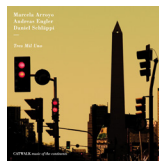


Marcela Arroyo, Andreas Engler & Daniel Schläppi
Tres Mil Uno

Catwalk Music (55 mins)



Tango for the 30th century?



The title of this intriguing collection, *Tres Mil Uno* (3001), perhaps indicates that Argentinian-

born, Swiss-based singer Marcela Arroyo, Swiss violinist Andreas Engler and double bassist Daniel Schläppi have an eye on the future. Most of the songs are tangos: a couple of classics and several modern ones, though the arrangements are all stridently post-Astor Piazzolla. And tango has a tradition of looking forward, often with a spirit of grim fatalism. Arroyo brings to the tango songbook a hint of Marlene Dietrich-esque drama on the opener, 'Preludio Para el Año 3001', but she can also deliver a folk singer's warmth. Whichever mode she's in, her manner is intimate and this fits well with Engler's jabs on the violin and Schläppi's soft, staccato plucks.

Often the songs are more like three-way conversations, with a jazz band's approach to phrasing and pauses but the occasional steering towards a lilting, classical strain (as on the beautiful version of 'Oblivion'). If this is the future of tango, it is dark, dream-laden and delectable.

CHRIS MOSS

TRACK TO TRY *Oblivion*

Aurelio Darandi

Real World Records (54 mins)



A collection of the Garifuna singer's greatest hits



With their lilting, soulful melodies, drums and guitars, the *paranda* songs of the Garifuna people are one of

the world's great musical traditions. Their unique blend of African, Caribbean and Latin influences reflects the extraordinary history of a people who can trace their ancestry back to the African slaves who escaped from a shipwreck to intermarry with the Arawak people of St Vincent, and who now live along the Caribbean coast of Central America. Since the death of the great Andy Palacio, it has been left to his former colleague Aurelio Martinez to



TOP OF THE WORLD TRACK 1

Cassie and Maggie
The Willow Collection

Cassie & Maggie (43 mins)



Roots music at its tree-mendously melancholic best



Albums do not usually come as beautifully conceived and packaged as *The Willow Collection* from young Nova Scotian sisters Cassie (fiddle) and Maggie (guitar and lead vocals) MacDonald. The idea, to pull together a set of tunes centred around the theme of the willow tree, is simple enough. But the pair have arranged the collection to look beyond the traditional folk imagery of the weeping willow and juxtaposed its associations of sorrow and death with symbols of soul and hope. The poise of final track, 'Turn Me Gentle When I'm Dying', is heartbreaking. There is musical

breadth here too, with Celtic sounds from both sides of the Atlantic, and from Gaelic song to country tunes. A couple of instrumental sets add a touch of instrumental swagger; Cassie's fiddle drives hard on 'Strip the Willow'. But it is the songs that delight the most. The sisters' own 'The Willow Lullaby' is touching in its warmth of spirit, although there is more energy and spirit in songs of misery: the lively 'Nobleman's Wedding' and downright macabre 'Down in the Willow Garden'. Taken all together, *The Willow Collection* is a virtuoso performance with a light touch.

TIM WOODALL

TRACK TO TRY *The Willow Hits*

promote this glorious, compelling music on the international stage.

His fourth solo album is something of a magnificent curiosity. It's a 'Greatest Hits' set – a selection of the most popular songs in his live shows, including nine that appeared on his earlier albums. And it's also his answer to a live album, though it wasn't recorded on stage but live at the Real World studios, soon after he made a tremendous appearance at WOMAD last year. Backed by his own guitar, two large Garifuna drums, bass, and twanging electric guitar from Guayo Cedeño, he treats songs such as 'Dondo', the charming 'Laru Beya' or the more slow and pained-sounding 'Dugu' to a thrilling, compelling work-over. Well worth checking out, even if you own all his earlier albums.

ROBIN DENSELOW

TRACK TO TRY *Laru Beya*

Azymuth Fênix

Far Out Recordings (54 mins)



A resilient Azymuth are reborn despite a sad loss



There's often consternation when a revered band loses a key member of its personnel. But

then along comes a Phil Collins to replace a Peter Gabriel and all is again well with the world. The 2012 death of Azymuth's keyboard wizard and principal composer, José Roberto Bertrami, left a big hole. His eventual replacement, Kiko Continentino, has worked with the likes of Djavan, Gilberto Gil and Milton Nascimento, so he has a good pedigree. Indeed, on the basis of 'Orange Clouds', his

tribute to the Azymuth of old, the new boy can clearly compose one of those lovely, lazy funky melodies that is synonymous with the band.

Perhaps the worst thing you can say about *Fênix* is that nothing much has changed. The impeccable rhythm section of bassist Alex Malheiros and drummer Ivan Conti is still there to steer the new vessel; the opening and closing permutations of 'Villa Mariana' are worthy of classic 1970s Azymuth; and in between, with guest percussionist Robertinho Silva being a welcome addition to the crew, there's plenty of snappy funk and melodic reveries such as 'Rio Doce'. It's tempting to suggest that *Fênix* represents a re-birth, but it's really more like Azymuth have never been away.

MARK SAMPSON

TRACK TO TRY *Villa Mariana (Pela Madrugada)*