

Inside/Adentro: The New Album by Ricardo Arjona

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Guatemalan music veteran Ricardo Arjona's new album, *Adentro*, released on December 6, 2005, is a perfect example of a composer and writer who has musically matured since his first album, *Animal Nocturno*, in February of 1993.

Arjona, who grew up in the midst of a brutal civil war has shown, even in the beginning, images of everyday life and many times the bitterness of that life. He has not failed in doing so in *Adentro*. However, he has added yet another dimension to his music: he has become more elaborate and poetic instead of rhetoric. He has begun to use words with double meaning, yet he is still very understandable and the average person can relate to him.

In his song, "De Vez en Mes", he uses a series of metaphors such as, "when you are a lady, it is natural to paint roses on the bed once a month", to make something as personal as a woman's menstruation seem beautiful. This is just a sample of what is probably Arjona's best album so far.

Despite his maturity, Arjona continues to have his unorthodox clichés. This can clearly be seen in the title of the album's fourth song, "Pinguinos en la cama" or "Penguins in the bed". The cliché describes the narrator's girlfriend who has gotten so emotionally "cold that there are penguins in the bed."

In his 1994 album, *Historias*, Arjona sang the story of a taxi driver who is being cheated on by his wife, so, he searches for other company, which he finds in a rich, blonde, woman passenger who is also saddened by the infidelity of her partner. She takes him to a bar where they find both their lovers together. Arjona does the same in his

Adentro's song "Iluso", except he takes matters to a completely new level. The narrator seeks company as before, but finds it in a prostitute with whom he wishes only to hold hands. When they arrive at his apartment, she tells him the deal is off if the woman in the picture beside his bed is his ex-girlfriend. Shocked at the question, he asks her why. It is then that she explains that she, the prostitute, is the reason why his partner left him. Arjona always makes this type of coincidences happen, which in the end, result in a bitter discovery, are usually left unfinished, and the hero disgraced.

The last song, which stands out in the album, is "Mojado," written, composed, and sung by Arjona accompanied by Intocables, a Mexican ranchero group. "Mojado", which means "wetback", tells the story and troubles of an illegal immigrant. The singer explains that the illegal immigrant is not wet because he must cross the river, but instead because of the tears he sheds from nostalgia. Later in the song, he compares the illegal immigrant to the moon and reasons that since the moon has the liberty of sliding over any and every corner, why do the immigrant require documents?

Ricardo Arjona's music is like wine, the more time passes, the finer it gets. Much can be expected from this artist who is just now emerging from Guatemala into the world.

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