

inti-illimani®

Few Latin American acts can rival this Chilean group in terms of the sheer beauty of sound. Much like a Zen affirmation, Inti-Illimani's music floats within your soul, filling it with calmness and hope.
THE LOS ANGELES TIMES



Introduction & Recent Times

For over four decades, Inti-Illimani has intoxicated audiences around the world. In their homeland of Chile and greater Latin America, they are a veritable institution, a cultural icon famous for their unique poetic and socio-political history. Their music, wedded in traditional Latin American roots, captures at once the very personal colors of their experiences while simultaneously appealing to the universal in us all. They have performed in over a dozen countries worldwide, bringing with them timeless themes and an inclusive spirit which unites us in our common humanity. Playing on more than 30 wind, string and percussion instruments, Inti-Illimani's compositions are a treasure for the human spirit. Their mellifluous synthesis of instruments and vocals captures those secret places in our hearts, journeying us out of the mundane into a respite for the soul. Sacred areas, colorful carnivals, daily lives, love lost and found again, vistas, defeats and triumphs all play out in the extraordinary cultural mural that is an Inti-Illimani performance.

Known for their open-minded musical approach, Inti-Illimani continues to allow for its own evolution while staying true to its musical roots. Since 2002, Inti has welcomed four new members, and so the changing of the guards, so to speak, only strengthens the Inti legacy-- like always at an Inti performance, one can expect the musicians to trade instruments with staggering fluidity, perform classic songs with fresh air breathed into them, and entertain with personal anecdotes and expressions. Manuel Meriño, current musical director and member since 2001, sees Inti's 2002 release *Lugares Comunes* (*Common Places*) as the point at which the present ensemble came together.

Daniel Cantillana (violin, vocals) posits that the classic repertoire, which the younger Intis have mastered, is not a constraint but rather that it "establishes an intangible aesthetic framework that lets us know whether a song can fit...It is our identity, and if it determines what we do, it does so very subtly."

As founding member and Inti constant Jorge Coulon remarks, "What pleases me about this group today is that the creative risks it is taking are very much in keeping with our history while opening us up to many perspectives, many possibilities." *Pequeño Mundo*, their most recent album, continues Inti's exploration of Latin American, Afro-Latin, and Italian sounds and includes the group's first foray into jazz-flavored composition. *Pequeño Mundo* also features appearances by several special guests, including former founding member Max Berru, past members Pedro Villagra and Renato Freyggang, and longtime collaborator and dear friend Patricio Manns.

Among many new projects is the scoring of Mike Nguyen's animated film, *My Little World*. This film, by its own words, "aims to express the beautiful simplicity of life that often gets overlooked, and to capture the feeling of true friendship and community." *Tu Pequeño Mundo*, the title track to their newest release, offers fans a preview to the Inti-composed soundtrack of this unique, work-in-progress film.



History

Inti-Illimani (Inti-E-gee-manee), from the Ayamara dialect, means “Sun of the Illimani,” in reference to the mountain at La Paz, Bolivia. It is therefore a kind of paradox that the history of Inti-Illimani began underground, in a dark canteen of Santiago’s Arts and Trades School of the Technical University of State. It was there in the 1960’s that the founding members met and began playing music together. Originally on the path to engineering, they would soon discover that their true destinies lie not in trade, but in the arts. This love of music encouraged their restless souls to explore the indigenous cultures of Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and Argentina. In these poorest, purest and ancient cultures, they discovered not only Andean music and therefore their roots, but corners of the world in need of voice...Inti-Illimani’s music quickly became Latin America’s visceral link between pueblo and people, vivified in Nueva Canción.

Nueva Canción (new song) is not only the name of the early Inti-Illimani recording which propelled them into global recognition and popularity, but is also the name of the socio-political, artistic movement of the 1970’s and 80’s throughout Latin America, seeking to resurrect and celebrate the traditional folk sounds of Latin culture while delivering messages of social change and revolution. It played a powerful role in the many uprisings against oppressive governments during these times, and many of its messengers faced censorship, exile, forced disappearance and worse. Inti-Illimani was no exception.

