

LOS WEMBLER'S DE IQUITOS

« Visión del Ayahuasca »

LOS WEMBLER'S DE IQUITOS CELEBRATE 50 YEARS
WITH NEW ALBUM AND TOUR

« Visión del Ayahuasca » Out on Barbès Records, 09/2019



Legendary Peruvian chicha pioneers Los Wemblers de Iquitos celebrate their 50th anniversary with an all-new album, *Visión del Ayahuasca* (Available on Barbès records, September 2019), and an international tour with stops in Europe and North America.

In 2007 Brooklyn label Barbès records released a 17-song compilation of a then ignored genre of psychedelic cumbia from Peru. That album, *The Roots of Chicha*, was essential in re-introducing the world to chicha music, a sound previously confined to the Amazon and the poorer neighborhoods of Lima. Though chicha originated in the 1970s, its particular blend of psych rock, surf, Afro-Latin rhythms and indigenous melodies proved to be particularly appealing to 21st century audiences. To many, especially in South America and Mexico, it came to be seen as the missing link between rock and tropical Latin music and was a key ingredient in the cumbia revival that has swept the Americas in the past ten years.

Los Wemblers, who formed in 1968 in the Amazonian city of Iquitos, were responsible for some of the first hits of the psychedelic cumbia genre - including the iconic "Sonido Amazonico" and "Danza del Petrolero", two titles co-opted (stolen claim Los Wemblers..) by popular band Los Mirlos. Los Wemblers became widely popular in the Peruvian Amazon and for a dozen years and criss-crossed the region, with forays into neighboring Brazil and Colombia. In the mid 1980's, however, touring mostly came to a stop and the band remained in Iquitos, playing mostly parties and local functions.

Their new album, *Vision del Ayahuasca*, was written in Iquitos, where the band still lives, but recorded in Lyon, France, while the band was on its second European tour. With only three days in the studio and a hand injury suffered by guitarist Alberto Sanchez, the session was fueled with a sense of urgency that only added to the raw energy the band has channeled for the past 50 years. Recording at BacktoMono, an all analog studio, Los Wemblers re-created the conditions they knew at the beginning of their career - beyond mere nostalgia, the process gave the session some profound historical grounding. The album was produced by Barbes' Olivier Conan, engineered by analog guru Christian Hierro (BCUC, Vaudou Game) mixed by Bryce Goggin (Joan as Police Woman, Swans, Akron Family) and mastered by Masterdisk's Scott Hull. The result is an album that goes back to the origins of the band, oscillating between their love of tropical dance music and loud guitar rock rooted in late 60's psychedelia. The past few years, had already seen a renewed interest in Los Wemblers, both in and outside of Peru. In the past few years, they have collaborated with Peruvian electro cumbia group Dengue Dengue Dengue, have been covered by Chicha Libre, La Chamba, XIXA and Firewater, been part of a number of documentaries and TV shows and inspired countless new bands across the Americas and Europe. In just three years, Los Wemblers have twice toured the US and Europe with festival and club appearances attended by a young generation eager to soak in their sound. *Vision del Ayahuasca* should further their legacy as pioneers -- not only of chicha and psychedelic cumbia -- but as musicians who are finally getting their place in the worldwide pantheon of influential artists. Indeed, the latin psychedelia they helped create 50 years ago, is more relevant than ever and the album is a triumphant tribute to their lasting creative powers.



Label : Barbes Records – olivierconan@gmail.com

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About Los Wembler's de Iquitos

In 1968, in Iquitos, the capital of the Peruvian Amazon, a shoemaker named Solomon Sanchez decided to form a band with his five sons. They were the first band in the Amazon to play popular local rhythms with electric guitars. The new hybrid they were creating would go on to have an enormous impact on South American popular music. Some of their songs, such as Sonido Amazonico or Danza del Petrolero became the most emblematic of this new cumbia amazonica movement.

The brothers were born and raised in Iquitos - the largest isolated city in the world. Iquitos boasts close to half a million inhabitants, but its nearest road is six days away by boat. The river and the forest are a big part of the culture, but the city remains a large urban center. Indigenous folklore and urban living have created a singular culture with the river dolphin and the moto-taxi as its primary symbols.

The brothers' main link to the outside world was the radio. In addition to their daily diets of Tahuampa, Pandillas and Criollo waltzes, long wave radio broadcasts would expose them to Colombian Cumbia, Brazilian Carimbo, Ecuadorian SanJuanitos, Venezuelan joropos – and psychedelic rock.

Curious to a fault, and willing to experiment, Los Wembler's managed to incorporate all these styles into their playing. They loved Pinduca's Brazilian Carimbó and covered some of his songs. Same with Ecuador's Polibio Mayorga, who was also mixing local rhythms with tropical imports. Most of all, they loved the sound of electric guitars – especially with a wah pedal.

Cumbia proved to be the most popular and most adaptable rhythm and it became the key element in their music. Their very first tune was called Cumbia Amazonica, which became the name of the music itself.

The band's name itself reflected both their traditional roots and their foreign influences. They combined the name of a local ethnic group – the Huambisa's – with that of the British stadium Wembley, adding the extra 's because it seemed more rock and roll...

Los Wembler's rise coincided with the height of the oil boom. With oil came money – a lot of it by local standards - and high wages attracted oil workers known as petroleros. They had money to spend, and Los Wembler's became a favorite attraction at petroleros' parties.

