

CuCu Diamantes – CUCULAND

The Co-Founder and Principal Vocalist of New York's Critically Acclaimed Latin Funk Collective Yerba Buena, CuCu Diamantes Delivers A Multi-Cultural Fusion Of Latin Rhythm, New York Funk, Cabaret Glamour And Feminine Strength With The March 17th Release of Her Debut Solo CD CUCULAND



"If Cuculand was a place, it would be a place of tolerance, open to all the races, inclinations and cultures, says Cucu Diamantes... the album includes rhythms of salsa, funk, cumbia, hip hop, pop, tango, flamenco and more" – Associated Press

"music [that] hopscotches across hemispheres, jubilantly fusing every idiom in its path... And for every nod to a vintage style there's a border-crossing or simply surreal twist." - New York Times

"...Cucu [is] fast talking and hyper-sexy... sassy, classy party music, with more trip-hop and cumbia, a touch or two of Latin balladeering, and a dose of high energy...pure pop -- Latin pop, that is." - Washington Post

"We heart Cucu Diamantes...She's fabulous! ...[Alguien] is candela. Sizzling hot!!!!!! Even if you don't understand Spanish, you will love love love this song. Listen to Alguien and be dazzled" – Perez Hilton

"[a]captivating and seductive album... CUCULAND is pure rhythm with deep and reflective lyrics, and you will not want to skip a single track... Cucu Diamantes' album might very well be one of the most pleasing musical surprises of the dawn of 2009" -Houston Chronicle/LA Voz

"Artist of the Week: Cucu Diamantes-The fiery cantante Cubana from funk banda Yerba Buena" - MTV Tr3s

"We're cuckoo for CuCu Diamantes... "Cuculand," doesn't disappoint. A sizzling mix of salsa, trip-hop and other hip-shaking sounds, the CD is as worldly as the sultry woman behind it" – New York Post

"Cucu Diamantes' debut album is as dramatic as her life story...On Cuculand she's [an] independent, flamboyant woman charging through life, as extravagant in her emotions as she is in her style."-Miami Herald

"CUCULAND is at once a breath of fresh air and a nostalgic whiff of a more glamorous time. It shimmers with the glitz and glamour of an era when catching a show meant dinner jackets and hair tonic, evening gowns and diamonds. But it also bares its teeth & bites down on the modern sounds of New York streets" – Miami New Times

"...nothing short of a carnival. On her hotly anticipated solo debut Cuculand, [Diamantes] creates a potent mix of Salsa, hip-hop, funk and other neo-worldly rhythms." - Latina

"CuCu Diamantes is the embodiment of luxury and style, refined and elegant, but still fun, playful and unique. She's every bit a modern day pinup... [she] has quite a voice... Sexy, spunky and Cuban...what's not to like?" – Broward New Times

"Artist of the Week: Cucu Diamantes-The fiery cantante Cubana from funk banda Yerba Buena" - MTV Tr3s

"Cuculand is an all out, frenzied explosion of freshness, a cyclone of creativity and irony... For weeks now, I cannot go without listening to it at least once a day, if not twice." - Miguel Bosé

"A Rare Jewel Sparkles: Cucu Diamantes... is a delight for the eardrum. ...The album is dedicated to women everywhere, and speaks about topics Diamantes has encountered from being mistreated ("Sentimiento"), being lied to ("Mentiras"), to undying love ("Still in Love")" – Washington Post Express

