"...we are ugly but we have the music".

ROCK BOTTOM MAGAZINE



Mientras las abejas duermen

The desert is ours... ...we are the desert

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Rock Bottom Magazine

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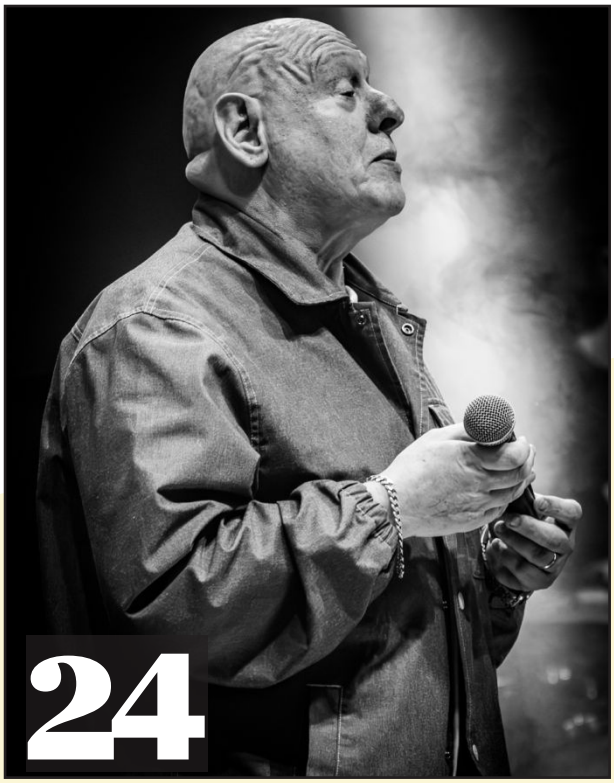
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The Cyrstal Teardrop



Shaun Ryder



Mientras las abejas duermen



Wucan



Álvaro “Corazón Rural”



FIRST

Editorial
by javistone

THE MUSIC IS STILL OUT THERE

AS LONG AS THERE ARE SONGS TO TELL

November 2025, the world seems, once again, like it could explode at any moment, and here in southern Europe there are still a few diehards who continue to believe that culture and music can and must save us. In this first English-language issue of **Rock Bottom Magazine**, we want to go a little beyond our unshakeable faith in culture, rock and roll, soul, literature... Are we the last humanists left, as **Al Pacino** claimed in *The Devil's Advocate*? If the devil is, then maybe we're on the right track... We are witnessing a long-standing idea that good music is no longer being made. That everything has already been said, that the new artists have no soul, that the classics were something else (each decade disparages the previous one). It's a mantra that is repeated in bar conversations, on social media, and in endless (and terribly cold) WhatsApp discussions with the same levity with which people talk about climate change or the rise in the price of bread. But anyone who takes an unbiased look at what's happening beyond the Spotify charts will know that this statement is not only false-it's lazy.

At Rock Bottom, we have been trying for years to dismantle this discourse without raising our voices. We don't have big media outlets, marketing campaigns, or budgets that allow us to reinvent the wheel every month. Just time, an ear, and an almost naive faith in music as a refuge and an act of resistance. Because, yes, wonderful music is still being made. And if artists such as **The Crystal Teardrop** from England, **AL9** from Brazil, **Wucan** from Germany, or the marvel that graces the cover of this issue (the first time we've featured a band that hasn't officially released an album yet, that's how confident we are), **Mientras las abejas duermen**, from Ubrique (the very south of Spain), teach us anything, it's that inspiration knows no fads or algorithms. The list could go on with names that are less well known but just as essential-**Chris Dale**, a veteran bass player who has played all over the world and still retains the enthusiasm of his first rehearsal, or **Shaun Ryder**, that survivor of excess who has managed to turn his chaos into a manifesto of freedom. We could also remember **Bobby "Blue" Bland**, whose unfortunate life continues to reflect what happens when talent and industry are not in sync.

Reflecting on all this is neither nostalgia nor complaint. It is a reminder that music is not dead; what sometimes dies is our curiosity. It is comfortable to think that we have already heard everything, that there is nothing left to discover, that the noise of today has no soul. But the soul is still there, hidden in garages, in home studios, in modest festivals, in small labels that release vinyl records for a hundred people. Music is not to be found in the spotlight but on the margins. And the margins have always been the territory of Rock Bottom.

Sometimes I think that our work is almost quixotic: defending the culture of the invisible, giving a voice to those who have none or whose voice is so low that no one hears it. But that's also what passion is all about: continuing to believe that it's worth telling the stories that others don't see. Every interview, every review, every text corrected or rewritten has the same intention behind it: to remember that there is life beyond nostalgia and the industry (what industry?) and that what really matters is not who reaches the highest, but who continues to play when everything else fades away.

I don't know if the world needs another music magazine. Probably not, but we need to make it. Because there is still too much music out there waiting to be heard, too many stories that deserve their little space. Because every time someone discovers a band thanks to these pages, or gets excited about an artist they had never heard of, we feel that this humble, stubborn, and passionate corner is fulfilling its purpose. And so we will continue, without haste and without fanfare, as long as there are songs to tell.

Because what we do is not nostalgia, nor fashion, nor business: it is faith that music, when it is real, never ceases to exist.

INVISIBLE CULTURE



The Crystal Teardrop

Psychedelic elegance

At Rock Bottom Magazine, we don't usually brag about much, but we certainly believe in the number of artists out there today making good music, in contrast to the reactionary movement that has no interest in current music and takes refuge in times gone by that will obviously never return. The number of bands, singers... artists in general making exciting music right now across the globe is endless. In this issue, we give several examples of this. But if there's one band that has me completely crazy, it's The Crystal Teardrop. The British band makes a psychedelic-tinged sound that is a real delight; only a stubborn and obtuse person would be able to deny the exaggerated quality and tremendous charm of their music. I heard "By the River" and fell completely in love with them. How could I not? That pop sensibility, Alexandra's voice, those sixties melodies, that psychedelic elegance... The Crystal Teardrop are wonderful. They've already visited our country on occasion, and I plan to follow in their footsteps as if I were an acolyte of a new religion that promises me instant happiness in the form of song.

Who are The Crystal Teardrop? What brought you together and what's behind that evocative name?
Alexandra and Leon met at Le Beat Bespoke Festival in London in 2022 and discovered that they lived less than a mile away from each other and shared a passion for all things 1960s. Leon had previously been in a band with Stuart and it didn"t take long for us to decide that we wanted to form a new group which showcased our mutual love for mid to late 60s psychedelia and garage rock. We were then joined by two talented musicians, Ed Quigley and Huw Woodward on bass and drums respectively, to complete the lineup. For the name, we wanted to choose a name that reflected our 1960s influences and decided to use the word "teardrop" principally because we"re all such great fans of Vox Teardrop guitars! We included "crystal" to add an organic feel to the name reflecting the fact that we are five individuals coming together to create our own sound and crystallising our musical ideas. Some people have asked whether the name is a reference to the lyrics in "Light Show" by The Fantastic Zoo but no, we didn"t realise it had been referred to in a song before! However, it was confirmation that we made the right decision – if it was cool enough in 1967 then it is cool enough for us!

You're from Birmingham. How do you perceive the garage and psychedelic scene in the UK today?
We all live in different parts of the Midlands - in Birmingham, Stoke and Leicester. There is a healthy garage and psych scene in many areas of the UK, but London still has the most well-attended DJ nights and gigs. Stuart and Alex regularly DJ at psych nights across the country and also organize their own events. There are lots of fantastic authentic sixties garage nights in the capital and some groovy happenings that take place frequently in different cities across the UK including Glasgow, Brighton, Birmingham and Bristol to name a few.

At times you remind me of the Stone Roses on their first album, the more psychedelic and pop side of them... or Velvet Underground, Buffalo Springfield... Which bands or albums were the real starting point for your style? Or perhaps you are influenced more by a particular era than a specific group, British psychedelia of the late 60s, the Paisley Underground scene of the early 80s, Laurel Canyon…
Thank you! We love all those bands. We grew up listening to a lot of original 60s classic artists including The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, The Kinks and The Who as well as West Coast favorites such as The Byrds, Love and Jefferson Airplane. Our music sets out to combine elements of Byrdsian jangle with the rawer garage sound that was prevalent in the mid-60s. We are also fans of the more obscure groups of the time that appeared on compilation albums like Nuggets and Pebbles but have many more modern influences too:- we are all inspired by the Paisley Underground scene from the early 80s which included bands like The Bangles, The Pandoras and Rain Parade and the more recent psych scene from the States with bands like The Brian Jonestown Massacre, Black Angels and The Lemon Twigs. Ultimately, we aim to draw on our inspirations both past and present to create a sound that is all our own.

In my opinion, psychedelia has a degree of creative freedom that you might not find in other styles. What did you find in psychedelia that made you immerse yourselves in it?
We think that "psychedelia" really encapsulated the experimentation and innovation that is intrinsically linked to the 1960s. The sixties were the decade where everything seemed possible and where new ideas, innovation and creativity flourished. The world was transformed from black and white into technicolour, and a new generation sought to express themselves through music, art, fashion and rapidly evolving political and spiritual beliefs. The era marks one of the most significant turning points in the creative and technical development of music and this spirit of adventure makes the decade so special and important to a lot of people and to us as a band. We aim to draw on the inspiration of that unique time and combine it with our own modern sensibilities to create something new that we hope will appeal to music fans of all generations!

Many of us got to know you through "By the River", which is a song that sounds like a classic, it's a wonderful song... What can you tell us about this song?
Thank you so much! We"re particularly interested in the Eastern influence on music in the late 1960s with the incorporation of sitar, tambura and plenty of percussion so we took great pleasure in introducing these instruments on our single "By the River" which started its life on an acoustic mandola. Alex tuned it to a drone scale and found a riff with an ethereal vibe and

> ***We believe that it is now more important than ever to remain authentic, demonstrate the value in what is "real" and use as much hand-crafted creativity in our everyday world as we possibly can. Music should be organic and the product of human imagination and soul.***

the song developed from there. Leon added his 12-string Rickenbacker which elevated the song and created a Byrdsian feel. The hypnotic drums and acoustic sitar made sure the song really took on a life of its own! The song itself is about eternal love. The lyrics focus on juxtaposing truths, nature and the transition between life and afterlife. The imagery is based on John Everett Millais" painting of Ophelia – it"s quite a haunting picture as she is drowning in a pool which symbolizes her broken heart. The lyrics are based on Alex"s interpretation of that painting, in that love can extend far beyond any of our lifetimes and that nature is one never ending cycle of life, death, love and loss.

You recently released your debut LP, Is Forming. What can you tell us about it? How was the recording process? How did you approach your first album after releasing several singles?



Rise Above Records have helped us to fulfil our creative ambitions by releasing our debut album on 2 May 2025. We were delighted when they suggested that we record entirely analogue without using any digital technology. The tracks were all recorded live so it really does feel like you"re in the room with us and all the backwards reverb, vocal effects and phasing was achieved authentically and organically in the studio - just like it would have been in the 60s!

When selecting the songs for this album we wanted to ensure the full variety of our original material was included - ranging from psychedelia to garage rock to a softer folk-rock sound. We tried to ensure that the album features the broad range of our influences and also reflects the energy we bring to our live shows. Ultimately, we wanted to make a psychedelic rock album and hopefully that is what we achieved! It was recorded at Tilehouse Studios, London and produced by the legendary Liam Watson who has previously worked with many prestigious artists including The White Stripes and who brought a wealth of experience to the recording process. Recording the album in this way definitely helped us to capture the sound and atmosphere we were looking for. Watching Liam work his magic and hearing the songs come together was an incredibly rewarding process and he was the perfect producer for this album.

It's an evocative album, with Alexandra's voice, the mellotron, the melodies, the rhythms... there are songs like "Into the Unknown" that transport you to another place... what can you tell us about this song?
"Into The Unknown" draws on our love for Eastern instrumentation and raga rock. We used an original Leslie speaker for vocal effects and acoustic sitar to evoke that experimental feel of late 1966-67. Like the album's opening track "Colours Changing" it is another song inspired by otherworldly experiences and the mysterious nature of human existence and invites listeners to overcome their inhibitions and enjoy the many adventures that life has to offer.

I understand that Stuart and Alexandra DJ regularly throughout the UK and are avid record collectors. How many records do you think they have? What kind of music do they usually play? Do you think physical formats have a long-term future?
Absolutely! We're all big record collectors - Alex and Stu have about 5000 records between them which they DJ all over the UK and more recently in Europe. Stuart runs a fabulous psych night called Biff Bang Pow in Leicester and Alex runs a garage club night in the heart of Soho, London called Reverberation as well as contributing to The Compact Pussycat Club in Liverpool and Disques Vérité in Birmingham, a club night specializing in Yé-Yé, Psychédéliques and fuzzy chansons. Nothing beats vinyl in our opinion!

What is the point of continuing to make psychedelic rock today in an era dominated by digital and instant gratification?
We believe that it is now more important than



ever to remain authentic, demonstrate the value in what is "real" and use as much hand-crafted creativity in our everyday world as we possibly can. Music should be organic and the product of human imagination and soul. "The Crystal Teardrop… Is Forming" is an entirely analogue album from start to finish. It was really important to us to create our first album in this way. We used a Studer A800 tape machine and a Studer 189 Mixing Console dating from 1970 to capture the sound which really helped to showcase our material in the best light. The most important aspect of recording for us is that everything is real and created organically in the studio. Every sound the listener hears on the album is made without digital effects - including the vocal and instrumental phasing and backwards cymbals. Very few records are produced entirely analogue nowadays as it takes time to capture the authentic sound and feel we were aiming for and we are very grateful to have had the opportunity to record in this way.

A few issues ago, we spoke with an advocate of LSD and psychedelics as tools for opening the mind beyond existing prejudices, in the use of certain substances beyond recreational purposes. What do you think?
Our song "Colours Changing" probably best illustrates our opinion on this! Colours Changing hints at the value of mind-altering otherworldly experiences. We wanted the opening track to plunge listeners into the feel of the late 60s with our own interpretation of the sense of disorientation and wonder from a psychedelic trip. The song reflects the fact that there are aspects of human existence that can only be appreciated if you really open your eyes. Ultimately, as long as people take responsibility for themselves and each other we think of an open attitude towards life and all the questions that come with it should be positively encouraged.

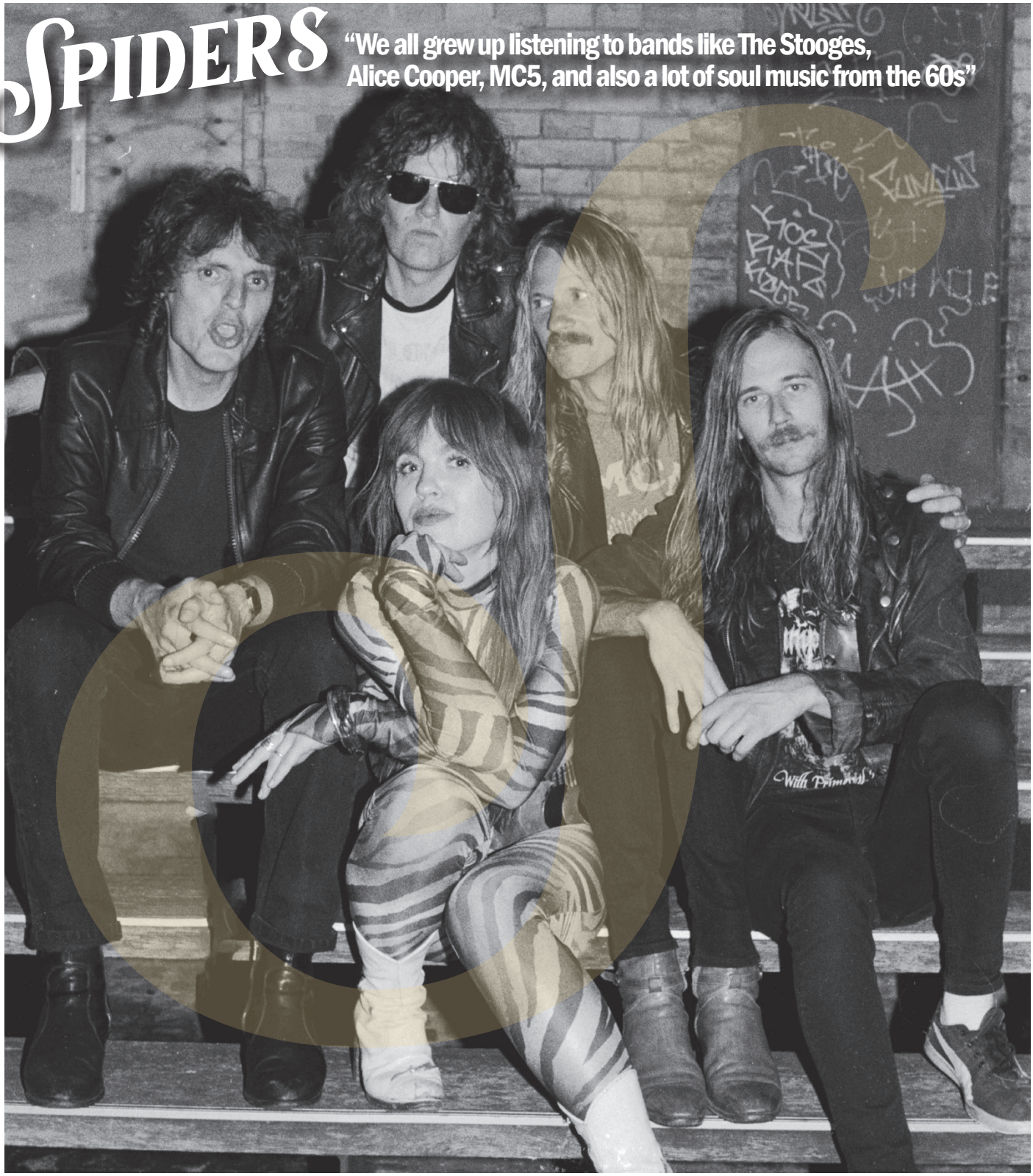
You've played in Spain, right? How did it go?
Yes indeed, we love Spain! We performed in Spain at the Sant Antoni Pop Festival in Valencia in January and at Wild Weekend Festival, Mallorca in April this year and also made our debut at the Yé-Yé in Gijon. We have really enjoyed the European shows we have been a part of so far – the crowds have been so welcoming and the party atmosphere infectious! It would be great to play in Spain again soon - hopefully see you in 2026!

Javistone



SPIDERS

"We all grew up listening to bands like The Stooges, Alice Cooper, MC5, and also a lot of soul music from the 60s"



Spiders is one of those many bands that people like Pupilo Dilatado from the essential blog "Criaturas salvajes" continually discover for us, and we give them the recognition they deserve, and boy do they deserve it. The number of bands we are discovering thanks to blogs continues to be incredible; they are an inexhaustible and indispensable source for diving into what is being done out there. The Swedish band Spiders is an example of this. Although they have just recorded a split album with The Hellacopters and are touring Europe (as if Spain were not part of Europe), many of us were unaware of their existence. And when I heard about their latest album "Sharp Objects," I rushed to listen to it, and what an album! A delicious album of pure rock and roll, high energy, garage, glam... a handful of infectious songs and, above all, a formidable frontwoman who will take your breath away, Ann-Sofie Hoyles. I imagine a triple bill of The Hellacopters, Spiders, and The Peawees, andI get dizzy. Can you imagine? We spoke with John Hoyles, guitarist, composer, and, along with Ann-Sofie, an original member of the band.

Your career began twenty years ago in Gothenburg, in a very fertile environment for rock music. How do you remember those first steps and what has changed in the band since then?

We started the band in 2010. I was playing in a band called Witchcraft at the time in my old hometown Örebro. I wanted to do something else so I moved to Gothenburg where I met Ann-Sofie and Axel Sjöberg from Graveyard. We wanted to play in a band so we started Spiders together with Matteo Gambacorta on bass. Gothenburg was a great city to move to, there was a really cool venue called Truckstop Alaska where everybody hanged out and bands like Graveyard, Horisont and Goat were just starting up. Spiders got signed to the record label Crusher Records and we released an EP and later a full length album. Axel had to leave the band because

Graveyard were getting big and taking up all his time so we brought in Ricard Harryson from the band Maharadjas on drums. We got signed to Universal Music and toured really a lot around Europe and USA. It was fun times and we learnt really a lot playing shows and recording albums. Today we have a new lineup in the band so its only me and Ann-Sofie left from the original band.

It took you seven years to release your new album. Why did it take so long? Did the pandemic affect you? Other projects? In any case... it was worth the wait!
Thanks, yes it took sometime mainly because of the pandemic, we had also been touring a lot before that and our contract with Universal came to an end so we felt like we needed a break. We all have jobs and some band members at the time had children so it was difficult to find the time. Although a lot of the songs on the new album was written during the pandemic. We are super pleased to have a new album out and playing shows again!

Throughout your discography ('Flash Point', 'Shake Electric', 'Killer Machine'...), you have always maintained a very direct energy. What would you say has been the key to not losing that intensity over the years?
I dont know, its the music we like to play and take it very seriously. We have all grown up listening to bands like The Stooges, Alice Cooper,MC5 and also alot of 60s soul music and we like the energy. We try to write music that we would want to listen to ourselves and see live.

Spiders has a sound that draws on 70s hard rock, garage and proto-punk, but with a sharp sound and personality. How would you define your musical identity? Were you perhaps more Stooges before and now a little more T. Rex? What references have been most present in the composition of Sharp Objects?
I think our musical direction has changed over the years and our records have had different influences depending on what we have been listening to at the time. Our latest album Sharp Objects has been very inspired by The Stooges, The Rolling Stones The Dictators and 60s garage music but we are big fans of T-Rex, Bowie, 70s glam so you can probably hear that too.

Ann-Sofie Hoyles is a frontwoman with a very strong stage presence. What role has her charisma played in the band's evolution and international recognition?
It has meant loads for the band. She is one of a kind and a natural star on stage with tons of energy so we are very lucky to have Ann-Sofie in the band. There has been quite a few younger women that come up to her after shows and tell her how she has inspired them to start bands of their own so its really cool.

Sharp Objects sounds more polished in terms of production, but without losing its rawness. What were you looking for in terms of sound, and what did the producer bring to this new work?
Im very pleased with the production as it was more or less the sound we were looking for. We recorded the album with producer Chips Kiesbye, who has worked with loads of swedish bands like the Hellacopters, Graveyard and The Nomads. He has a studio at his house in a small town outside of Gothenburg where we recorded for a few weeks. Chips has a great taste in music and some great vintage music equipment, he helped us a lot with ideas about backing vocals and arrangements. Our friend Martin "Konie" Ehrencrona mixed the album and we are really pleased with the result.

Some songs on the album seem to have a darker and more melodic approach than your previous work. Was there an intention to broaden the spectrum, or did it come about naturally?
I think it came naturally… I haven't thought of that. Maybe the production has a darker sound to it not as sparkly compared to our previous albums.

There are even folk sounds, such as in 'Valentines', a clearly sixties track, very much in the style of 60s girl groups. What can you tell us about this song?
Yes Valentines is very inspired by early 60s girl groups and also the Beatles. Ann-Sofie listens a lot to The Shangrilas, The Ronettes and girl garageband complitations. We always like to have a slower song on the albums almost like a ballad, something to break off from the other more up tempo songs. Valentines is one of my favourite tracks on the album.

Sweden continues to export high-calibre rock bands. How do you see the Swedish scene today compared to when you started out? From Spain, we view your country with a mixture of amazement and envy, of course.
Everything seems to go in waves, the last few years has been a low point for rock music and underground music in general. There has been a lot of small venues that have had to close after the pandemic, but Ive heard its been happening all over Europe. Although we are currently on tour with The Hellacopters in Sweden and are playing sold out shows everywhere at 1000 capacity venues so there is still an audience and hopefully soon rock music will be the coolest thing ever again!

> ***"She (Ann-Sofie Hoyles) is one of a kind and a natural star on stage with tons of energy so we are very lucky to have Ann-Sofie in the band. There has been quite a few younger women that come up to her after shows and tell her how she has inspired them to start bands of their own"***

You have always been associated with the Scandinavian rock and roll scene, especially with names like The Hellacopters. Is this a comparison that flatters you or do you feel it is a burden?
Its very flattering. Both bands have a lot of the same influences and us in Spiders all grew up listening to the Hellacopters in our teens so its only natural that we are compared I suppose. They are a great band and its an honour to be touring with them and be able to watch their shows every night. Spiders and The Hellacopters have just released a split 7" together covering a song each of late David Johansen from the New York Dolls RIP. Its been a dream come true to do a 7" and tour with them!
They have meant a lot to the swedish rock scene inspiring loads of bands.

