

Altiplano

BY

Ciro Hurtado

Written by

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I have been an admirer of the work of Peruvian guitarist **Ciro Hurtado** for a few years now and with the release of his brand new album **Altiplano**, we have the delightful prospect of going on another wondrous musical journey with the artist.

The lively start is a real scene setter called **Macchu Picchu**; this is one of the top most spiritual places on the planet and has been on my bucket list for many years. Hurtado's beautiful performance on guitar really takes us to that mountain and the 15th century Incan citadel, and with the added instrumentation, it all makes for a really fun and exciting start to the album and of course our musical sojourn.

The title track is up next, **Altiplano**, this means high plain in Spanish and a more lush and colourful performance on guitar you will not hear. This is that magical empty canvas called the title track, one that Hurtado has so masterfully and musically painted on, and thus drawn such a beautiful portrait of sound and tone whilst doing so. With the close knit work on the flute, Hurtado's guitar has manifested something truly remarkable; this would be one of my personal favourites from the release.

We now move to the piece **Rumba Andina**, the familiar pipes are there and match Hurtado's work perfectly, and his guitar seems to resonate right across the mountains. Within this piece there is a really charming narrative of movement, almost dance like and playful at the same time, this is a truly charming offering, one that will no doubt be a bit of a fans favourite, it is a wonderfully lively composition that draws a memorable energy that will stay in

the musical heart for a long time, you we also revel in the amazing vocals from *Ciro's* wife *Cindy* too.

Our journey of musical beauty finds us at the portal of a really masterful performance on guitar by the artist, it is called **Ciudad Del Lago**. This was originally a song, but now arranged as a solo guitar piece, one I may add as a guitarist myself, is played with such a superb style and standard of performance, almost classical at times and technically outstanding in all moments, now this is how to *really* play guitar.

What is so very pleasurable about this album is the length of the tracks; we have well over six minutes of utter enjoyment now as we reside within the musical halls of this next offering called **El Ayaymama**. Sung in Spanish by vocalist *Alexa Ramirez*, we are gifted my stand out piece off the album, the vocals were sensitive and beautifully sung, but *Hurtado's* performance on guitar was beyond anything I have heard for the last few decades and made this track my all-time favourite off the album.

The artist is at his very best on this next offering too, gifting us a composition called **Andean Heart**. A lush cross classical, new age styled guitar track demands our attention now; one has to literally admire the beautiful fluency of his performances. There is almost a symbiotic sense of composition here as well, seemingly to blend in styles of both regional music with a western twist, and one done so cleverly, with such style and panache it has to be said.

This exciting and vibrant new collection of stunning songs by **Ciro Hurtado** continues now with a track called **Recuerdos**. The singer on this offering is *Mariel Henry* of the Mexican band *Chejere* and forms a beautiful musical relationship with the artist as they produce a song filled full of colour and rhythm, interestingly enough this piece reminds me of the regional music here in Cyprus, but perhaps more sensitive in composition.

We now move into the deeper waters of the album and come across another solo piece called **Entre Las Estrellas**. The translation means between the stars and here we have yet one more example why *Hurtado* is rated as one of the best world guitarists of his generation. Take time to sit in silence and listen to this one, it is idyllic and beautifully played, perhaps setting the scene perfectly for a night time meditation.

Our penultimate offering is called **Triste**, a composition that is true to its roots and gives us the perfect combination of flutes and guitar that go to make up an almost sad and mournful opus. This for me sounds like the music from a film soundtrack, one that has a real sense of emotion and an imploring energy about its construction.

So we find ourselves at the last portal to this musical dimension and the track in question is called **House of The Rising Sun**, if you have never heard of this piece, where have you been for the last 50 years? Most versions I have heard have been rock ones, but this is the first really chilled version that now resides in my musical vaults and is superb, Hurtado has ended the album in such a clever way, with an absolute classic.

There can be no doubt that **Ciro Hurtado** is at the front of all that is good in the realm of the world and global fusion genre, and personally for me I rate this album to be the best he has created thus far. **Altiplano** is fresh, vibrant and rustic, it's an album that gives you all you would expect from the artist, but much more. Technically brilliant, beautifully crafted and wonderfully produced, if this release isn't a big hit, there is no justice in the world.