- See Expanded Reviews Below -

"NEW CDS-CRITICS" CHOICE: CUCU DIAMANTES- CuCuLand - There's always a touch of sass when CuCu Diamantes sings, whether she's bemoaning a lover's lies, playing the gold digger or touting her inner strength. "CuCuLand" is the solo debut album by Ms. Diamantes, the Cuban co-founder and singer of Yerba Buena, an irrepressible Latin alternative band from New York. (She can rap at high velocity too, as she does in "Alguien.") The album is produced by Andres Levin, Yerba Buena's Venezuelan bassist and arranging mastermind, who also collaborated on the songs. And as on Yerba Buena's albums, the music hopscoches across hemispheres, jubilantly fusing every idiom in its path. Salsa, funk, cumbia, hip-hop, pop-punk, mariachi, tango, disco and flamenco are in the mix, just for starters. There are horn sections and turntables, conga drums and accordion. And for every nod to a vintage style there's a border-crossing or simply surreal twist, so that big-band arrangements mingle with drum machines and salsa percussion meets surf guitar. Each song folds into its own irresistible time warp. "CuCuLand" trades Yerba Buena's communal and cultural messages for one woman's chronicles of romantic ups and downs. Ms. Diamantes can play the classic Latina torch singer, passionate and betrayed, but she can also be a flippant, hard-headed 21st-century tough gal. Just as multiple eras overlap in the music, a multiplicity of attitudes infused the vocals and lyrics — along with the unshakable conviction that the best way to survive heartache and other setbacks is with dancing feet. Ms. Diamantes is to perform on Thursday night at the Bowery Ballroom. **Jon Pareles, NEW YORK TIMES**

"...Catlike and acrobatic on vertigo-inducing heels, Cucu [is] fast talking and hyper-sexy. She [is] just so cool that it was hard to tell how deep her presence went. But "Cuculand," her solo debut, should put the spotlight right where it belongs: on her remarkably flexible pipes, and on her equally remarkable good sense of who she is... ["Cuculand is] a surprisingly personal and satisfying album. That means sassy, classy party music, with a little less hip-hop than you'd find on a YB album, a little more trip-hop and cumbia, a touch or two of Latin balladeering, and a dose of high energy. Cucu's voice is clear as a bell but tender, too. And maybe that's the real surprise in "Cuculand": the warmth -- along with the story... "Cuculand" has a narrative that reveals Cucu's pride and vulnerabilities, her heartbreak and what she's overcome. Standout tracks include "Mas Fuerte," with its milonga-ish rhythm and '60s twang, about living well as the best revenge on an ex; "Alguien," a tongue-twisting and perverse little take on love, money and understanding; and "Free," the closest thing to pure pop -- Latin pop, that is." — Achy Obejas, **WASHINGTON POST**

"Listen To This: Cuchifrito! We heart Cucu Diamantes because...1) She's a fellow Cubana! 2) She's fabulous! 3) She used to be in one of our favorite Latin bands, the critically acclaimed and loved by us Yerba Buena. Now, Cucu has gone solo and her first single is *candela*. Sizzling hot!!!!!! Even if you don't understand Spanish, you will love love love this song. Listen to *Alguien* and be dazzled with how fast Diamantes sings on it and how catchy the song is." — **Perez Hilton**,

"Cucu Diamantes' debut album is as dramatic as her life story... It's quite a place, Cuculand, but then Cucu Diamantes, the singer whose emotional worldscape is laid out in the new album, dropping Tuesday, has had quite a life. It has included a scrappy childhood in a poor Havana neighborhood; escape to art school in Rome; bohemian survival in New York City, where she cross-dressed so she could perform as a drag singer (kind of Victor Victoria with a Cuban accent); a zany diva-singer role with Yerba Buena, one of the hottest Latin dance bands of the last half dozen years, and now her own record. "I like things that are uncommon," says Cucu "Common things, I get bored.". Little chance of that for a woman whose life has been a perpetual adventure... [CuCu] practically vibrates with energy as she ticks off Cuculand's many inspirations, from Cuban writer Guillermo Cabrera Infante to a turn-of-the-century Cuban midget, from her love affairs to old-fashioned, over-the-top singers like Lola Flores, Rocio Jurado or Italy's Mina.... On Cuculand she's still playing a character, but it's her own, the independent, flamboyant woman charging through life, as extravagant in her emotions as she is in her style....The songs deal with the complications of relationships, and balancing emotional connection, independence and identity. On *Mas Fuerte* (Stronger), she moves on from an abusive lover, proclaiming "I'm stronger than you, I'm braver than you, and I have a full life where you don't appear." Still in *Love* deals with the mix of feelings when a former flame turns up, while on *Alguien* (Someone) she seeks "someone who loves me the way I love myself, someone who understands me the way I understand myself," switching from singing to a tongue-twistingly rapid-fire rap." — **Miami Herald**