Your live performances have always been one of your greatest strengths. What can we expect from the Sharp Objects tour, and how will the new songs translate to the stage? Any chance of seeing you in Spain?
We have been playing a lot of the new songs live now for a few months and they work really well live. We have worked hard to put on a good rock show to make them exciting and interesting and as I said before having Ann-Sofie in the band really lifts the roof at the shows. I think Spiders is in its best form ever. We have toured Spain a few times before over the years and we really want to come back and tour with our new album soon! We love Spain!

Javistone



POR AMOR AL ARTE

Nestor Mandela

There are dates that one keeps in one's memory not because someone repeats them, nor because they are written down in a calendar, but because they remain tattooed on the skin as an indelible memory. October 4, 1980, is one of those dates for me. I wouldn't remember it so clearly if it weren't for the fact that, some time ago, while looking through a newspaper archive, I confirmed what my memory had been telling me for decades: that day I was inoculated with the poison, or rather, the magic potion of rock and roll.

I was a child, with wide eyes and raw curiosity. My neighborhood (San Miguel) was celebrating its patron saint festivities, and the lineup included a band that was already making waves at the time, Lone Star. The stage was a traveling bullring, one of those set up for the cruel spectacle of heifer bullfighting. They seemed to appear out of nowhere, as if someone had decided to erect a temporary coliseum for a pagan ritual.

I remember it with the precision that only initiatory moments retain. From the early afternoon, the streets were a hive of activity. People arrived little by little, many wearing open shirts and worn, flared jeans, and there was an atmosphere that was both defiant and festive. This was not just a concert, it was a modern procession, a parade of colorful characters who seemed to have come from another world. I looked at everyone with a mixture of fascination and naivety, wondering how it was possible that so much life existed outside the walls of school and family routines.

When I think about it, the Woodstock documentary inevitably comes to mind. I saw it many years later and, despite the differences, I recognized myself in that spirit. For me, that day was my own personal Woodstock, compressed to the scale of a neighborhood, but with the same emotional intensity. There was electricity in the air, a buzz that grew as the concert time approached.

I was a thirteen-year-old kid. And so young that, besides not having a penny to my name, they wouldn't have sold me a ticket even if I had tried. So I did what any apprentice rebel would do: I snuck in. I nervously made my way through the crowd, with that feeling of doing something forbidden and exciting at the same time. And of course, I got home a little late, where a scolding awaited me. But the truth is, I didn't care. What I had discovered inside that traveling bullring was well worth the scolding.

The place was packed. The speakers were roaring even before the musicians appeared, as if the cables and valves were already impatient to release all that pent-up energy. And then, suddenly, the lights came on and Lone Star took the stage. The impact was immediate.

I can't describe exactly how I felt, because it was a whirlwind. It was noise, yes, but it was also order; it was fury, but it was also beauty. The singer, Pere Gené, with his rough voice, seemed to invoke invisible gods, while the guitar threw daggers of light that pierced the chest. I, barely thirteen years old, understood something that still stays with me today. Rock and roll isn't just something you listen to, rock and roll goes through you.

I remember the heat of the crowd, the pushing and shoving, the nervous laughter of those around me. I also remember my own bewilderment at seeing that, in that place, differences seemed to disappear. There were young and not-so-young people, there were many boys with long hair, there were workers who had left their blue overalls behind for a few hours, and teenagers seeking their first taste of freedom. We were all equal, all part of a momentary tribe brought together by the power of music. When I think back to that moment, I realize that something more than a musical taste began there. That day, I understood that there was a language different from that of adults, a language made of guitars, drums, and screams that didn't ask permission to exist. It was rebellion in every sense of the word. It was the poison of rock and roll running through the veins of a child who would never be the same again.

The years have passed, of course. I've seen many concerts since then, some in huge stadiums and others in small venues where you could touch the musicians. I've felt the vibration of the amplifiers in my stomach and shouted lyrics until I lost my voice. But none of those moments changed me as much as that first encounter, on October 4, 1980, in a traveling bullring in my neighborhood.

If I close my eyes, I can still hear the drums beating out the rhythm, the chords that seemed to open invisible doors. And above all, I still feel that certainty that I had discovered something that would stay with me forever. Rock and roll, with its imperfect magic, with its luminous noise, had become my home, my refuge, and my banner.

That day, without my knowing it, I was graduating from a different school, the school of beautiful disorder, of unfiltered passion, of life lived to the melody of a guitar, the rhythm of a bass, and a drum. I didn't know it then, but I had been given the most enduring potion, the eternal illusion that as long as there is a song to be played, there will be a corner of the world where anything is possible.

I just received Pere Gené's book ("Let me tell you something about the band, Lone Star") and I'm going to enjoy the journey. See you later.



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Another new yearbook from the digital magazine Rock Bottom Magazine, bringing together in physical format a summary of the work done over the past twelve months. With the mighty Goat on the cover, the content is overwhelming: Sacri Monti, F.A.N.T.A., Sam Cooke, Nat Simons, Las Dianas, Los Farelli, Miles Davis, The Fuzztones, Manola, Baby Huey, Vega, The Cubical, Tom Werman, Dead Boys, Alligator, Maika Makovski, Thee Cha Cha Chas, El Niño Delta, Dunes, Jordi Pujol Nadal, Gene Hackman, The Killer Barbies, Terry Callier, Hippie Death Cult, Guernica Mancini, Lendakaris Muertos, Marina Ferbes, Zålomon Grass, Julián Maeso, Wilson Fisk, Irene Serrano, Mark Lanegan, Ruge Boreal, Los DelTonos, Lagartija Nick, Europe, Edgar Allan Pop, Lionel Richie, Jodie Cash, Bunbury, The Rocky Horror Picture Show, Morgan.....

Does that sound like enough? Well, there's all that—and plenty more.

AL9

Beatles melodies from Brazil



From Brazil come the Khouri brothers, Matheus and Thiago, who since 2017 have been giving free rein to their passion for the pop sound of the 1960s, with a fixation on the music of The Beatles and The Beach Boys that makes their songs catchy and recognizable. Geoff Emerick himself, who was The Beatles' engineer, spoke about them on social media, praising their ability to develop pop melodies in the style of the Liverpool band. "The Ninth King" is their first album in English, after having sung in Portuguese, and clearly doing so in the language of Shakespeare is opening many doors for them. With songs as addictive as "The Only One," it's impossible for them not to attract attention. Keep an eye on them because they are already beginning to gain followers in the rest of the Americas, and in Europe they are already being talked about as a band with a tremendous future. We spoke with the Khouri brothers.

Tell us how AL9 came together. You are brothers, and I understand you had a similar musical upbringing.

We've always listened to a lot of rock music because of our parents. Our dad plays guitar as a hobby and started teaching us a bit. Over time, we started learning more on our own until we found ourselves playing together. Since we're siblings, like you mentioned, it felt even more natural. The band really came together in a very organic way.

I imagine you get asked this a lot, but... what does AL9 mean?

"AL" comes from alameda, which is a type of street we have in Brazil, and "AL" is just the abbreviation of it. The number 9 comes from the movie School of Rock, there's a scene where Jack Black says that 9 is a magic number. (In fact, the melody and spirit of the scene are inspired by Bob Dorough's song "Three Is a Magic Number" (1973), originally written for the educational series "Schoolhouse Rock!", of which there is a wonderful version by Blind Melon. NDR). We actually came up with this name when we were kids, and we decided to keep it.

Your sound is eminently pop, with obvious references to The Beatles, The Beach Boys, Badfinger, the sound of the 60s... am I right? Who did you listen to to develop such an easy way of crafting such infectious melodies?

You're definitely right. We grew up listening to a lot of that music, The Beatles, The Beach Boys, Simon & Garfunkel, Elvis Presley, Everly Brothers…and it really shaped the way we hear melodies. Our parents always had rock records playing at home, so that sound was in our ears from an early age. Melody has always been at the heart of what we do, so it just feels natural to build songs around it.

I believe Geoff Emerick, who was The Beatles' engineer, has praised you on social media. How did that make you feel? I think you've stirred up a lot of Beatles fans around the world, is that right? That sounds wonderful. Music endures, even as the years go by and generations change, don't you think?

It was truly surreal to know that Geoff Emerick, who worked so closely with The Beatles, had kind words for us. He's such a legendary figure in music history and getting that kind of recognition was unbelievable. We've definitely felt a strong connection with Beatles fans around the world, and it's been amazing to see how our music resonates with them. I think it shows exactly what you said, that music endures. The songs that touched people decades ago still inspire us today, and hopefully what we create can also inspire future generations in the same way.

"Isso É AL9" and songs like "Chama De Amor" catapulted you to fame on TikTok. How did you experience that transition

from homemade covers to going viral with original songs?
Everything happened so fast when we blinked, our videos were already going viral in Brazil and then later around the world. We were really happy that this happened with our original songs, because it allowed us to express ourselves and share that with such a big audience.

You've released four albums in Portuguese, and finally "The Ninth King" in English. How did you decide to take that step? Is it the same album as "O Nono Rei" but in English, or have you changed anything?
Yes, The Ninth King is the English version of O Nono Rei. The only difference is that we included a bonus track, You Called Me Up, which is the English version of Ela Me Ligou, a song we had already released back in 2019. We started recording in English because, even while we were still releasing music in Portuguese, we noticed that more and more fans from the United States, Europe, and Canada were connecting with our work. So it felt natural to create something in English as well, so that everyone could understand and be part of it.

"The Ninth King" is an infectious album from the first listen, with songs like "The Only One" that you can't get out of your head. What can you tell us about this song?
The Only One is a song we really love. It has a strong 60s vibe, which is where many of our biggest influences come from. That's probably why it feels so special to us, and maybe why it sticks in people's heads so easily.

How are creative roles distributed among you as brothers? Do you bounce ideas off each other in jam sessions, start with lyrics or melodies, or does each of you contribute in your own way? I understand that everything revolves around the melody, right?
It really depends on the song. Sometimes one of us brings an idea and we develop it together, sometimes we come up with something at the same time, and other times one of us starts alone and then we finish it together. It changes a lot from song to song, but in the end it's always a very collaborative process.

With over a million followers on social media, how do you manage that relationship with your global audience? Do you feel that language or culture is a barrier or, on the contrary, a bridge to connect?
We believe those cultural differences actually help us connect with our fans. We're a rock band from Brazil reaching a very large audience all over the world, and that just shows how music connects people no matter where they come from.

> ***We grew up listening to a lot of that music, The Beatles, The Beach Boys, Simon & Garfunkel, Elvis Presley, Everly Brothers... and it really shaped the way we hear melodies.***

Your release on streaming platforms was "Blue Road" with country singer Ruby Leigh. How did this collaboration come about? I have to say it's wonderful.
Ruby had been following us on Instagram since 2023, and we've been following her ever since too. When we wrote Blue Road, we immediately thought her voice would sound amazing on the track. Later we also had the idea of adding a choir, which was recorded by a group from Nigeria. In the end, everything came together beautifully, and we can see that our fans are really enjoying it.

Thank you very much, we hope to see you soon in Spain.
Thank you! We would love to play in Spain and meet our fans there soon!

Javistone



Monkey Week SON Estrella Galicia

Monkey Week

It was an open secret that Monkey Week's idyll with Seville had been left behind since the pandemic, but above all with the change of political team in the Andalusian capital, much less, let's say, sympathetic to cultural trends such as those promoted by the festival. What has been a surprise (and a pleasant one for the locals) is to learn that the organization decided, after weighing several options, to return to its native El Puerto de Santa María. A city that they had managed not to abandon with Monkey Weekend, which somewhat mitigated the absence of the "bigger" Monkey. Tali is like a brother (the cool brother I never had) to this writer, knowing that he is also family to Rock Bottom, so it was inevitable that I would discuss with him some questions that had been on my mind since the news of the dates for the next Monkey Week SON Estrella Galicia.

"The festival's leitmotif has always been 'discover tomorrow's music today'. We remain faithful to that premise and we like not only not to betray it, but also to keep our radar as active as possible." Tali Carreto

You're returning to El Puerto after several years in Seville. For some, it's a step backwards; for others, a natural move… What is it for you, honestly? Logistically, unfortunately, Seville is much more functional.

Seville might seem more functional, at least in terms of logistics and production, but in recent editions that was no longer the case. After the pandemic, the City Council pushed us further and further away from the Alameda de Hércules, which, as you know, was the festival's nerve center in the city. First, it became impossible to place the two main stages there again—the bumper-car stage and the free stage. And then, to top it off, with the current mayor and his new administration, they drastically and unexpectedly cut our schedules, forcing us to improvise solutions on the fly. As you can see, it wasn't functional at all. On top of that, once the previous edition was already underway, they informed us it would be the last time we'd be allowed to use Espacio Santa Clara—the venue of the professional conferences and home to two additional stages.



For us, returning to El Puerto de Santa María means not only going back home; it also allows us to celebrate Monkey Week SON Estrella Galicia as it truly is: a 100% urban event and festival, making use of buildings and spaces with historical and artistic heritage behind them. Something that, sadly, Seville didn't understand (or had stopped understanding in our later editions) but that here they grasped and valued immediately.

Moreover, speaking of functionality, when the festival moved to Seville in 2016—nine years ago now—our city didn't offer as many resources as it does today. Now the options for accommodation have multiplied thanks to the growth of tourist apartments, and there are more connections to other parts of the country thanks to additional flights at Jerez airport and more trains to the province.

Leaving Seville has been a long-announced death. The first period in the Alameda de Hércules was idyllic, truly special—few times have I felt such happiness in a



musical environment as in those editions, something we can never thank you enough for. But when I saw that you began moving the big stage… I suspected something. Complaints from neighbors (funny how one weekend of music bothers more than Holy Week and other traditional fanfares), changes in political leadership… Tell us what really happened.
Well, in the answer to your first question you already have a pretty detailed summary. To everything mentioned above, you can add the lack—or total absence—of understanding with the new mayor and his team. As an example: in the two years of his administration that coincided with the festival's last editions, we were never able to meet with him. Unthinkable for an event of Monkey Week SON Estrella Galicia's scale and reach—not only culturally.

You've always been an example of resilience; it's incredible how you adapt to adversity. When you decided to leave Seville, did you consider other options? How did you approach it?
Of course, we had several options. A festival like Monkey is candy for many cities—for many



reasons: the visibility it brings to the host city (in media impact alone, the festival usually reaches over 3 million euros, according to analyses by Onclusive, a prestigious media-monitoring platform), the economic return for the town (since it's an urban event, many local bars and restaurants benefit from visiting attendees), the prestige it brings in the cultural and industry sphere (Monkey often appears highlighted every year in the Observatorio de la Cultura, an annual study of cultural events and initiatives in Spain)… and so on. So, yes, there were suitors. But we were also very clear that if we were going to move the festival again, the most accurate, natural, and exciting decision was to return to where everything began: El Puerto de Santa María. Our home, after all.

I've been to almost every edition of Monkey (including Freek Fest), and I remember the big Monkey editions in El Puerto as something wonderful—and next to them, Monkey Weekend felt like an appetizer. How big will this returning Monkey be? Are you thinking back to those editions, or will the concept change?
The main idea, as I mentioned earlier, is to return to the festival's identity as an urban event. During the day and part of the night, both the professional activities (conferences, workshops, meetings, cocktails…) and the showcases and concerts will take place in the city's historic center, with venues such as the Castillo de San Marcos and its Bodega Caballero, the Teatro Municipal Pedro Muñoz Seca, the Bodega de Mora de Osborne, Casa Cossio, Padreo, Milwaukee, Plaza Alfonso X El Sabio, and others that will host more surprises. And at night, the epicenter will be the Monasterio de la Victoria, with two stages (the Chapel and the Cloister), plus the now-legendary bumper-car arena.

The fact that in just three days there will be around one hundred concerts and showcases, plus two days of professional programming with over twenty activities, in addition to other surprises, gives you an idea of the scale of this Monkey Week SON Estrella Galicia—and of its differences compared to Monkey Weekend SON Estrella Galicia, its younger sibling, conceived as a smaller summer festival without the professional fair aspect of the main event.

By the time this interview is published, the festival will only be a few weeks away. Tell me a surprise you can reveal… I've heard whispers that you're bringing back the Monasterio de la Victoria…
Yes! Haha, I beat you to it! But we're not only bringing back familiar spaces—we're also adding new ones, like the Casa Cossio, which will absolutely delight many attendees.

Recommend some of the lesser-known acts that might surprise us this year. Remember, this isn't Rock de Lux…
For this fine house that loves rock, folk, punk, and other veteran genres, there will be plenty to choose from: 800 Gondomar, Destroyer, Juventude, Moundrag, Winona Riders, Dear Joanne, Los Chivatos, Ku!, Aiko el Grupo, Sistema de Entretenimiento, Sin Bragas, Rata, Memocracia, TOC, Ajou!… There's just so, so much interesting stuff!

In the end, the spirit of getting surprised is just as alive as ever, right? How do you manage to discover so many bands and artists? Some apply to perform, but many others you bring in yourselves.
Well, the festival's leitmotif has always been "discover today the music of tomorrow." We remain faithful to that premise—not only do we avoid betraying it, we keep our radar as active as possible.

Is there Monkey for a long time to come?
Of course. And Monkey extends its tentacles beyond Week or Weekend, with other related events such as Suntracks, an international meeting with music supervisors that we've been hosting for several years now, the latest edition of which took place last September in Los Angeles.

When will there be a "Rock Bottom" stage?
Hahaha, don't give us ideas, my friend…

Javistone



From Abbey Road... ¡to Hell!

Before Bandcamp and digital technology turned recording an album into something anyone could attempt from their own bedroom, most artists had to travel to a studio and play inside a fishbowl, repeating takes endlessly, fighting with sound engineers, negotiating every chord with their producer, crying next to the coffee machine, and sprinting to pack up their gear before other poor devils came in to do the same. However, a lucky few were able to choose other places to record their music and, at times, made decisions as utterly deranged as the ones we're about to tell you. Here's a list of some of the most extravagant places an album has ever been recorded.

Nine Inch Nails: The Downward Spiral (1994). Trent Reznor used part of the cheque issued to him by Interscope (an Atlantic subsidiary) to rent the house where Sharon Tate was murdered and record his second album. Reznor renamed it "Le Pig Studio" and moved in his arsenal of consoles and 24-track recorders. The sinister sound of this record may owe something to the morbid influence of having been recorded at the site of a brutal crime—something Reznor openly boasted about and took as the perfect inspiration for a collection of deranged, unhealthy songs. Shortly after the sessions wrapped, the house was partially demolished, and Reznor salvaged one of the side doors to take with him. In time, Trent softened up and regained some sense, eventually admitting he regretted choosing that location—especially after meeting Sharon Tate's sister.



Red Hot Chili Peppers: Blood Sugar Sex Magik (1991). The band's first album produced by Rick Rubin was recorded in a mansion he owned, built in 1920. The house had a reputation for being haunted and for hosting strange phenomena, but Rubin forced the band to move in for the entire duration of the recording. Taking advantage of the mansion's natural acoustics, most of the album was tracked with all musicians playing live in the same room, with no added effects. Blood Sugar Sex Magik would go on to become a massive international hit, but Anthony Kiedis and company couldn't wait to leave the house: drummer Chad Smith refused to sleep there, claiming he felt "presences," and guitarist John Frusciante began acting nervous and erratic, which the others quickly attributed to some sort of supernatural interference—as if Frusciante needed otherworldly help to act erratic.

Led Zeppelin: Led Zeppelin III / Led Zeppelin IV (1970 / 1971). Another mansion, this time two of them: Headley Grange was a partially derelict Victorian country house in Hampshire— anything but comfortable. Jimmy Page chose it and dragged the rest of the band along to record several tracks there. Robert Plant, for his part—and probably as revenge—convinced them to record more songs at Bron-Yr-Aur, a remote stone cottage in the Welsh hills where he used to holiday, and which had no electricity or hot water. Isolated from the world, armed with can openers, diesel generators and the Rolling Stones' mobile studio, Led Zeppelin captured some of their most memorable tracks in these inhospitable environments, where there may not have been ghosts, but there were mosquitoes—and those are far more dangerous. As a bit of trivia, the thunderous drum reverberation at the start of "When the Levee Breaks" comes from the natural echo in the stairwell where they set up John Bonham's kit.

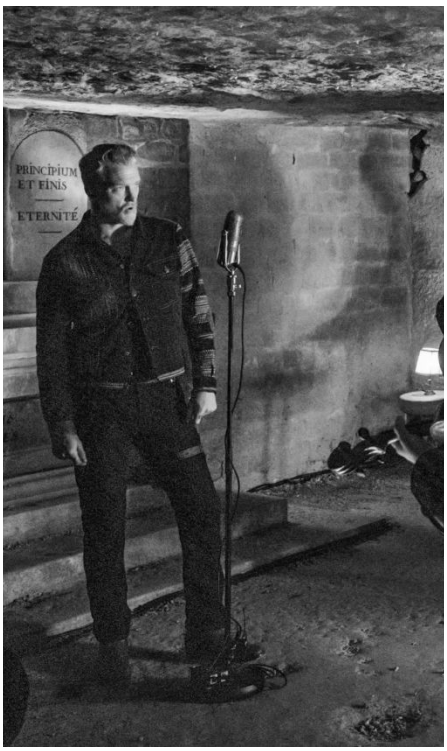
Burzum: Dauði Baldrs (1997). Up to this point,



everything has been more or less eccentric artistic whims. Varg Vikernes, however, was forced to record this album in Bergen (Norway)… because he was in prison, serving time for the murder of Euronymous (Mayhem's vocalist) and for burning several churches. Vikernes had no access to guitars, drums, or professional recording gear; he was only allowed to record alone in his cell using a Casio keyboard and a four-track recorder. The entire record consists of synthesized sounds imitating strings, percussion and pianos, steering this Burzum album away from black metal and toward a kind of medieval ambient wrapped in Vikernes' usual mythological ramblings. Unlike Charles Manson's Lies (1970), its author did eventually walk free—much to the concern of everyone.

Beastie Boys: Paul's Boutique (1989). It's the second Beastie Boys album and—with all due respect to Ill Communication (1994)—their best. The unusual place chosen for this record couldn't have been simpler: the living room of the Dust Brothers' house, their producers, in Silver Lake (Los Angeles). There were no facilities or professional gear, just a room packed with vinyl, samplers, analogue tapes and vintage turntables. The entire recording was homemade and handcrafted: beats and mixes built layer by layer, launching samples live one by one… and there are over a hundred of them, from James Brown to Pink Floyd, plus dozens of fragments impossible to identify. Paul's Boutique is a monumental collage of funk, soul, classic rock, disco, old-school hip-hop and experimental music. Although the final result had to be polished in a real studio (Record Plant Studios—where Hendrix, Black Sabbath, Prince, Guns N' Roses and Beyoncé recorded), its authentic, artisanal sound is impossible to replicate. Except maybe by DJ Shadow, who's been trying for years.

Queens of the Stone Age: Alive in the Catacombs (2025). Released barely a couple of months ago in an ultra-limited edition priced like a human organ—and with a title that couldn't be more revealing—Alive in the Catacombs is undoubtedly the album recorded in the strangest location on this entire list. QOTSA somehow obtained permission to set up their gear in the Paris catacombs—or maybe they just snuck in; it's a fact that in Paris these days people sneak into places with startling ease—and there they recorded the songs on this EP. The result is hypnotic and solemn: the gloomy atmosphere of the catacombs wraps the five tracks in a strange aura that amplifies the melancholy of "Running Joke," lights up the gothic decay of "Kalopsia" like a will-o'-the-wisp—complete with a string section—and sweetens the haunting mystery of "Suture Up Your Future." Recorded live, the audience sounds a bit lifeless, but the music cuts straight to the bone. Two bad jokes in the final line—that's how you end an article.



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Interview with Kike Babas and Kike Turrón

"Joaquín Sabina, Pasión y vida", the comic you weren't expecting



Who hasn't heard a thousand and one stories about the life of Joaquín Sabina? We're certainly not talking about an unknown figure within the Spanish music industry. Many biographies, anecdotes, and songs have been published about the life and work of one of the most controversial and renowned singer-songwriters this country has produced. However, it's rare to find originality in the way such a popular figure is portrayed. That's why the publication of a comic about the native singer of Úbeda is more than a reasonable excuse to explore the forms and methods through which one can still observe a life.

Kike Babas and Kike Turrón, the minds behind this unique work, have kindly explained the motivation for this project, which traces the early years of the artist's career—from his childhood in Úbeda and his exile in London to the beginning of his international success, including passages dedicated to his most iconic songs.

You've chosen a very innovative way to portray the life and work of a universal figure. What does a comic offer that a traditional biography doesn't?

Kike Turrón: First of all, Sabina has never been told like this before—in panels. And on top of that, Sabina already has almost twenty books that fall under what you describe as a "traditional biography." Besides, comics allow you to go further; they let you capture a photo of that special moment when nobody had a camera in their hands…

Kike Babas: A comic is another art form. The combination of illustration and narrative allows you to inhabit places you couldn't otherwise: for example, we placed Sabina inside a poem by Jaime Gil de Biedma, and we even interviewed characters from his songs. Plus, Sabina was already a comic-book character—it just needed someone to actually draw him, and we were the lucky ones.

