

WORLD

Listen out for the rich Afro-Venezuelan mix of *Familia Atlantica*, and *Geomungo Factory*'s modern treatment of the Korean zither

MUSIC WORLD CHOICE

Best of British folk

Jon Lusk enjoys the hypnotic and up-beat narratives of this Irish-Scottish duo



TEAM LEADERS:
Coyne and Drever
recruit the best



COYNE & DREVER

Storymap
Reveal 014 CDX 44:38 mins
BBC Music Direct £11.99

Irish banjo player/tenor guitarist Éamonn Coyne and Scottish singer/guitarist/mandolin player Kris Drever are here accompanied by a full acoustic band, drawing on the cream of Britain's burgeoning folk scene. Megan Henderson is on fiddle and harmonium, and there's also some delightful, shimmering accordion by Eddie Reader's squeezebox specialist Alan Kelly. Double bassist Nico Bruce, drummer Callum McIntyre and *bodhrán* (Irish frame drum) player

Eamonn Nugent, and Drever on strum make up the rhythm section, choogling along like a flowing brook from Ceapaval in the infectious opening brace of reels.

Aside from the fresh, live-in-the-studio feel of these recordings, there's a wide range of moods and styles. They seem most at home on the more upbeat material, including 'Marches and Reels' and closing with 'Teddy Bears' Picnic Jigs'. But there are also some gorgeous, more reflective moments such as the plangent, hypnotic tall-guitar tune set 'Pot Luck', which will burrow its way into your internal playlist from first spin. In three fine songs Drever's exquisitely quavering tenor phrases reach new heights of delicacy and control. Traditional and original material are all stitched together seamlessly, and sequenced with such flair that it really does sound like a story. ★★★★★



FAMILIA ATLANTICA

Familia Atlantica
Soundway SNDWCD 042
103:21 mins



MULATU ASTATKE

Sketches of Ethiopia
Jazz Village SP 9570015
52:30 mins



ORCHESTRE POLY-RYTHMO

The Skeletal Essences of Afro Funk Analog Africa AACD 073 114:15 mins



KOBO TOWN

Jumbie in the Jukebox
Cumbancha CMB CD 25
41:34 mins



FAT FREDDY'S DROP

Blackbird
The Drop DRPO19 CD
103:52 mins



GEOMUNGO FACTORY

Metamorphosis
Synnara DDCJ-122C
43:20 mins

FAMILIA ATLANTICA's eponymous debut ranges from the frisky triple-time of Afro-Venezuelan tambor to gentle, wistful *tonada* ballads. Family members hail from Europe, Ghana/Nigeria and Venezuela – notably charismatic lead singer Luzmira Zerpa. There's a beguiling diversity of sounds: Venezuelan *cuatro*, West African *kora* and pitch-shifting *goombay* drums, an array of hooting conches, flutes, brass, and some delicately inventive use of a gas tank as a percussion instrument. Ethio-jazz pianist Mulatu Astatke guests slyly on 'Escape to the Palenque'. (★★★★★)

ASTATKE's *Sketches of Ethiopia* also kicks off in triple time, and with Malian singer Fatoumata Diawara and Ethiopian singer Tesfaye sounds almost as Pan-African. Astatke's casually wandering style on piano and vibraphone is a relaxing treat, with distinctly Ethiopian sounds in the single-stringed *masinko* lute, the wooden *washint* flute and the six-stringed *krar*. (★★★★★)

The Skeletal Essences of Afro Funk 1969-1980, Analog Africa's latest retrospective compilation, is devoted to the recently resuscitated Beninois band **ORCHESTRE POLY-RYTHMO DE COTONOU**. Fans of Nigerian Afrobeat, vintage US R&B, Cuban guajira and funk will find plenty of common ground. (★★★★★)

And those with an ear for good storytelling and word play will enjoy **KOBO**'s 21st-century take on Trinidadian calypso. They're fronted by white Trinidadian singer/songwriter Drew Gonsalves, whose lyrical flow often has a political dimension. He's accompanied by a punchy little brass section, and clearly listens to plenty of Jamaican music. (★★★★★)

The same is true of New Zealand/Aotearoan seven-piece **FAT FREDDY'S DROP**. *Blackbird* features classic reggae, ska and dub. Still, many of their sweet music's charms come from the digital depths of Chris Faiumu's MPC2000XL, including virtual 'drums' and often 'bass', but they stay closer to roots with their 'mid-range vintage music equipment' – woozy trombone, swathes of trumpet/sax, Iain Gordon's style-whore noodling on analogue keyboards and Jetlag Johnson's choppy, skanking rhythm guitar. Their star is velvet-voiced crooner Dallas Tamaira whose way with the phrase 'Never Moving' shows his effortless musicality. (★★★★★)

GEOMUNGO ('G'mungo') **FACTORY**, a three-women and one-man South Korean band, thrilled London's Cadogan Hall at this year's K-Music festival. Named after the ancient Korean zither made with Pawlonia wood and six silk strings, Geomungo have revitalised and used it as a modern instrument. As you can hear in *Metamorphosis* (available iTunes), there's quite a swagger to their fierce plucking and bowing, often suggesting the dynamics and energy of Western rock. They toy with tango and do a delightfully potty version of 'Dance of the Sugarplum Fairy', featuring their own new instrument – a 'xylophone geomungo'. Other novel sounds come from the more commonly encountered 21-stringed *gayageum*, the hammered *yanggeum* and the *damhyeongeum*, a mini geomungo which they can play as they walk around the stage, contrary to the traditional practice of playing while seated only. And there's an electric geomungo, as well as the theremin-like wail of a cello geomungo. Oh, and they sing as well. (★★★★★) *Jon Lusk*
BBC Music Direct: *Analog Africa* £14.99; *Cumbancha* £13.99; *The Drop* £15.99; *Jazz Village* £15.99; *Soundway* £13.99