





Omara Portuondo is one of Cuba's most celebrated female voices. During a career which stretches back to the early fifties, she has sung a great variety of Cuban styles including the jazz influenced 'filin' and vocal quartet harmonies as a founder member of the renowned Cuarteto Las D'Aida, dance-orientated Cuban big band, traditional bolero and trova styles. This album features her seasoned voice in a variety of settings, accompanied by a dream band recorded at Havana's Egrem Studios.

The record opens with *La sitiera*—a traditional lament from Santiago de Cuba—with Omara's rich, plaintive vocal and 'Guajiro' Mirabal's delicate trumpet in an arrangement inspired by the great Santiago musician Eliades Ochoa. *He perdido contigo* was part of the repertoire of one of Omara's heroines, María Teresa Vera, and this version echoes the melancholy of the legendary singer's last recordings. Omara started her career as a dancer at Havana's Tropicana cabaret and *¿Dónde estabas tú?* is a re-working of the wonderful dance number originally performed by Beny Moré. Demetrio Muñoz' arrangement, with its emphasis on the saxophone and rhythm sections, was influenced by Machito's classic fifties recording. *Mariposita de primavera* is

a rare habanera by Miguel Matamores and here Omara's yearning vocals are unusually matched with a string quartet. The bolero *Canta lo sentimental* is flavoured with the electric guitar of Manuel Galbán who played on the hit version by the sixties vocal group sensation Los Zafiros. The alto sax solo is by Panteleón Sánchez from Beny Moré's Banda Gigante. *Ella y yo* is a treasure of the trova repertoire arranged, with dual clarinets, by the inimitable Compay Segundo, who also appears on guitar. *No me vayas engañar* is a bolero-cha featuring a beautiful trumpet solo from 'Guajiro' Mirabal. Arsenio Rodríguez's *No me llores más* is a duet by Omara and Ibrahim Ferrer with a typical improvised solo by Arsenio's pianist of the forties, the phenomenal Rubén González. *Veinte años* is introduced by Jesús 'Aguaje' Ramos and 'Cachaíto' López in a rolling trombone and bass dialogue in the 'filin' style popularised by Omara. Gershwin's *El hombre que yo amé* (*The Man I Love*) is the only non-Cuban song on this collection and it harks back to Omara's first radio broadcast when she was introduced as "Miss Omara Brown". *Siempre en mi corazón*, which closes the album, is a Cuban melody popularised in America by, amongst others, Glenn Miller and this arrangement recalls the golden age of the Tropicana.

The Musicians

Omara Portuondo vocals

Ibrahim Ferrer vocal (8)

Pio Leyva vocal (6)

Rubén González piano

Orlando 'Cachaito' López bass

Amadito Valdés timbales

Angel Terry Domech congas

Filiberto Sánchez bongos

Carlos González bongos (11)

Alberto 'Virgilio' Valdés

maracas, clave (4)

Roberto García guiro

Lázaro Villa clave

Manuel Galbán guitar (5)

Eliades Ochoa guitar (1 and 2)

Compay Segundo guitar (6)

Benito Suárez guitar (6)

Gilberto 'Papi' Oviedo tres (8)

Manuel 'Guajiro' Mirabal trumpet (all solos)

Yaure Muñiz trumpet & flugelhorn

Alejandro Pichardo trumpet

Yanko Pichardo trumpet

Daniel Ramos trumpet

Jesús 'Aguaje' Ramos trombone (all solos)
Demetrio Muñiz trombone
Antonio Leal trombone

Panteleón Sánchez alto sax (all solos)
Javier Zalba alto & soprano sax
Antonio Jiménez tenor sax
Rafael 'Jimmy' Jenks tenor sax
Carlos Fernández tenor sax
Ventura Gutiérrez baritone sax

Rafael Lázaro Inciarte clarinet (6)
Haskell Armenteros clarinet (6)

Dania Valdés chorus
Teresita García Caturla chorus
Xiomara Valdés chorus
Lázaro Villa chorus
Jesús 'Aguaje' Ramos chorus

