

Lila Downs y La Misteriosa – Live



For over a decade, Lila Downs has traversed the world bringing her dramatic and highly unique reinvention of traditional Mexican music and original compositions fused with blues, jazz, soul, African root, and even klezmer music, all supporting her soaring voice. Some would classify Lila as a Mexican artist, but there is no real way to categorize her music except to say that it is an exciting collision of international sounds. A musical journey with Lila Downs is always a fascinating one, simultaneously edgy and powerful, yet sumptuous and graceful.

Born in Oaxaca, Mexico, Lila Downs is the daughter of Mixtec cabaret singer Anita Sánchez and Allen Downs, a Scottish / English–American art professor. She grew up in Oaxaca, California, and Minnesota, where she graduated from the University of Minnesota in voice and anthropology. Her musical vision is anthropological in nature, as varied as the ancient and earthy cultures that continue to nurture and inspire her. As a musical spirit guide, Downs is accompanied on her musical journey by longtime band, La Misteriosa, multi-cultural multi-instrumentalists who include Paul Cohen, her collaborator, producer and husband.



The topic of her music is often political and social justice, immigration, and transformation, all rooted in the human condition. She strives to make a meaningful connection with her diverse audiences through her music and performances. "I'm so lucky," remarks Downs. "People who follow our music are from all walks of life, and they want to scratch the surface to know the whys and hows. Every day we get to connect in so many ways."

Lila Downs is now releasing her first live recording, *Lila Downs y La Misteriosa en Paris*, recorded in May, 2009, at Radio France Studio 105, on world *village*, a label of harmonia mundi. Downs is well-known for her texturally rich and diverse recordings, as well as dynamic live performances. The album delivers the best of both worlds, brilliantly capturing the exuberant energy of Lila and eight international musicians performing together, weaving traditional instruments including accordion, harp, clarinet and trombone with driving bass and drums, electric guitar, and infectious Latin percussion.

The songs on *Lila Downs y La Misteriosa: En Paris* span six albums, from 1999's *La Sandunga* to 2008's *Shake Away*, and clearly demonstrate the timelessness of her music. Sometimes the sound feels like a heat fueled road trip from Oaxaca to New Orleans. But then Downs is not afraid to shake things up with a cumbia rock, beat-poet style rap, or even the chirps of an iguana, taking the music to its own enigmatic world. From the carnival like atmosphere of *Perro Negro* or the blues of *Minimum Wage*, to traditional Mexican songs that audiences have come to love such as *Paloma Negra*, few artists can successfully navigate the terrain of such seemingly disparate music. But Lila Downs y La Misteriosa go to the core of it, make it their own, and bring the audience along for an emotional and memorable ride.