

AURELIO



GARIFUNA SUPERSTAR – CULTURAL AMBASSADOR OF THE GARIFUNA NATION (HONDURAS/CENTRAL AMERICA)

NEW ALBUM JANUARY 17

Singer-songwriter, guitarist and percussionist, Aurelio Martinez aka AURELIO is one of Central America's most gifted performers. Born in Honduras, the artist is known for his powerful and evocative voice. He is a major tradition-bearer and represents the Garifuna Nation worldwide through his music. Aurelio is considered nowadays as the Cultural Ambassador of the Garifuna nation.

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1. PHOTOS

<http://www.aureliomusic.net/gallery/>

2. AUDIO FILES & DISCOGRAPHY

Find 4 music tracks here: <http://www.aureliomusic.net/music/>

LUBARU WANWA (WAITING FOR THE ARRIVAL OF A SON) – From Laru Beya

A sailor returns from the sea to await the birth of a child; one he suspects might not be this. Drawing on Latin and Caribbean vibes, the songs gives a nod to the boleros and reggae that have inspired many Honduran Garifuna musicians over the years. The bittersweet of the lyrics was captured by Senegalese Afropop icon Youssou N'Dour, who wipped up a striking vocal line in English at his studio in Dakar.

SAÑANARU (I CAN'T HANDLE HER) – From Landini.

I can't handle her character. I don't know what to do with her and all her defects. I'll just park her there, like a canoe.

This song could be about a love affair, or a difficult moment between relatives, but it gets to the heart of the bittersweet difficulties of close relationships, with music that straddles the upbeat and the melancholy with typical Garifuna grace.

NAFAGUA (I WILL TRY) – From Landini

I cannot believe it. I will try and speak to him to see if he can wake up from his coffin.

A traditional song made up of several short vignettes, "Nafagua" describes the sorrow of a loved one's sudden death, as well as the return of a long-lost traveler.

YALIFU (PELICAN) – From Garifuna Soul

Nuguchile haliñañadibo, haliñañadibo nuguchile

Baba haliñañadibo, nuguchile naha agurababo

Yalifo, yalifo rubay baruna nu ñudunamuga ñein!

Luya weyo, laru beya nau agurababo o nuguchile

Fuyale garabale nau ya agurababo luba machuluguidibo

Machuluguidibo babo, machuluguidibo naha agurababo ya larubeya

Nuguchile haliñañadibo, anagubaraba anaha ya laro

Agurababo, hay baba hay haliñañadibo.

¡hay nuguchilema! Lirum rabouniweyu nau ya

Nito mama hagueinuguchile naha agurababo

Father, where are you, my father?

Father, where are you? I am waiting for you

Pelican, Pelican, give me your wings for me to fly there

The sun sets over the horizon and I am waiting for you, Father

The wind is blowing. I am here and you have still not arrived

You have not arrived, Father. You have not arrived. I am here on the seashore waiting for you

Father, where are you? Out at sea and I am here on the shore

Waiting for you, oh father! Where are you?

Oh, Father! How sad I am here this afternoon

Sister, Mother, where is my father? I am waiting for him.

Find 2 music tracks on Soundcloud:

<https://soundcloud.com/realworldrecords/aurelio-sananaru> (Album 'LANDINI')

<https://soundcloud.com/realworldrecords/ineweyu> (Album 'LARU BEYA')

DISCOGRAPHY

- **New album: DARANDI** (Real World Records, Stonetree Records) 2017
- **LANDINI** (Real World Records, Stonetree Records) 2014

