



Calle Sur

BIOGRAPHY

Calle Sur is what happens when you combine man and woman, Black and White, urban and rural. Hearing Calle Sur gives you that gorgeous feeling that something just left you breathless and tingling, but you can't say exactly why. Seeing Calle Sur is living proof that the terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" can't be summarized.

Ed East is Panamanian. His upbringing in Panama City meant noise, hustle, bustle, and those chaotic smells and sights so characteristic of any Third World metropolis. It also meant a fierce need for individuality and lots of musical innovation and creativity, as expressed in the work of his compatriot, Ruben Blades.

Karin Stein, his Colombian partner, brings to the music of Calle Sur the perspective of her rural upbringing. Very rural, that is. She is a cowgirl from the eastern Llanos or plains of Colombia. No kidding.

While he rode buses and watched TV, she rode horses and watched the red ibis stalk across emerald green rice fields. There was no TV in her neck of the woods. No electricity for that matter. Only a small transistor radio which sometimes worked, and from which she gleaned tidbits of an outer world. His veins were filled with the fusion of world beats converging in a big city. Her soul harbored haunting cowboy tunes from her traditional Llanero culture, a fascinating people whose music remains one of Latin America's best kept secrets.

They met in Iowa, of all places. They discovered that they both had moved to Iowa on student scholarships, had stayed, and had built a life in a foreign but welcoming land, where their Latin heritage began to blend with their predominantly Anglo-Saxon surroundings. They have been pioneers in a state that has only recently seen a significant influx of Latinos. Calle Sur performs mostly outside of Iowa, however: New York, Colorado, Costa Rica, Malaysia, Romania. Wherever their music takes them. They have composed the film score for three documentaries, some of them aired worldwide. Recently, one of Karin's compositions was chosen for a feature-length movie, "The Air I Breathe."

This duo has charisma. It has class. It has good looks. And it has talent to boot. One minute, Ed's drumming makes you jump to your feet. The next, you sway to the samba he plays on his guitar. Karin strums a mean 6/8 beat on her Venezuelan cuatro, then effortlessly switches to Bolivian panpipes. Ed's versatile voice takes you from guajira and jazz to bossa nova and salsa tunes. Karin melts you away with a Ladino lullaby, then swings you with an Afro-Caribbean cumbia, packing Mercedes Sosa and Joan Baez into her vocal chords. And when they sing one of their boleros together... there is nothing left to do but to let the goose bumps run up and down your spine.

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