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## WORLD

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### LA LINEA: NOVALIMA

Cargo, EC2

★★★★☆

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### JANE CORNWELL

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SURROUNDED by laptops and electric guitars, before video images of pulsing bass bins, a vocalist held a donkey's jawbone in the air and hit it rhythmically with his fist. Either side of him, straddling the box-like cajon, two percussionists joined in what was originally a marinera, a traditional Peruvian dance, but what was now something muscular and modern.

Forget the pan pipes. Lima-based collective Novalima are making club-friendly, cutting-edge Peruvian music: music with roots in the country's

African population, earthy, tribal, haunting music too long overlooked.

This London show, part of the La Linea festival, was the first since the band's 2006 debut. Armed with rave reviews for their current third album, *Coba Coba*, they were in fine party spirit. Female singer Milagros Guerrero, sporting a pork-pie hat and blood-red talons, sang silkily over the reggae chug of Ruperta.

Just like the Gotan Project, whose dubby electronics have parallels here, Novalima fuse the traditional and contemporary and use beats to link it together. Handclaps, percussion and call-and-response vocals blend gradually, respectfully, with funk, reggaeton or hip-hop. Then explode, with whistles and cowbells, into furious dance music. All this and the quijada de burro, whose poor old teeth vibrate when struck.

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