

Grupo Fantasma To Release *El Existential* on May 11th, 2010

Fourth studio album from the acclaimed Latin collective is the apex of their work to date

The intrepid members of Grupo Fantasma have been doing things their own way for over a decade now, which continues with the highly anticipated and self-produced *El Existential* out May 11, 2010 on Nat Geo Music. An exceptional followup to their Grammy nominated *Sonidos Gold* (2008), this new effort's love for exploration using the sounds and fundamentals of traditional Latin styles is uniquely reminiscent of Fania Records; and GF, like Fania's staple of artists in its prime, has been on the corner long enough to not only be tough, resilient and self-assured, but also be mature enough to turn out top quality material repeatedly on its own terms.

For *El Existential* the band opted to bypass the traditional studio route and installed a custom built facility in a three bedroom rental house in their hometown of Austin, Texas. Their goal: to immerse themselves in a collectively occupied homestead so they could create communally in a non-corporate, domestic atmosphere engineered to foster collaboration and experimentation. Special guests on the album include the legendary pianist Larry Harlow (who also appeared on *Sonidos Gold*) and guitar wizard Curt Kirkwood of the Meat Puppets.

Thematically, there are several references to web-spinning spiders which in Afro-Diasporic folklore is a trickster, a story-weaving teacher and above all a symbol of resourceful survival. Lyrics touch on sinners, seductresses, and self-searching, with a bit of spiritual advice, revenge, and reconciliation added for good measure. Musically, unraveling spools of cumbia, salsa, son montuno, Afro-funk, psychedelia, bolero, jazz, folkloric, cinematic soundtrack and even startling hints of new wave integrate naturally with the touch that only GF can provide. Every cut is animated with this rare analog spark that makes the whole thing warm and hand-made, especially in an era when so much Latin music is created in a teflon laboratory by robots pretending to be *de la calle*.

The collective power of Grupo Fantasma is what makes this orchestra such a treat live. But their bundle of differences, that is itself an apt metaphor for the Latino experience in the USA, coheres quite well on *El Existential*. Expect delicacies on this record from incredible vocals to insane brass cavalcades, propulsive guitar and smoking percussion workouts. To enumerate all their individual charms would almost kill the collective thrill of first hearing the songs in sequence. Once you've heard *El Existential*, you'll realize it's so good that it's hard to keep quiet about it.