

## PRESS KIT KUENTA I TAMBU



Tradition is a tricky beast. There are those who would leave it as a dusty museum exhibit. Then there are others who see further, into the possibility of tradition, a line that runs through history all the way to the present. They're the ones who respect the past but aren't going to be hidebound by it, who make it a very vital part of now. People like Kuenta i Tambu, who've transformed the old tambú music of Curaçao into the 21st-century phenomenon of Tambutronic.

Then meets now through hard kicks and hooky synths, the gritty good times that spawned bass music's tropical, global offshoots, from baile funk to moombahton. Taking up the sounds that evolved in Dutch clubs and mashing them effortlessly with the group's percussive, evocative Caribbean roots, Kuenta i Tambu proves how easily traditional grooves can move in new, unexpected ways.

Though as fresh as M.I.A. or Major Lazer, Kuenta i Tambu's music began long ago and far away. On Curaçao, an island in the Caribbean close to the coast of Venezuela, history remains very much alive. Originally home to the Arawak Indians, it was conquered by the Spanish in 1499 and became Dutch in 1634. But in many ways it's almost an outpost of Africa, a first stop for slave ships on their journey to South America, and the influence of another continent is still powerful. For centuries, the people have celebrated with drums and

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singing, styles like seú, muzik di zumbi (music of the spirits), and above all, tambú. When Roël Calister, a Curaçao-born percussionist who moved to the Netherlands, began his career, it was with the traditional music of his homeland, everything he'd learned as he grew up. The band he founded in 2005, Kuenta i Tambu, played and sang acoustically. It even infused the material he composed. But in 2010 a sea change happened, following a change in band membership.



“Like a lot of people, we were listening to hip-hop, to dance music,” Calister recalls. “We started experimenting with beats and electronics to give our music the feel that fascinated us in European electronic music, music we really loved. We released an EP and

the style we call Tambutronic was born.” Since then Kuenta i Tambu have evolved and refined their music. They’ve introduced Tambutronic music to several continents and added a new singer, Diamanta, to make them into a five-piece.

“The people there are very proud that we took the step to give the old music a new look,” Calister says. “We stay true to the roots but we also give the island its own voice in the modern world.” Older folks, familiar with the tradition, hear it in the music while youngsters who’ve grown up with American hip-hop, R&B and the global flavor of dance music, hear their own world reflected at them. And that’s an important way to keeping the past alive and strong.

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The band's latest EP, Muchu Danki, continues to match rhythms to blunt electronics, relentless, innovative and blessed with incredible energy. The quintet is able to display a diversity to their sound ranging from tracks such as 'Where To Go' which is a laid back carnival groove and 'Peace Of Mind' billowing cross-currents between old and new. One thing, however, is certain: their energetic percussion is guaranteed to see some shapes on the dance floor and their hypnotizing beat is impossible to shake.

Live, Kuenta i Tambu are a non-stop Carnival, a riot of beats and rhythms that take the audience deep into the Caribbean. Above all, though, it's obvious that the musicians enjoy playing the music and the live percussion thunders through the air.

"We have fun," says Calister, "and that's the key."

Tambutronic: where Curaçao's past dances with its future and takes on the world.

Kuenta i Tambu performed at a.o.:

Glastonbury (UK), NYC's Lincoln Center (US), Kennedy Center in Washington (US), SXSW (US), Pitch Festival (NL), Best Kept Secret Festival (NL), Body & Soul Festival (IR), Europavox (FR), Pole Pole (BE), Pohoda Festival (SK), Etnosur (ES), The Great Escape (UK), Eurosonic/Noorderslag (NL), Amsterdam Dance Event (NL), Electrochoc Festival (FR), Levitt Pavillion (US)

### **RELEASES** *(click to listen)*

Don't Wanna Behave (ft Typhoon) – 4 March 2016

Muchu Danki – Aug 2015

Santa Electra – Dec 2014

Tambutronic (album) - Oct 2013

Gregor Salto & KiT - Otro Dia – May 2013

Jackhammer (Single) - Sep 2012

Kuenta i Tambu (EP) - Nov 2011

### **VIDEOS** *(click to watch)*

[Live video – Kuenta i Tambu - Them a call it Tambu \(live at Enchufada Label Night, ADE 2016\)](#)

[Live video – Kuenta i Tambu ft Typhoon – Don't Wanna Behave \(Live at the Red Bull Studios\)](#)

[Live video – Live at Gebr de Nobel, Netherlands](#)

[Music video – 'Where To Go'](#)

[Short documentary - 'This is Kuenta i Tambu'](#)

[Music video - 'Jackhammer'](#)

[Live video - Lightswitch' at 3voor12 Radio](#)



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### **PRESS**

*The Guardian*: "... lacerated by the sounds of Dutch quartet Kuenta i Tambu, who take Afro-Curaçaoan tambú music to ravey new highs." – *Review on Glastonbury 2015*

*Red Bull Music*: "... heavy percussive dance beats with catchy melodies native to the tiny Caribbean island of Curaçao."

*New York Times*: "The six-beat complexity and metal percussion of tambú arrived, strategically, as peaks of momentum."

*Rolling Stone*: "Sounds like: A super-crunk, blacklight warehouse party surrounded by four separate Carnival parades."

### **BOOKINGS**

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The Netherlands: [jeroen@blipagency.com](mailto:jeroen@blipagency.com)

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