



Salsa Celtica /Biography

Salsa Celtica's remarkable success story began in 1995 in the bars and clubs of Scotland's Edinburgh and Glasgow. They were an immediate hit with the locals and the newly arrived Hispanic community. After recording their debut album 'Monstruos y Demonios' (Monsters and Demons), Salsa Celtica took their music around the village halls of Scotland, from Skye to Mull, Iona to Barra, Lewis to Orkney, and everywhere in between. After this they saved up their pennies and headed off to Cuba to hang out with salsa groups, including Son14 and Sonora La Calle, and to generally soak up Afro-Cuban sounds in Havana and Santiago de Cuba. Swapping whisky for rum they were asked to join in at musical / religious "bembe" gatherings and were invited to worship the Afro Cuban "orichas". After acquiring new tastes and skills they returned to Scotland to sign to Scottish label Greentrax and to release two albums 'The Great Scottish Latin Adventure' and 'El Agua De La Vida'.

Following on from a sensational breakthrough in 2003 when 'El Agua De La Vida' reached number 5 on the World Music Chart of Europe, reached number 24 in the end of year round-up 2003 World Music Chart for Europe and was also their first album released in the US on Compass Records, 2004 saw the band take their unique fusion of Latin and Celtic sounds on tour in England for the first time. The nineteen date tour highlight was a sold out headline performance at the UK's premier World Music venue, Queen Elizabeth Hall on London's South Bank as part of the La Linea Festival, which saw the entire audience on their feet throughout the show and led to much dancing in the aisles.

In support of the 2004 tour, Salsa Celtica re-released the album El Agua De La Vida. The album gained a prestigious Top Of The World recommendation in the UK's foremost World Music magazine Songlines, 'This is a tremendous album which further establishes this unique group as a dynamic force on the world scene.' The album also achieved the paper's highest rating for its review in London's Evening Standard, 'Just what it says on the tin, a great Scottish salsa band that manages to combine the Cuban charanga sound of flute and fiddles with a Highland blend of flute fiddles and bagpipes. One style flows naturally into another and there is a fizzing instrumental musicianship. Live, they are a storm.'

During the tour the band were featured on BBC Radio 2's flagship folk programme The Mike Harding Show. The same month The Andy Kershaw Show on BBC Radio 3 also broadcast a session and interview with the band, specially recorded at the BBC's Maida Vale Studios in London. The tour was followed in the summer by a series of high profile festival dates including Edinburgh Jazz Festival, Dublin's Temple Bar Festival, Gent's (Belgium) Pole Pole Festival, Northern Ireland's Celtic Fusion Festival and the National Theatre's Watch This Space Festival on London's South Bank. In Autumn 2004 they performed in front of 40,000 people as part of the prestigious BBC Proms In The Park and in November were chosen to close Belfast's Queen's Festival. Salsa Celtica had established themselves as an important force in World Music in the UK and beyond, winning new fans and reaching a new level of profile and critical acclaim.

In 2005 tours of the UK and Canada followed as well as one off shows in Germany, Belgium, Greece, Italy, Scotland and more. In June the band travelled to London to film two scenes for the movie Driving Lessons, starring Julie Walters and Rupert Grint. Then in the Autumn the band went back into the studio to record a new album, after a three year break, bringing in Calum Malcolm as producer and including a collaboration with folk diva Eliza Carthy.

On March 6th 2006 Salsa Celtica's fourth studio album, El Camino (The Road), is released on the band's own Discos Leon label. The release will be followed by Salsa Celtica's most extensive UK tour to date, taking in twenty five venues in March and April. A full festival season will follow.