Pedro Depestre González violin
Humberto Legat violin
Aeyoth Marichal violin
Gerardo García violin
Rogelio Martínez violin
Ariel Sarduy violin
Augusto Diago violin
Hugo Cruz violin
Julián Corrales violin

Angel Zaldivar viola
José Marón viola
Rafael Cutiño viola
Roberto Herrera viola

Arelis Zaldivar cello
Roy Avila Serrano cello

String quartet on (4)
Augusto Diago violin
Ariel Sarduy violin
José Marón violin
Arelis Zaldivar cello

Roger Beaujolais vibes (5)

*Manuel Galbán and Eliades Ochoa
appear courtesy of Virgin Records Spain*

*Compay Segundo appears courtesy
of DRO East West Spain*

Papi Oviedo appears courtesy of Tumi Records

1. La sitiera

Gujaira. RAFAEL LÓPEZ

Sitiera mía,
dime qué has hecho
de nuestro dulce hogar
Reina que un día
fue la alegría
de todo aquel sital

Lágrimas vierte
la sitieria
que tiende a desolar
y es por no verte,
reina que un día,
fuiste de aquel lugar

Ya el jilguero se alejó
de aquel frondoso algarrobo
y hasta la mata de jobo
nos da muestras de dolor

La sitiera se ha marchado
y yo enamorado
llero por su amor
y es para la sitieria
cual si fuera un día
que le falta el sol

Ven sitiera por favor,
ven conmigo a mi retiro
y gozaremos de amor
al son del tiple y el güiro

My sitiera*
tell me what you've done
to our sweet home
My queen, once
you were the joy
of that community

Tears are flowing
down every
grieving face
as you're no longer here,
My queen, one day
you left

Even the finch has left
that leafy carob tree
And even the cedar
can't hide its sorrow

The sitiera has gone
and left me here in love,
crying for her love
and everyone feels
it's a day when
the sun has left the sky

Come back, sitiera, please,
come with me to my hiding place
Let's bask in love
to the sound of the tiple and guiro

*Sitiera. The owner of a small farm

2. He perdido contigo

Bolero. MARÍA TERESA VERA & LUIS CARDENAS

Me quisiste, lo sé
yo también te he querido
Me olvidaste después
pero yo no he podido

A sufrir por tu amor
me condenó el destino
¿Qué le vamos a hacer?
Yo tenía que perder
y he perdido contigo

Tantos amores buenos
que con fe me adoraron
yo te entregué el cariño
que inocente te he dado
Pero fuiste tan cruel
que jugaste conmigo

¿Qué le vamos a hacer?
Yo tenía que perder
y he perdido contigo

You loved me, I know
and I loved you too
then you forgot me
but I couldn't forget you

Destiny has condemned me
to suffer for your love
What can I do?
I had to lose with someone
and I lost with you

So many lovers
who adored me with good hearts
I gave you my affection
with innocence
But you cruelly
played with my love

What can I do?
I had to lose with someone
and I lost with you

3. *¿Dónde estabas tú?*

Mambo. ERNESTO DUARTE

¿Dónde, dónde estabas tú? (bis) Where were you? (bis)

¿Dónde tú estabas, José Inés? Where were you, José Inés
¿Que ayer fui a buscarte y no te hallé? When I went looking for you yesterday?
Te llevaste los cueros, el quinto y el tres You took the drums, quinto and tres
y por tu culpa suspendimos el bembé So we had to cancel the fiesta

¿Dónde, dónde estabas tú? (bis) Where were you? (bis)

Yo fui a buscarte I went looking for you
con Lola, Tomasa y Mercé with Lola, Tomasa and Mercé

¿Dónde, dónde tú estabas Where were you
Juan José? Juan José?