"As expected, Cucu takes us by surprise and hits hard... her 'Cuculand' is an all out, frenzied explosion of freshness, a cyclone of creativity and irony... For weeks now, I cannot go without listening to it at least once a day, if not twice. Not only does it put me in the best mood, in great spirits, but it also keeps me moving... If what you want is to hear something new, then you have it here and it's called "Cuculand"- sung, told and performed by Cucu. "*La Descará*" (the fearless one)." - **Miguel Bosé**

“On her debut album CUCULAND, CuCu Diamantes (the ghetto-glamorous lead singer of the Latin fusion band Yerba Buena) goes it alone to create a wildly entertaining musical journey that is at once totally eclectic and modern, yet somehow cohesive and nostalgic... A mixture of funk, sizzling boogaloo, and a distinct late-night cabaret atmosphere, the album is a stunner”

– iTunes “What’s Hot”

“She's got the best name in Latin music, legs that extend from here to Havana and a thick accent she laughingly describes as "a female Ricky Ricardo." But CuCu Diamantes -- vocalist and cofounder of the Grammy-nominated Yerba Buena -- has a lot more going for her than great gams, as she proves on her classy and eclectic debut. This native-born Cubana is a true artist who's passionate about her influences and immerses herself in all phases of songwriting and music-making, down to singing the backup vocals on her own songs. She's also a committed humanitarian who, for all her New York City fabulousness, is always looking out at the world to see how she can make a difference. She puts her talent where her mouth is -- working on two Red Hot + compilations, volunteering to be part of the Amnesty International song "The Price of Silence" and most recently working to put the song "Vengo" off her debut album, CuCuLand, in service of victims of domestic abuse in Spain.”- Rhapsody

“CuCu Diamantes' CUCULAND is at once a breath of fresh air and a nostalgic whiff of a more glamorous time. It shimmers with the glitz and glamour of an era when catching a show meant dinner jackets and hair tonic, evening gowns and diamonds. But it also bares its teeth and bites down on the modern sounds of New York City's streets, and if you close your eyes a sudden almost tangible perception of the faint smell of tastefully applied Chanel can just as quickly become the steam rising from the sewer grates down in the Village, and all within the very same song. Producer Andres Levin, with whom CuCu formed Yerba Buena, says of multifaceted artist, "she's such a complex entertainer. She's funny, she's sexy, she's glamorous and she's ghetto." All of which contributes to the Cuban songstress' charm, which, along with a sharp wit and a style all her own, made her such an integral part of Yerba Buena's success. But after the group's tremendous success over the span of 8 years, including a Grammy nomination and a long and distinguished list of groups they shared the stage with... the time has come for the singer, songwriter and actress to foray into solo work. And it's a role she assumes eagerly and effectively as she claims the limelight for herself with CUCULAND.” – Miami New Times

“STIR IT UP: CUCU DIAMANTES lives to fuse. That is take everything-from a hi-lo-fashion sense and fine arts schooling in her native Havana to her Spanish, African, Chinese and French heritage – and blend it all into one extended trip that is nothing short of a carnival. On her hotly anticipated solo debut Cuculand, [Diamantes] creates a potent mix of Salsa, hip-hop, funk and other neo-worldly rhythms. Who says you can't afford to travel.” – LATINA (Full-page lead of CULTURA section)

“We're cuckoo for CuCu Diamantes. The Yerba Buena lead singer has finally gone solo and her debut album, "Cuculand," doesn't disappoint. A sizzling mix of salsa, trip-hop and other hip-shaking sounds, the CD is as worldly as the sultry woman behind it” – New York Post

