



WAKUENAI (CURRIPACO) Music for Shape-Shifters: Field Recordings from the Amazonian Lowlands, 1981-1985

Label

SUBLIME FREQUENCIES

Format

LP

Catalog Number

SF 125LP

UPC

843563180969



Store Price

\$18.99

Release Date

10/18/24

Territory

WORLDWIDE

Genre

FILE UNDER - W - WORLD

DESCRIPTION

In the early '80s, an anthropologist left his recording equipment and tapes behind in a remote Wakuénai (Curripaco) village along the Upper Río Negro in Venezuela. When he returned almost a year later, he discovered that the village headman and his sons had used the equipment to record 12 hours of tape documenting a bewildering array of local narrative and musical genres – sacred chants, place-names, spirit languages, and, as featured here, the astonishing and mesmerizing sounds of trumpet and flute ensembles. Recorded in a wide range of settings – during all-night sessions in and around the village, while paddling on the river by canoe, and at various locations deep in the surrounding forest, including the mythical homes of the ancestors and animal spirits, these tapes are not only a stunning artifact of indigenous ethnomusicology, they also reveal the deep connection between sound and the shape-shifting animism of Wakuénai (Curripaco) society. As you will hear here, the music of Wakuénai (Curripaco) wind ensembles range from the deep bass drone of handmade trumpets to the high-pitched dissonance of various flutes. Sometimes the trumpets and flutes produce distinct rhythmic and melodic patterns associated with animal species, ancestors, and spirits – the hissing sound of jaguars; the low-frequency sounds of the river filled with spawning fish; or the "voices" of birds, frogs, and spirit animals. At other times, they are played together to produce cacophonies representing the undifferentiated chaos of primordial space-time – "the [cosmic] sound that opened the world" associated with the mythic trickster-creator. The anthropologist in this story was **Jonathan Hill** (1954-2023), who spent many years studying the music and culture of the Amazonian lowlands. This LP is dedicated to him and his legacy. The first two recordings here were made by Jonathan and feature catfish trumpets and ceremonial flutes performed during ceremonial exchange (pudáli) at Gavilán, Río Guainía, Venezuela, October 24, 1981. The remaining tracks were recorded by **Feliz López de Oliveiros** and focus on the trumpet and flute ensembles performed during a rite of passage in a remote village along the Tomo River, Colombia, 1985. These recordings are presented here for the first time. Produced by Radio Is A Foreign Country.

TRACKLISTING

- A1. Kulirrína trumpets
- A2. Double duet of yapurutú and tsikota flutes
- A3. Men playing trumpets in canoe
- A4. Place-naming Pt. 2
- A5. Yarakí Rum, Songs, and Sexual Jokes
- B1. The sound that opened the world
- B2. Ten men playing in the village plaza

HIGHLIGHTS

- Never before released recordings from the Amazon Basin.
- Mind blowing and trance inducing field recordings from the early '80s.
- Deep bass drones of handmade trumpets and high-pitched dissonance of various flutes.
- Four page insert with liner notes and photographs.
- Produced by Radio is a Foreign Country.

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