Oye, tremendo lío me has buscado tú Look, I went to a lot of trouble for you
con Doña Inés with Doña Inés

¿Dónde, dónde estabas tú? (bis) Where were you? (bis)

¿Dónde tú estabas? Where were you?
¿En casa de Nico, Jacinto y Andrés? With Nico, Jacinto and Andrés?

Tú no juegues conmigo Don't play with me
que yo como candela it's playing with fire

Y por tu culpa suspendimos el bembé Because of you we cancelled the fiesta

¡Ay, pero qué sabroso, mi hermano! Ah, but isn't it tasty, my friend!
¡Suave! Beautiful!





4. *Mariposita de primavera*

Habanera. MIGUEL MATAMOROS

**Mariposita de primavera,
alma con alas que errante vas
por los jardines de mi quimera
por los jardines de mi quimera
como un suspiro de amor fugaz**

Butterfly in spring
a winged soul fluttering
through the gardens of my fantasy
through the gardens of my fantasy
like the sigh of elusive love

**Cuando te alejes a otras regiones
llévale un ruego de adoración
a aquél que un día me dio ilusiones
que se trocaron en decepciones
que aún llevo dentro del corazón**

When you fly away
take with you a request for love
to the one who once gave me dreams
dreams that changed to disappointment
that I still carry in my heart

**Yo quiero verlo para besarle
con esos besos que tú a la flor
das cuando quieres la miel robarle,
das cuando quieres la miel robarle
para embriagarte cual yo de amor**

I want to see him to kiss him
kisses you plant on the flowers
when you steal away their honey
when you steal away their honey
and feel the intoxication of love

**Mariposita de primavera,
dile a mi amado si es que lo ves,
dile que torne mi compañero
a los jardines de mi quimera
do tú no vuelvas jamás tal vez**

Butterfly in spring
if you see him, tell the one I love
tell him to come back
to the gardens of my fantasy
Maybe I'll never see you again

5. *Canta lo sentimental*

Canción. URBANO GÓMEZ MONTIEL

Versos: Y. de la Fuente

**Esta tristeza se niega al olvido
como la penumbra a la luz,
quiera el destino que puedas volver
un día para recordar**

This sadness cannot be forgotten
Like shadow into light
At the will of destiny is your return
One day to remember

**Sentimental mi ventana se vuelve,
las cosas parecen pensar
Llueve en la calle y dentro de mi
canta lo sentimental**

With emotion my window swings open
and all seems to tell the story
It's raining outside, and in my heart
emotion resides

**Todos los días me duele
la tristeza que me da
y se me cae del recuerdo
un nido de soledad**

Every day it hurts;
the sadness it brings
And from my memory falls
a secret stash of loneliness

**Para volar mi paloma se tiende
como un pañuelito de luz.
Baila la lluvia y dentro de mi
canta lo sentimental**

To return my dove floats
like a scrap of light
The rain dances and in my heart is
a song of emotion

Canta lo sentimental A song of emotion

6. *Ella y yo*

Bolero. OSCAR HERNÁNDEZ

En el sendero de mi vida triste hallé una flor
que apenas su perfume delicioso me embriagó

Along the path of my sad life I found a flower
whose sweet perfume intoxicated me

Cuando empezaba a percibir su aroma, se esfumó
Así vive mi alma, triste y sola,
así vive mi amor

But as soon as the aroma reached me, it faded away
Like my soul, sad and alone,
like my love

Queriendo percibir de aquella rosa
su perfume y color
que el lloro de mi triste vida secó,
como la rosa, como el perfume, así era ella,
como lo triste como una lágrima así soy yo (bis)

I wanted the perfume and colour
of that rose to reach me
but it had faded with the tears of my sad life
Like the rose and its perfume she was
Like sadness and tears am I (bis)



7. *No me vayas a engañar*

Bolero. OSVALDO FARRÉS

**No me vayas a engañar,
di la verdad, di lo justo
a lo mejor yo te gusto
y quizás es bien para los dos**

Don't lie to me
Tell me the truth, like it is
You may like me
and it could be good for us