Sabina is made of words and songs. How do you translate his poetry, irony, and voice into a visual language without losing his essence?

Turrón: By studying his work and life in depth—his influences, his discoveries—while also looking at the historical context of each stage of his life.

Babas: The comic lets you reach his essence naturally: we recreated several of his songs and, simply with the illustrations, we didn't even need to include the lyrics.



The title refers to "passion and life." If you had to choose a single panel or chapter that encapsulates those two words in Sabina, which would it be?
Turrón: I'd pick the moment when he leaves Spain, goes into exile… And on the dining table at his parents' house, there's a plate of lentil stew cooling down as his mother calls him to come eat—but he's already gone. He's on his way to London to escape trial for throwing a Molotov cocktail at a bank branch in Granada. I'll stick with that plate of lentils with chorizo his mother made for him—lentils he wouldn't eat again for another three years…

What was the process of turning sounds and emotions into images like?
Babas: First, it was an intellectual exercise. We had to imagine those sounds and emotions; then put them on paper, describe them, and finally send everything to the illustrators who, with their art and magic, gave us pure gold in return.



SABINA. PASIÓN Y VIDA. CORTESÍA @ALBERTO PERAL

Was there a particular song or biographical moment that especially shaped the narrative?
Turrón: The book has a great soundtrack. As any good biography does, it covers all his albums, his hits, his verses. Many songs have their place: "Quién me ha robado el mes de abril", "El diario no hablaba de ti", "Medias negras", or "Y nos dieron las diez", because Sabina is his life, but also his universal repertoire, which has transcended many generations here and throughout Latin America.

Personally, which chapter of Joaquín Sabina's life would you have liked to experience?
Turrón: (Laughs) Well, since I'm such a rock fan, I wouldn't have minded starving with him during the London years, accompanying him to see Lou Reed in his killer era, or the Stones back then.
Babas: As a musician, I wouldn't have minded knowing what it feels like to sell out Las Ventas—something Sabina



experienced more than once. As a fan, I would've loved to see him on a wild, inspired night at La Mandrágora.

Thinking of fans, do you believe this graphic work reveals any special moment from his life?
Turrón: I'm sure it does. Even more so because this first volume of Sabina's biography covers his life from birth to the mid-1990s—a stage quite distant now, which longtime "Sabina experts" will appreciate revisiting, while newer fans will find it incredibly revealing. And if you're a true fan, visit the publisher's website—you'll get exclusive gifts that will only be available for a limited time: https://editorial.baobilbao.com.

You worked with two exceptional prologues: Benjamín Prado and Luis García Montero. How do their literary visions blend into a work that is, fundamentally, visual?
Babas: Honestly, very well. They're close friends of Joaquín, so they have a personal, accurate perspective, and for two giants like them, stepping into the world of comics is an easy task.

What was the process behind choosing the illustrators who worked on this project?
Babas: Most of them have been with us from the start. They worked on the comics about Fito and Wyoming, and we found them in various ways: mutual acquaintances recommended some, and others came through a Facebook group where we posted an ad ("Illustrators wanted for biography of Spanish musician"). For this Sabina book, five new artists joined in, and each one arrived differently: someone mentions one, you spot another's drawings on social media… For the selection, we mostly know what we don't want: no manga, no Bruguera, no European-style comic. We lean more toward the American school—from Marvel/DC to noir. And honestly, the level in this country is exceptional.

Graphic biographies always balance the real and the interpreted. Where did you draw the line between the historical Sabina and the Sabina of your imagination?
Turrón: We like to keep a logical balance between both. We maintain rigorous accuracy—facts, dates, people—but then we allow ourselves to fly. For example, the songs and the characters that inhabit them. Being able to take flight through the verses and turn them into images is pure magic, always holding Sabina's hand, as he is the central axis of this story.

If Sabina were to read this graphic novel, whisky in hand and one eyebrow raised… what do you think he'd say upon turning the last page?
Turrón: I don't know if he'd have a drink in hand, but he'd probably say something like: "I have a lot to say in favor of this book. From the bottom of my heart, I want to congratulate the Kikes and their team: for the text, the fantastic drawings, and the research work. Some things are even told better than how I remember them through the haze." Which is, in fact, what he sent us in a voice message after reading the book.

Ada Salas

"HIGH FIDELITY": 25 YEARS OF A LIFE LESSON MADE OF VINYL, LOVE, AND LOSSES



I didn't read the book before watching the movie. I won't lie to you. In fact, the only thing I'd ever read by Nick Hornby was Fever Pitch when this film landed in my hands and I was surprised to read that the script was based on one of his books. And no, I can't brag about having seen it in a cinema either. I didn't, and I don't even know if it ever made it to the big screen in this country. Honestly, I don't feel like checking it on AIs and all that stuff. Because this little text isn't about reliable data — it's about feelings. About how a simple, unpretentious film can become your favourite one or, in this case, mine. No, not The Godfather Part II, Goodfellas, Apocalypse Now, Psycho, Pulp Fiction, Casablanca, or One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest. My favourite movie is High Fidelity, by Stephen Frears, and I'm not one bit embarrassed to say it. Not at all.

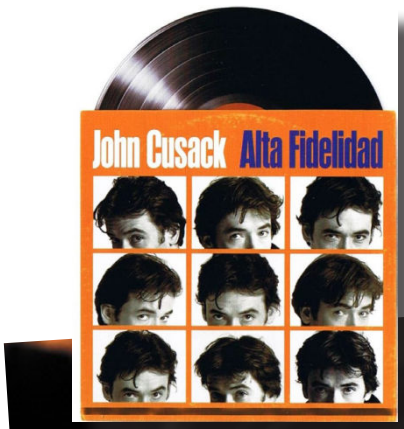
Facts are facts: it's by far the film I've watched the most times in my life. Since it came out, at least once a year — by the way, I still haven't watched it yet in 2025 — and sometimes twice or more. It's the only one whose lines I actually know by heart. And while we're at it, it's the one I saved from "the purge"; which wasn't really a purge, more that a few months ago I decided to get rid of my DVD movie collection and keep only the music ones. Why? With all the platforms around and the lack of space caused by collecting vinyl, CDs, books, comics, and movies, something had to be done. It was pretty obvious, especially since my computer didn't even have a DVD drive and I didn't have a standalone player plugged into the TV either. I got rid of many things with a heavy heart, and soon realised that instead of leaving them out on the street for someone to pick up — because the libraries didn't want them either —

I could've just kept the discs in a binder and thrown out the cases. I can be such an idiot. Still, one survived. Of course: High Fidelity. With all its bonus features. Now I'm actually thinking about buying a small, cheap DVD player — see what a fool I am? Now that I no longer have my movies… Anyway, my son Jon is also a fan of the movie and has watched it several times. There you go, slipped in a bit of dad pride.

And since we're talking about "a bit of a song" in another sense, Frears' film is exactly that — thanks to Nick's book. In his case, an ode to loving life, even though it's full of heartbreak, and also an ode to vinyl records, whose passion isn't exactly free of drama either. I've wanted to be Rob Gordon, the character played brilliantly by John Cusack, with all his breakups and meltdowns, many times. I've wanted friends like Barry (where I first discovered Jack Black) or Dick (Todd Louiso). I've imagined that some of the guys who stole away the girls I liked throughout my life had the face of Ian "Ray" Raymond (Tim Robbins). Bruce Springsteen hasn't appeared to me in my dreams, I think. But Elvis and Bob Dylan have. I've had heated debates about albums or concerts that could easily fit into the movie. I've been to hundreds of bars just like the one where Marie De Salle (Lisa Bonet) sings, and I've been just as clumsy with girls as Rob is with her at the start. I've had relationships that could easily outdo any of the exes in the film. People have given me demo tapes to listen to. My favourite book is also Cash by Johnny Cash. And I could go on forever.

But the thing is: the film turns twenty-five this year. A quarter of a century. Two and a half decades (that's how Barry would put it). Plenty of time for its scenes to feel old. Yet to me, it still feels incredibly fresh. Because those freaks — and I'm currently reading Freaks Out! by Luke Haines, just to add to it — we're still here. Fewer of us, maybe. Not balder — that's been standard on me for a while — but definitely more wrinkled, men and women alike. Still, whenever you need it, for whatever reason, you can turn to High Fidelity. Not to watch someone whose life is worse than yours, but to meet someone who hurts and enjoys life in equal measure. Someone who gets angry and laughs. Who gets passionate and disappointed. Because in the end, what Rob Gordon is doing is living. And that's the whole point. Realising we're not here just to drift through, but that if we can leave a mark — even if it's just in someone's heart through our passion — we should. Because the rest is very, very boring. The complete opposite of High Fidelity. Play.

Eduardo Izquierdo



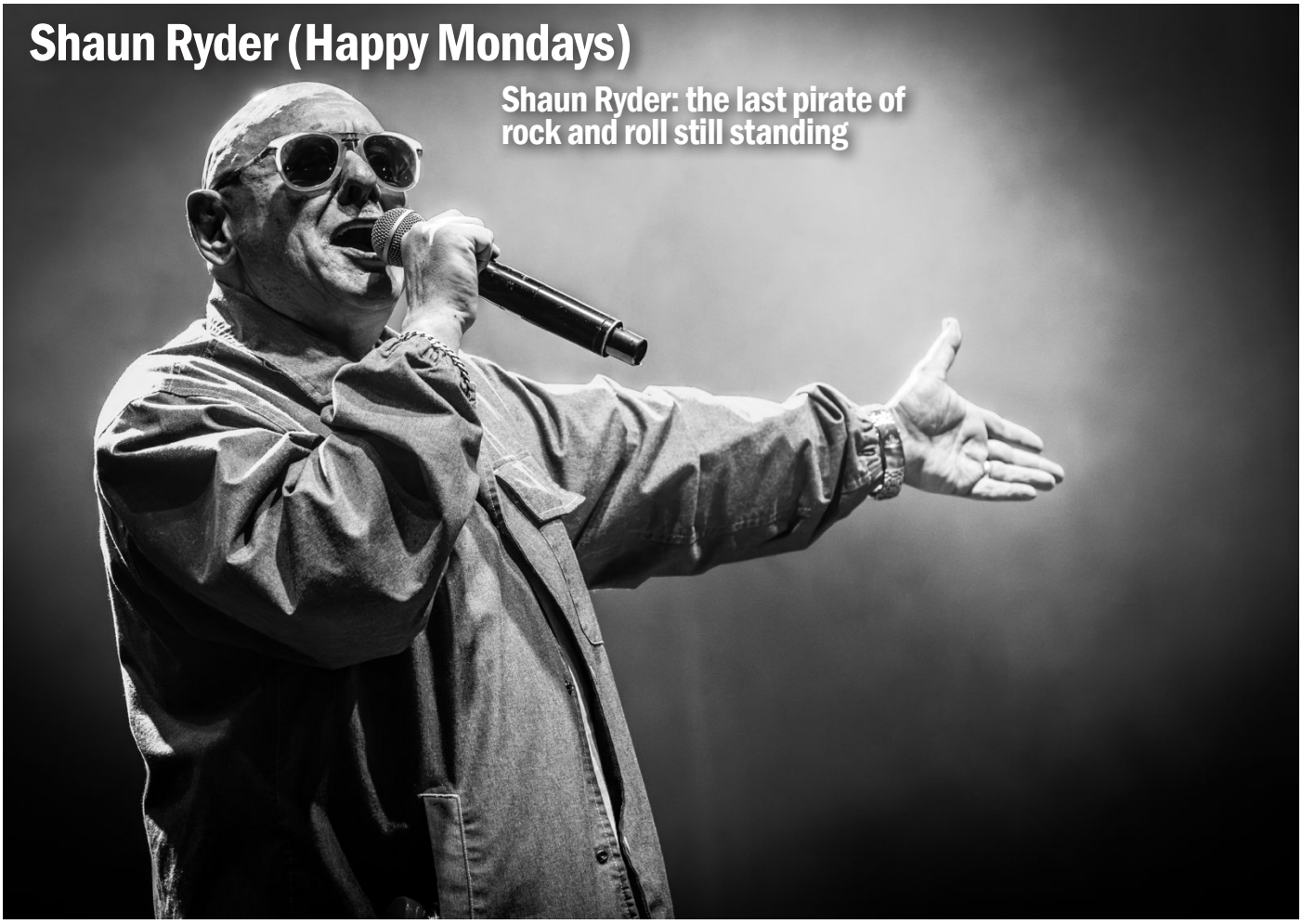






Shaun Ryder (Happy Mondays)

Shaun Ryder: the last pirate of rock and roll still standing



Shaun Ryder shouldn't still be here. By all accounts, he should've been another name carved into the "gone too soon" list, right alongside the usual casualties of the chemical romance. But instead, he's still onstage, still ranting, still laughing like the bastard child of Johnny Rotten and a Salford bookie.

Happy Mondays weren't just a band; they were a street gang with instruments. Ryder, his younger brother Paul on bass; Bez, shaking maracas like a man possessed; and the rest of them locked into a groove that made ecstasy feel like Sunday service. Shaun wasn't a singer in any conventional sense: he barked, muttered, slurred… but what came out was pure working-class poetry. He turned dole-queue slang and pub chatter into mantras for the rave generation. "24 Hour Party People", "Hallelujah", "Step On"… this was Madchester at its most unhinged. And Ryder was its high priest. The stories are the stuff of legend: recording an album in Barbados while smoking crack with the locals, blowing through record-label advances, dragging Factory Records to its grave… By the early '90s the Mondays were done for: bankrupt, strung out, imploded. Shaun was circling the drain.

Then, like a Mancunian Lazarus, he came back. Black Grape in '95 was a filthy, funky resurrection. It's Great When You're Straight… Yeah was part carnival, part sermon, part piss-take, and it went straight to number one. Ryder was once again the bloke who could spin chaos into gold, spitting rhymes about Jesus, blowjobs and politics in the same breath. For a moment, it looked like he'd finally shaken off his demons.

But Ryder never really escapes anything. Lawsuits, label bust-ups, health scares — he dragged them all along. And yet instead of fading away, he became a cult folk hero. The country looked past the wreckage and fell for the man underneath: the loud-mouthed Manc who could tell a story like no one else. TV crowned him a kind of accidental national treasure, the bloke with no filter who says the absolute worst possible thing and leaves you laughing till your stomach hurts.

Now, at sixty, Shaun Ryder is battered but unbroken. He's still fronting the Mondays and Black Grape, still howling into the mic like a man who's cheated death more than once. He talks openly about ADHD, memory loss and the toll of his past, but there's no self-pity — just dark humour and the spark of a survivor who knows the joke's on him, and is still inside it.

Shaun Ryder's career is a wrecking ball that somehow never stopped swinging. He didn't just soundtrack Madchester; he embodied its excess, its humour, its collapse. He's chaos with a grin — proof that sometimes the shipwreck survives the crash. And when he's onstage, half-talking, half-growling into the mic, it's obvious: Ryder is the last real pirate of rock 'n' roll, and he's not abandoning ship anytime soon. Unfiltered, unpredictable and unmistakably iconic, Ryder is the rebel bard of rave culture.

I spoke to him last week, just before Happy Mondays kick off their Spanish tour.

Hi Shaun, how are you doing?

Yeah mate, I'm all good how are you?

All good! So, you guys are coming over to Valencia at the end of September to perform at Visorfest and I can honestly say they buzz about the Happy Mondays playing here is off the chart! The last time I think you played here was 1989.

Nice!! Yeah I've not been to Valencia for years! I don't think the last time I was there was '89 – we might have played there then. But the last time I was there was the early 2000's. which is still 25 years ago! I can imagine it's changed a lot since then.

"The Happy Mondays helped define the Madchester scene — do you ever feel proud of being a cultural architect, or do you just see it as a lot of chaos that happened by accident?"

Oooh! Well, I'm very proud of what we have done and its definitely better than beeing a crackhead waste of space! Seriously though, it really wasn't by accident – we might have played hard but we fucking worked harder. I don't think at the start some of the band members realised what that work entailed! At the end of the day we are an Indie band and we were getting publicity like we were a major record label band. We made our own way with a bit of help from Factory records, so really I am really proud of what we have done.

Is the pigeon story true?

Ha Ha oh yeah! I was a kid, I was 15 and a junior post boy and we used to eat our dinner in St Peters Square and the pigeons used to fucking try and rob our food. So me and my mate decided one day to get a load of rat poison and teach the pigeons a lesson for trying to steal our KFC of us. So we put some rat poison in bits of chicken and chips and threw it at the pigeons. The next day the headline on the front of the Manchester Evening News read "Sick Maniacs Poison Pigeons" – that was 1978 and I think was my second newspaper headline before the Happy Mondays took off.

"If the Happy Mondays had started in 2025 instead of 1980, what would that band even look like? Would you be banned from Spotify before you hit the charts?"
Im really not sure what Spotify is all about! My kids do, but I haven't got a clue! Would we be banned? I don't know – but what we did was make our own publicity, Factory was a small label and they didn't have money to advertise or pay for publicity. So me and Bez did it all ourselves, the rest of the band didn't maybe understand that the publicity part was just as important. So me and Bez got full colour reviews and PR in magazines by being ourselves and having a laugh and not taking it too seriously. When we started it was a diferent time - if Bros had admitted to smoking weed they would have been dropped by the label and you would have never heard of them again. But we took pills, smoked weed, we didn't give a fuck! We wasn't hiding it from our mum, we wasn't worried about a knock on the door. We grew up with the Sex Pistols and the Rolling Stones and innapropriate behaviour. We might have had learning difficulties but we certainly knew how to play the game. Now with social media and eveything else, its just a digital version of the same thing – you make up shit on it, just the same as what we did back in the day.

"When you look at today's music scene, do you see any bands with that same danger, that same madness, that you lot had in the late 80s and early 90s?".
Not really, you are not not allowed to have that anymore. Its gone back to the days of "The Brotherhood Of Man", all very nice out there and if anyone is a bit off their nut it just pushes it all underground. Record labels get frightened of real people, you got all these daft cunts on the videos now showing themselves raking drugs and doing robberies and all that shite on social media. If a record label saw that, they would run mile! They don't want to know, they would be frightemed to death. So, they go and sign up the safest thing and its all the same. But there are still great bands out there, Rock and Roll bands. Its just not Rock and Roll as we would think of it. I really havent got a clue what actually is going on, but my Lad is 32 and in the music game and he knows all the bands and DJ's and whats current. But me, I haven't got a fucking clue! I just listen to the same shit as I always have! I put Absolute Radio on or Gold, I can't do 6 Music – I like what I have always liked! Not only that I cant remember the names of these new bands!

Its like Manchester and Liverpool have always had plenty of talent, the entertainment world, acting, music, TV. These two places will always carry on doing that, its abreed of people.

"You've been through every label and box people tried to put you in — 'lad', 'junkie poet', 'working-class hero' — which one pisses you off the most?".
Er, none of them really, I mean, now they call me a national treasure and I will take that over smackhead any day! National smackhead or national treasure, I know which I prefer! Its good having nice things said about you, whether you believe it or not! But National Treasure gets given out to easy, you know what I mean? Someone like Fatima Whitbread is a National fucking Treaure, not me! Nowdays there is a snobbery in Music, Especially in Mnachester – but we are still playing shows, getting paid and we love it more than ever. And we do a bit of television, which puts young punters on our doorstep at festivals. Our fan age range now goes from 9 to 99 – maybe because of mine and Bez's exploits into TV, which some of those "Muso Kids" who write things in magazines don't like! We might just be some lads from Salford, but we know how to play the game.

"What's the wildest myth about the Mondays that you secretly wish was true?".
Secrety wished was true? Fuck me, I don't know! Im not even sure about the myths – at the time we were all off our boxes! Now we are all in outr 60's and we are fucking pensioners!

"Does being sober make gigs easier, or does it ever feel like you're missing the chaos?".
I haven't felt like I am missing out for years. Im 63 next week. When I hit 40 that's when it was time for me to knock it all on the head. My kids – the youngest is 16 and the oldest is 35 – when my kids started growing up and understanding things it was time for Dad to stop acitng like he had been acting and stop doing doing what he had been doing. When I hit 40 I realsied it was time to fucking grow up! I've been clean for 23 fucking years! I still like a pint and I do like a cold Corona. I've knocked the spirits on the hrad, but a nice cold beer…

"You're known for saying whatever the fuck you think — in this hyper-cancel era, does that make you feel more like a dinosaur or more like a necessary rebel?".
Well its makes me wonder why the fuck havent I been cancelled!

"If you could swap places with Bez for a week — no microphones, just the maracas — what would you do differently?".
I would stay in for a week and put me fucking feet up! He hasn't stayed in for a week since about 1986! He might be 60 something, but he doesn't know he isnt still 21!

"You've survived heroin, fame, insolvency, reality TV, UFOs… so what actually scares Shaun Ryder these days?".
Teenage fucking daughters! Fucking lads, no problem. Teenage daughters… Fucking hell!!!!

> ***Don't tell anyone but aliens heard the Happy Mondays years ago and thety sort of got it!***

"Do you think aliens would get the Happy Mondays, or would they just send us back the tapes and tell us to try harder?".
Don't tell anyone but aliens heard the Happy Mondays years ago and thety sort of got it!

"If you had to sum up the Happy Mondays' entire career in one smell — what smell would it be?".
Fucking hell! ADH fucking D!!!!! What does chaotic smell like?

Bez in three words.
Bez is Bez. There are no fucking words – Bez is Bez!!! He is a character out of the Magic Roundabout!!!

First record you ever bought?.
It was two LP's, I didn't buy them, I stole them. In our part of Salford, this is going back to 1973, they built a massive foorball sized supermartket. I mean they are eveywhere now, but in 1973 there waas nothing like it and it was called Scan. They set it up like a massive corner shop. They had a couple of security guards on the door and that is! They had tents set up in there, they sold eveything, air rifles, records, cream cakes, beer and food. So we used to go in and get a load of cream cakes, go to the booze and get a load of booze and then go to where the tents were in the display and sit in a tent, drink the booze and eat the cakes. At the time I had a Parka coat which I had cut the lining to take LP's - so the first records I got was "Pin ups" and "Hunky Dora" by David Bowie and "Every Picture Tells A Story" by Rod Stewart.

Oasis or Blur?
Oh come one! They are both amazing fucking bands – brilliant writers, great frontmen, just yeah! So, I'm not going there!

Whats the best insult you have ever been called?
You know what, the one good thing about me is I cant remember things so I never get embarrased about things that happended the night before! I grew up being insulted, so I cant remember!

And finally, as I mentioned at the start – so many people are looking forward to seeing you at Visorfest. What can we talls the fans?
Hello fans in Valencia! Cant fucking wait to get there! Not ben there for 25 years, so we just cant wait to be there and see you all. We enjoy it more than ever now and I am not just saying that, you will see it in the performance.

