin de Jesus. Although the influences are many, Umoja Orchestra's main mission is to bring an international party to the people. It's refreshing to have a debut recording of such diverse energy from a band right here in Gainesville. ☺

— Fred Sowder



SATELLITE TOP FIVE LOCATIONS TO DOWNLOAD MUSIC

With decent radio stations disappearing, music fans are forced to take their ears elsewhere. I've asked Grooveshark's James Davis, vice president of communications, to list the top five places he thinks people are going for their music.

1

WWW.PANDORA.COM

A new age radio, where you pick the stations and change the songs when you don't like the ones playing. Once you sign up, you can listen for free by creating your own radio stations and searching for songs.

2

WWW.LAST.FM

Davis said this is Grooveshark's biggest competitor. It's a free site, like Pandora, that just requires you to sign up. When you listen to a song on your computer it's sent to Last.fm and added to your music profile.

3

WWW.GROOVESHARK.COM

Davis said he didn't want to seem biased naming Grooveshark, but in reality it's a popular destination for music lovers. This site offers tons of music that is free to listen to. The advantage of this site is that users who upload music make a portion of the money when someone else downloads their songs.

4

WWW.THESIXTYONE.COM

You can listen to this site for free or sign up to become more active in the music community. If you want to upload songs, you need sign up. Once a member you can "bump" songs that you like, and as other people bump those songs, you earn more points. According to the site, points record your progress and reflect your community status.

5

WWW.MUSICOVERY.COM

I'd like to think of this site as a mood ring, with a lot more options. It allows you to pick the mood, genre, decade and tempo of the music you're in the mood for. You can listen to songs for free; become a member for free and add favorites or ban songs; or become a member for \$4 per month. It's great when you are just in the mood for something rock, funk or even something from the '60s.

"The biggest driver is to listen to music for free," Davis said. "Not necessarily download for free."

Davis said that 90 percent of people listen to a majority of their music on computers.

"iTunes is a music store," Davis said. "You go to the store because you know what you want. Grooveshark is like a mall. You go to the mall when you don't have money and don't know what you want."

Although Davis listed five sites, he said he wouldn't really rank them because one might do something better than the next, and it's really a personal preference. ☺

— Allison Candreva

