

= Soul Food Taqueria =

Soul Food Taqueria is the third studio album by former professional skateboarder and Quannum Projects @-@ member Tommy Guerrero , released April 8 , 2003 , on Mo ' Wax Records . Recording sessions for the album took place during 2002 and 2003 at the Function 8 record label 's studio in San Francisco , California . Production , instrumentation and songwriting was primarily handled by Guerrero , with contributions from producers Gadget and Monte Vallier .

The album consists mostly of downtempo , instrumental and sample @-@ based chill @-@ out music with musical influences such as Latin soul , R & B , trip hop and lo @-@ fi music . It also features only a few vocal contributions from guest artists , which include rapper Lyrics Born and singer Gresham Taylor . Its cover artwork , depicting a taquería that also serves soul food , was designed by artist Stephen Powers .

The album was not promoted well , no radio singles were issued , and it did not chart . Despite no commercial and sales success , Soul Food Taqueria was mostly well received by music critics , who commended its diverse style , production quality , and viewed it as a progression for Guerrero from his 2000 album A Little Bit of Somethin ' .

= = Background and recording = =

Recording for Soul Food Taqueria took place at the recording studio of the San Francisco @-@ based independent label Function 8 from 2002 to 2003 . Mostly handled by Tommy Guerrero , production for the album also featured audio mixing contributions from producer / engineers Gadget and Monte Vallier . Prior to these sessions , Gadget and Guerrero had previously worked together on independent label projects and collaborations , including their collaborational studio effort , Hoy Yen Ass 'n (2000) for Function 8 . Most of the instrumentation for the album was employed by Guerrero , while session drummer Chuck Treece and keyboardist Greg Galbreath also contributed to Soul Food Taqueria . All of the album 's material was written and arranged by Tommy Guerrero .

The album is primarily sample @-@ based and instrumental , as recording and production followed a lo @-@ fi and downtempo aesthetic . Gadget also assisted in vocal production for the album 's three vocal tracks , " Organism " , " It Gets Heavy " and " Getting It Together " . In contrast to Guerrero 's previous studio album A Little Bit of Somethin ' (2000) , production for Soul Food Taqueria was more polished , despite Guerrero stating that he is " still down with the fucked up 4 track action " upon the album 's release . During recording , the instrumentation , sequencing and mixing were more detailed than its predecessor 's , as noted by one critic who wrote " everything sounds much more polished and in tune with their surroundings . "

= = Composition = =

Music writers note that the album was inspired by the San Francisco music scene , with Allmusic 's Bryan Carroll citing the " general street vibe of San Francisco 's Mission district " . BBC Collective editor Matt Walton described the music as " chillout music " . According to one music writer , the title of the album reflects its " spicy fusion of soul , funk , hip @-@ hop and Latin flavors stirred up in an intoxicating downtempo gumbo that is hard to resist " . According to Carmen Johnson of Prefix magazine , the album has Tommy Guerrero , a San Francisco @-@ native , " oozing soul in every track " . She also described the music of Soul Food Taqueria as " an exploration into soulful , bass @-@ heavy trip @-@ hop that combines a lot of twists and sweeps through many genres and styles " .

The album 's music mixes 1970s soul music elements with Latin @-@ style grooves , as well as R & B , samba , drum and bass , and trip hop . The songs also have a retro vibe . One writer noted the diverse musical elements of the album , writing that it contains a " hybrid sound that 's hard to categorize and easy to enjoy " . Several of the songs on the album are built on laid @-@ back breakbeat samples . A notable influence on the music is the West Coast jazz of Chet Baker . Similar to Guerrero 's previous work , which has been described as " instrumental neo @-@ funk " , Soul

Food Taqueria encompasses influences from stripped down folk , jazz , lounge , guitar @-@ blues , rock and minimal funk , as well as indie rock . Despite Guerrero 's musical background , a CMJ columnist noted the album 's similarity to New York City 's experimental music scene , citing artists such as the Beastie Boys , Cibo Matto , JSBX and Luscious Jackson . Lily Moayeri of Remix Magazine noted the similarity of the album 's " low @-@ key soul threaded through the understated funk " to the work of underground artist Money Mark .