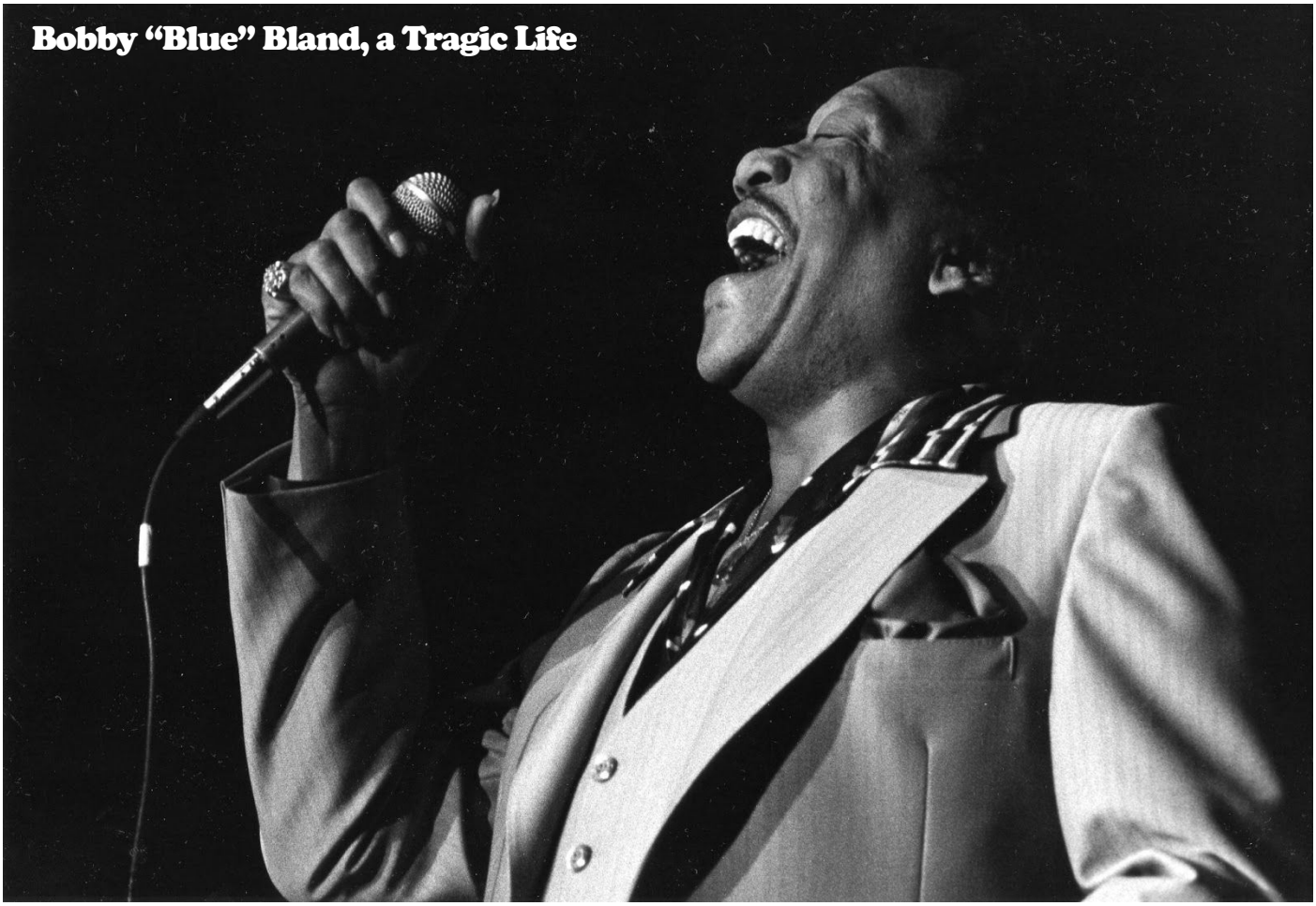
Shaun, thank you and see you at Visorfest!
Yes, come and say hello and see you there!

Rhyan Paul

KEEP THE SOUL ALIVE

BY JL. CRESPO ZEPISOUL

Bobby "Blue" Bland, a Tragic Life



In the early eighties, we spent much of our free time on the streets and in the doorways of our neighborhoods, listening to cassette tapes on those unforgettable "loros" —the portable radio-cassette players that almost everyone had at home— enhanced by the inspiration provided by beer —a one-liter bottle of Mahou beer— creating a sense of brotherhood through music.

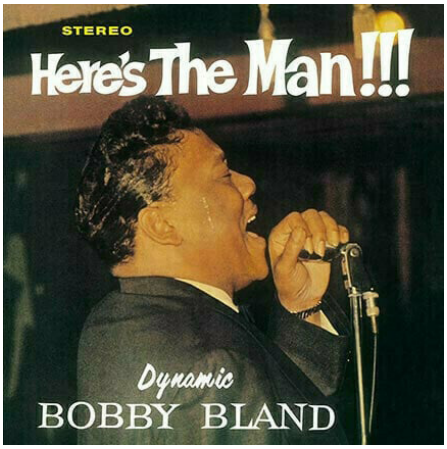
Those were the days of Madrid rock and heavy metal, of discovering the great classics (Led Zep, Queen, Purple, Cream...), of spending part of your weekly allowance on vinyl—especially at the legendary Discoplay and Madrid Rock—or on bootleg concert tapes bought at the Rastro. One of my first acquisitions from that time was a totemic double live album that I still own: "Live...in the Heart of the City" by Whitesnake, a band that still brings back good memories. One side of that vinyl closed with an overwhelming song with a crushing title, "Ain't No Love in the Heart of the City"; forty years later, it still gives me goosebumps.

In 2003, a version of "Ain't No Love in the Heart of the City" by Paul Weller reached my ears, and I thought, astonished: "How on earth is the Modfather covering a Whitesnake song!!!" Restless and curious soul that I am, I began to investigate and discovered that this "white snake" song was written by Michael Price and Dan Walsh and released in 1974 for the soulman Bobby "Blue" Bland. A piece of my musical perception shifted with this discovery, and I dove headfirst into finding out who that man was who delivered "Ain't No Love" with such feeling and passion. The following lines are my heartfelt tribute to him.

A world of poverty and misery welcomed Robert Calvin Brooks in 1930, in a small Tennessee village. His father's abandonment shortly after he was born plunged the rest of the family even deeper into hardship, forcing them to rely on the local church for food. Young Bobby took advantage of this church environment to connect with spiritual music.

These miserable times forced our protagonist to leave school to work in the cotton fields; as a result, he never received the basic education he needed, a burden he would carry for the rest of his life. His main concerns during these years were keeping his shoes from falling apart and not going to bed hungry. Little by little, however, he became aware of the gift in his voice—and that he had to use that talent to become someone. At twelve, he discovered country and blues through the songs of Blind Lemon Jefferson. The surname of his stepfather gave him a new beginning: from then on, he would be Bobby Bland.

In 1947, he moved to Memphis with his mother in search of a slightly more dignified life amid hardship. In the city, he quickly connected with the rising R&B scene shaped by musicians like Sonny Boy Williamson and B.B. King, forming his first group during those early months in the big city: The Miniatures. With them, he performed mostly at school events, making the hits of the moment his own. After a year, he met B.B. King in person and, almost by accident, became his assistant—and soon after, his supporting guitarist. His relentless hunger for learning led him to another renowned bluesman, Rosco Gordon, with whom he performed live. He also played with The Beale Streeters, whose ranks included the legendary Johnny Ace, and, as if that weren't enough, he recorded his first song, "Crying All Night Long", a dragging blues intensified by his prodigious voice, with the help of the downright despicable



(to put it kindly) Ike Turner on piano. This whirlwind of activity strengthened him personally, turning him into a confident man whose undeniable talent allowed him to write songs that almost made him forget the sad place he came from and overcome his educational limitations.

In 1954, he was recruited by Don Robey, head of the Duke label, who gave him his first major opportunity by hiring him for the traveling revue Blues Consolidated as driver and assistant to another legendary hero, Junior Parker; soon after, he earned the position of substitute singer in the show. A rather sad curiosity: because Bland was practically illiterate, he could not read the contract binding him to the label—nor sign it—so Don "helped" him. Exploitation of musicians was common in that era, and in Bobby's case, taking advantage of his lack of education, his contract granted him half a cent per record sold instead of the standard two cents.

We arrive at 1957, the year Bland released one of the essential songs of Black music: "Farther Up the Road", written by Robey and Joe Medwick Veasey, marking the transition from early blues to the blues rock of the sixties. The song shot to number one on the R&B charts and number three on the Billboard Hot 100. From here, Bobby launched a barrage of hits, led by "Little Boy Blue" (1958), and recorded an academic album with Junior Parker that same year, "Blues Consolidated." At the dawn of the decade, he continued producing unimpeachable gems such as "Cry, Cry, Cry", "Don't Cry No More", the number one "I Pity the Fool" (1961), "Lead Me On", and one of my favorites, the fabulous "Turn On Your Love Light." All these tracks cracked the Top Ten, becoming magnificent anthems of the genre: searing blues, dramatic love ballads, gospel-tinged melodies, and powerful R&B bursts marked by his passionate delivery inherited from the gospel he absorbed as a child. His last number one arrived in 1963 with another pinnacle of 20th-century African American music—and one of his artistic summits—"That's the Way Love Is." The following year he released another delight, and a personal favorite of mine: "Ain't Nothing You Can Do", which reached number twenty on the charts and was later turned into a thrilling rhythmic artifact by the Lion of Belfast. Until the mid-sixties, he continued releasing hits: twenty-three Top Ten entries on Billboard.

If at times it seemed his miserable childhood was becoming a distant memory… nothing could be further from the truth. Despite his relative success during this decade, he remained haunted by the hardships he had endured since birth. Depression and anxiety were frequent companions, which he numbed with high-proof alcohol, turning him into an addict. Financial problems compounded his troubles, forcing him to fire his touring band because he could no longer pay their salaries. A true tragedy.

In 1971, he managed to quit drinking, and a glimmer of light began to appear on his horizon. His label was absorbed by ABC Records, allowing him to record several blues and soul albums acclaimed by audiences and critics alike, in the company's L.A. studios and supported by top-tier session musicians. These essential albums included "His California Album" (1973), "Dreamer" (1974)—featuring that emotional song I mentioned earlier—"Get On Down" (1975) and "Reflections in Blue" (1977). The first single from "California Album", the gut-wrenching blues outburst "This Time I'm Gone for Good", returned him to the Top 50 on the pop charts and reached number ten in R&B—his first chart appearance since 1964. The following year (1974), he climbed even higher, placing "I Wouldn't Treat a Dog" in the Top Three of the R&B list (though only number eighty-eight on the pop chart), a clear sign that his audience was not among mainstream pop consumers. Toward the end of the decade, his albums declined in quality as he attempted to adapt to the prevailing "disco" sound, bringing him nothing but disappointment.

1980 marked a return to his roots with a tribute album to his mentor Joe Scott: "Sweet Vibrations", produced by Monk Higgins and Al Bell, though it failed to reach beyond his loyal circle of followers despite its undeniable quality. During these years he frequently collaborated with his old friend B.B. King, both live and in the studio. In 1985, he signed with southern-soul specialists Malaco and delivered a spectacular collection of songs titled "Members Only", and with the title track he returned to the charts—albeit to positions far from his former heights. The album includes a melancholic cover of Elvis



Presley's "In the Ghetto" and southern soul gems like "Straight from the Shoulder", "Sweet Surrender", and the delicious "I Need Your Love So Bad." It is, in short, a colossal album that stands as his swan song.

His well-deserved induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1992 was a just reward for a nearly flawless career driven by passion and talent. In the following years, he continued performing occasionally in small clubs, and also as a guest of Van Morrison on several shows—the Irishman was a devoted Bland admirer and had already been covering his repertoire during his early years with Them. Their immortal "Tupelo Honey" was recorded by both artists as a sumptuous duet in 2007. Another follower of his legacy is Mick Hucknall, lead singer of Simply Red, who released "Simply Red Tribute to Bobby" (2008), featuring songs associated with the Tennessee singer; the album reached number eighteen on the UK charts.

He continued roaming stages until shortly before his death on June 25, 2016, at his home in Germantown, a Memphis suburb, after a long chronic illness caused by his years of alcohol abuse. A tragic life that he managed to "patch together" with his undeniable gifts as a singer and guitarist, leaving us an everlasting legacy of songs for the soul.

Mientras las abejas duermen





“The mountains are a recurring theme for us, the main source of inspiration for the album, both lyrically and musically. The Sierra de Cádiz is a spectacular place, full of incredible spots, spots that evoke contemplative life, a concept that for us is strongly associated with trance and psychedelia”.

It doesn’t happen every day, rarely, in fact. You let your guard down and suddenly your skin prickles, you start to float, you look to your right and see your partner Ada with her eyes wide open, asking us in unison... “But... this... what is it?”, lost in our amazement. Let me set the scene: it’s the second day of the famous Jerez contest, 6 Bands 6, which is being held in the central Plaza del Banco, a perfect setting for a large stage and high-quality sound equipment, although I’m afraid the neighbors might not agree. The new band comes on stage, a bunch of kids wearing soccer jerseys I don’t recognize, with beards and long hair. It’s already nighttime, but it’s still terribly hot here, which doesn’t seem to bother them in the least. The lighting begins to dim. The smoke and colors, red and green, give the square a somewhat somber atmosphere. The singer approaches the microphone and says laconically, “We’re from Ubrique, a place where no one seems to know we exist”. The first chords begin and the band surprises us with a hypnotic sound that takes us completely by surprise. Our skin prickles, our eyes open wide and our minds begin to fly. They call themselves Mientras las abejas duermen (While the bees sleep) and their concert was like a psychedelic-stoner epiphany coming from the depths of the Cádiz mountains.

I'm not exaggerating when I say that I have rarely felt so uplifted as I did when these guys played that day. Damn my luck that I missed them in the final (they played first and I arrived late), but even so, with the east wind, their music reached my house, a few kilometers from the stage, as if their songs were calling me. The bees may sleep, but the stoner soul of this writer (where do you think javistone comes from?) experienced an epiphany. Maybe it was just me, maybe going with my little daughter made me more open to enjoying it more than usual. But... what if not? If not, we are looking at something huge. I'm sure Josh Homme would agree with me: Palm Springs and the mountains of Cádiz are one and the same.

Who are Mientras las abejas duermen? How did the band form?
Mientras las abejas duermen is a musical project formed by Juan Manuel Román (drums), Fernando Fernández (bass), and Manuel Pérez (guitar and vocals). It was born out of a series of jam sessions during the summer of 2023, which were recorded and from which some of the ideas for the songs on the first album were extracted. During these improvisational gatherings, they attempted to capture the essence and rawness of bands such as Sleep, Los Natas, Kyuss, among other 90s stoner bands, and 70s psychedelia, trying to incorporate a little of each member's individual influences into the ideas that came and went. The three of us have been playing together and separately for more than ten years in many other projects of different styles, ranging from punk to singer-songwriter, Valiente mierda, Xplit Xperience, Danié... among others.

Where does the name come from?
It seems like there's a lot of philosophy behind it, but that's not the case. One day when we were going to rehearse with another project (before we even thought about this one), Fernando was stung by a bee (or a wasp, he can't remember) and as soon as the others arrived at the rehearsal space, he said we had to form a band called "Mientras las abejas duermen", so we could play without getting stung. Obviously, you can draw many more meanings with more poetry and transcendental meaning, but that's the real story. Everyone can interpret it however they want.

I met you at 6 Bands 6, that is, live, and you blew my mind. I found you hypnotic and tremendously powerful... What motivates you to make music, in particular?
It may sound cliché, but basically we make music because it comes naturally to us, and when the three of us get together we feel a brutal connection, both studied and innate, since it has existed since the first time we got together, but it has been refined and improved with time and dedication. For a few years now, we had been brewing the idea of setting up a freer project, and above all, one that was more ours. We try to fuse what really moves us when we play, which is trance, circles that never break, and, above all, the strength and power that characterizes stoner rock, all full of symbolism and evocations of our homeland, Ubrique.

You touched a nerve when you said, "We're from Ubrique, where no one seems to listen to us".
The music world is full of contacts, people who can get you into places, friends who know the owner of a venue or who are organizing concerts. There's none of that in small towns. The number of people involved in music in such a relatively small place is limited, and we feel, in a sense, "excluded" from that wheel that turns in the cities, as we don't have the opportunity to meet so many people personally. Also, when you organize a concert in this area, it seems that no one from outside the village comes, which contributes a little to the musical loneliness. On the other hand, it seems that if you're not from a better-known place like Seville or even Cadiz (to mention two places), it's hard for your band to get anywhere. Not to mention the burden that the name Ubrique carries for the rest of history because of the public figures we all know. In a way, we want our town to be known for what it really is, a place of hard-working people with a lot of artistry in their veins.

Having a band in Ubrique seems complicated, of course.
Yes, in general, it's complicated. What is clear is the lack of infrastructure and facilities. Finding a rehearsal space is a very difficult task, and in the end, the spaces are not equipped. We ourselves rehearse in an old bar, with the bar in the middle and everything. There aren't many bands with whom we can share expenses, so financially it's also a bit of an uphill battle.

So, what about concerts?
When we do something, it's always the same audience, an audience that isn't particularly moved by our music and seems to be doing us a favor by coming to see us. However, we do have a group of very loyal fans who even accompany us when we play outside the town, which makes all the bad stuff fade away. In the town itself, the scene is practically non-existent. Few bands, little audience, and few possibilities. But the bands that are here and the audience that is here are enough for us to have a really good time and for the rehearsal spaces to ultimately become social centers where our relationships go beyond music.

The first thing I thought of when I heard you was Kyuss, their generator parties in the middle of the desert, and when I mentioned it to you, you said that there was something of that, that I should swap the solitude and grandeur of the deserts of Sky Valley for the mountains of Cádiz and the result was similar. How do you let yourselves be immersed in that atmosphere, how does it affect you, how does that particular environment influence you?
The mountains are a recurring theme for us, the main source of inspiration for the album, both lyrically and musically. The Sierra de

> ***Pink Floyd, without a doubt, is one of the cornerstones of our style. We've been immersed in them practically forever. Their way of creating atmospheres that grow, almost from nothing to practically everything, is a concept that we always keep in mind when playing, creating, and composing.***

Cádiz is a spectacular place, full of incredible spots, spots that evoke contemplative life, a concept that for us is strongly associated with trance and psychedelia. It should be said that this contemplation is not at all monotonous, as our entire environment is constantly changing with the seasons, changes that are sometimes enormous from one day to the next. The whole range of possibilities is practically infinite. Each walk through the same place is not the same as the previous one or the next one. The grandeur of an entire mountain range in full sunlight, with the horizon constantly in the background, like a destination to reach, fills you with a bucolic fervor and a feeling of joy that is difficult to escape; but at the same time, that same landscape, shrouded in the thickest of fog, sometimes dispels any perception of progress, of moving forward, and fills us with a feeling almost completely opposite to the previous one. You are overcome by despair, loneliness, and the feeling of being isolated among the mountains.

We mentioned Kyuss, who would be your references? Pink Floyd-style psychedelia, something progressive...
Pink Floyd, without a doubt, is one of the cornerstones of our style. We've been immersed in them practically forever. Their way of creating atmospheres that grow, almost from nothing to practically everything, is a concept that we always keep in mind when playing, creating, and composing. We try to fuse those lysergic atmospheres with more tense and energetic moments, but without losing the trance at any time. We have tried to learn this energetic part from bands that have already been mentioned, such as Kyuss or Sleep, whose music blends what we have mentioned very well, lysergic and hypnotic rhythms, but without losing the frenzy that a strong and well-distorted rhythmic base always brings. It should be noted that, above all, what we try to absorb from bands of this style is the way they approach riffs, following a loop, adding textures and nuances, but without ever losing



the “punch” and dissociation characteristic of psychedelic trances. Ultimately, what we try to convey and capture are those comings and goings between transcendental and pleasurable psychedelic trips and the darkest feverish dreams, showing that innate duality of trance, where everything can be colorful or a real nightmare, and sometimes both at the same time.

Talking to you, you told me that you admire Surya. How is that? They are still very young people.
Absolutely. First, we adore them on a personal level. From the day we met them, we established a very good relationship. We have a very similar sense of humor, and in the end, you can talk about anything with them. Some of us even shared a flat in Seville while we were studying. What’s more, they’ve always given us everything we need, and you can hear their amplifiers on our album, so we couldn’t be more grateful. Secondly, we adore them musically. The first time we heard them was live, and we were blown away. It’s just the kind of thing we like, with impressive quality. We often tend to look to more “well-known” or foreign bands when we have artists just a few miles away who could be competing with the biggest names. In the end, we also see them as a way to follow, a way of doing things. They have inspired us a lot, musically and artistically. Often when we come up with riffs, we say, “Wow, this sounds a lot like that Surya song”, which tells us we’re on the right track, but we need to change something! (Laughs). In short, anyone who knows them can’t help but love them, and no matter how young they are, their quality transcends any ear. We can’t wait for them to release their third LP someday.

Live, the vocals sounded much harder than on the album, which is softer. Why the change in register?
When we recorded the album, we had in mind that the vocal lines would serve as a common thread, contributing the main idea of the concept and adding texture to the experience, loaded with many effects and almost “hidden”, you could say. When it comes to bringing that proposal to the live stage, there are times when it comes naturally to us to raise the intensity a little, due to the euphoria of the stage, and both the instrumental and vocal parts become distorted and intensified a little. It is also worth noting that each stage is a world unto itself, and what sounded one way yesterday may sound completely different today. In short, we are guided by the feelings of the moment.

The album seems like a dream, a journey.
We knew we wanted to write about our lives and the things that we believe have had the greatest impact on us. Day by day, what influences us most is our town. All the lyrics, to a greater or lesser extent, talk about this. In the end, life is a journey, and it’s normal for it to feel that way. All that remained was to work on the sound so that the dynamics were in line with that message. So you’ve hit the nail on the head, it is a journey. It’s true that the sound can lead to a more dreamlike experience, although we’ve tried to make it as raw as possible to convey our reality.

Everything has come together very naturally because when we start composing, we don’t think directly about the complete result, but rather we take it part by part and let ourselves flow, and the songs take on a life of their own. In fact, we hadn’t planned on doing a physical release, but in the end, the total length and the sides turned out to be perfect for a vinyl record. It was a huge coincidence.

One of your most hypnotic songs is “Los hijos perdidos de Umrica” (The Lost Children of Umrica). Umrica is, or was, the Andalusian Ubrique, right?
This was the first song we did “by right”. It just happened that we saw a local news story about an ancient Andalusian settlement between Ubrique and Benaocaz, in the middle of the mountains, called Umrica. Around that time, we started getting together to develop ideas and thought about talking about this village, although we wanted to give it a twist. Basically, the song is about a young man who questions life beyond the mountains. Hence the chorus “beyond the broom, beyond the mountain”. It also references the crosses that abound in the mountains of our town and that feeling of confinement that comes from being surrounded by stone. The meaning we wanted to convey is that the feelings of the young man from the village and the other kid from our town today are the same. Same insecurity, same gossip...

Another song I love is “El camino silencioso” (The Silent Road).
The idea for this song came about, like all the others, almost without planning it. We wanted to juxtapose two ideas, calm and tension, both united in the same goal: the question. The two parts of the song do not seek any answers. They only raise questions and questions, which of course remain unresolved, both in peace and in chaos. In short, it is a clear tribute to wandering and continuing without certainties, because, in a nutshell, that is what existence is all about.

What are your plans? I think you’re releasing your album on streaming platforms soon and the physical edition at the beginning of next year.
Well, the idea is to release a few singles between now and the end of the year and then release the full album in early 2026. We’ll release one of these singles with a video that will represent the band’s idiosyncrasies a little. The album will come with a physical vinyl edition and we have lots of merch ideas in mind.

I think the album was recorded in 2024, so why the wait? It must be hard to have a finished work and not be able to release it, for whatever reason. It’s like having a child and not being able to show it off.
That’s right, it was recorded in November 2024, and here we are a year later with nothing to show the public. Well, this is what the vast majority of bands say, it’s complicated to self-release and even more so to find a label that doesn’t try to cheat you. Luckily, we’ve found a label that we like and that has taken a real interest in us. Due to factory deadlines, communication, and other issues, it has taken us a long time, but it’s better that everything turns out well, even if it takes longer.

How are things going with concerts? I’m really looking forward to seeing you live again.
At the moment, we’re not doing much; we haven’t been too interested in coming out of the cave (laughs), although the time is coming to do so and we’re really looking forward to it. For next year, we’re considering some options in Seville, but nothing official yet. We think we’re more excited about recording another album!

Thank you very much and good luck. I wish there were more bands like yours.
Thank you for your kind words and your interest in emerging bands. You do a tremendous job giving a voice and momentum to new projects. We hope to see you soon on more stages!

Javistone
Photos Awa Creatives

La delgada línea entre inspiración y copia



"I Feel Fine" (The Beatles, 1964) / "Watch Your Step" (Bobby Parker, 1961)



It's undeniable that all great bands and songwriters—especially those from the 1960s—took more than a few liberties when it came to borrowing other people's material. And, although it may seem surprising, the Fab Four were especially prolific in this noble art. It cannot be denied that, in their search for the sound that became a cornerstone of pop music, they used—throughout almost their entire career (you already saw an example in the first part of this series)—resources, techniques, and phrasing from other artists. It's true that they were rarely accused of plagiarizing or copying a song outright, with one glaring exception I'll discuss shortly. A perfect example is the riff from "Watch Your Step," a 1961 track performed by Lafayette-born blues-rock guitarist Bobby Parker. Lennon and McCartney played it live in their early days and, casually giving it a little twist, composed one of their great hits, "I Feel Fine," based on that guitar introduction. As far as I know, no one ever claimed copyright, nor did Parker himself seem bothered: perhaps having a band of The Beatles' caliber use one of your guitar lines counts as a compliment.

