

**ELLE Magazine - August 2004 - by Leigh Belz**

"With a throaty voice that's as much Billie Holiday as Maria Callas, Downs channels her heritage and infuses it with contemporary passion."

**LOS ANGELES TIMES (CA) - 7/16/04 - by Agustin Gurza**

headline reads "A Mexican diva aglow with spirit"

calls Downs "resplendent"

"...a hypnotic 90-minute concert"

"that wondrous voice"

"That authenticity still comes through in Downs' performance, which is imbued at moments with a spiritual quality. Her exceptional voice, ranging from a hoarse whisper to a powerful, piercing wail, adds to the sense that one is witnessing a natural wonder."

"Talent and conviction allow Downs to take on issues - about women and workers, migrants and warmongers - without sounding preachy or political. She convinces us she cares."

"...her new album, 'Una Sangre/One Blood,' [...] represents a maturation of her folk/jazz fusion and a high point of her career."

"Downs' gut-wrenching version of 'Paloma Negra,' the *ranchera* classic of lost love and heartbreak, had her reverent crowd whooping and hollering like mariachis in a cantina."

**NEW YORK POST (NY) - 7/14/04 - Ernesto Lechner**

"You haven't really heard 'La Cucaracha' until you've heard the moody version of the venerable classic performed by Lila Downs, marked by operatic vocalizing and a rap interlude *en Español*. The song is one of the many highlights of 'Una Sangre/One Blood,' Downs' fourth and finest album."

"...compelling live shows..."

**NPR - 7/5/04 - unknown**

"The Mexican-American singer's sound evokes the pulsing, vibrant rhythms of her home country's rich folk-music legacy. But in addition to modern instrumentation and arrangements, Downs has brought a new social awareness to her repertoire of original and native Mesoamerican songs."

**BOSTON GLOBE (MA) - 6/25/04 - Renee Graham**

"In one of the more talked-about scenes in the 2002 film 'Frida,' Salma Hayek, as artist Frida Kahlo, shares a seductive tango and kiss with Ashley Judd. Far more titillating was the wondrous voice of singer Lila Downs, whose music infused the moment with riveting beauty."

"...Downs is an extraordinary singer whose talents both devastate and delight. On her audacious new album, Downs hops from one genre to the next, with nary a misstep."

"...on 'La Cucaracha,' she rescues the song at last from the realm of dusty ethnic caricature."

"...Downs is so versatile, she can recall [Susana] Baca on one song, then jazz singer Cassandra Wilson on the next."

"A melancholy waltz, "Paloma Negra" soars with Downs's aching vocals, as well as the bottomless depth of emotion she conveys. A singer of unerring artistry, Downs has delivered 13 stunning tracks of fragile grace and shattering ferocity."

**MIAMI NEW TIMES - 6/17-23/04 - Christopher Sanders**

"While cultural exploration is undoubtedly her focus, poetic social commentary and themes of empowerment lie under the rich tapestry of music."

"But weighty concepts don't keep her from having fun. Creative and intriguing renditions of 'La Bamba' and 'La Cucaracha' give you a reason to dance while absorbing her other, more profound themes."

"Hovering somewhere between Celia Cruz and Dinah Washington, her voice is gorgeous and amazing, and she easily transitions from the bluesy growl of songs like 'Mother Jones' and 'Paloma Negra' to the fluttering airiness of 'Yanahuari Nin.'"

"*Una Sangre* is a wonderful offering."

**ONE WAY - June/July 2004 - Ken Micallef**

"Part medium of music, part anthropologist of the heart, Lila Downs performs rare ritual magic on *One Blood Una Sangre*."

"...Downs seemingly pulls sounds from the sky to create her mysterious music."

"...the songs of *Una Sangre* are startling in their richness and assimilation of cultures."

"Throughout, her music is earthy and lusty, as if summoned from the hills of Mexico that she so dearly loves."

