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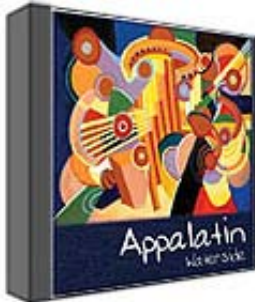
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Sample Track 1:
"Down by the Waterside (Vozos) (rough cut)" from Waterside

Sample Track 2:
"Sobre Reales (Obando) (rough cut)" from Waterside



Kentuck-cumbia: The Foot-stomping, Hip-swinging Roots Music of Appalatin

"Hey, there's a guy playing a *charango* on Bardstown Road!"

That's how Fernando Moya, a Louisville-based Ecuadoran flute and panpipe virtuoso, first heard about **Appalatin**, the unexpected meeting of Kentucky-raised musicians and masterful Latin émigrés. Moya was so excited, he grabbed his own *charango* (a diminutive Andean lute-like instrument) and ran down to see what was going on. He soon joined the band.

What began with informal jams spearheaded by two Kentucky-bred, Spanish-speaking sojourners in South and Latin America (Steve Sizemore, Yani Vozos) and a Nicaraguan guitarist/songwriter (Marlon Obando), quickly evolved into a committed band of brothers, including a Guatemalan journalist and harmonica whiz (Luis De Leon), a jazz bassist from Down Under (Luke McIntosh), and Moya, an Andean wind player from Quito who's performed at Carnegie Hall. Playing everything from impromptu street shows to rock clubs, Appalatin organically unites driving bluegrass and high-energy Latin music, finding mutually savored roots with more than a little in common.

Embraced by the prolific, open-minded Louisville scene, where everyone gleefully plays with everyone else, they have turned blues, bluegrass, and rock fans on to the joys of salsa and Andean melodies, to clever originals and rollicking fusion. With their recent release **Waterside** and a **regional tour**, Appalatin are ready to get hips swinging and feet stomping with catchy cumbias and gritty Panamerican roots music.

{full story below}

It was the day of the Kentucky Derby, and Appalatin did what any self-respecting band would: They donned their funkiest hats, packed their cooler, and played on the street for hours.

"The energy was so high, with lines of people just getting down to our music," recalls Vozos, Appalatin's guitarist and native son of the Eastern Kentucky backwoods. "It's just such a joyous event. There was a lot of improv, of continuous playing. At some point, I started playing this bluegrass boom-chuck rhythm." Sizemore, a Latin percussionist raised in Hazard, Kentucky,



picked up the driving feel on his *cajón*. The band dove in, resulting in “Down by the Waterside,” a Kentuck-cumbia, that unexpected sweet spot where cumbia’s bounding bassline meets bluegrass grit and pulse.

Finding sweet spots together is one of the band’s fortes. Its members’ seemingly disparate backgrounds have deep connections that unite them, whether it’s their shared devotion to family and community—a commitment as common in the rural Upper South as it is in Latin America—or their shared cross-cultural experience. Sizemore and Vozos spent years abroad in Latin and South America, and Obando, Moya, and De Leon have put down deep roots in their new Kentucky home.

“We’re learning music from each other, but the common thing is our bond and friendships,” Sizemore reflects. “When things are tough, we come together to remind ourselves that we’re here to have a good time.”

“That’s the best thing about our group. We love each other, and you see that on stage and hear it in the music,” adds Vozos. “We’re brothers. From the first time we got together, it was like we had found each other.”

Shifting between languages—everyone in the band speaks both English and Spanish—styles, and vibes, Appalatin follow their instincts. From the seriously Americana-inflected (“Danville Breakdown” born during a school presentation in front of 650 dancing kids), to upbeat acoustic Latin (Obando’s “La Liña”), to the outright Andean (traditional tune “Alpa Mayo” and Moya’s Quechua contribution, “Ñuka Shungo,” inspired when he crafted a flute in a new key), Appalatin’s danceable, infectious tunes spring from the band’s shared love of roots music, but also from an unexpectedly global, vibrant music scene in their home town.

Though known for its powerful regional roots, Louisville, like many smaller but vital American cities, has a secret global side. Home to many asylum seekers and a growing community of Latino émigrés from all over the Americas, the scene harbors all sorts of creativity that goes far beyond bluegrass and that welcomes new sounds.

“Louisville is traditionally a foot-stomping town, but we’re getting more and more people into the hip swinging,” exclaims Sizemore with a smile.

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