In 1973, Chilean president Salvador Allende was deposed during a coup d’état when Augusto Pinochet took control of the country; overnight the democratic atmosphere of Chile disappeared. The Intis were on tour in Europe, and found themselves without patria or passport, in sudden political and artistic exile. Italy became their home for the next 15 years. Separated from beloved family members, friends and their homeland, the coup d’état and their subsequent exile dramatically changed their personal stories, as well as the story of Inti-Illimani, forever. Inti-Illimani became, and remains, South America’s ambassadors of human expression. In 1988, they were unexpectedly allowed back into Chile by the same military government which had banished them. They were warmly welcomed home by the Chilean people, with 6,000 fans greeting them at the airport; their arrival was symbolic of the end of a tragic, stifling era. They soon after gave a home-coming concert, attended by 130,000 people for whom Inti’s music had become a common voice, a communal place for the dispossessed as well as for the Chilean spirit. They moved home permanently in 1990, coinciding with the official resignation of Pinochet.

What followed were many performances and collaborations inspired by and born out of their own struggle, and the struggles of the bereaved across the world. In honor of slain guitarist, poet, and singer-songwriter, Victor Jara, Inti-Illimani gave a “purifying” concert at Victor Jara Stadium, to heal the residue of atrocities committed there. This was followed by various Amnesty International Concerts in South America as well as the UK, where Inti-Illimani appeared on stage with Bruce Springsteen, Sting, Peter Gabriel, Tracey Chapman, Youssou’n’Dour, Mercedes Sosa, Wynton Marsalis, and others. In February of 1989, Inti-Illimani performed in the Berlin Song Festival just weeks after the demolition of the wall. On September 21, 2008, Inti-Illimani gave a concert in celebration of the 100th birthday of former president Salvador Allende, at the Plaza de la Constitución (Constitution Square) in front of the presidential Palace. They played 100 songs in his honor, without pause, in this historic performance.



Inti-Illimani on stage offers passion and poetry that is mantra for peace in the world and within ourselves. As Coulon remarks, “We are not political in [the propaganda] sense, but we have always been politically engaged. We have a concept about society and about the relationship between human beings, and we try to translate our ideas into our sound, not to be part of one political party or another but in the sense to bring about a better world.”

Honors & Collaborations

Inti-Illimani has appeared on Amnesty International stages with Peter Gabriel, Bruce Springsteen, Mercedes Sosa, and Wynton Marsalis; at benefit concerts for the Victor Jara foundation with Peter Gabriel, Paco Peña, John Williams, Emma Thompson, Karen Matheson, Maria Farantouri, Salsa Celtica, and the Rambert Dance Company, also sharing the stage with Federico Fellini, Patricio Manns, Arja Saijonmaa, Holly Near, Mercedes Sosa, Youssou'n'Dour, and Pete Seeger.

In 1982, they were nominated for a British Academy Award (TV's most original band). In 1984, their platinum, BBC record, *El Vuelo del Condor (Flight of the Condor)*, received a British Academy of Music nomination (best soundtrack of the 1982 BBC film *The Flight of the Condor*). In 1985, they won an INDIE award from the National Association of Independent Record Distributors, USA. They were honored with the 1990 Lion of Venice Award from Italy, and in both 1991 and 1999, were named Group of the Year by Chile's Entertainment Journalists Association. EJAC also awarded them Best Record of the Year in 1991, for *Leyenda*. In 1997, UC Berkeley honored them with the Human Rights Award. In 2004, the Indie Acoustic Project awarded their album *Lugares Comunes*, as one of their Best CD's of 2001 to 2003 Awards. In addition to their prolific tours and recordings, Inti Illimani's music was used for the award-winning documentary *Devil's Miner* (2004), a moving portrait following two young brothers as they work the silver mines of Cerro Rico, Bolivia.