**No me vayas a decir
que no te has dado ni cuenta
No digas lo que no sientas
por mi,
conociendo la verdad**

Don't tell me
you hadn't realised
Don't tell me
that you don't feel for me
when you know the truth

**Soy tu refugio de amor,
mis besos yo te daré,
haré lo que quieras tú,
mi dulce querer**

I am your refuge of love
my kisses I will give you
I will do what you desire
my sweet love

**No me vayas a engañar,
di la verdad, di lo justo
a lo mejor yo te gusto
y quizás es bien para los dos**

Don't lie to me
Tell me the truth, like it is
You may like me
and it could be good for us

8. No me llores más

Son montuno. ARSENIO RODRÍGUEZ

Coro: No me llores, no me llores más Chorus: Don't cry, don't cry anymore

Papi no me llores lagrimitas Darling, stop those tears
que me siento una cosita I can feel something happening
que me acaba con el alma that's eating away at my soul

Tata, tú me pones una carita Don't look at me like that
que me siento desvalido It makes me feel so helpless
que me perturba la calma And churns me up inside

No quiero que me llores, I don't want you to cry,
que me digas "mamacita de mi alma, Don't tell me, "darling, my sweet
eres mi vida" you're my life"

Sabes que ese disco está rayado You're like a scratched record
ya de oirlo tengo canas, just repeating the same old lines;
todo es mentira it's all lies

Siempre me está haciendo cuentecitos You're just feeding me the same old stories
y llorando lagrimitas and those tears don't stop falling;
ya me tiene confundida you're confusing me

No pienses que yo trago, mi negrita, I won't swallow it anymore, my love
ese cuento no me manga all those stories don't wash
ni me turba los sentidos and they just aren't getting to me

No me llores, mi negrito, Don't cry anymore, my love;
que tú me vas a matar it's killing me

Oye no, que, que con tus lagrimitas No, listen, those tears
me vas a matar are killing me

Como tú me abandonaste, You're the one who left me
yo no te podré perdonar. and I can't forgive you



**Lo que le hiciste al otro a mi
no me puede pasar**

And what you did to him
I won't let it happen to me

**Tú no eres como el otro,
porque conmigo tú vas a acabar**

You're not like that one
you'll be the death of me

**No, no, no, no, no me llores, papacito,
que conmigo vas a acabar**

No, no, no, no don't cry, my love
it's killing me

**¿Tú no te fuiste para el Vedado?
Ahora quieres regresar**

Didn't you go out messing around?
And now you want to come back?

**Hoy vamos a darnos la mano
vamos a vivir en paz**

Let's take each other's hand
and live in peace

**Tú no eres como el otro
porque conmigo vas a acabar**

You're not like that one
you'll be the death of me

**Vamos a darnos la mano
y vamos a vivir en paz**

Let's take each other's hand
and live in peace

9. Veinte años

Habanera. **MARÍA TERESA VERA**

Versos: **Guillermina Aramburu**

Qué te importa que te ame
si tú no me quieres ya
El amor que ya ha pasado
no se puede recordar

What's the point of loving you
if you no longer love me
We shouldn't dwell
on love that's forgotten

Fui la ilusión de tu vida
un día lejano ya,
hoy represento el pasado
no me puedo conformar

I was your life's desire
one day, long ago
Now I'm history
I can't come to terms with it

Hoy represento el pasado
no me puedo conformar

Now I'm history
I can't come to terms with it

Si las cosas que uno quiere
se pudieran alcanzar
tú me quisieras lo mismo
que veinte años atrás

If only we could make
all our dreams come true
you would love me
like you did twenty years ago

Con qué tristeza miramos
un amor que se nos va,
es un pedazo del alma
que se arranca sin piedad

How sad it is to see
love slipping away
like a piece of the soul
wrenched heartlessly away





10. *El hombre que yo amé* (The Man I Love)