"My Sweet Lord" (George Harrison, 1970) / "He's So Fine" (The Chiffons, 1963)

We continue with the boys from Liverpool, and especially one of them: the affable George Harrison who, in his solo years after the breakup of The Beatles, developed the unfortunate habit of letting all kinds of music influence him—something I've never quite understood, because he certainly didn't need anyone else's inspiration to compose. The most blatant case was "My Sweet Lord"



(from All Things Must Pass), in which he used more than a few notes from "He's So Fine" by the wonderful Chiffons. The issue became a media phenomenon, evolving into a legal battle that dragged on for nearly thirty years. Harrison was sued in early 1976; the trial took place in NYC on February 24–25, and the final resolution arrived on August 31, with a verdict of "subconscious plagiarism." Although the judge ruled that the two songs were identical, it was more or less clear that Harrison had not copied intentionally. The compensation George had to pay was set at $1.6 million, though after decades of legal wrangling it was reduced to $587,000 when the matter was finally settled around 1998. Eventually, Harrison regained the rights to the song both in the UK and the US. But don't think the Englishman's creative freedom ends there: on the same album as "My Sweet Lord" you'll find "What Is Life," rhythmically analogous to Jackie Edwards' "Keep On Running," popularized by the Spencer Davis Group in 1965; "Long, Long, Long," remarkably close to Dylan's "Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands" (Blonde on Blonde, 1966); and the emotional "When We Was Fab" (1988), a "neighbor" of ELO's delicate "Can't Get It Out of My Head" (1974). In short… plenty of material to unpack.

"Black Night" (Deep Purple, 1970) / "Summertime" (Ricky Nelson, 1962)

Deep Purple—the quintessential hard rock band—also extended their parabolic antenna to capture musical wavelengths when composing. For the creation of their fist-pumping anthem "Black Night," with one of the definitive riffs of the genre, they simply borrowed the introduction that Ricky Nelson released in 1962 of the George Gershwin classic—one of the most

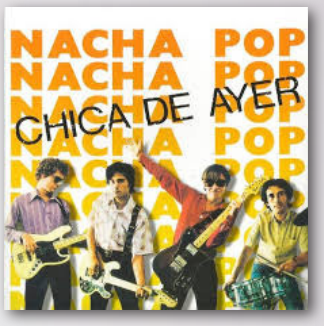


covered songs in history. Nelson's version was proto-hard rock in spirit, far removed from his usual output. The ever-eccentric Ritchie Blackmore admitted the influence this reinterpretation had on the Purple sound and, of course, on "Black Night," while Jon Lord confessed to having "stolen" the riff outright. And that's not all: their celebrated "Child in Time" (1970) begins almost identically to "Bombay Calling" by It's a Beautiful Day (1969), though at a slower tempo. The excellent and psychedelic San Francisco band didn't mind at all and even praised the supposed homage. And to push things further, here's a surprise I discovered only recently: if you listen to Astrud Gilberto & Gil Evans' "Maria Quiet" (1966), you'll understand what inspired its piano sequence. I'll leave the riddle there… hint: there's smoke on the water.

"Borrowed Tune" (Neil Young, 1975) / "Lady Jane" (The Rolling Stones, 1966)



While exploring the curious world of musical "borrowing," I stumbled across a surprise—one that is quite atypical, because in most cases where there's evidence of influence or copying, the influenced party is reluctant to acknowledge it. The creation of the anguished Tonight's the Night (1975) was a devastating compositional effort for Neil



Young, shattered by the deaths of two friends—Danny Whitten and Bruce Berry—from overdose shortly before recording began. The album's songs form a portrait of a generation felled by drugs, wild sex, and violence. Moments of creative drought led him, when composing one of the most heartbreaking tracks, to shamelessly "copy and paste" the Stones' "Lady Jane," resulting in a piece with a very clarifying title: "Borrowed Tune." And to top it off, he included this stanza: "I'm singin' this borrowed tune / I took from the Rolling Stones / Alone in this empty room / Too wasted to write my own." As I said at the beginning: sometimes the best path to redemption is confessing the sin.

"Chica de ayer" (Nacha Pop, 1980) / "La caza del bisonte" (Piero, 1976)

"Chica de ayer" is possibly one of the best Spanish-language songs ever written, aside from being part of this country's collective imagination of tambourines and tomfoolery. Some years ago (September 2009), an article in the music magazine Efe Eme pointed out a more-than-obvious resemblance between Antonio Vega's song and "La caza del bisonte" by the Argentine Piero. The melody, and even some phrasing (though the lyrics have nothing to do with each other), inevitably conjure "Chica de ayer." The discovery was made by Vicente Fabuel, who immediately shared it with illustrious musicologists such as Juan Puchades, Diego A. Manrique and DJ Floro. The commotion was considerable, given that the song is almost considered a form of national—well, musical—heritage (I dislike the former term). "La caza del bisonte" appeared on Piero's 1976 album Y mi gente dónde va, but it wasn't written by him; it was composed in 1975 by Italian singer-songwriter Ivano Fossati with Oscar Prudente for another star, Gianni Morandi, who released it that same year under the title "La caccia al bisonte." In any case, Piero's album came out in 1980, and in the spring of that same year "Chica de ayer" was released. We will probably never know whether there was plagiarism, copying, influence, or pure coincidence, since Vega mostly listened to Anglo-Saxon music and may not have been aware of the "bison." The answer… is blowin' in the wind.

J.L. Crespo (ZepiSoul)



New Blood in American Rock with Italian Roots

DIAMANTE



Diamante Azzura Bovelli—known artistically as Diamante—is a young vocalist we discovered a few years ago performing modern hard rock, though over time her sound has travelled back several decades, settling into a distinctly '80s vibe. The Metal N' Rock team reached out to the friendly Boston singer to throw a round of questions her way.

What were your main musical influences? Which artists made Diamante decide to become a singer?
My first musical inspirations were women who sang with a lot of power. I spent hours and hours a day in my room singing songs by artists like Avril Lavigne, Paramore, or Kelly Clarkson. I loved how powerful they sounded and how amazing their harmonies were. It was very emotional for me to sing their songs, and when I finally discovered more rock music, I fell specifically in love with '80s music, so people like Debbie Harry, Stevie Nicks, Def Leppard really enchanted me. As you can see, I had different types of influences during my early years.

In 2018 you released your first studio album, which must have been a major challenge because you were very young. Were the songs on that debut written during your teenage years? We assume they must bring back strong memories.
It took me about two years to write the songs for my first album. I was 18 and 19 during that time. In those years I would go to a writing session almost every day and write with completely different people. It was a great experience and a huge learning process for me because I had never written so much or so often, and many of the songs turned out great. A lot of those compositions ended up on the album, and I learned to perfect my craft. I learned how to write with different types of collaborators. It was very exciting but also terrifying, because I felt a lot of pressure writing my first album at such a young age.

In 2021 you released "American Dream," which marked a big leap in your career with powerful singles and well-crafted music videos. We've read that you released that record through your own label, Antiheroina Records. It was the album through which we discovered you. What does that album mean to you?
"American Dream" was a very important album for me because I released it completely independently. I had just separated from my first label and I remember being very worried about what the future might hold—I had so much uncertainty about what would happen next. But the one thing I knew was that I had to keep writing, I had to keep releasing music, and not being a singer was not an option for me. I just had to keep going no matter what. So I took the leap and started writing with songwriters and collaborators knowing it might never be released, but also knowing I had to make this album anyway. I ended up writing some of my favorite songs I've ever written. For example, "Unlovable" is on that album, and it's probably my most vulnerable song. There was a big leap in songwriting for me and a lot of growth—learning how to be vulnerable, how to think and sing about things I didn't necessarily want people to know. That album taught me that writing from that perspective is actually what helps people connect with your music and with you as an artist. And the tour I did for that album really showed me how important music is in my life. Without a doubt, "American Dream" is an important album for me.

At the end of 2023 we discovered your single "1987," which left us impressed and speechless. The accompanying music video really won us over and was very well received by our audience. We think it would be perfect for the next season of "Stranger Things." You shifted from a more modern rock sound to something entirely '80s. What caused that change?
First of all, thank you—that means a lot because I'm a huge fan of "Stranger Things," so that's a big compliment. And secondly, I think the reason I really went for the '80s sound on this album is because I had always flirted with it in the past in songs like "Coming in Hot" from my first album, which had kind of an '80s vibe. With these new songs I wanted to go all in because I love the '80s so much, and I thought it would be fun to make an album I would enjoy listening to as a fan.

Some time ago you released a new song called "All for Glory." We assume that, together with "1987," it will be included on your next studio album. Will the album follow the same '80s style? When will it be released?
Yes, both songs will be on the album. I can't reveal the release date yet or much more about it, but I can say I'm very proud of this album because it sums everything up. I love how the tracks sound. It has the elements of hard rock you already know from me, but also very guitar-driven pop moments. These songs are some of my favorites I've ever written. I really pushed myself vocally, and the lyrical content is very vulnerable—I feel like I get very introspective in this album and look back on my life as an artist and as a human being. So I'm very excited for people to hear it, but we don't have a release date yet.

Seeing how actively you work on social media and music videos nowadays, do you think it's more important today to have a strong online presence than to have a powerful record label behind you?
I think it's a mix of both. I've realized this after having my first album with a label and my second one completely independent—there are pros and cons to both. In any case, having a social media presence is very important. It's a direct connection with fans, and in the era we live in, any fan can see a video of you at any moment and something can catch fire and go viral. There's not always a clear reason why, but it happens. Still, having a strong team behind you makes a huge difference. When I released "Coming in Hot" I had a powerful team, but not even close to the social media presence I have today. And with my second album, which I funded entirely myself, I was very involved in creating the content and the videos, but I didn't have the resources to really push the album like artists with big teams do.

You've collaborated with artists like Bad Wolves, Lit, Breaking Benjamin and others. Who would you like to collaborate with in the future? Not long ago you toured with Nita Strauss, and you two seemed to get along well. Maybe a collaboration with Nita?
I would love to collaborate with Nita—I think she's fantastic. She's also very sweet, which helped a lot on tour. I love collaborating with other artists in general. I think you can create something magical and add something to a song that maybe wasn't there before. That's why I love "Duets" so much. I would love to collaborate with another female artist because I haven't done that yet. I'd love to collaborate with The Warning, I think they're great, or Lady Gaga, who is one of my favorite artists. A dream come true would be collaborating with Stevie Nicks. The possibilities are endless.

You have several rock-classic covers on your YouTube channel—we love them. Do you think those covers helped you reach more people?
I've seen that a lot of people discovered me through the covers I did, which is really cool because maybe they would never have found my music otherwise. Doing covers and putting your own spin on a song can be a great way to reach people who might not even listen to your genre. It's been a lot of fun, and I love playing them live—they also hook people who haven't been to one of my shows before. There are people who might see my cover of "Love Is a Battlefield" by Pat Benatar at a show for the first time, enjoy it, and then dive into my original songs. So yes, I love doing covers for all those reasons.

There are many women in the rock world today. Who are your favorites? Do you keep in touch with any of them?
There are so many to list—for example, as I said, I love The Warning. I also like Evanescence, and I've always loved Paramore, Halestorm, The Pretty Reckless. In fact, I toured with The Pretty Reckless two years ago and it was really great. I also know Lzzy Hale from Halestorm and she's awesome—both she and Taylor from The Pretty Reckless are super nice. I haven't met anyone from Evanescence yet, but I'd love to someday. There are so many women killing it in hard rock and metal right now—it's amazing.

What are your immediate plans for the future? You've just released another powerful single called "Silver Bullet." We assume that after the album release you'll embark on a new tour. Will that tour reach Europe?
Yes, the plan is to release the album and tour next year. I already have a tour lined up soon. I'd love to tour Europe—I haven't done it yet. I've only toured the US and Canada, so my dream is to go to Europe, Latin America, Japan… basically the whole world. That would be incredible. Hopefully we'll be touring all those places next year.

Metal N' Rock

SERIE BOOTLEGS

Por Sob 2025



These days, with everything going on around us, it's hard to sit down and write about unreleased recordings or about how this or that concert was taped in the '70s or '80s. Right now, I barely have the strength to dig up stories; better times will come. The situation in the world is disastrous—the suffering of our neighbours across the Mediterranean, the genocide taking place, the global escalation of violence—everything forces you to rethink a lot of things. One of them is the extreme security measures currently in place in the United States: metal detectors at the entrance of concert halls and arenas, turning the act of taping a show into a kind of obstacle course—except with security guards and armed personnel. Getting high-quality recordings is going to become increasingly difficult. The prevailing psychosis in that country is slowly spreading, and I just hope it takes longer to reach us here in Europe; we tend to be more level-headed than Americans in these matters.

Life has hit us hard these past few days: two of my youthful idols have become stars. The great Ozzy, who accompanied me through each and every one of my university exams on my Walkman, with the Randy Rhoads tribute playing. And the great Space Ace, thanks to whom, at the tender age of fourteen, I discovered what a real live concert was. I'm not talking about the Alive! albums—those too, of course—but the bootlegs that circulated around me, and the one that blew my mind was Kiss Takes Tokyo from 1977, rawer and more direct than the official recording. When I got my hands on a video of that performance—a black-and-white VHS so degraded from copying that it was barely holding together—I knew that was what I wanted: to be able to capture my own recordings, to treasure them as memories I could turn to whenever the moment called for it. Is there anything happier than enjoying live music? The memories that rush in—the people who were with you, the loved ones who are no longer here but were connected to you through that moment; the venues where everything happened; the trip to and from the show, discussing the songs, hoping to experience it all again. Today, forgive me, I'm not really in the mood to dig for stories. Instead, I want to leave you with a couple of things I'm sure you'll all enjoy.

The first is the Antichrist Superstar demos by Marilyn Manson. Who didn't enjoy that wild record back in 1998? I remember asking my father, on a trip to Sweden, to buy me anything he found by them. I still don't know how I dared ask a sixty-year-old man who had no idea who those guys even were. But he brought me back a single, and I was thrilled. The music on this release comes from a TDK SA-90 cassette tape Marilyn Manson gave to Scott Putesky (a.k.a. Daisy Berkowitz). In early 2013, Scott sold the tape to Adam's Ribs, who passed it to Cringeon,

a member of the Provider Module forum, who then copied and remastered it.

Several songs have different or additional lyrics compared to the versions on the official album: “Angel with the Scabbed Wings”, “Antichrist Superstar”, “Minute of Decay”, “Mister Superstar” and “The Beautiful People”. “Astonishing Panorama” is very different from the official version. “Piss in the Wound” (originally “Crippled Groom”) is an unreleased track, not to be confused with the “Dungeon Master/Teen Dabbler” song. “Irresponsible Hate Anthem” is a complete demo, unlike the previously leaked “work-in-progress” version. Likewise, the version of “Antichrist Superstar” included here is unreleased and different from the one that recently leaked online. “Tourniquet” cuts off at 2:51. “Little Horn” is not on the cassette, despite being listed on the back cover. Scott plays guitar and wrote “Wormboy Gets His Wings”, “Irresponsible Hate Anthem”, “Antichrist Superstar”, “Mr. Superstar”, “Man That You Fear”, “Tourniquet”, “Piss in the Wound” and “Suicide Snowman”. The unreleased songs belong to what is known as the “Spooky Kids” catalogue.

There are also additional demos on the tape, including “Heaven on the Brain”, which is musically related to “Antichrist Superstar” and was intended as the introduction to the album of the same name. It was inspired by “Heaven On Their Minds” from Jesus Christ Superstar.

The second item is a recording from a small theatre show in Chicago on the recent Queens of the Stone Age “catacombs tour”—you know, those deep cuts largely unknown to the general public and buried in their discography. Here they play in an acoustic format, opening themselves up completely to offer this gem of a concert. The sound is excellent, lovingly captured with great care.





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PODCAST

Presentado por

Roberto Martínez

It's the End of the World as We Know It (and I Feel Fine): Songs About the End of the World to Stay Prepared



The end of the world has always been a musical obsession. Not just as a cataclysm or prophecy, but as a metaphor for inner collapse, for fading love, or for societies rotting from the inside out. From Johnny Cash's biblical laments to R.E.M.'s radiant cynicism, from The Clash's urban chaos to U2's redemptive epic, every artist has crafted their own soundtrack to the Apocalypse. Because sometimes the world doesn't end — it just changes shape.

"London Calling", The Clash



March 28, 1979. The Three Mile Island nuclear power plant in Pennsylvania (USA) suffers a partial core meltdown that triggers an explosion releasing radioactive gases into the atmosphere—somewhere between 2.5 and 15 million curies—right in an area inhabited by more than twenty-five thousand people. Back in 1974, warnings had already been issued about the growing risk of the River Thames overflowing and flooding parts of London. Construction of the Thames Barrier began as a result, eventually being completed in the early '80s.

A severe social and economic crisis was sweeping across the UK. It was the perfect breeding ground for Joe Strummer's creative mind to compose the song that gave its name to The Clash's third album. The band were true pioneers of the politically committed side of the newly emerging "punk" movement, giving a much-needed jolt to their generation and becoming instant classics. Other themes that inspired the record's lyrics were the Spanish Civil War, unemployment, and drug use.

With a martial and commanding rhythm and a hypnotic guitar riff, the song opens with Strummer emphasising the disillusionment of British youth by proclaiming that "the war had begun" ("London calling to the faraway towns, the war is declared and battle come down") and that they were not the ones to blame ("London calling, now don't look to us, phony Beatlemania has bitten the dust"), pointing directly at the previous generation. In the bridge—almost, but not quite, a false chorus—the rhythm shifts to warn of a possible nuclear winter, one of the most recurring fears of those Cold War years ("The ice age is coming, the sun's zooming in / meltdown expected, the wheat is growing thin"), and it makes explicit reference to the events mentioned above ("Engines stop running, but I have no fear / 'Cause London is drowning, and I live by the river").

Returning to its initial pulse, it's worth noting that the song has no real ending, dissolving into Strummer's howls and shouts and a final cutting line—"I never felt so much a-like…"—delivered over an SOS in Morse code. The apocalyptic vision of The Clash not only named their most celebrated album but also served as its lead single, reaching #11 in the UK charts—their first single ever to chart. In 2004, *Rolling Stone* listed the song at #15 in their "100 Greatest Rock Songs" ranking.

Marcos Sánchez

"Eve of Destruction", Barry McGuir



If you were, like me, one of those who tuned in religiously decades ago to Juan de Pablos' radio show and recorded the best songs on cassette (hoping he wouldn't talk over the endings with his signature lament-orgasm "Uuuhhhhmmm"), you probably taped "Eve of Destruction" by Barry McGuire at some point. The song was written by another *Flor de Pasión* favourite, the prolific New Yorker P.F. Sloan, right in the middle of the turbulent sixties. In 1965, thorns like the Vietnam War, civil rights struggles, the threat of nuclear catastrophe as the grim shadow of the Cold

War grew darker, and the uncertainty of the space race were stuck deep in the hearts of many Americans. The message didn't hold much hope for humanity and quickly became one of the era's signature protest songs.

Although Lou Adler initially offered Sloan's song to The Byrds, they rejected it, and it was folk singer Barry McGuire—regular at the Troubadour—who released it in July 1965, accompanied by Sloan on guitar and members of the Wrecking Crew. That alone should give anyone peace of mind, shouldn't it? The funny part is that the version that became a hit was the rushed demo take—McGuire literally sang it reading the lyrics scribbled on a piece of paper—meant to be re-recorded later. A Los Angeles DJ played that very demo on air, kicking off an unexpected journey that would take the song to #1 on the *Billboard* charts in September 1965.

Juan Carlos León

"Until the End of the World", U2



Very much in line with what "Achtung Baby" represented—a re-examination of myth and faith from a humanist viewpoint. Bono has explained in several interviews that "Until the End of the World" is literally an imaginary dialogue between Jesus and Judas, but what interests him is not the religious dimension but the emotional one. Judas is not just the biblical traitor: he embodies the friend who betrays, the love that corrodes, the point of no return in any relationship. It's long been said, in fact, that the emotional backdrop of the song is The Edge's breakup with Aislinn O'Sullivan, with whom he had three children, a rupture that deeply affected the band dynamic.

Bono has put it very bluntly: "There was a lot of divorce in the air, a lot of end-of-the-world in our lives." Both he and The Edge were dealing with personal crises, and the lyrics of songs like "So Cruel", "Love Is Blindness", and this one reflect that pain. "Until the End of the World" isn't literally about The Edge's breakup, but it feeds off the same emotional atmosphere: the feeling of having betrayed or been betrayed, of loving and destroying at the same time, of living an intimate apocalypse while the outside world keeps turning.

Ultimately, the "end of the world" here isn't the biblical apocalypse with horsemen descending from the sky, but that moment when trust breaks—when something sacred between two people ceases to exist. It's the end of the inner world, the collapse of that shared universe that crumbles once betrayal occurs. Bono, as a good Irishman, often uses Catholic imagery as metaphors for human experience: love, guilt, forgiveness, the need for redemption. In *Achtung Baby*, and especially in this song, he uses biblical language to speak about contemporary emotions like disillusionment or loss of faith in oneself.

In that sense, the "end of the world" is psychological: it happens inside the traitor, who realises he has destroyed what he loved most—and therefore his own universe. Bono associates Judas with the end of the world because betrayal and the remorse that follows are, to him, a deeply intimate apocalypse. The world ends every time one crosses that irreversible line. And by the way, if U2's version doesn't strike you as dramatic enough, check out Patti Smith's cover—you'll see what I mean.

Javistone

"The Day the World Went Away", Nine Inch Nails



When it comes to dark themes, Trent Reznor cannot be left out. In *The Fragile* (1999), his extraordinary third album, he created a sonic encyclopedia of alienation and misery— a kind of personal *The Wall* for the Ohio artist.

The first single extracted from the album was "The Day the World Went Away." It became the band's first top-10 single and was bound to appear here if the topic at hand is the end of the world. However, this entry is a bit of a cheat: while the title and its intricate verse are 100% apocalyptic, the actual meaning is a metaphor—a deep exploration of desolation and loss.

The opening verse, just two lines, is written in the first person, referring to a figure whose voice is marked by decay ("I'd listen to the words he'd say / but in his voice I heard decay"), an idea reinforced in the next line by the image of a "plastic face," suggesting deterioration and emotional anguish ("The plastic face forced to portray / all the insides left cold and gray").

The second verse, slowing down as it is recited, works as a metaphor for death. It speaks of "a place that still remains / It eats the fear, it eats the pain," which leads to a "sweet reward" that must be paid: the day the world went away. As he recites the final line, silence heightens the dramatic climax, leading into a mantra of repeated "Na, na, na…" over a powerful guitar riff that evokes the total absence of anguish after death—the arrival of nothingness.

Within the band's context, the song pairs introspective, bleak lyrics with an ambient, hypnotic soundscape that reflects Reznor's constant internal struggle to find meaning in a world that seems eternally in decline.

Marcos Sánchez

"The End of the World", The Cure



"The End of the World" is, once again, not a song about meteors or Nostradamus-style prophecies but about emotional collapse after the end of a relationship. Robert Smith returns to one of his most recurring themes: the impossibility of sustaining love against the erosion of time and human fragility. What ends is not the planet but the small universe shared by two people—which, to a human being, amounts to the same thing.

The lyrics describe, with Smith's characteristic melancholy, that moment when routine, miscommunication, and guilt gradually wear down a relationship until it simply can no longer hold. "Go if you want to / I never tried to stop you," he sings with more resignation than drama. There's no violence, no shouting, no reproach—just the realisation that what was once an entire world has crumbled, and with it, life's very meaning. Hence the title: when love fades, everything else loses its centre.

The song's brilliance lies in the contrast between its subject and its sound: musically, it's more luminous than the theme suggests. It's a very *The Cure* paradox—a nearly pop melody hiding a devastating message, part of the band's unique charm.

The music video (back when music videos were made to expand a song's meaning) reinforces this symbolic reading: Robert Smith sings among the ruins of a house

collapsing piece by piece, everyday objects flying away like lost memories. The end of the world literally happens inside the home, in that microcosm where everything was once shared.

"The End of the World" doesn't dramatise the apocalypse—it humanises it. It's the portrait of a breakup lived with quiet sadness, where the true catastrophe isn't the destruction of the planet but the silence that remains when there's no one left on the other side.

Javistone

"Un apocalipsis", The New Raemon



The three-body problem refers to a classic mechanics question studying the motion of three celestial objects under their mutual gravitational pull. But our readers probably couldn't care less—and frankly, neither could I. *El problema de los tres cuerpos* is the title of a 2011 collaborative album recorded by three cult Spanish artists: The New Raemon, Francisco Nixon, and Ricardo Vicente, released through Cydonia, the label founded by the first of them.

Each contributed three songs to the album, and one of The New Raemon's contributions is "Un apocalipsis." In it, Ramón Rodríguez (aka The New Raemon) uses an epidemic ravaging humanity as an excuse to keep his lover inside his home, claiming it's the only safe place on the planet. "Por lo visto aquí no hay foco de infección, ni gente estropeada por un virus letal, artificial y sin antídoto," he sings—apparently unbothered by the world ending. He's got plenty of supplies and the girl he likes right beside him. That's another way of looking at it.

Juan Carlos León

"The Man Comes Around", Johnny Cash



"The Man Comes Around" is probably one of the most prophetic and haunting songs Johnny Cash wrote in his final years. Released on his album *American IV: The Man Comes Around* (2002), shortly before his death, it's a sombre meditation on the Final Judgment and humanity's fragility before the divine. Cash composed it inspired—unsurprisingly—by the Book of Revelation, blending biblical imagery, apocalyptic visions, and his own reflections on mortality.