Guerrero 's guitar work for the album encompasses styles such as blues and flamenco music , and uses chord progressions and four note melodies , creating " nimble and colorful pieces of musical texture " when mixed in with the rest of the tracks ' instrumentation . His guitar playing utilizes a minimal , acoustic and sparse sound and space blended with the live percussion of drummer Chuck Treece , Jupiter @-@ heavy bass lines and keyboardist Greg Galbreath 's synths . Vocals are more prevalent on the album than on Guerrero 's previous recordings , with vocal tracks from rapper Lyrics Born of Blackalicious , Quannum and Latyrx fame , and long time friend and collaborator , lo @-@ fi and indie pop singer @-@ songwriter Gresham Taylor , credited as Gresham for the album .

= = Songs = =

The minute @-@ long intro track , entitled " Lectric Chile Goat " , is a blues @-@ based guitar instrumental performed alone by Tommy Guerrero . The album opener " Abierto " (open in Spanish) consists of low bass lines , allowing for guitar solo interplay that stylistically contrasts the bass , while bells jingle quietly with the drums . " Organism " contains predominant wah @-@ wah guitar effects , which accompany a notable funk groove . " Thank You (MK) " is an ode to the tropics and features soft , jazz instrumentation . Guerrero 's guitar arrangement for the song is reminiscent of the music of Brazilian bossa nova musician João Gilberto and American jazz saxophonist Stan Getz , with guitar licks similar to the playing @-@ style of jazz guitarist Wes Montgomery .

Accompanied by delicate harmonies , " Tatanka " is a funk @-@ infused and bass @-@ driven track that features intricate percussion and guitar riffs , as well as unique fret @-@ work by Guerrero . The album contains three atmospheric break tracks , " Train of Thought " , " So Many Years Ago " and " And the Day Goes By " . One critic stated that the interludes " render the ambience palpable " . The adumbral " It Gets Heavy " features melancholic lyrics and folk vocals by Gresham Taylor , which are similar to those of singer @-@ songwriter John Secada . " Thin Brown Layer " has a noticeable Latin rhythm and guitar arrangement . The song also contains a predominant hypnotic beat , which , according to one music critic , " makes you feel stoned even after completing a Twelve step program " . " Terra Unifirma " , " Another Brother Gone " and " Broken Blood " are built around laid @-@ back grooves and detailed guitar orchestrations .

The moody " It Gets Heavy " features Guerrero and Gresham Taylor singing , and is reminiscent of trip hop artist Tricky , contributing to the album 's general sound of hip @-@ hop infected Latin soul . Its lyrics have been described as " socially conscious but thought @-@ provoking " . Cited by critics as the standout track on the album , Bryan Carroll described it as " the sole hip @-@ shaker among a gaggle of moodier pieces " . The bongo @-@ driven track " Lost Unfound " has Guerrero occupying all instruments , and the album 's third vocal track , " Gettin ' It Together " , features rapper Lyrics Born delivering a blend of emceeing and singing , which is a departure from his previous work . One music writer described the album 's closing track , " Falling Awake " , as " the most beautiful song Guerrero ? s written to date " . The song contains melancholic piano arrangements . Another critic noted " Falling Awake " ' s meditative sound , writing that its light guitar melodies are " slowly ascending on a journey of Satori " .

= = Artwork = =

The album 's front and back cover artwork , which depict a taquería that serves soul food , was designed by world @-@ renowned graffiti artist and graphic designer Stephen J. Powers , also known as by his moniker ESPO . On September 29 , 2007 , the album 's artwork and other similar

works by Powers were displayed at Coney Island 's Dreamland Artist Clubhouse in Brooklyn , New York during his studio visit there .

