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Barcelona native Daniel Cros has an incredible ear for musical navigation on his Latin, mostly Cuban-inspired jazz album Las vueltas que da la vida. But it shouldn't come as too much of a surprise that this young Catalan can turn into an old Cuban crooner when his ensemble starts hitting the notes. On this album, he manifests a particular love for salsa, guaguanco, son, and other Cuban styles. "En la palma de mi mano" shoots you straight back in time to the 1950s, dancing cheek to cheek in Havana. "De par en par" offers a slow, mysterious Latin bass and some melancholy trumpet solos, while "Siempre nos quedara Paris" gets you back out there doing the one-two-three footwork. It begins as all jazzy Parisian songs should, with a nasalsounding trumpet that lets your mind wonder to some other time and place, but then it flies straight to Havana for some seriously danceable rhythms.

There are other genres represented as well. The Catalan-language tune "Aire de mar" sounds like an old sea-faring song like the ones bohemians tried to revive during the years of the Cuban nueva trova. Meanwhile, "Mi Tambor" demonstrates how the tango can be both soft and romantic yet macho at the same time. "Mas y un poco mas" is a slow, waltzy ranchero with all the typical trimmings of that genre except the heavy yelping, and the pop tune "Mi corazon esta desierto en Arizona" is melodic with a nice change of rhythms. There are moments that you wish you could shimmy his clear voice out of its protective shell. It can be a little reserved. But then the music gets pumping, and with the horns a blowin' and the drums a poundin' you find Cros' musical smarts will get you doing all sorts of happy shaking.

-- J. Gage

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