The song begins with Cash himself reciting Revelation chapter 6: "And I heard, as it were, the noise of thunder… one of the four beasts saying, 'Come and see.'" From there, he unfolds a kind of poetic sermon on the arrival of the "Man"—Christ in his second coming—who comes to judge the living and the dead. Biblical references cascade one after another: trumpets, horsemen, crowns of thorns, wheat and chaff… Cash knew his end was near, and the religious foundation that had shaped him ever since Jesus and his earthly heralds saved him from death and addiction appears here in all its "glory," steeped in the stark, grave tone so characteristic of him.

Beyond a literal reading, the song also works as a personal confession. Cash was aware of his approaching end, and the apocalypse he describes seems also to be his own: the reckoning of a life marked by faith, sin, redemption, and guilt. His deep, trembling, almost spectral voice turns each verse into a reminder of mortality.

Musically, "The Man Comes Around" combines folk-country tones with dry percussion and austere guitar work. It doesn't seek adornment or virtuosity; the power lies in the words and in the voice. It's a hymn of endings: a prayer, a warning, and a farewell. Cash said he wrote it after dreaming of the Second Coming, but it can also be heard as a lucid look at his own personal end of days. Because, in his case, the apocalypse had already begun inside him.

Javistone

"Wooden Ships", Crosby, Stills & Nash



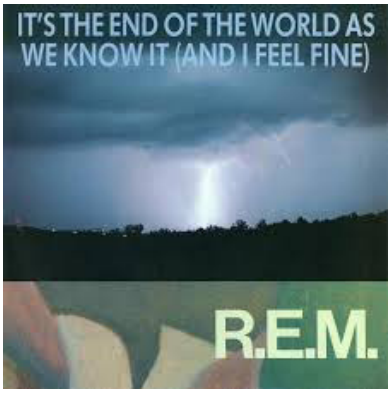
An apocalypse also triggers the message behind this Crosby, Stills & Nash classic, although, to be precise, Jefferson Airplane deserve part of the credit for its creation. Off the coast of Florida, aboard the *Mayan*—the boat David Crosby bought after being fired from The Byrds—"Wooden Ships" was conceived, co-written with science-fiction enthusiast Paul Kantner of Jefferson Airplane and Crosby's soon-to-be bandmate, Stephen Stills.

If Barry McGuire had reasons to cry out against the Vietnam War in 1965, three years later the bloodshed the conflict was inflicting on American society had become nearly unbearable. "Wooden Ships" became part of the anti-war soundtrack thanks to its narrative: a nuclear holocaust has devastated the planet after two sides clashed. Two survivors—one from each side—manage to stay alive by eating berries, while people in silver anti-radiation suits wander along the beaches waiting to board wooden ships that will carry them away from the coast. Those who stay behind will die.

In 1969, both Crosby, Stills & Nash and Jefferson Airplane recorded the song—the former for their stunning debut album, and the latter for *Volunteers*, their rebellious fifth record. Ultimately, it was the magical trio who claimed the definitive version, turning it into one of their flagship songs and a generational anthem.

Juan Carlos León

"It's the End of the World as We Know It (and I Feel Fine)", R.E.M.



I remember the first time I heard R.E.M. as if it were yesterday. It must have been around 1988, on one of those TVE Channel 2 programmes that occasionally offered something worthwhile—I'm sorry, I can't remember the name. They aired the video for "The One I Love," and its impact still rattles me today. I knew of the band through a *Popular 1* article, but nothing more. From that moment on, the Athens (Georgia) group became my personal gravitational centre.

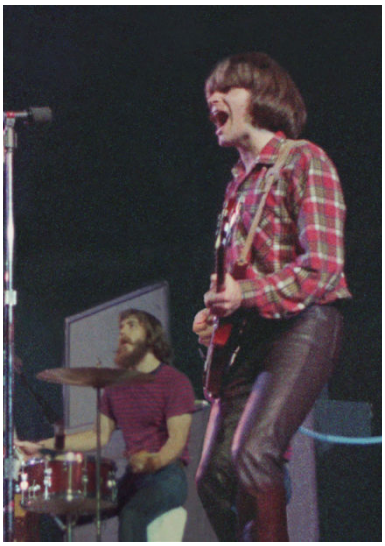
I boldly dove into their discography, especially the album containing the staggering melody that had turned me upside down. It wasn't hard to find *Document* in those legendary record shops—our musical training grounds—like Madrid Rock. Alone in my room, I immersed myself in an utterly stunning collection of songs, with textures and sounds that still give me goosebumps today. And closing the A-side of the vinyl was a frenzied sonic whirlwind with a prophetic title: "It's the End of the World as We Know

It (and I Feel Fine).” It took me a while to flip the record after such an amphetamine blast.

The song strings together a rapid-fire succession of apocalyptic images, referencing disasters and cultural figures (Lester Bangs, Lenny Bruce, Leonid Brezhnev, Leonard Bernstein) with a delightfully playful chorus. Its four minutes and six seconds form a hopeful chaos, heavily marked by Cold War anxieties and the media overload it produced. The repeated line “It’s the end of the…” contrasts with the final coda, “I feel fine,” suggesting a disconnect between the grim events described and the narrator’s emotional reaction—Michael Stipe’s detached cool. It’s like saying: “We almost went to hell, but I’m feeling great.”

JL Crespo, ZepiSoul

“Bad Moon Rising”, Creedence Clearwater Revival



Creedence’s only #1 hit in Europe came in September 1969 thanks to the single “Bad Moon Rising.” One of Fogerty’s most famous songs—brisk, upbeat, and ready to brighten any party—actually hides an apocalyptic message beneath its cheerful melody. The lyrics conjure a threatening atmosphere, referencing lightning, earthquakes, and hurricanes.

In an interview with *Rolling Stone*, John Fogerty explained that the ominous lyrics were inspired by the film *The Devil and Daniel Webster*, in which a hurricane destroys nearly an entire town. That’s where the idea came from: “I feel the hurricane blowin’, I hope you’re quite prepared to die.” In short, the song is about “the apocalypse waiting for us,” as Fogerty put it.

“Bad Moon Rising” appears on Creedence’s third album, *Green River* (1969), and reached #2 in the US charts (they never scored a #1 there). As a fun fact, the song was used in the film *An American Werewolf in London* (1981), playing while the protagonist waits for the full moon and wonders whether he’ll turn into a werewolf.

Juan Carlos León

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Especial “Los Soprano”















"Task"



If you are one of those who think that there are no longer series like the ones from before (we would have to define what we mean by "before"), stop reading these lines. On the other hand, if you still have the ability to be surprised, to be amazed by new stories and new characters, "Task" is waiting for you: stories with depth, actors with the ability to move you, productions made with the tact and delicacy necessary to make viewing them an intense and immersive experience. With "Task," Brad Ingelsby has managed to disarm you emotionally while captivating you with a plot that, without inventing anything, has enough personality to grab you by the gut and not let go until the end.

Brad Ingelsby had previously produced "Mare of Easttown," a decent thriller in which the protagonist, the always wonderful Kate Winslet, was the one who maintained the dramatic and narrative tone of the series. This time around, the main draw was Mark Ruffalo, an actor I'm not exactly a big fan of. I remember him in the wonderful "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" (2004), "Shutter Island" (2010), in countless supporting roles, and especially in the ineffable Marvel movies. In the series The Undeniable Truth (2020), I couldn't handle his double role. I find the drama that Ruffalo tries to convey in every glance from bottom to top extremely annoying and having him twice was too much for me. So, as I said, it wasn't the draw that made me rush to see Task. And yet, Ingelsby manages to contain Ruffalo's drama (which he has in spades). Besides, he's not the main character, at least not the only one. The series is full of fascinating characters: Tom Pelphrey (remember him in his formidable role in "Ozark" as Ben Davis, Wendy's redneck brother) gives a fabulous performance as Robbie Prendergrast, a textbook failure who only aspires to stop being one; Jamie McShane ("Sons of Anarchy," "Wednesday"...), as Perry Dorazo, leader of the Dark Hearts, a terrible biker gang; Emilia Jones, as Prendergrast's tortured niece... And yes, Ruffalo is superb.



"Task" is yet another work about losers, about a gray, dark America (despite the spectacular and breathtaking nature of Delaware County's parks, which seem to be another character), a compendium of broken lives, of a bitter and desperate working class. An FBI agent (Ruffalo) is assigned to a case involving robberies at drug safe houses, taking him out of a gray job that reflects a difficult family situation. On the other side of the mirror, a lonely father (Pelphrey) tries to get out of the filthy hole he lives in by stealing from the scum who has turned his community into a filthy and violent hole. Two men doomed to meet, two ways of trying to keep breathing when everything else has fallen apart. The thriller is there, the intrigue is there, but as in works such as the masterpiece "The Leftovers" (2018), what is interesting is not the end of the journey, but the journey itself. Watching each page of each character's life turn is a harsh reflection of what human life is like. There are no winners; we are all losers trying to breathe, vaguely reaching for the surface to take breaths of air and hold on. In the end, Ingelsby does not seek to offer you morals or concepts of poetic justice; it is simply a reflection of people getting ahead, people who, even living submerged in the greatest of miseries (social, economic, moral... family), try to stay afloat, that even in the midst of mud there are people trying to be decent.

Javistone

“The Monster of Florence”



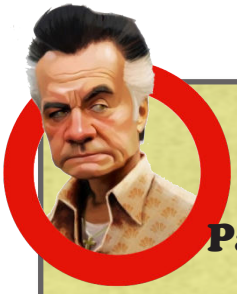
Few stories blend art and dread as seamlessly as that of the so-called Monster of Florence — a series that not only brings back one of the most disturbing criminal cases of 20th-century Italy, but does so with the unsettling elegance of a Renaissance fresco stained with blood. The show dives into the murders committed between 1968 and 1985 in Tuscany, where a killer (or several, depending on who you ask) spread panic by murdering couples seeking privacy in their cars. What begins as a simple true-crime tale becomes a hypnotic journey into the collective psychology of a country torn between superstition, sexual repression, and a cult of beauty.

Far from following the usual journalistic or police-procedural template, the series chooses an ensemble approach that shows how violence seeps into every layer of society. Farmers, police officers, neighbours, families — all living under the same shadow, caught somewhere between fear and morbid curiosity, trapped by a case that seems to swallow even those trying to make sense of it. Stefano Sollima’s direction (yes, the same one behind Gomorrah) doesn’t chase shock value, but atmosphere: fog-wrapped rural roads, police blue lights flashing across olive groves, silences heavy with suspicion. Italy isn’t presented as a tourist postcard, but as a morally sick landscape, stuck between its own reflection and its ghosts.

The most disturbing part is how the series makes the viewer feel the weight of beauty. Every frame carries that contrast between perfect aesthetics and the violence corrupting them. It’s impossible not to think of Caravaggio — that constant tension between the divine and the carnal. In the end, The Monster of Florence isn’t so much a story about murder as it is an X-ray of fear: fear of the unknown, of desire, of decay.

Beyond the crime, there’s the sense that we all take part, in some way, in that collective monster. That behind the media obsession lies a dark fascination that ties us together. The series doesn’t offer answers — and rightly so, because real life didn’t either. What it does leave behind is an uneasy aftertaste, a dirty kind of beauty that clings to the skin and forces you to look straight at what we’d rather bury beneath Tuscany’s cypress trees.

Javistone



Paulie’s Corner

Biff Tannen, (“Back to the Future”)



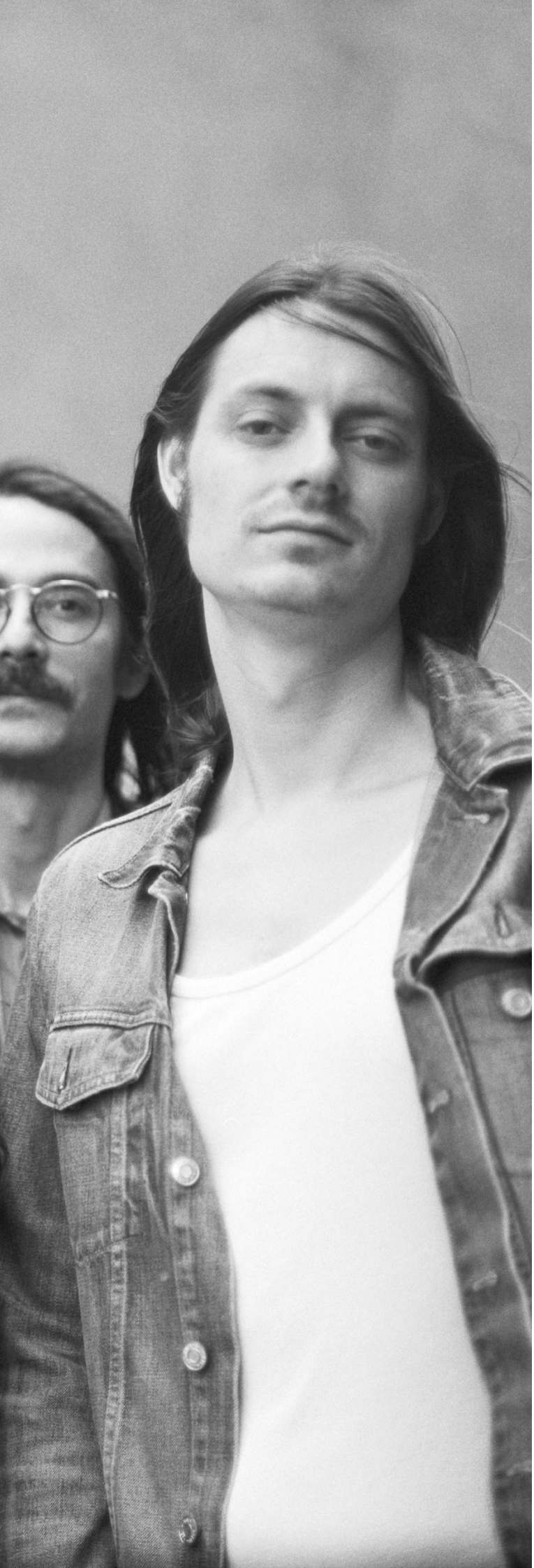
Few beings are as despicable and at the same time as oddly endearing as the thuggish bully who makes the McFly family’s life miserable across every generation since the very first McFly, Seamus, arrived on American soil from green Ireland. Few piles of muscle in the history of film or television are as stupid and hateful as Biff Tannen—a guy who absolutely deserves a place of honor in this section.

Of course, good old Biff isn’t a criminal mastermind; he doesn’t devise Machiavellian plans nor command an army of stormtroopers. His weapon is an overdeveloped, muscle-bound mediocrity, a cocktail of swagger and unparalleled stupidity reminiscent of Nelson from The Simpsons (I’ve always suspected some inspiration there when Matt Groening created him): the embodiment of the schoolyard bully elevated to pop-villain status. The wonderful “Back to the Future” trilogy turns him into a universal constant, almost a genetic virus passed down from generation to generation. It doesn’t matter if we’re in 1955, 1985, a dystopian 2015, or a far-off 1885 in the Wild West: there will always be a Tannen ready to ruin your day, call you “chicken,” or shove your face into a pile of fresh manure. Stupidity is immortal.

Tannen’s iconic moments include grabbing George McFly by the tie in 1955 and knocking on his skull with his knuckles—“Hello?... Helloooo?? Anybody home?”; or when in 2015 (where are my hoverboards ten years later?) and everything upside down, Biff has turned—thanks to that sports almanac—into a gaudy caricature of a tycoon with his own casino; or when he tries to win over the gorgeous (and extremely frisky) Lorraine with all the subtlety of a tank, only to end up knocked out by the biggest nerd in school; or the idiotic 2015 Tannen getting punched out by the elderly 1985 Tannen (space-time itself humiliating you—try getting over that). The formidable Thomas F. Wilson, who brings Tannen to life, manages to give the character a perfect blend of dull-witted expression, twitchy bravado and tremendous charisma as a textbook bully: a character who, despite all his strength and intimidating frame… always ends up covered in shit. If only every Biff in the world (hi, Donald!) ended up under a rain of manure.

Javistone

Wucan



“We got excited when Kadavar found my acoustic cover of one of their songs online and suddenly we had an excuse to record demos”.

Wucan are one of those bands that, even though they don’t feel comfortable with the idea, draw on past influences and bring them into the present, developing a personality that they can claim as their own, with great songs, a devastating sound, and Francis Tobolsky, who is pure energy at the front. Ever since they blew my mind in 2015 with their monumental song “Father Storm” (“Sow the Wind”), I’ve been following them closely, even though their discography has been few and far between. Finally, they release their new album “Axioms,” which brings them renewed energy, but maintains their powerful style with a 70s and psychedelic vibe that we love so much on these pages.

Wucan was formed in Dresden in 2011 with Francis Tobolsky as its creative core. I believe it all started with an advertisement in a university newspaper with the phrase "Blues Brothers Wanted". Is that right? Did many Blues Brothers show up? Did any of them come dressed as Jake or Elwood?
That's right. I started there. Our first drummer

> ***We are constantly honouring the ones that came before us. Especially when it comes to those artists, who truly shaped our German cultural landscape in the 60s and 70s. Most of these bands are forgotten now. We might be ten years down the road- who knows?***

Pätz got in touch with me following up. He was the former drummer for Alpha Tiger, a successful metal band at the time. Through friends in my hometown, I got to know Tim and the rest is history.

How do you remember those first steps and the local scene around you?
We were very clueless ablut what we wanted in the beginning. Initially, it was me pushing the possibilities and looking whether or not this band had a future. We got excited when Kadavar found my acoustic cover of one of their songs online and suddenly we had an excuse to record demos.

The name Wucan means "dawn" in ancient Chinese. Why did you choose that concept and what does it symbolize for the band today? I think it has something to do with a Clutch song, is that right?
Which type of Chinese? Apparently in Mandarin it means "Lunch". We got it from the Band Black Mountain. They got a song named "Wucan".



Marshall McLuhan, Canadian philosopher, once said: 'We look at the present through a rear-view mirror. We march backwards into the future.' In art and music, the past is often revisited, but it is not always used as an enhancing element, but rather as simple imitation. You, on the other hand, use sounds from other eras and take them further. Vintage krautrock, progressive rock, rock, stoner and psychedelic folk... Your sound is fascinating, it has many nuances. Do you believe in the need to delve into the past? Is it a way of honoring past artists? Is it a way for influences to flow? Tell us...
We are constantly honouring the ones that came before us. Especially when it comes to those artists, who truly shaped our German cultural landscape in the 60s and 70s. Most of these bands are forgotten now. We might be ten years down the road- who knows? Life is short. It could all end tomorrow. However, despite the fact that we've been called copycats before, we do not intentionally copy anyone. It's not possible to copy anyone with the urge to express yourself freely. That's what we've been about since we started. It's a conglomerate of influences. Metal and Funk as well as Krautrock and Psychedelic Rock most prominently. If we feel like incorporating more influences, we will. Regardless, of anyone's expectations.

I don't know if you're familiar with a band from the late 60s called Fear Itself, who released a single album titled after the band. You remind me a lot of them: 70s rock, psychedelic touches, lots of energy... What are your influences when it comes to making your music?
Yeah I love that band. "For Suki" is my fave song of theirs, but we don't sound like them at all. Their approach has always been more laid back and bluesy, but heavy.
We got too many influences to mention. For me it's Heavy Metal, 70s Hard Rock, Jazz, Krautrock, Funk, Disco.

It's inevitable to ask you about Jethro Tull because of your incisive and sharp use of the flute. Are they an influence? Francis's playing seems very influenced by Ian Anderson. Is that the case?
No. Is Pete Sandoval an influence on all drummers? Is John Lawton an inspiration to all singers?

We've been asked about this band for ten years and the comparison does both bands great injustice. It's tiring and frankly quite sad that other flutist, who actually had an influence on my playing, aren't acknowledged in any way. Speaks volumes about how the other (very capable and influential) band members of Jethro Tull are basically overshadowed by Ian Anderson and the omnipresence of the flute. I feel for them.
I personally don't know any of their songs, but Alex is a fan.

Your 2015 debut, "Sow the Wind", already showed a strong identity. What memories do you have of composing and recording that first full-length album after releasing several singles?
We were full of excitement to write our first album and naïve enough to go about it without any fear. We knew we'd be compared to certain bands and obv weren't prepared for the criticism that came with it. I'm glad we got the chance to develop naturally and organically without being hyped up by a label without the skills to back it up. But quite frankly the first record sounds sloppy as fuck.

You recently released the eagerly awaited 'Axioms'. What motivated you to give it that title? Is there a philosophical or conceptual background that underpins the songs?
Yes, there is. After a dark phase in our time together, we faced the decision whether to keep continuing making music together or not. But the band and us four have become such a huge part in each other's lives,

The flute and theremin have always set you apart. How have you explored their role in 'Axioms' compared to previous works?
The roles for both instruments have always been pretty clear. I write songs on the flute. The Theremin is an embellishment. In that sense AXIOMS follows our tradition. However, of course, the more experienced you get, the more you push your boundaries. Our goal is to become better and better with each album and work on our craft. I hope we have accomplished that.

Can you highlight a song from the album that you consider key to understanding this new phase? Why?
The songs on "AXIOMS" are a natural progression from what we've done before. We're striving to push our boundaries and go beyond our limits with each album. In any way possible.

There are echoes of early Black Sabbath in your music. What can you say about Ozzy Osbourne? Did you see the concert he organized just a few days before he died?
I haven't watched it at the time it aired, but of course in retrospect I saw the last time they played "Paranoid", and I BAWLED my eyes out. I love Black Sabbath, especially their early stuff and "Never Say Die!". He was a true icon and it truly felt like the world changed a little when he passed. An era came to a close. It's scary.

Any chance of seeing you in Spain?
Yes. Book us!

Javistone



NOVEDADES

Deftones: "Private Music" (Reprise/Warner, 2025)



MASTERPIECE. All caps, and in the broadest sense of whatever that word may mean to each reader. That's the best way to define the latest album (their tenth) from California's Deftones—a collection of songs that takes you through an extreme emotional journey, the same journey the band has had to survive to make it together into 2025, more than 30 years after forming.

This journey probably began in 2000, when they reached the top of the mountain with White Pony. It was an attempt to escape the legacy they were handed—the expectation of being the representatives of a sound and a scene they never wanted to belong to. And they're still doing that. Deftones redefined metal with an atmospheric, dreamlike sound full of textures and nuance, gliding across shadows and light to repeatedly take you into your deepest feelings. That sound—the way they twist your brain and squeeze your emotions—has become their defining trait.

The songwriting duo of Chino Moreno and Stephen Carpenter has walked a tense, thorny path where each knows exactly which button to press and what role to play: riffs serving impossible melodies and complex lyrics to create something beyond a song—an experience. The first example is "My Mind is a Mountain", which flows into "Locked Club": two suffocating, toxic, unsettling tracks that expose your most unspoken insecurities. The existential climb continues with "Infinite Source" and lands in the beautiful, acoustic "I Think About You All The Time." Up to this point, Chino is absolutely on fire vocally—arguably the best he's ever sounded. The climax comes with the dense "Milk of the Madonna", followed by a series of sinuous curves where "cXz" and the surprising "Metal Dream" stand out, preparing you for the end of the journey with the extraordinary "Departing the Body."

An excellent album—easily among the best of 2025 for this writer. We eagerly await the tour.

Marcos Sánchez

Malcolm Scarpa: "The Road Of Life Alone" / "My Devotion" / "Malcolm Scarpa" (30 Aniversario) (Caballero Reynaldo Producciones Psicotrópicas)



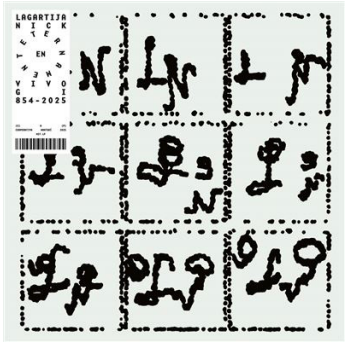
We all know about the devotion that Luis González (Caballero Reynaldo)—who also played with him for many years across many albums—has for the great Malcolm Scarpa. Over the span of two years, he released these three legendary albums, each with twenty-six songs, with demos and outtakes still left unreleased. So if you're into this genius, somewhere between Ray Davies and Brian Wilson, you need to get the three luxurious 30th Anniversary box sets, each with four CDs (the "Malcolm Scarpa" box has three, but it's just as good), offering more than eighty tracks and four hours of music per box (limited editions). Each box includes fifty or sixty unreleased cuts, plus fabulous 24-page full-color booklets packed with rich texts, photos, press clippings and detailed credits. All are remastered with great sound and include at least two high-quality live CDs.