#3 The Sunday Times Ten Best World Music Albums of 2014

#3 fRoots Critic's Poll New Albums of 2014

#2 World Music Central Best World Music Albums 2014

Songlines 10 Best Albums of the Year 2014

Curious Animal Best Albums of 2014

1 Songlines 50 Greatest World Music Albums of the Last Five Years 2015

Top Ten fRoots Best of the Best Albums 1986-2015

- **LARU BEYA** (Stonetree Records, Real World Records, SUBPOP) 2011

Songlines 50 Greatest World Music Albums of the Last Five Years

One of Songlines Top 10 Best Albums of the Year 2011

#7 Best Albums 2011 – The Guardian Critics Choice

#4 The Sunday Times Top 100 World Albums of the Year

- **GARIFUNA SOUL** (Stonetree Records) 2004

Top 10 Albums and Afropop Newcomer of the year Award 2004

- **LITA ARIRAN** (JVC Sounds of the World) 1995

3. VIDEOS

Aurelio at the Pirineos Sur Festival - Spain 2015

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EnuGV0qWAcI>

Aurelio at WOMAD Charlton Park - UK 2015

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cVJEMFLIuaU>

Aurelio at the Symphony Space - New York 2014

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pwGUdNYdajA>

Find others videos here: <http://www.aureliomusic.net/video/>

4. BIOGRAPHY

Singer-songwriter, guitarist and percussionist, Aurelio Martinez (46), is one of Central America's most gifted performers. Born in Honduras, the artist is known for his powerful and evocative voice. He is a major tradition-bearer of the Garifuna culture and music and he is considered nowadays as the Cultural Ambassador of the Garifuna nation.

The Garinagu, commonly known as the Garifuna are people of Amerindian and West African descents who live along the coasts of Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. The original home of the Garifuna is St. Vincent (one of the windward islands in the West Indies) from which they were deported in 1796 by the British government and landed on Roatan island, situated in the Bay Islands of Honduras.

Aurelio grew up in a small Caribbean village called Plaplaya, surrounded by a **family of talented musicians**. His father was a well-known local troubadour who improvised Paranda songs containing Garifuna roots rhythms and Latin sounds. Following the influence of his uncles and grandfather, he became a brilliant drummer in his early childhood. From his vocally gifted mother, he learned to sing and picked up many songs she crafted. Actually, Aurelio began performing at Garifuna ceremonies when just a boy, even at the most sacred events where children were usually not even allowed. At the age of 14, the young man became a respected musician with a firm grounding in Garifuna rhythms, rituals and songs.

While attending secondary school at the provincial capital of La Ceiba, Aurelio dove into diverse and innovative musical projects that took him outside the traditional sphere of performance. By this time, he played professionally with popular Latin ensembles and refined his musical skills.

In the late 80's, he created his first group called Lita Ariran, who was one of the **first Garifuna traditional music and dance group** to appear on the international scene and most specifically in Japan. His first album was produced by his friend Akira Tomita with the Japanese company JVC World Sounds (*Grupo Garifuna de Honduras, LITA ARIRAN (JVC Records, 1995)*). Later, Aurelio received the award for the Best singer of Garifuna music and his group Lita Ariran was rewarded for the Best cultural group of the year at the Garifuna World Music Awards, in New York (1998). The less we could say is that Lita Ariran's first and unique album remains most certainly a legendary treasure of the Garifuna music nowadays.

In 1997, Aurelio meets his Belizean friend and fellow musician Andy Palacio. The two artists struck up a decades-long friendship thanks in part to their shared hopes for the future of Garifuna music and culture. Through Palacio, Aurelio met Ivan Duran, the tireless producer behind Belize's Stonetree Records. The same year, the young artist participated in a paranda project, including the King of Paranda Paul Nabor "Nabi", Junie Aranda, Jursino Cayetano, Andy Palacio, among others. Critics around the world acknowledge **PARANDA: AFRICA IN CENTRAL AMERICA** (Stonetree Records, 1999) as being one of the best albums to come out of this part of the world. It is in fact a very rich collection of three generations of paranderos with a depth and range that grows with each listen. From the haunting, bluesy exuberance of Paul Nabor's "Naguya Nei" to the fresh sounds of Aurelio's "Africa", this album takes the listener through the tapestry of feeling and soulful striving that lies at the heart of the Garifuna culture.

In 2004, Aurelio releases his first solo album called **GARIFUNA SOUL** produced by his friend and long time collaborator Ivan Duran (Stonetree Records, 2004), backed by some of Belize's and Honduras' best studio musicians who improvised adeptly on Garifuna percussion, saxophone, electric and bass guitars. Undoubtedly, the artist takes the music into the future without compromising whatsoever the cultural foundations of his inspiration. Aurelio's rich resonant voice and soulful acoustic songs caught the attention of the global music press and saw him as a tradition-bearer with an innate musicality and subtle innovative streak. Indeed, **AfroPop Worldwide names him "Newcomer of the year"**.