“Cucu Diamantes (vocalist of Yerba Buena) debuts as a soloist with the captivating and seductive album Cuculand, loyal to its style, it boils with fusions of rock, boogaloo, hip-hop, funk, jazz and Antillean rhythms with lyrics focused on female dignity...Yerba Buena is one of the most entertaining and fearless groups of the alternative rock scene of the U.S... Diamantes was a essential component of [the Yerba Buena]albums, in songs such as Guajira and Sugar Daddy, for example, with her deep and fresh voice and which perfectly accommodates any type of fusion... CUCULAND is pure rhythm with deep and reflective lyrics, and you will not want to skip a single track... The first song, Mas Fuerte, is a combination of tango and son montuno mixed with traces of trip-hop and sounds of the electric Surf guitar similar to the style of the 60's American band, The Ventures.... The song speaks about the strength of a woman who manages to break out of an abusive relationship. The main course comes next, the second song is Mentiras, another track with influences of flamenco and a section of funky metal, which speaks of envy and malice and could've been sung perfectly by Cuban singer La Lupe because of its intensity and profound lyrics... One of the most interesting songs, which is very difficult to say since are all very good, is Vengo, in which through afro-dance and funk is a hymn of feminine pride. Cucu Diamantes' album might very well be one of the most pleasing musical surprises of the dawn of 2009 and it stands out because of its fresh beats loyal to fusion, contemporary sounds, and with lyrics that speak of female dignity.” – David Dorantes, LA Voz/Houston Chronicle (translated)

*“The main event was a show featuring CuCu Diamantes, who many will recall from ultra-badass Latin fusion band Yerba Buena, now successfully embarked upon a solo career... CuCu Diamantes is the embodiment of luxury and style, refined and elegant, but still fun, playful and unique. She's every bit a modern day pinup... Even if she didn't have that amazing voice, she would've had me with her adorably-accented between-song banter. But of course she does have a voice, and quite a voice indeed, as she demonstrated. She tore into numbers from her upcoming solo debut CUCULAND, flawlessly easing from the surf-tango hybrid "Mas Fuerte" into sultry son with "Mentiras" to the rapid-fire tongue-twister chorus of "Alguien", all the while urging the crowd dance and suggesting that everyone go home to make love. Catching CuCu live was all at once like catching a dinner show right in front of the bandstand at the Tropicana and grabbing an unexpected 2am performance of Yerba in the Lower East Side, with the very best of both worlds in evidence. Sexy, spunky and Cuban...what's not to like?” – **Broward New Times***

*“A Rare Jewel Sparkles: Cucu Diamantes... The Cuban-born Diamantes has reason to be excited.... after nearly a decade as the frontwoman for Afro-Cuban funk, salsa, hip-hop and Nuyorican boogaloo fusion band Yerba Buena, she's releasing her debut solo album, "Cuculand"... "Alguien" (featuring Yotuel of Cuban hip-hop pioneers Orishas), is a delight for the eardrum. A stirring big horn section, clap-along beat and backup vocalists greet listeners with "Ay, mama, Cucu!," and she replies with her impressive spitfire rhymes...The album is dedicated to women everywhere, and speaks about topics Diamantes has encountered from being mistreated ("Sentimiento"), being lied to ("Mentiras"), to undying love ("Still"). One of her more soulful and personal tracks is "Mas Fuerte," about moving on after a breakup in which she sings, "I'm stronger than you/I am more worthy than you/And I have a full life where you don't appear." – **Washington Post Express***

“4 _ Stars: Cuculand is Yerba Buena co-founder Cucu Diamantes debut album and what a stellar debut it is. An upbeat album of tracks that combine funk, hip hop, cumbia, pop, tango together with lyrics written by Diamantes that express personal and universally familiar themes, this is an album that you can lead you to dance or think with tracks that you'll want to play over and over again.”

- About.com “About Latin Music”



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