A fun fact: Malcolm's favorite is the second one, "My Devotion", but both his self-titled debut and the fiery third album, "The Road Of Life Alone", contain gems of psychedelic pop, blues, jazz and folk for days. It's clear he also loved The Beatles, Robyn Hitchcock, The Mamas & The Papas, Vainica Doble, or Cole Porter, alongside his adored Beach Boys and The Kinks. Ideal treasures to discover this underrated genius!

Txema Mañeru

Lagartija Nick: "Eternamente En Vivo" (Montgrí / Popstock)

A live album from this legendary Granada band led by Antonio Arias was long overdue. I've seen them many times over their 35-year career, in different lineups, and they've always been raw and powerful—and I've always enjoyed them. Just as I'm enjoying this beautiful LP (also out digitally), whose only flaw is that it isn't a double album so it could include all thirty songs they played and recorded at the Teatro Caja Granada earlier this year. That said, the vinyl selection is spot-on: twelve tracks pulled from eight of their albums. The most represented is



Su, and all their most recognizable classics are here.

The original lineup with Juan and Eric is wonderfully supported by JJ Machuca's rich psych-infused keyboards, which shine in the post-punk energy of "Lo Imprevisto". You'll love how, more than thirty years later, classics like "Estratosfera", "La Curva de las Cosas", "Conmigo Crece El Caos", "Nuevo Harlem", or the still-relevant anthem "Hipnosis" retain their punch. Among the surprises: a much more rock-oriented version of "Niña Ahogada En El Pozo" and the melodic rarity "Fulcanelli", a pop ballad with lush keyboards. And the finale? An apotheosis: more than six heavenly minutes of "Celeste." A killer vinyl from a killer classic band!

Txema Mañeru

The Bo Derek's: "Working Class R'n'R" (Folc Records)



We love this Galician trio led by Óscar Avendaño (Siniestro Total, Reposado). Backed brilliantly by the Lorre brothers—who also front the fun, highly recommended Los Wavy Gravies—the band began in the late 2010s and this is already their fourth album. We've enjoyed all of them, but even more their exciting, fun, and extremely danceable live shows.

"Working Class R'n'R", with its electrifying title, may be their best and most varied record yet. They experiment to avoid getting too comfortable—though honestly, with their attitude, that seems impossible. Their foundation is classic '50s–'60s rock'n'roll and Black rhythm and blues, though they also draw from the '70s and '80s, with names like



Dr. Feelgood, J. Geils Band, labelmates Nine Below Zero, or their live comrades J. Teixi Band.

There are two great covers they make fully their own: Bachman-Turner Overdrive, and the fabulous "Get On" by Finnish veterans The Hurriganes. It's natural to talk about Little Richard (they cover him live), Chuck Berry, Dr. Feelgood, Bo Diddley or Ike & Tina Turner (also successfully covered on the previous album). And bangers like "Tanto Gilipollas", "Viva Cristo, Me Cago en Dios" or "Hiroshima". They even touch rockabilly with "El Diablo" and deliver a surf-guitar instrumental in "Mojitos After Midnight." Giants of r'n'r and r&b!

Txema Mañeru

Robert Jon & The Wreck: "Heartbreaks & Last Goodbyes" (Journeyman Records, 2025)



Ninth studio album (plus three live albums and a B-sides/rarities compilation) from this Californian band that hasn't stopped moving since forming in 2011. With a stable lineup since 2017 (only Jake Abernathie is new on keyboards) and a frenetic touring schedule—highlighted by Henry James' lead guitar—the Orange County crew has built a solid fan base both in the U.S. and Europe, securing a rightful place among today's southern rock elite.
This time they're joined by in-demand roots producer Dave Cobb. And while everything on the album seems geared towards expanding their fanbase even more, to us it still falls a bit short. After nine albums and countless live shows, many of us were hoping for more risk—both in songwriting and production—rather than repeating a formula that's starting to feel tired.

Don't get me wrong: "Heartbreaks & Last Goodbyes" is a very good blues/southern album, with frantic riffs like the opener "Sittin' Pretty" and high-octane gems such as "Dark Angel", "Long Gone", or the bluesy "Better Off Me". Their signature mid-tempos—"Highway", the title track, or the closer "Keep Myself Clean"—hold their ground. But within their discography, I expected something more outside the familiar comfort zone.

Musically, the vocal and guitar work shines, confirming Henry James' essential role through his solos. Lyrically, they explore familiar themes: the road, love and heartbreak, redemption, connection to the past. Maybe overexposure, or the high expectations we now place on their albums, worked against them—or maybe it's just me who needed something different from the band this time. Still, a good record that doesn't tarnish their trajectory and keeps us excited for the next tour.

Marcos Sánchez

Shirley Bassey: "As I Love You – The Complete Shirley Bassey 1956–1962" (Frémeaux)



The list of classic box sets—especially blues, jazz, rock'n'roll, soul and chanson—released by Frémeaux & Associés under titles like "Intégrale" (recent sets from Lalo Schifrin, Quincy Jones or John Barry, among others) or "The Complete" is truly impressive. These sets usually range from three to six CDs (or more) and are must-haves for anyone wanting the best overview of these artists' work.

Here we have five CDs and more than five and a half hours of music—108 tracks. These are the first six years of Europe's first great diva, right before she became even more famous for her iconic James Bond songs. From Wales, she reached the stature of Barbra Streisand, selling over 140 million records and topping charts for more than seven decades. Here you'll find wonderful performances (many with orchestra) of classics like "Stormy Weather", "Beale Street Blues", "Night and Day", "As I Love You", "The Nearness of You", plus compositions by Cole Porter (a whole bunch), Gershwin, Bernstein, Kern, Rodgers/Hart, Arlen, Loesser and many more standards. And, as usual, a delightful 16-page booklet to lose yourself in for days.

Txema Mañeru

Loquillo: "Corazones Legendarios" (Warner)

Great title and great presentation for this little gem—especially the beautiful colored-vinyl edition. The title comes from his admired Lou



Reed song "Legendary Hearts", which was heard everywhere in Madrid when Loquillo arrived in the city around 1983. Nearly fifty years into his career, this album is yet another celebration of his legacy.

It brings together twenty-three of his best and most popular songs, newly recorded with prestigious musicians from different generations. Most are from his own generation, naturally. The expected songs are all here. His collaborators range from veterans and contemporaries like Ramoncín, Jorge Ilegal, Coque Malla, Alaska, Miguel Ríos, Raphael, Tarque, Bunbury, Los Secretos or Manolo García, all the way to today's artists such as Hinds or Nat Simons.

The single, included as a bonus in the vinyl edition (and also in the well-crafted digipack CD), features advance tracks with Bunbury ("Cadillac Solitario") and Dani Martín (they even performed "Feo, Fuerte y Formal" together on La Revuelta). Pleasant surprises abound: a great "La Edad de Oro" with Nacho Vegas, flamenco touches and country slide on "No Volveré A Ser Joven", and the heavily transformed "El Ritmo del Garage" with J (Los Planetas), which he drags into his own universe. Josu Martín's production is excellent, and Loquillo's consolidated band sounds flawless. No fan of El Loco will be anything less than thrilled with this gift—and the tour already under way!

Txema Mañeru

Montana Stomp: "The Horse & the Hill" (Self-released, 2025)



Second album from this Zaragoza band, returning strong with a lethal combo of southern rock and blues rock, driven by the unmistakable rasp of Susana Colt's voice front and center. Their previous (and now distant) album made it clear where the band—Susana (vocals), Óscar (guitar), Josete (keyboards), Beto (bass) and

Adrián (drums)—was headed, and time has only given them the live consistency needed to stand tall in the national scene.

The album opens full throttle: “Rock and Roll Wheels” hits you instantly, its signature riff grabbing you with no escape—just like the swinging vocal inflections and delicious bass phrasing on the very danceable “Big Blind Special”. Between the two, ballads like “Maybe That Day” and “Unbroken” slow the pace with Óscar’s sharp guitar solos contrasting perfectly with Susana’s trademark voice, without forgetting Josete’s warm keyboards, which shine on their own.

The title track brings a mid-tempo with a strong rock edge and leads, in my view, to the album’s most mature songs—its true peak—where the band’s textures and sonic layers are most evident. “Bad Choices” is an absolute monster: a tar-sticky riff and a thunderous rhythm section lifting that voice—half lament, half desperate cry—to a whole new level. The album ends with the wonderful country ballad “Bourbon Call”, followed by “Troubled Sinner”, the cherry on top of this vinyl-shaped cake. Enjoy.

Marcos Sánchez

Bravo Lahoz: “La Tensión Irresoluble (De Nuestros Días)” (L.L.O. Música / DiscMedi)

Truth be told, we’d kind of forgotten about him. He released two very good albums almost back-to-back, full of modern folk and lo-fi post-punk, all within a year. But then two years went by with no news. The news is here now—and they’re very good. A beautiful 7-inch vinyl EP that digs even deeper into his most intimate side, achieving a sound with a kind of arid tenderness that makes him one of the most original, unique rock-leaning singer-songwriters in the country. That’s why it’s easy to name-check Rafa Berrio, Nacho Vegas, Julien Elsie, Fernando Alfaro or Corcobado. Juan A. Salinas (Alondra Galopa, Varaverde, Maine) returns as producer and multi-instrumentalist. The label describes the sound as somewhere between Low and The Stooges—and that’s spot on. Four



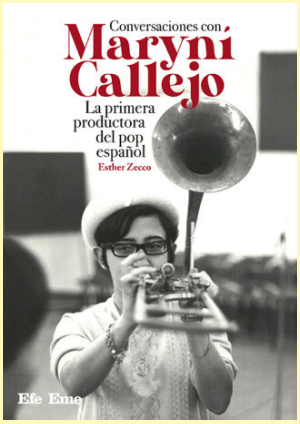
tracks beginning with the brilliant “La Tensión Irresoluble”, which even has a slow-motion road-movie style video. It’s classic, dark post-punk—almost like Décima Víctima. And yes, “Los buenos van al cielo”, and Bravo is one of them. His lo-fi aroma continues with his distinctive piano on “Horror Vacui”. “Volvemos a empezar” carries the tension of the city with very current echoes. We love his return—and reconnect (or restart) with him.

Txema Mañeru



LIBROS

Esther Zecco: "Conversaciones con Maryní Callejo" (Efe Eme)



It's truly sad that someone like Maryní Callejo remains almost completely unknown in the music world of this country. We're talking about "The First Female Producer in Spanish Pop", as the subtitle of this book rightfully states. This volume joins the spectacular "Conversaciones con…" collection from Efe Eme, which already includes figures as important and varied as Jorge Ilegales, Teddy Bautista, Gonzalo García Pelayo, Xoel López, José Ignacio Lapido, Ana Curra, Quique González, Lichis or Javier Ruibal.

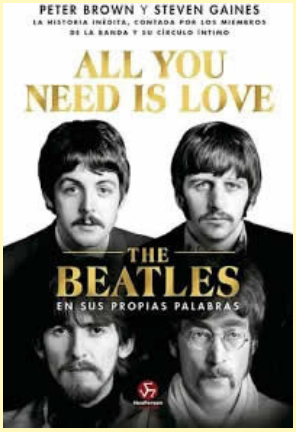
The book is written by Esther Zecco, who recently published the highly recommended "Mari Trini. Retrato de una mujer libre", a biography full of substance. She is also a singer and songwriter. The strong introduction is written by Juan de Dios Rodríguez Pariente. On the visual side, we find many family photos and images of most of the artists she produced, including such key names in Spanish music history as Los Brincos, Nino Bravo, Massiel, Los Relámpagos, Marisol, Fórmula V, Rocío Dúrcal, and Mari Trini—whom Esther dedicated her debut book to last year.

Callejo was one of the very few female producers in the entire international scene, and practically the only one here until very recently. A woman who worked with complete independence and who even passed through the legendary Zafiro label, something also discussed here. There's even a very interesting chapter in which the two of them talk about "Music on Television". And of course, there's an excellent playlist compiled by Esther featuring many of the best Spanish pop songs sung, produced, played or arranged by Maryní.

We also have to take the opportunity to recommend visiting www.editorial.efeeme.com, because the number and quality of books they've released in recent months is truly impressive. Particularly recommended is the latest book by Diego A. Manrique, "El mejor oficio del mundo".

Txema Mañeru

Peter Brown y Steven Gaines: "The Beatles en sus propias palabras. All You Need Is Love" (NeoPerson Sounds)



As Pattie Boyd rightly says, there could be no one better to tell the true story of The Beatles than Peter Brown. He was Apple Corps' Director of Operations, but more importantly, he was a close friend of all four members since their early Liverpool days—he even kept their passports in his desk drawer! And here he teams up with respected writer and journalist Steven Gaines.

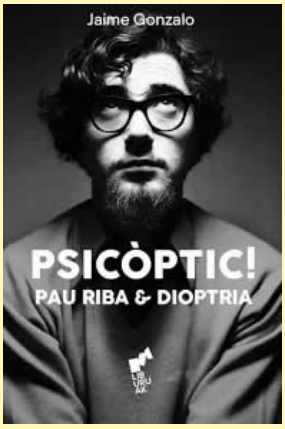
What makes this volume even more interesting is that we finally have an oral history—exactly the kind of format so popular among the best modern music books. These interviews were conducted between 1980 and 1981 with every member of The Beatles (except Lennon), but also with their families, closest friends, and several of their most important business partners. Over 350 pages, with the largest space devoted to McCartney, Harrison and Ringo. Other key figures with many pages include Yoko Ono and Allen Klein. Added to that are several interviews with Brown himself, discussing crucial moments and situations in the band's history.

Among the more than thirty interviewees, you'll also find essential names like Brian Epstein, Pattie Boyd, Derek Taylor, John Eastman or Cynthia Lennon. The book opens with a solid introduction by Brown and includes eight beautifully curated pages of black-and-white and color photos. Authentic historical value, full of fun anecdotes, firsthand experiences of the Fab Four and many clues as to why their sad breakup eventually happened. There's an overdose of Beatles books out there, but this one is truly worth it!

Txema Mañeru

Jaime Gonzalo: "¡Psicóptico! Pau Riba & Dioptria" (Liburuak)

This book was a big success when it was released in Catalan on Sant Jordi earlier this year—something to be expected from the prestigious rock critic Jaime Gonzalo. The album "Dioptría" is a key milestone in Catalan



rock, and its fifty-five years show none of their age. Pau Riba himself is an essential figure in local rock—always visionary, transgressive, provocative, untamable. Many say he was punk before punk existed, and a rocker before rock was properly valued here.

Gonzalo began writing half a century ago for the still-alive Popular 1. He was later a key figure in Vibraciones, and forty years ago co-founded and directed Ruta 66. He also contributed to Rockdelux and produced albums for Loquillo, Desechables, Cancer Moon or Los Rápidos. Among his half-dozen books, the standout ones are the biographies of The Stooges and La Banda Trapera del Río.

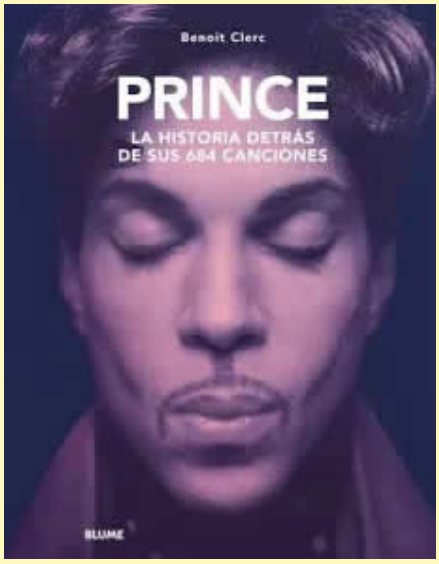
This is a short book, an easy read about an album considered one of the best ever made here. Each chapter opens with a full-page photograph in color or black and white. Chapters come with enticing titles like "Una gran y liberadora carcajada", "Las otras hornadas irritantes", "La magnitud del fracaso" or "Desenrollando el rrollo". The "Contenidos adicionales" chapter stands out especially for its graphic value, with photos, full-color sleeves, alternate editions, posters, singles, and even the Vibraciones magazine cover from 1976 alongside Jaume Sisa.

This book had to appear in the Arima collection, but on www.liburuak.org you'll find other recent and highly recommended works, including titles on Daniel Johnston, "Flores en la basura / Loreak Zaraman", "My Rock And Roll Friend", "Todo lo que necesitas saber sobre el mundo de la música" or "Viaje hacia la canción perfecta". Plenty of great and varied reading options!

Txema Mañeru

Benoît Clerc: "Prince. La historia detrás de sus seiscientas ochenta y cuatro canciones" (Blume)

I was genuinely surprised to learn just how many songs the Minneapolis genius composed. I knew he was prolific, of course, and he now becomes the second Black artist to appear in Blume's spectacular deluxe series "La historia



de sus canciones", after Michael Jackson. He joins the absolute greats: Dylan, The Beatles, The Stones, Bowie, Queen, Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd.

I haven't followed him as closely as some of these others, but I fully acknowledge the quality of early albums like "Dirty Mind" as well as his timeless masterpieces—"Sign O' The Times", "Purple Rain". With more than 130 million records sold, he can be considered the father of modern R&B. Funk simply wouldn't be the same without him (or without James Brown). Songs like "When Doves Cry", "Kiss", "Little Red Corvette", "1999", "Cream", "U Got The Look", "Gett Off", "Raspberry Beret", "Nothing Compares To U" or "Purple Rain" are deeply embedded in the memories of millions.

As usual in this collection, everything is structured in its signature format: recording anecdotes; "Collaborations", offering space for key figures in his career; "To Listen To"; "On the Cover"; and "Technical Details". And of course, the recurring sidebars titled "For Prince Addicts" stand out once again. A total of 648 pages by the respected Benoît Clerc. You can get it at www.blume.net, where you'll also find a similar volume titled "Taylor Swift. La historia detrás de sus doscientas cuarenta y ocho canciones", 496 pages by Damien Somville and Marine Benoit. Swift fans will fall for it instantly.

In film-related books, there's also a wonderful, expansive portrait of "Marilyn Monroe", an illustrated biography by Chiara Pasqualetti Johnson. The cover describes her as "Spectacular, Complex, Independent, Vulnerable, Mysterious". All of it comes with their usual richly curated photographic material, including some images spread across two full pages. And they continue to publish quality books across other genres—cooking, history, as well as titles aimed at younger readers ("La montaña de la loba", by Alice Roberts and illustrated by Keith Robinson), all with the same luxurious presentation and visual appeal.

Txema Mañeru

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The Ninja's corner

"From Dusk Till Dawn" (1996)



For this new issue of our holy and blessed publication, we're heading down to the Mexican border in the now sadly distant 1996. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, we're going to talk about From Dusk Till Dawn. I remember perfectly its mid-week premiere on Canal Plus, which coincided with a football match I actually cared about, so I set my old JVC recorder to tape it and watched it the following day. And the truth is, it left me with a very good impression, because the story takes a turn halfway through that really hit me. In fact, that afternoon my father put aside whatever he was doing at home to sit in his armchair and enjoy the film—especially during the Salma Hayek scene.

The story, written by Robert Kurtzman, had been bouncing around Hollywood studios since the late '80s, but no one dared take the step until the ever-restless Quentin Tarantino stumbled upon it and realized there was some top-quality madness in there. He decided to take over the script and restructure the story. At first, Kurtzman himself was supposed to direct, but due to his lack of experience behind the camera he was replaced, and the job ended up in the hands of Robert Rodriguez. Even then, Rodriguez wasn't the first choice—names like Tony Scott or Renny Harlin were considered, although the latter dismissed the project, thinking it was too B-movie.

Rodriguez already had an interesting little résumé, having previously made El Mariachi and the successful Desperado. In From Dusk Till Dawn, there are nods to the latter, and the director wanted to surround himself with familiar faces, which is why he brought in performers like Danny Trejo and Salma Hayek. He also tried to get Antonio Banderas on board, but that didn't work out.

As for the cast, we've got faces from all sorts of backgrounds: the special-effects wizard Tom Savini as Sex Machine (glorious); Harvey Keitel, who at the time would jump on anything; a sensual Juliette Lewis, who joined the film thanks to her friendship with Tarantino; and Tarantino himself, who reserved a little role for the sake of sharing the stage with the iconic Satánico Pandemonium—a moment many of us were blown away by. Incidentally, that number nearly cost Salma Hayek the role, as she had a terrible phobia of snakes. She was close to quitting, but when Tarantino and company hinted that Madonna was interested in the part, the voluptuous Mexican actress gathered her courage and ended up accepting—and shooting that scene, snake included. There were also fun cameos from Cheech Marin, the indestructible John Saxon, the lovely Kelly Preston, and of course the great Danny Trejo, who took a major leap in fame thanks to this film.

We also can't forget the main character, played by lady-killer George Clooney, who in his early days had done some horror films but had recently achieved massive success with ER. The silver fox accepted the role because he wanted to distance himself from the nice-guy persona he played in the series that made him famous—and he did a damn good job. Other names considered for the part included James Woods, Christopher Walken, and John Travolta, who rejected it because he didn't want to do a vampire movie.

With a modest budget of nineteen million dollars, the film grossed nearly sixty, becoming a big success that spawned a TV series and two very B-movie sequels that still had their own lovable trashy charm, along with familiar faces. In fact, the third film was more of a prequel than a continuation. In those sequels we still got to see Trejo, as well as Robert Patrick, Rebecca Gayheart, and the beautiful Tiffani Amber Thiessen—yes, Kelly from Saved by the Bell.

As usual, there were some issues during shooting. The exterior set of the legendary Titty Twister bar caught fire and had to be rebuilt. Due to budget limitations, many of the vampires were done with puppets, since there was only enough money for six fully equipped vamp suits—meaning models, miniatures, and plenty of handmade effects had to be used, along with the great work of makeup artist Greg Nicotero. And naturally, some violent scenes were trimmed so the film could get a more accessible rating.

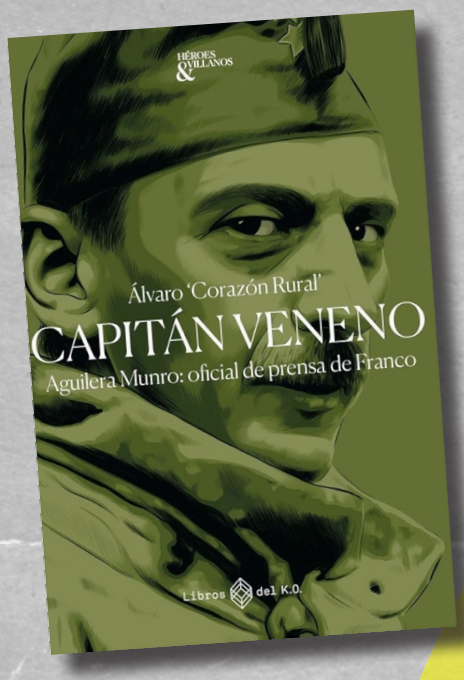
We can't forget its ideal soundtrack—songs and artists perfect for a road movie. We've got Tito & Tarantula, ZZ Top, Stevie Ray Vaughan, and The Blasters with the perfect "Dark Night," which has always reminded me of Little Caesar's "Cajun Panther."

In short, it's a perfect film to watch this upcoming Halloween. And for the record, the person writing these lines would give anything—anything—to have been at the Titty Twister on that fateful night.

Álvaro "Corazón Rural"

Author of "Captain Veneno: Aguilera Munro: Franco's press officer"

"I thought he'd be the perfect supervillain to write about, but once I started digging into his story, I realised he was a far more complex guy than that".





I've known Álvaro for many years, from back when we used to bump into each other at every concert in the purest underground scene of the kingdom's capital. He has always struck me as a brilliant guy, as eloquent as they come, and ever since he started writing for places like JotDown or Valencia Plaza, we've been able to see how well he can translate that eloquence to the written press. His interviews with people like Roberto Muñoz Bolaños, Joaquín Caparrós, Paco Jémez, and especially Radomir Antic, should be studied in journalism schools in this country. His analytical prowess, his deep knowledge—whether of football history, cinema, or, above all, European political history—make him a reference for those of us who write, even if he doesn't know it. Now he surprises us with this small but damn intense and brilliant book on Gonzalo de Aguilera Munro, an eccentric figure who served as press officer for the rebel side during the Spanish Civil War and who, as Álvaro himself says, lived a life worthy of an HBO series—or a Tarantino trilogy. It's a genuine pleasure to finally have Álvaro in Rock Bottom Magazine.

First, why a book about Aguilera Munro and not someone else? The Spanish Civil War is full of characters worth writing about. What makes him special, beyond his obsession with sewers (which we'll get to at the end)?

The idea came from the editor, Emilio Sánchez. We talk a lot about everything under the sun, and this character came up. I already knew of him because I've been interested in the Spanish Civil War since I was a teenager, and Emilio proposed writing an essay on him for his "Héroes y Villanos" collection. Aguilera Munro is special because he was an aristocrat who openly recognized in 1936 that the July 18 coup d'état aimed to exterminate Spaniards who didn't think like them. Not only did he acknowledge this—he told journalists, both informally and formally, in an interview with The Washington Times (not to be confused with the Post), which ended up being debated in the U.S. Congress. And beyond that, he murdered his own children at the end of his life. He seemed like the perfect supervillain to write about, yet once I began researching him, I found someone far more complex.

