



THE GARIFUNA COLLECTIVE

Featuring UMALALI



Since its inception the **Garifuna Collective** has consistently provided a uniquely rewarding experience - Garifuna music and dance performed by composers and musicians who push the boundaries of their dynamic, centuries old musical traditions and make it accessible to an enthusiastic worldwide audience.

And now the Garifuna Collective featuring the Umalali women singers continues to break new ground with performances that leave no doubt as to why UNESCO, in 2001, officially proclaimed the language, dance, and music of the Garifuna people of Central America as a **"Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity"**.

This is a rare opportunity to experience contemporary Garifuna roots music and performances as distinctive and spirited as the culture from which they spring.



Hailing from **Belize, Guatemala and Honduras**, Desiree Diego, Sofia Blanco and Chela Torres are three women whose songs draw on the wellsprings of Garifuna culture while echoing the joys and sorrows of contemporary life.

This is a seasoned collective representing the cream of today's Garifuna musicians and dancers, with a dynamic that comes from over a decade of playing together and crafting some of the most original and refreshing modern roots music to ever come out of the Central American and Caribbean region. Drawing upon a deep reservoir of talent and experience while restlessly exploring new frontiers in a changing world, the Garifuna Collective continues to evolve in ways that captivate old fans and electrify new audiences.

Over a foundation of ancestral beats, the unmistakable and powerful sound of the two traditional Garifuna drums – the Primero and the Segunda – along with driving maracas, turtle shells, acoustic and electric guitars and swinging bass grooves blending with evocative melodies and powerful call and response vocals, these artists tell their stories through music, dance, and traditional costume.



SELECTED PRESS QUOTES

"The complex rhythms demand attention, and quickly resolve themselves into a completely irresistible groove. When the melodies kick in on top of them, the lushness is overwhelming."
The Wall Street Journal

"This troupe of extraordinary singers have fashioned a unique and wonderful world; once you enter, you will never want to leave."
Charlie Gillett, The Guardian (UK)

"The meeting point where ancient meets modern, where acoustic slips effortlessly into and out of electric, this music stretches forward, defying the listener to pin it down. And yet far from being disturbing it is endlessly satisfying and soothing. Whatever people mean about music being universal, surely that is the perfect demonstration of their argument."
The Observer (UK)

"Full of surging seaside rhythms and yearning, soulful melodies that hang in the memory,"
BBC Music (UK)

Voted #1 World Music album of all time" Amazon.com
#1 World Music Charts Europe
2007 BBC Music Award (Americas Category)
WOMEX AWARD 2007
2014 JUNO Award World Music Nomination (with Danny Michel)

The **Umalali** performance opens with the women holding hands as they deliver a traditional cappella Abueymahani song before the drumming begins and, one by one, the instruments join in. The first half of the concert consists of six or seven songs from the group's highly acclaimed Umalali and Watina albums, incorporating **Paranda, Hungu Hungu** and **Gungei** styles sung in Garifuna. Each song tells a compelling story that the lead singers describe at the beginning or during a musical breakdown.

Midway through the performance, the group comes together for a traditional combined medley with the three women performing several dances with traditional call and response singing. One of the dancers slips backstage to reappear in a white Jankunu costume set off with a striking mask and crown with seashell knee rattles providing accompaniment. Then the singing and bass, driven by drums, maracas and turtle shells, kick in to create an uplifting and extremely danceable group experience.

The concert's finale brings home the meaning of a vibrant sing-along, Lidan Aban - "together as one."

The Garifuna Collective has performed in over 25 countries, with appearances at Grand Performances Los Angeles, the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, the Montreal International Jazz Fest, Rio Loco in France, Germany's Afrika Festival and a range of venues and festivals worldwide, and has been part of the most celebrated Garifuna albums of all time, including the critically acclaimed Wátina, recipient of the WOMEX and BBC World Music Award and voted by Amazon as the Number One World Music Album of All Time.

Whether on a sandy Caribbean beach or before a large international audience, the Garifuna Collective provides an unforgettable, universally enjoyable and deeply moving experience that never fails to captivate audiences of all ages and cultural backgrounds. No matter where you come from or what your musical interests are, you'll return home richer for the experience.



Discography