Around the same time, other Amazonian bands were also electrifying their music. In Pucalpa, Juaneco y su Combo borrowed heavily from Brazilian music, and in Tarapoto, Sonido 2000 was inspired by Afro-Cuban Guaracha. Los Wembler's drew more heavily from Amazonian folklore. They were also more isolated and their fame took a bit longer to spread. It wasn't until Los Mirlos – an Amazonian band based in Lima - covered some of their tunes , that Los Wembler's started to become known in the rest of Peru.

Throughout the 1970's, Los Wembler's released up to two LPs a year. They toured constantly throughout the Amazon, with forays into Peru's majors cities. They became Iquitos greatest musical export.

By the mid 1980's, cumbia amazonica had lost its popularity and was gradually being replaced by the more electronic sounds of techno cumbia . Los Wembler's stopped recording and touring. Their strong family bond did ensure that they wouldn't drift apart , and they never stopped playing as a band. They performed for whoever would hire them locally: parties, community events, weddings, but outside of Iquitos, they pretty much vanished from public consciousness.

Fast forward twenty five years. After the Fujimori years, young Peruvians are in search of their past and start reconnecting with national popular culture. Early rock bands are being re-discovered as is Cumbia Amazonica. In 2007, Barbès Records released Roots of Chicha: Psychedelic Cumbias from Peru. The album anthologized Peruvian cumbia (which came to be known as Chicha) from Lima and the Amazon. The Amazonian bands, in particular, struck a chord worldwide and came to be seen as a sort of missing link between Latin roots and rock – just as a new generation of musicians in Argentina, Mexico and Colombia had themselves started to mix those same elements.

Slowly, Los Wembler's came to be re-discovered. In 2011, they performed in Lima for the first time in twenty five years. A new generation of Tropical Electronic musicians started looking up to them for inspiration and the Peruvian group Dengue Dengue Dengue collaborated with them on a few songs. In 2015, the Smithsonian institute invited Los Wembler's to perform at their prestigious Folklife festival in Washington DC.

Los Wembler's haven't lost any of their creative edge. To watch them perform or record is to witness musicians at the height of their powers. Their happy first experiments with cumbia and indigenous rhythms were not the product of chance. These are accomplished musicians in tune with their environment but also infinitely curious about the world. The style Los Wembler's pioneered more than forty years ago has finally found an audience around the world, and Los Wembler's intend to keep it relevant by finding new ways to experiment.

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*Celebrate of 50 years career & the Tenth Anniversary of The Roots Of Chicha
Peruvian Cumbia Pioneers from the Amazon to Tour Europe and North America*

PAST EUROPEAN DATES

FALL 2019

- 18/10/19 – QUIMPER (fr) Cafe Local
- 19/10/19 – PARIS (fr) Festival Villes des Musiques du Monde (*with Chico Trujillo*)
- 25/10/19 – TAMPERE (Fi) OFFICIAL WOMEX SHOWCASE (Torni Stage, Paja Kongressi)

SUMMER TOUR 2019

- 28/06/19 – PARIS (fr) Nuit Zébrée de Radio Nova
- 05/07/19 – Pisa (it) Arno Vivo
- 06/07/19 – Livourno (it) Nano verde
- 09/07/19 – Concarneau (fr) carré des Larons
- 10/07/19 – Arques (fr) La Claranda
- 11/07/19 – Bordeaux (fr) Festival Relache
- 12/07/19 – Halle (ger) Pierre Grasse
- 13/07/19 – BERLIN (ger) Saalchen
- 16/07/19 – Cerveteri (it) Jova Beach Party
- 17/07/19 – PARIS (fr) La Plage du Glaz'art (RELEASE PARTY)
- 18/07/19 – La redorte (fr) Festival Convivencia
- 19/07/19 – Chanac (fr) Festival Detours du Monde
- 22/07/19 – Gent (be) Festival Pole Pole

SPRING TOUR 2018

- 09/05/18 – BERN (CH) Bee-Flat
- 10/05/18 – BORDEAUX (FR) Arliq
- 11/05/18 – PARIS (Pantin) (FR) La Halle Papin
- 12/05/18 – LYON (FR) Les Nuits Sonores
- 16/05/18 – BERLIN (DE) Yaam
- 17/05/18 – PARIS (FR) Alhambra
- 18/05/18 – EEKLO (BE) N9 Muzikclub
- 19/05/18 – WINTERTHOUR (CH) Afro-Pfingsten Festival
- 20/05/18 – ORDIAIP (FR) Musikaren Eguna Festival

SUMMER TOUR 2017

- 23/06/17 – Paris (FR) RFI LIVE
- 24/06/17 – Stockholm (SE) Arena
- 25/06/17 – Mechelen (SE) Ottertrotter
- 28/06/17 – Rotterdam (NL)
- 30/06/17 – Brussels (SE) Recyclart
- 02/07/17 – Paris (FR) Macki Music Festival
- 06/07/17 – Gignac (FR) Les Nuits Couleurs
- 07/07/17 – Dieulfit (FR) Bizz'Art Nomades
- 08/07/17 – Toulouse (FR) Convivencia
- 09/07/17 – Chalon (FR) Musiques d'ici et d'ailleurs
- 13/07/17 – Koln (DE) COSMO LIVE direct
- 14/07/17 – St-Aubin/Mer (FR) Pete the Monkey
- 22/07/17 – St-Antonin (FR) Samba Al Pais
- 23/07/17 – Sète (FR) Fiest'A Sete
- 26-30/07 – Antwerpen (FR) Zommer
- 03/08/17 – Bordeaux (FR) Festival Relache
- 05/08/17 – Crozon (FR) Festival du Bout du Monde