Music journalists have noted the title and artwork as reflective of the album 's musical influences . A columnist for the Santa Fe Reporter later described the artwork as " totally cool , with a blocky style depicting some kind of Miami soul food / taco stand . " Music journalist Kimberley Chun of the San Francisco Bay Guardian wrote of the concept , stating " So what is a soul food taquería ? Do you get a side of collard greens with your menudo ? " In an interview with Chun , Guerrero discussed the concept and title , stating " It 's just this funny idea I had , growing up in the city ? it 's so diverse . The city itself is just down @-@ home , down @-@ to @-@ earth , blue @-@ collar , full of everyday kind of people . My music is along the same lines , just being simple ? I just try to be honest in what I do . "

= = Commercial performance = =

The album featured release in three different countries ; the United States on April 8 , 2003 and the United Kingdom on April 14 of that same year on Mo ' Wax Records , and Japan on April 26 , 2003 through the Japanese record label Flavour of Sound Ltd . Released by Flavour of Sound , the Japanese issue of the album contains bonus material previously featured on Guerrero 's Junk Collector EP (2001) . Soul Food Taqueria was released on the iTunes Store as a digital download on April 28 , 2003 .

According to website sources such as Allmusic and Billboard.com , the album has not exhibited any charting in the United States since its release . Soul Food Taqueria received some airplay on the college radio station KALX . In Canada , it peaked at number 6 on the CKUA Radio Network 's Best of 2003 chart . No promotional or radio singles were released from the album . " Gettin ' It Together " later featured a limited edition single release in 12 " vinyl format on March 22 , 2004 , through the Santa Cruz @-@ based label Galaxia . The cover art for the single was designed by Stephen (ESPO) Powers , designer of the album 's artwork .

= = Critical reception = =

Soul Food Taqueria was well received by music critics . Exclaim ! editor Noel Dix observed an improvement in production and complexity of instrumentation by Guerrero from his earlier work , and stated , " This record pours so much heart and emotion into it that you ? re bound to feel its warmth and splendor while it ? s bumping in your walkman as you trek the city streets . " Noting that A Little Bit of Somethin ' was criticized as a " lifeless piece of pop @-@ trip @-@ hop " , Brian Ho of Dusted praised Guerrero 's artistic growth and found " everything " to be " an improvement over its predecessor " , writing that the album " is filled to the brim with body and life in a way that few albums can claim " . XLR8R critic Liz Cordingley called the album a " nice case of dubby , electric guitar @-@ driven downtempo " , and called its music " dusty lo @-@ fi soul that is seductively languid " . Joe Warminsky of the Washington City Paper praised Guerrero 's minimalist approach to the album 's chill @-@ out sound , as the chill @-@ out music genre mostly features implementation of a slicker production . He also compared the lo @-@ fi grooves of Soul Food Taqueria to " Shuggie Otis with Baja roots " . Carmen Johnson of Prefix Mag called it a " stellar follow @-@ up to 2000 's A Little Bit of Somethin ' " , and commended Guerrero for producing " his own organic , subterranean blend of bohemian blues , hip @-@ hop and salsa that 's creative and adventurous " . Johnson called it " the perfect soundtrack for the lazy days that hearken back to the end of summer . "

In a mixed review , Luke McManus of RTE compared its songs to " those jazzy Beastie Boys tracks " , and described the sound as " undemanding and smooth " . However , McManus criticized the album 's mood and wrote , " Soporific , over polite and too damn quiet , Soul Food Taqueira veers dangerously close to snooze territory . " Bryan Carroll of Allmusic criticized the predominance of " mood pieces " , and stated , " on the whole Soul Food Taqueria fails to stick to the ribs because it simply lacks the proper spice " . Other critics cited Guerrero 's simple , inventive style and sound for the album as one of its better qualities . Bill Campbell of Ink 19 called the album an " exemplary

album ... 100 % soul " . He also commended Guerrero 's musicality , " he constructs heartfelt music with a complexity few can pull off successfully " , as well as his guitar playing , as Campbell wrote " his guitar work is subtle and works the spaces between the beats marvelously " .

Canadian radio station CKUA ranked the album number 93 on its Best of 2003 Chart . Uptown contributor Anthony Augustine named Soul Food Taqueria as one of the Top 10 albums of 2003 . In a January 2004 issue , Ulli Pfleger of Germany 's publication of Rolling Stone ranked the album number two on his " best of list " of 2003 .

= = Track listing = =

All songs written and composed by Tommy Guerrero .

* Co @-@ producer

= = Personnel = =

Credits adapted from album sleeve liner notes .

= = Release history = =