Two years later (2006), Aurelio, a new born gifted musician takes on another role as a politician in the Honduran National Congress, becoming this way **the first Garifuna congressman of his region in the country's history**. For this occasion, the politician's main goal was to represent and support the Garifuna people through concrete manifestations that would protect their integrity as a whole. Precisely, the idea was to lead innovative actions to improve the daily life of this population as well as to feed and preserve their cultural treasures.

In the mean time, the Spanish public television (RTVE) produces: **Honduras y Belice: la Aventura Garifuna**, an original documentary that features simultaneously, the encounter between old paranda's singers and the Garifuna's way of life of yesterday and today's generations. Aurelio is the star of this journey: a very popular young musician who later becomes known as one of the best paranderos. Thanks to its richness, this documentary is definitely an interesting audiovisual reference to introduce oneself into the surrounding world of the artist.

In 2007, Aurelio was invited to participate in the album **WATINA** (Stonetree Records, Cumbancha, 2007) featuring Andy Palacio and The Garifuna Collective who received the prestigious WOMEX Award, a respected acknowledgment from the world music industry. Additionally, the album Watina was declared the Greatest World Music Album of All Times by Amazon.com in 2010.

Andy Palacio passed away unexpectedly at the young age of 48, leaving the Garifuna community stunned and bereft. "Aurelio was still a congressman, but he left the congress session to go to Belize for the funeral," Duran recalls. "He hadn't been playing guitar for months because of his intense political commitments. But after Andy's passing, he gave a few concerts and he knew he needed to start recording right away."

Together with Ivan Duran, several veteran Garifuna musicians, and the occasional local ensemble dropping into the studio, Aurelio began laying down the tracks for this recording in a cabana on the beach. **Laru Beya** was not only a way of honoring Andy Palacio as a person; it was a means for continuing his mission of uplifting and expanding what it meant to be a Garifuna artist.

By the year 2008, Aurelio was selected worldwide musician by **the Afropop legend Youssou N'Dour, within the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative**. Most definitely, this was a major event allowing Aurelio and the Garifuna music to open up for the first time to African famous musicians. With no doubt, this opportunity of sharing was another main step in the artist's developing career. Aside of exchanging valuable points of view about the former it gave him new ideas about musical technical features as well as an exciting possibility to share the

stage with Youssou N' Dour in places such as Senegal, New York (Nokia Theater) and Vienna (Vienna Jazz Festival). At the end of this journey, Aurelio's dream of traveling one day to the African continent finally became true.

Three years later, as part of a result of Youssou N'Dour's collaboration, Aurelio releases his second album **LARU BEYA** (Stonetree Records, Real World Records, SUBPOP, 2011), a compilation of soulful songs linking back to the African roots. N'Dour adds his stirring vocals to two of its songs, while elsewhere there is backing from those great veterans of the Afro-Cuban scene, Orchestra Baobab, and from Senegalese rapper Sen Kumpé. Laru Beya wins sixth place in the Top 20 World Music Albums of 2011 in the WorldMusic.co.uk Award. "Aurelio is a highly talented musician, conscious composer and passionate performer with an excellent band behind him, as well as being the prime advocate for a unique culture. If anyone is going to put the Garifuna culture onto the map, it is Aurelio Martinez", wrote the WorldMusic.co.uk website.

After his debut in the African scene, Aurelio makes a return to his musical roots with his third album **LANDINI**, (Stonetree Records, Real World Records, 2014). This last composition draws a traditional scenario of the Garifuna community way of life. Most specifically, the album shows a gentle picture of the paranda musical environment in Plaplaya, the artist's dear hometown. Traditionally, after a long day of fishing, villagers return into their boats to the river landing and gather for a convivial paranda session. This symbolic image leads us to the album's present name: "landini", from the English word: "landing".

According To Aurelio, "I consider this album to be the sound of my Garifuna people. On the previous album [Laru Beya] we experimented and collaborated with other artists to reconnect what was lost between Africa and America. This album is purely Garifuna, and the entire spirit of the music reflects the Garifuna experience. My mother is the sole inspiration for this album. She sees herself reflected in me, to a large degree, the only one of the family who could fulfill her dream of singing professionally. She's the best example I have in my life of what a human being should be, my main consultant and confidante."