Future

Most recently, Inti-Illimani has collaborated with French-Canadian singer Francesca Gagnon, aka the "Voice of Alegria" of Cirque du Soleil. Like Inti-Illimani, Francesca has toured the world, inspiring audiences with her powerful, singularly sparkling voice and energy. While Inti-Illimani's early influences included Victor Jara, Violeta Para and Patricio Manns, Gagnon's included Piaf, Brel, Ferland, and Vigneault. With an ability to lift the heart and appeal to the universal condition of the soul, Gagnon's personal style and passion are a special and exciting match to those of Inti-Illimani. Together, they are painting a vivid, relevant mural on a canvas with much room left to explore.



Gagnon and Inti-Illimani were introduced at an Inti performance in Montreal in November 2008. A palpable magic was felt instantly. Through mutual appreciation and admiration of each other's work and their shared passionate affection for music from all corners of the Earth, collaboration seemed imminent. The partnership was launched in Chile and North America in 2009. First spending time in Chile together, creating and performing, the collaboration then gave its two premier U.S. performances in August of 2009. They first appeared at New York's Queens Theater in the Park, followed by a performance at Orange County Great Park, in Irvine, CA.

With a program that mixes popular songs from *Cirque Du Soleil* with beloved compositions from Inti-Illimani's vast repertoire, this collaboration celebrates, arouses, rekindles, and motivates the human spirit, transporting the listener to a world with a universal language, a world where we celebrate our differences be that of culture, color or creed. Together, their experimental, imaginative reinterpretation of each other's music produces an impressive musical dialogue, "illustrative of music's indefatigable prowess as a place of peaceful encounter for the cultures of the world." –KPFK Los Angeles

In 2010, they released their recording, *Meridiano* (Warner Latin), which highlights the most stunning moments of their collaboration thus far in a spellbinding, dreamlike, intimate and alluring collection of compositions from both *Cirque de Soleil* and the Inti vault. The cultural exchange between these renowned international artists is endorsed and supported by the Embassy of Canada in Santiago, Chile and the Quebec Delegation in New York.

Inti-Illimani is also developing a new orchestral program, since their initial foray with symphony orchestra in the 90's, which culminated in the 1999 release of *Sinfonico (Symphonic)*. In their performances with symphonies and children's choirs, their resonant sound finds a new dimension of emotion and presence. Based on their musical expertise as well as their socio-political past, Inti-Illimani is also currently seeking to partner with universities for the development of a Residency Project, which would be appropriate for and an exciting addition to a range of collegiate departments, such as Latin American Studies, Ethnomusicology, Political Science (specifically in relation to political exile), and Intercultural Relations, to name a few.

On October 14-15, 2011, Inti-Illimani performed at the Caupolicán theatre in Santiago, with Illapu and Quilapayún, fellow groups of the Nueva Canción movement, in a special concert named *Juntos, aquí estamos, "We Are Here Together."* Both Illapu and Quilapayún have similar histories to that of Inti-Illimani, and the groups will be together on stage for the first time in Chile.

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musicians

DANIEL CANTILLANA

violin, zampona, viola, mandolin, vocals

EFREN VIERA

congas, bongo, cajón, timbales and other latin percussion, clarinet, saxophone, vocals

CHRISTIAN GONZÁLEZ

flutes, piccolo, quena, sikus, cajón, bass, vocals

JORGE COULON

guitar, tiple, rondador, zampona, hammered dulcimer, harp, vocals

CESAR JARA

guitar, tiple, bass, charango, vocals

MARCELO COULON

guitar, quena, piccolo, flute, bass, vocals

JUAN FLORES

bass, cajón, cuatro, charango, quena, guitar, mandolin, sikus, vocals

MANUEL MERIÑO

musical director, guitar, tiple, bass, vocals

technicians

LUIS GALVEZ

sound director

GABRIEL VASQUEZ

Stage manager