Bolero. GEORGE & IRA GERSHWIN
Spanish lyrics: Humberto Suárez

No sé qué tengo yo, qué triste estoy I don't know what's wrong, I'm so very sad
las horas de dolor, qué largas son The hours of pain last eternally
No puedo soportar las ganas de llorar and I can't help but cry

El hombre que yo amé, ya lo perdí I've lost the man I loved
y nunca más podré amar así and I'll never love that way again
muy sola quedaré con el dolor Alone with the pain I'll remain
de amarlo más The pain of love

No podré olvidar las horas I'll never forget those
tan felices que pasé happy hours I spent
cuando estuve entre sus brazos in his arms
y mi vida le entregué, con ansias I gave him my life

El hombre que yo amé, ya lo perdí I've lost the man I loved
y nunca más podré amar así and I'll never love that way again
muy sola quedaré con el dolor Alone with the pain I'll remain
de amarlo más The pain of love



11. Siempre en mi corazón

Bolero chá. ERNESTO LECUONA

Estás en mi corazón You are in my heart
y aunque estoy lejos de ti even though I'm far from you;
es el tormento mayor it's the greatest torment,
esta fatal separación this terrible separation

Estás en mi corazón You are in my heart
y en mi amarga soledad and in my bitter solitude
el recuerdo de tu amor the memory of your love
disminuye mi penar heals my pain

Yo bien sé que nunca más I know too well that I'll never
en mis brazos estarás have you back in my arms
prisionero de un cariño I'm a prisoner of love
que fue toda mi ilusión that was just an illusion

Pero nada ha de poder But there's no way
que te deje de querer I can stop loving you
porque como único dueño You're the only master
estás en mi corazón of my heart





Dedico a este disco a mi padre y madre, "por que ella me dijo en los momentos difıciles que yo siguiera cantando por ella y por mi país" y aqui estoy, y él me ha enseñado todo lo que se. A mi hijo Ariel porque cree que soy la mejor cantante del mundo, a su mujer Anabel y a mi nieta (sobrina) Rocío de casi un año de edad.

Agradezco del fundo de mi corazón: A Nick Gold, por tener confianza en mi, y por estimularme mucho en este disco, a Juan de Marcos González, él fue el que me dio la oportunidad de conocer todo este mundo, a Ibrahim Ferrer, por invitarme a cantar *Silencio*, Compay Segundo, Jerry Boys, a Rubén González por darme la oportunidad de escuchar y compartir su música, a Demetrio Muñoz, a todos los integrantes, a Toti, músicos y personal de Egrem que hicieran parte de este sueño.

I dedicate this record to my father and to my mother, who encouraged me "to continue singing through the most difficult times – for them and for my country". And here I am; they taught me all I know. This record is also dedicated to my son Ariel, because he believes I am the best singer in the world, and to his wife Anabel, and my granddaughter Rocío, now nearly one year old.

From the bottom of my heart I thank Nick Gold, for having confidence in me, and for all his encouragement; Juan de Marcos González, who gave me the chance to discover this world; Ibrahim Ferrer, for asking me to sing *Silencio*; Compay Segundo; Jerry Boys; Rubén González, who gave me the chance to listen to and share his music; Demetrio Muñoz; all the members of the band; and Toti, and all the musicians and staff at Egrem who took part in this dream.

Omara Portuondo

A World Circuit Production

www.worldcircuit.co.uk

Produced by Nick Gold and Jerry Boys
Recorded and mixed by Jerry Boys
and Simon Burwell

Musical director Demetrio Muñiz
with Jesús 'Aguaje' Ramos
All string and horn arrangements
by Demetrio Muñiz

Ella y yo arranged by Francisco Repilado
Siempre en mi corazón arranged by Juan de Marcos González
Canta lo sentimental co-arranged by Manuel Galbán

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top l-r: Compay Segundo, Demetrio Muñiz, Manuel Galbán, Cachaito López
bottom l-r: Guajiro Mirabal & Alejandro Pichardo, Rubén González
& Jesús 'Aguaje' Ramos, Eliades Ochoa, Panteleón Sánchez