**NEWSWEEK INTERNATIONAL - 6/21/04 - Joseph Contreras**

"...the album is vibrant, eclectic and sometimes haunting collection..."

**BILLBOARD - 7/26/04 - Anastasia Tsioulcas**

"...Lila Downs is an exotic flower of a singer..."

"With such a background, perhaps it was inevitable that her artistic embrace incorporates a dazzling array of influences..."

"On her fourth outing, Downs is smart, subversive, sexy and soulful, with a profoundly rich voice that changes color like a chameleon, framed by her sensitive and highly talented band."

"Whether Downs is reinventing 'La Bamba' and 'La Cucaracha' or offering paeans to courageous women ('Mother Jones' and 'Dignificada'), her presence is unforgettable."

**CHICAGO SUN-TIMES (IL) - 6/20/04 - Laura Emerick**

"...singer-songwriter Lila Downs has served as a musical emissary between cultures, Mexican and American. "

"On her fourth disc, Downs somehow manages to surpass herself. 'Una Sangre' combines the social consciousness of 'La Linea' ('The Border,'

2001) with the ethnomusicological experiments of 'La Sandunga' (1997) and 'Tree of Life' (2000)."

"...Downs creates a musical *ofrenda* of stylistic depth and stunning beauty."

"Along with the excellent originals, they [Downs and Paul Cohen] rework the traditional Mexican standards 'La Bamba' and 'La Cucaracha,' stripping away gringo stereotypes and turning them into statements of ethnic pride."

"And if you sigh and think that conscious-raising is not your thing, then just settle back and let the musical soundscapes of 'Una Sangre' wash over you. In a world of assembly-line 'artistry,' Lila Downs remains an original to be cherished. Brava, Dona Marina, La Malinche and La Dona Lila."

#### **ESTYLO - June/July 2004 - Jackie Perez-Sachen**

"Her version of Ritchie Valens' 'La Bamba' is proof that a serious album can also be fun, as is her take on 'La Cucaracha,' the Mexican folk song about soldiers and marijuana during the revolution."

"*Una Sangre* helps bring us together while celebrating our similarities, not just our differences."

#### **DALLAS MORNING NEWS (TX) - 6/13/04 - Mario Tarradell**

"In essence, it's ['Paloma Negra'] a classic ranchera and Ms. Downs sings it with heartbreaking zest."

"*One Blood Una Sangre* awakens the senses while it enlightens the mind."

#### **LATINA - June 2004 - (author unknown)**

calls Una Sangre "hypnotic"

#### **HISPANIC - June 2004 - Mark Holston**

"With a voice that sears with the intensity of the midday Sonoran sun and an affinity for Mexican folkloric music, she has the ability to transform a well-known and highly revered repertoire into performances that radiate contemporary values. At the same time, she

knows how to preserve the characteristics that made the music special in the first place.”

“The album’s highlight is her haunting, reggae-accented title tune, sung in English. In a perfect world, it would be on every radio station in the land.”

**ASBURY PARK PRESS (NJ) - 5/21/04 - Lisa J. Adams**

“Downs’ voice traverses the musical spectrum, delivering with equal ease Caribbean salsa tunes and English-language songs once rendered by Doris Day, Billie Holiday and Woody Guthrie. Her Range dips from the smoky depths of bass and blues to the skin-tingling altitude of mezo-soprano opera.”

**WASHINGTON POST (DC) - 4/24/04 - Teresa Wiltz**

“Of this there is no doubt: Downs can *sing*, her three-octave voice wringing with pathos, indignation and, at times, sarcasm at the injustices faced by people of color.”

**NEWSDAY - 5/16/04 - Letta Tayler**

“...her songs embrace the outsider in everyone...”

**STAR-LEDGER (Newark, NJ) - 5/14/04**

“ ‘One Blood’ is another Downs musicologic delight, sung in English, Spanish and Mexican-Indian dialects. The music is soulful and politically aware.”