Lándini was named to multiple 2014 year-end critics lists, including: #3 on The Sunday Times Ten Best World Music Albums of 2014, #3 on fRoots Critic's Poll New Albums of 2014, #2 World Music Central Best World Music Albums 2014, Songlines 10 Best Albums of the Year 2014, Curious Animal's Best Albums of 2014, #1 Songlines 50 Greatest World Music Albums of the Last Years.

In March 2015, the Garifuna community of New York honored Aurelio with a special musical tribute and concert to celebrate the 30th anniversary of his career.

Aurelio launches his new album in January 17 **DARANDI**, a collection of Aurelio's favorite songs from his career recorded to capture the sound of his incendiary live performances accompanied by some of the Garifuna world's brightest musical talents ...

"We're not going to let this culture die. I know I must continue my ancestors' legacy and find new ways to express it. Few people know about it, but I adore it, and it's something I must share with the world." Aurelio.

5. CONCERTS REFERENCES

Yerba Buena Center of the Arts SF Sonido Fest USA 2016 www.ybca.org
Hollywood Bowl Playboy Jazz Festival USA 2016 www.hollywoodbowl.com
WOMAD Charlton Park UK 2015 www.womad.co.uk
Edmonton Folk Festival Canada 2015 www.edmontonfolkfest.org
Sukiyaki Tokyo Japan 2015 www.sukiyakitokyo.com
Chicago World Music Festival USA 2014 www.worldmusicfestivalchicago.org
Lotus Fest USA 2014 www.lotusfest.org
Winnipeg Festival Concert Canada 2013 www.winnipegfolkfestival.ca
Nuits d'Afrique Canada 2013 www.festivalnuitsdafrique.com
Africa Festival Würzburg Germany 2012 www.africafestival.org
Festival Internacional Cervantino Mexico 2012 www.festivalcervantino.gob.mx
Festival d'Ile de France France 2012 www.festival-idf.fr
Carnegie Hall NY 2011 www.carnegiehall.org
Union Chapel UK 2011 www.unionchapel.org.uk

6. PRESS REVIEWS & QUOTES

Interview de Okayafrica – September 2016
<http://www.okayafrica.com/featured/aurelio-martinez-garifuna/>

Interview by Buzzbands - August 2015
<http://buzzbands.la/2015/08/11/interview-aurelio-on-garifuna-culture-his-musics-global-reach-and-making-people-dance/>

Interview by Rhythm Passport - July 2015
<http://www.rhythmpassport.com/articles-and-reviews/interview/aurelio-july-2015/>

Interview by Rolex Mentors & Protégés - March 2015
<http://www.rolexmentorprotege.com/journal/6723>

"Aurelio raises the standard for Garifuna pop to a new plateau."

Afropop (USA)

"With his talent, vision, charisma and searing voice, Aurelio is a big part of the reason (Garifuna music) has achieved outside recognition internationally."

NPR All Things Considered (USA)

"Powerful and energetic ... Having settled in with this first number they put their pedal to the metal and drove off into a storming piece, fast, powerful and energetic. I was struck by the sound of the band: only six musicians but a full, rich sonic landscape.

If you get the chance, go and see this band. Aurelio is a highly talented musician, conscious composer and passionate performer with an excellent band behind him..." **Worldmusic.co.uk (Live review from Mac, Birmingham) (UK)**

"An irresistible testament to the musical heritage of Honduras delivered by an emerging superstar of world music. Landini is a well-produced and authentic album full of deft musicianship and Aurelio's rich vocals..."

Folk Roots Magazine (UK)

“It was truly, sublime, in every sense of the word! Aurelio, in as distinctively emotive voice and vibrant personality as ever, led his hard working band as they bounced their varying sounds off his, with all ending up inspired, including the audience. ... With one stunner after another exuberantly hurled at us, meant we couldn't help dancing more or less non-stop throughout”.

Extra! Extra! (Live from Union Chapel, London) (UK)

7. OFFICIAL WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIAS

Official website <http://www.aureliomusic.net>
Facebook <http://www.facebook/AurelioMusic>
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Record labels

Stonetree Records (Belize) <http://www.stonetreerecords.com>
Real World Records (UK) <https://realworldrecords.com/artist/3662/aurelio/>
SUBPOP (USA) <https://www.subpop.com/artists/aurelio>

