

trouncing tablas, plenty of heart-tugging strings and sweet, if not slightly sappy, melodies. Real treats do abound, as in the funk instrumental, “Soul of Bobby (Part 2),” that opens the second disc. Hearing Mangeshkar besides Rafi is always a treat, and “Mujhe Teri Mohabbat Ka,” from the film *Aap Aaye Bahar Aayi*, remains a special moment for the two. This collection is a great history lesson in Bollywood’s cinema, with music that continues to stand the test of time, especially in an era when that industry has become even more mechanized than during the years of Laxmikant Pyarelal. A.R. Rahman has nothing on these guys. — DB

LAS RUBIAS DEL NORTE

Ziguala
Barbès 0024

One day Allyssa Lamb and Emily Hurst realized that singing with the New York Choral Society was not for them; whether or not the duo understood that they would go on to create some of the strangest and most addictive music known is another story. Lamb’s longtime affection for Mexican vocalist Lydia Mendoza inspired them to dive into the folk tradition of our southern neighbors, completely rearranging *tejano* music in groundbreaking ways. While we think Los Tigres del Norte when contemplating *tejano*, they conjured ambient lounge music from distant Peru tempered with psychedelic guitars and absinthe-induced keyboards. The Brooklyn-based duo’s third album, *Ziguala*, is spiced with a wide range of international styles – Bollywood, rembetika, French opera, Spanish music. Yet everything they tackle is laid with a foundation of eerie and lovable percussion-fueled Latin music. This is a phenomenal and breakthrough album. The women are complemented brilliantly by guitarist Olivier Conan, whose love for ’70s Peruvian music has helped spark a local revival out of his tiny Park Slope club, Barbès, which is also the label that releases albums like this one. With an uptempo take on an S.D. Burman track, “Mana Janab Ne Pukara Nahin,” the band captures the romanticized aura of *filmi* while injecting the bouncing rolls of *clave*. It’s an astounding take on Bollywood, complete with piano and violin genius. The diversity of material covered on this ambitious record keeps the listener guessing and, more importantly, forces them to return for multiple spins. This statement may be overindulgent, but it’s also true: you’ve never heard anything like this. — DB



ANA MOURA
Leva-Me Aos Fados
World Village 468099

Ana Moura is one of the upcoming generation of *fadistas* – female Portuguese singers of the *fado* style, mournful, poetic and quite beautiful. Although she’s running behind the leader of the pack, Mariza, there’s no doubting the heartbreaking quality of her voice or her material. She’s lucky to have the services of Custódio Castelo, a master of the Portuguese guitar and one of the best modern *fado* composers; the high standard of his work is apparent throughout. The two cuts that stand out here, however, are those that break the standard mold of *fado*. “Rumo ao sul” has Moura singing in a lower, huskier register on material that’s more lovely acoustic pop than *fado*. The presentation alone grabs the attention, and the song and delivery are both good enough to stick in the mind. The other curious cut is “Não é um *fado* normal,” which brings in bagpipes for an almost oboe-like effect, increasing the track’s sadness quotient. This experimentation reaps big rewards, and affirms Moura’s increasing confidence and stature. — MN

XARNEGE
Ixo-Sho
Pyrene 003

Xarnege draws its members and music from the villages along the Pyrennes, from Gascony in France and the Basque region in Spain. The band name comes from a Gascon word that refers to these villages, where both the Basque and Gascon languages and traditions intermingle. The folk music and dance of this unique area encompasses both cultures, transcending borders and providing an absorbing musical experience.

All five members of Xarnege are outstanding multi-instrumentalists who perform on a dozen and a half instruments among them; three handle vocal duties as well. Each has comprehensive credits as members of other traditional folk bands and collaborative associations. Joan Baudoin plays, among other instruments, the *boha* (a native bagpipe), the three-holed *flabuta* (flute), and tambourine. Lucia Longué per-

forms on diatonic accordion and wind instruments, and provides striking lead vocal work. Simon Guillaumin contributes on hurdy-gurdy, both acoustic and electronic. Rounding out the ensemble are Josean Martin, guitar and bouzouki, and Juan Ezeiza, who plays violin and *alboka*, a traditional animal-horn instrument. Two guest musicians supplement the production.

Nearly all 11 tracks on *Ixo-Sho* (*Silence-Listen*) are traditional songs and tunes. The CD kicks off with the lively “Belats xarmanta/Lo mialòc charmant.” The spirited dance “Mugaliariaren banakoak/Los banakos deu passaire” is followed by resonant whistles and drums taking lead in the instrumental “Marin Congo.”

To North American ears, “Nòste vailet Peire/Peire, gure morroia” is reminiscent of French-Canadian music in portions of its vocal form and cadence. “L’unicòrn/Adarbakarra” appears to be contemporary but complements well within the traditional framework with its lovely accordion leading the waltz tune.

The final cut, “Sokadantza/Rondèu,” is a fabulous six-minute rondo. The release is exhilarating, a fascinating cultural showcase of music preserved in a kind of time warp that Xarnege has given new life, ensuring its preservation. Highly recommended! — SPL

OSWIN CHIN BEHILIA
Liber
Otrabanda 010

While the island of Curaçao was overlooked by Spanish invaders, given that it had little in the way of saleable or tradeable resources, the Dutch knew a deal when they eyed it, using one port as a gateway to the South American world. Occupying it since 1634, Dutch exploiters were overjoyed to find that the island harbored rich deposits of oil in the early 20th Century. By this point, most of the indigenous Arawak Amerindians were long gone via the slave trade, though today the island, with its population of just under 150,000, still retains some sense of cultural pride. Folk singer Oswin Chin Behilia has been chronicling the native plight for nearly 50 years, utilizing a variety of musical forms – most notably Cuban *son* and the native *tumba* – to tell the tale of his fellow citizens. His latest, *Liber*, translates as “free”; for the most part, it is an excellent acoustic recording. *Tumba* is also indigenous to Aruba, borrowing from *merengue* and Latin jazz, and while a pan flute finds its way in, when we focus on Behilia’s conversational lyrics and enjoyable guitar strums, we’re