He was responsible for a large part of the propaganda of the rebel side and managed what was said and written about the war; he had more than eighty foreign reporters under his control (or at least he tried). The work Franco did in that regard was overwhelming. Propaganda has always been another weapon: back then it meant controlling the press, now it means controlling social media.

The rebels were especially careful about controlling the information published about them. In the eyes of the civilized world, they were an army that had risen up against its own legitimate democratic Republic. They had to create an opinion context in which what was happening didn't look like what it really was, but rather like a defensive movement against an incipient social revolution. They also concealed their collaboration with the Nazis and Italians until well into the war and, of course, couldn't allow news of the irregular executions they carried out in their wake to spread—Catholics abroad who might support them wouldn't take that well. The press officer, Aguilera, spent his days maintaining these narratives, controlling foreign journalists so they would publish what the rebels wanted. Today it's not so different: whoever controls social media, whoever manages to set the agenda online, dominates the conversation. You don't even need to coerce journalists anymore—you can create influencers with a snap of your fingers.



Journalist Frances Davis was sympathetic to the Republican cause, which often made her ashamed of what she had to write, but whatever Aguilera didn't change, the editor-in-chief of the Daily Mail would surprisingly alter later anyway. Yet she helped colleagues smuggle uncensored reports out of the country hidden in waistbands; some journalists wrote two versions of each article—one for Aguilera and another for her, since she had a bit more freedom of movement. You write: "Something as seemingly trivial as referring to the coup army as 'rebels' caused clashes and tensions between Aguilera and the journalists." Who do you think came up with the idea to control every comma written about the Nationalist movement? Was there a truly brilliant mind behind it? Was it Aguilera?

Yes, there was a Press Bureau led by the Nazi Juan Pujol, a bureau through which figures like Joaquín Arrarás passed, who later became a historian and is the father of many theories about the Civil War still used today by writers like Pío Moa; Giménez Caballero, one of the earliest Spanish fascist writers; Víctor de la Serna, later a longtime journalist… Aguilera followed the orders given to him by this bureau. He was highly cultured, fluent in several languages, so journalists couldn't fool him easily.

On April 26, 1937, the German Condor Legion and the Italian Legionary Air Force attacked the civilian population of Guernica with incendiary bombs. The destruction was incalculable, the horror indescribable. But… why do you think events like the Desbandá in Málaga didn't have the same impact as Guernica? The painting came much later, after all. Were there fewer journalists in Andalucía than in the north? Málaga remains an open wound. It's ironic that it was a man from Málaga who took the story of Guernica to another level.

Guernica was covered by a journalist just hours after it happened and published in The New York Times, which generated massive attention. Málaga had less coverage, even though Gerda Grepp documented what happened. But the press is almost never able to give the public a perfect portrait of reality. It works in bursts and flashes; its focus is not always where it should be. It's historians who later put everything in order. There were many moments in the war with more deaths than Guernica, but the way this bombing spread and the effect it had on public opinion was notable. The proof is that Picasso decided to paint "Guernica" after reading about it in the newspapers in Paris.

The effort to cover up what happened in Guernica was tremendous. Reports claimed that the "reds" burned everything with gasoline and that there had been no air attack because there had supposedly been fog that morning, and that there were no bomb craters… yet at one point you mention a journalist who survived machine-gun fire precisely by hiding in a crater. Aguilera took it personally, didn't he? And still, some foreign reporters risked their lives to show the truth.

He followed orders. The instructions were clear: the journalists accompanying him had to report that the "reds" had burned Guernica. The scene was staged fuel was poured so it would smell, and once everything was ready, the press was brought in and essentially had to certify what had been set before them.

Reading your book, it's clear that war correspondents' work is not Bambi, as a friend of mine says. Arturo Pérez-Reverte, before becoming a scourge of social media, always described it very well: it's brutally tough, but someone has to tell the truth. The case of Julio Anguita Parrado, killed in Iraq, is the clearest example. It mixes a nearly obsessive love for a brutally dangerous job with the need to show reality… and the knowledge that, usually, nothing will come of what you expose.

Covering a war is not just another assignment. The journalists Aguilera worked with give us a picture of what war correspondents were like at the time: highly rigorous professionals with strong principles, idealists who felt fulfilled by supporting a cause, adventurers on "holiday" in an exotic warring country, spies… there was everything. And today it's probably not that different.

Information management during the conflict was meticulous, like hiding from aligned countries the fact that the Nationalists were being aided by Germans and Italians. An English journalist was nearly executed as a spy for revealing the presence of Italian and German troops—something Franco denied until then. How important do you think the Spanish Civil War was for what happened later in Europe?

The Spanish Civil War was indeed the prelude to what was coming in Europe. The bombing of Guernica, which the British saw in the press, soon happened in London. The Republican authorities, under Negrín, were obsessed with resisting, believing that a similar conflict would soon erupt in Europe and hoping to link it to the Spanish war to receive help. It didn't happen—they missed it for months. Spain and Czechoslovakia were sacrificed, and the democracies only reacted when it was Poland's turn.

Would you dare give your opinion on why the war began? You write that one of the reasons—and I quote—was "the dispute between the 'Africanist' military lobby demanding promotions for wartime merit, as opposed to the 'junteros,' who defended promotions by rank or seniority… although this clash is rarely mentioned today because it doesn't fit political narratives".

Promotions were indeed an issue that divided the Army and had an influence. However, the causes of the war are multiple. Most importantly, the July 18 coup failed but couldn't be crushed, that's what led to the war. But if we look at deeper causes, it's obvious to me that those who had held economic, political, and social power refused to accept any reform that would modernize the country. The measures blocked and fought against since 1931 are now totally normal in Spain and any Western democracy: labor laws, regional autonomy, gender equality, secularism, etc. The radicalization of sectors of the left came from such absolute refusal to accept even a single reform. That, I think, is the root of the war and the cause of the polarization to which conflict is often attributed with little nuance.

Let's go back to Aguilera. Who was he? He was, unsurprisingly, an odd character. A Spanish aristocrat (with everything that implies), yet an animal-rights supporter and anti-bullfighting; a womanizer; widely read despite lacking a conventional education… and, once the war was over, deeply critical of Franco's regime. I'm struck by the fact that he stopped considering himself a Christian after seeing soldiers who, poisoned by gas, coughed up pieces of lung tissue.

He was an aristocrat whose mother wasn't one, which led to him being rejected by his family and social circle. Instead of distancing himself from the aristocracy, he doubled down and exalted those beliefs. He failed in his studies and at the officers' academy, dedicating himself to life's pleasures. But despite appearances, he wasn't some unproductive spoiled brat—he was a great autodidact with a passion for technology, always up to date with the latest developments and taking part in them, like radio broadcasting. That contrast is important.

As for the Great War, he served as an observer and had come from the war in Africa, which he found horrific, yet instead of becoming a humanist pacifist—as many did in the interwar period—Aguilera threw himself enthusiastically into the Civil War. It's hard to understand in someone so learned. And then there are the texts he wrote, summarizing his accumulated knowledge, which were far removed from the common sense that was beginning to take hold in Europe in the 1950s and '60s. With someone so cultivated, you'd expect a different mindset, yet he lived mentally in the myth of medieval Castile, before the Catholic Monarchs—a land some historians describe as a place of free men. At the same time, he was fiercely anticlerical, another contradiction. He was absolutely incomprehensible, unclassifiable, which for me makes him much more interesting. A reminder that stereotypes are useless for understanding the world or History.

Explain that phrase you quote from one of the books he dedicated to a nephew, in which he attributes priests' sexual obsessions to their "esmegmatic spirit".

It's an expression Aguilera used to describe the clergy, and I think it's a real literary gem. He used it to say their motivations were always dark, dirty, and greasy. Degenerate and perverted. His book "Cartas a un sobrino" is full of expressions and reasoning of this sort which, while forming the theory of a deeply deranged person, are very entertaining and even funny to read. Another contrast: he was writing madness, but with immense talent. That's another reason why I find him irresistible as a character.

Finally, explain his aversion to sewers.



It was simply a joke or boutade he used to explain the social changes taking place in the early twentieth century. Industrialization, medicine, and hygiene filled cities and created what philosophers called "mass society." Aguilera, in a crude joke, attributed the formation of the proletariat to the disappearance of infant mortality and other diseases. In a café it might have been amusing, especially for people of his ideological circle—but in the context of large-scale irregular executions, it was pitch-black humor.

To finish, remembering the days when we spent all our time talking about music… What are you listening to know that you could recommend? And don't you dare say Modern Talking or The Everly Brothers.

Listening to music is still practically my only hobby. I keep going back and forth between classic rock and the underground of the '70s. In recent years—since 2015—I've had a resurgence of metal fever, the music of my teenage years. I rediscovered it and have gone through truly obsessive phases listening to extreme metal, a genre which, in hindsight and with more knowledge, I realize was far better than people giving it credit for—not just a stylistic curiosity. Among these bands, I love those from the '80s who were shifting from thrash to death without knowing it, because death metal didn't yet have a defined stylistic canon. But I still listen to everything, and lately I've been deep into early 1980s British electronic music—bands like Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark, Soft Cell, etc. With Spotify I've found the perfect ally for my compulsive listening habits, and I make playlists of thousands of songs in each style, then play them on shuffle as if it were a radio station. They always surprise me. I'm like the guy in the Parálisis Permanente song "Oigo cintas que he grabado con mi voz"—only I've built a radio empire of different channels for which I'm the sole listener.

Javistone

Robert Finley, Madrid – Sala Mon (25 October 2025)



Saturday in Madrid brought a crisp, very autumn-like day to the capital, which made everything run smoothly. Without the usual heat we've had lately, the pre-show felt perfect—one of those great warm-ups that already put you in the right mood so the concert itself feels like pure excitement. Like a kid on Christmas morning.

Once in the area, we grabbed one last drink and headed straight to Sala Mon, a really comfortable venue with fantastic sound. You can tell they've invested in improving both the audio and the visibility. It's wild how good it is now: clear, sharp sound where every instrument stands out perfectly. The show had been sold out for days, and you could feel that "big night" atmosphere—blues and soul in the air. It's a vibe he'll be repeating across a long tour around the peninsula, with previous stops in Zaragoza, Santiago and Madrid, and upcoming dates in November in Valencia, Bilbao and Barcelona. It's part of the European tour Robert's been doing this autumn to present his latest album, Hallelujah, Don't Let The Devil Fool Ya.

At the door we could already sense the buzz. We got in quickly and secured strategic spots for what promised to be an amazing night—some close to the stage, others a bit further back to take in the full view, and a few more on the upper floor, where the line of sight is perfect and the bar is conveniently close. Around 9:10, about ten minutes late, the old-school soul tracks playing over the PA faded out, giving way to the intro of the concert. The stage lights revealed Robert's logo, with curtains draped on the sides, giving everything the feel of a Southern U.S. theatre.

The band is formed by Liam Hart (guitar), Charlie Love (bass), Ollie Hopkins (drums), and Christy Johnson (backing vocals). Christy stays by Robert's side at all times because of his eyesight issues—he suffers from glaucoma, which limits his vision—so he sometimes needs his daughter's help to move safely around the stage. But once that's solved, Finley is all energy, emotion and sheer strength, something he passes on to the crowd with ease. Seeing his enthusiasm and the connection he builds with the audience, the night felt truly special. And it's a connection he fuels through the little stories and bits of advice he shares during the show—not just the usual "we love you", but short motivational messages which, coming from someone with his life experience, hit differently.

The setlist covered all of his albums, from his very first record—which still carries a heavy emotional weight—to several songs off the new one. The concert began with a powerful start: Finley in top vocal form, Christy delivering beautiful harmonies and dual vocals, and the rhythm section perfectly locked in. Liam's guitar work deserves special mention; with just a few chords he transported us straight to Robert's native Louisiana. The guitar shone over the rhythm section, wrapping around the vocals and leaving a great aftertaste.

After sitting down for a short rest, he performed the ballad I Can Feel Your Pain, hitting the highest notes. When he finished, he thanked his daughter for being there with him and handed her the front of the stage for a song she dedicated to her father, My Father's Keeper, a strong track recorded this summer. A bit long, yes—probably giving him extra time to recover for the final rush.

During Nobody Wants to Be Lonely he looked visibly moved by the song's theme, sitting down and beating his chest while he sang. The high notes at the beginning add a deep emotional layer to the track. He continued with Medicine Woman, and with Souled Out On You the bond with the audience was already complete. This classic led into the last song before the encore, a new-album track titled I Wanna Thank You. Make Me Feel Alright closed the night—a show that sent us out into the street smiling and already waiting for his next visit.

Sob2025





Redford, the man who aged better than cinema itself



It was not my intention to turn this section into an obituary, but in recent months two of the icons of 1970s thrillers (and twilight westerns) who were still alive have passed away, and I cannot ignore it. If it was Gene Hackman's turn recently, now it is Robert Redford's. Two opposite ways of living life and creating characters: Hackman, a guy devoted to acting, surly, unfriendly, and whose social life was limited to shopping in a tracksuit. Redford, on the other hand, was the handsome Hollywood guy, with an ego to match his fame and a need to take on Hollywood with his independent film festival.

Robert Redford died on October 3, 2025, at his ranch in Sundance, Utah, surrounded by mountains, hardwood, and a silence that seemed tailor-made for him. It was not a scandalous or tragic death, but something much more disturbing for this world of surprises: serene. At 89, the man who embodied the American ideal said goodbye without fuss, as if he were simply stepping off the stage after performing his last scene. Some media outlets spoke of cardiac arrest, others of multiple organ failure, but the truth is that Redford had been dying gracefully for years, little by little. This was unusual for a guy who, unlike Hackman, hardly ever died on the big screen, except perhaps in that death denied to the viewer in "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" and in some last-minute superhero drivel. Hollywood reacted as it always does when one of its golden gods falls: with a choreography of serial obituaries, tear-jerking videos, and headlines repeating the same three words ("legend," "handsome," "integrity") until they were emptied of meaning. But Redford was always more than that. He was the last to believe in the American dream and, more admirably, the last to realize it was a lie.

His face was the longest advertising campaign of the 20th century. A jawline chiseled for optimism and a head of hair that looked like it had just come out of the barber shop, even if he had just escaped a fire. Redford didn't play the American hero: he embodied him, justified him, made him believable even when the country was burning in Vietnam or sinking in Watergate. While Hackman growled and Nicholson fell apart, Redford smiled as if the camera still deserved trust. And yet, beneath that smile was a man with miseries, with more doubts than certainties. What saved him from cardboard cutout status was precisely what Hollywood never knew how to digest: an uncomfortable moral intelligence. Redford was not a naive man with good lighting; he was an idealist who understood that ideals rot if you leave them in the sun too long.

You all remember the meme of the zoom nodding smugly in Jeremiah Johnson, but who was Robert Redford? In the biography written by Michael Finney Callan (out of print as I write this, probably reissued before Christmas. Publishers and necrophilia), he

tells us that Charles Robert Redford Jr. was born in Santa Monica, California, on August 18, 1936, the son of a milkman who later became an accountant for Standard Oil. The drive to succeed ran in his family. Surprisingly, or perhaps not, he was a troublemaker at school, joining a street gang and getting arrested for "borrowing a car that had stolen jewelry in the trunk." Oh, come on, Bob. Seeing that he wasn't doing well there, he won a scholarship to the University of Colorado thanks to his baseball skills, but was expelled after eighteen months for drunkenness, who would have thought. At that time, an event occurred that would change his life: his mother died at the age of only forty. Overwhelmed by grief, he wandered for a while and found work in the oil fields of California, before traveling to Paris and Florence, where he studied art. This stay in Europe encouraged him to adopt a new perspective on the United States: "I began to see my country from another point of view," he would later say. And in his films, he would show this perspective without mincing words, making more than a few enemies.

He returned to the United States with a mixture of nihilism and discipline that only ruin and art can provide, so he enrolled in the Actor's Studio, although he always despised its mystique of "emotional torture": he said that truth was in the eyes, not in the guts.

His leap into cinema coincided with a country that was beginning to suspect itself. In the 1960s, while young people burned flags and old studios crumbled, Redford appeared on screen as a modern anachronism: as handsome as the classical gods, but with a tremor in his gaze that the gods did not have. Inside Daisy Clover (1965) was his first serious attempt, but the masterstroke came with Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid (1969). That's where it all began: the myth, the festival, the spirit.

The film, directed by George Roy Hill, was the perfect postcard of the end of an era: two bandits fleeing into nothingness while progress was hot on their heels. Redford, alongside Paul Newman, rewrote male camaraderie with irony and fatalism. His Sundance Kid is not just a likeable outlaw: he is the smile in the face of extinction. In their hands, Western cinema became self-aware, and the film's box office success brought the twilight Western into every home in the US. In fact, it was such a cross-generational hit that surely 93% of our mothers enjoyed watching it. They were so handsome, charismatic, and cool that they couldn't be killed on screen. The final frame shows Newman and Redford running while shooting, and for a few seconds we hear the Bolivian army firing salvos. It's one of the most iconic endings in history.

In fact, that would be his trademark for decades: embodying the hero just when that hero ceases to make sense. If anyone asks me, I'll admit that I think he's a very decent actor, but not a great one: that restrained gesture always seems to me to hide ice, not fire, and he never managed to move me (as Newman does, for example). Of course, this is my problem, and he remains a huge idol in at least three of my favorite movies. But he was just too handsome; maybe it's envy.

The 1970s cemented him as the most important actor of his generation, not because of his Oscars or his magazine covers, but because of what he represented: America's moral doubt wrapped up in the face of the most handsome man in the country. In a decade dominated by paranoia, Redford was the face of elegant confusion. Three Days of the Condor (1975), directed by Sydney Pollack, is the perfect example: a CIA analyst discovers that the agency kills its own agents and flees with nothing but his trench coat and the fear of an entire generation: he runs through Manhattan pursued by the state, but it seems he is fleeing from something bigger: the certainty that the truth no longer saves anyone. Redford plays paranoia in a suit and tie (and, again, with great hair), without hysteria or fuss, as a decent man caught in an indecent system. He is the antithesis of the macho man: an ethical hero who doubts, and that is why he is convincing. Pollack and he understood that beauty only works when you put it in danger.

His partnership with Pollack was one of the most fruitful and sincere in American cinema. Both understood that cinema could be commercial without being idiotic, political without being propagandistic, romantic without being corny. Jeremiah Johnson (1972) is a silent, almost Zen-like western in which Redford plays a deserter who retreats to the mountains to escape civilization and ends up confronting it at every turn. It is the mystical reverse of the classic western, an echo of Thoreau with a rifle. And then, in The Way We Were (1973), Pollack pits him against Barbra Streisand in a story of impossible love between conscience and privilege: he, a handsome liberal; she, an idealistic communist. Spoiler alert: the story wins, they both lose.

Unlike other contemporaries, Redford did not allow himself to be consumed by his physical appearance. He managed it like a politician manages his symbolic capital: with coldness and strategy. Every wrinkle was a choice. In All the President's Men (1976), as Bob Woodward, he was no longer the myth of the West, but the modern journalist who believed that truth could still bring down power. That film not only saved The Washington Post and its reputation: it turned investigative journalism into an epic and Redford into the last civil hero of the 20th century. It also made some beardless idiot (ahem!) who now writes obituaries want to go into journalism, but that's another sad story.

Redford, alongside Paul Newman, rewrote male camaraderie with irony and fatalism. His Sundance Kid is not just a likeable outlaw: he is the smile in the face of extinction.

I can't forget Redford's perhaps most popular film, The Sting (1973), in which he stars again with Newman, directed once more by George Roy Hill, a cinematic con in tailcoats and fedora hats, where the film laughs at itself and the viewer in equal measure. Redford (Johnny Kelly Hooker) and Newman (Henry Shaw Gondorff) are two charming and charmingly deceitful guys, setting up a mess of bets, marked cards, and twists that seem straight out of a parlor game, but with more tension than a Gremlin's baptism. The film doesn't just tell you about a heist: it makes you feel like you're inside it, that every smile hides a calculation and every glance is a little theft of your attention. And that music by Scott Joplin, that legendary ragtime piano tune, sounds as if time has gone back to an elegant Chicago, full of smoke, cheap whiskey, and exquisitely educated con artists. It's not just a classic: it's a reminder that cinema can be cunning, seductive, and mischievous all at once. A theft from the viewer that, against all odds, leaves you applauding.

Both protagonists became superstars, but while Newman was content to leave his mark on the history of cinema and fill American pantries with sauces bearing his smiling face, Redford was not comfortable. He wanted more. He wanted an empire.

While the world hailed him as an icon, he was beginning to tire of his own reflection. In the 1980s, he founded the Sundance Film Festival, which began as a refuge for independent cinema and ended up becoming a parallel industry as polished as the one he criticized. Redford, the pragmatic idealist, ended up directing films

that seemed like elegies to his own myth: Ordinary People (1980), his directorial debut, is the attempt of a middle-class

> ***The 1970s cemented him as the most important actor of his generation, not because of his Oscars or his magazine covers, but because of what he represented: America's moral doubt wrapped up in the face of the most handsome man in the country.***



man to maintain the facade of success. In other words: a portrait of Robert Redford without makeup. Of course, the 80s and 90s established him as an irresistible mature man, but for the sake of my self-respect, I'm going to ignore Out of Africa and Indecent Proposal. You're welcome.

The fascinating thing about him is that he never completely broke down. He didn't have Brando's abysmal fall or Nicholson's public collapse. He simply faded away. He retired with All Is Lost (2013), a silent film in which he fights alone against the sea, and then returned once more for The Old Man & the Gun (2018), as if he wanted to come full circle: the old outlaw who continues to rob banks for pure pleasure, aware that the end is near. It was his epitaph in life.

In his westerns, Redford was always the civilized man seeking redemption in nature. In his thrillers, he was the honest man caught up in a corrupt machine. In his life, he was a mixture of both: the individual who tried to escape the system while keeping it going with his own beauty. Deep down, Redford was Hollywood's last functional myth: someone who knew it was a lie, but worked every day to make the lie seem dignified.

Perhaps that's why he aged better than cinema. While Hollywood indulged in digital plastic and superheroes in underpants, Redford continued to film mountains, conversations, and silences. Oh, of course he fell into the trap in Avengers: Endgame, his last film, in which, coincidentally? his character dies. His beauty, which in others would have been a curse, became a reminder of what had been lost: faith in the image as truth.

When he died, social media was filled with lamentations about his "incalculable legacy." Redford left behind not only films, but also a model of behavior: the possibility of being honest in a system that rewards deception. That's why he was never quite American, even though he seemed so. His America was not that of rifles and flags, but of remorse. Let's not forget that on his Sundance ranch hung a quote from Thoreau: "Most men lead lives of quiet desperation." Redford turned that desperation into something beautiful. He didn't shout, he didn't implode, he didn't degrade himself in public. He simply faded away.

And now that he is gone, cinema seems even older than he was. Young actors continue to try to reproduce his mixture of decency and charisma without understanding that this cannot be trained, it is sculpted by blows of contradiction. Redford was not perfect, but he was consistent: a handsome man with a conscience, who deep down knew that neither of these things was in fashion.

Javier Sanabria



Scott Evil

Indie Rock de profundos matices pop y shoegaze



The German band Scott Evil came to our attention thanks to the great work done in the underground scene by a label like Spinda Records. The indie rock with deep pop and shoegaze nuances that Scott Evil captures on their album "Big Dipper" is a great opportunity to rediscover and reclaim a genre that has been drawn, for its own reasons or those of others, into a complicated spiral of honesty and credibility. We talked about these and other things with Scott Evil.

How was Scott Evil born?
In late 2017 Farina, Philipp and René were all without a band, and so, as they were all still studying, had enough free time on their hands, to start looking for a rehearsal space and just start a new band. Trying out a wide array of ideas and genres, and playing with different musicians nothing really stuck, until Philipp met Till at a party, and talked to him about his new Shoegaze project, which was barely a project and hardly shoegaze at this point. I was excited to join, and during the first rehearsal, brought a short riff idea which quickly developed into both a song and a band. Rene asked Tibor, then a friend from university if he would like to join and so the first lineup was complete and ready to play the first show, right before the first lockdown.

What was the process of composing and recording "Big Dipper"?
Writing for Big Dipper started during a one week stay at a friend's former woodworking space which he started turning into a creative space at this point. Isolating at the outskirts of the city, gave enough room to write three songs (Barbed Wire, Pizazz, Red to Grey). More songs followed in the coming months, so a full album was intended. The band decided to ask their friend Felix Margraff to record the album. The sessions were two weekends, at Karnak in Kassel, a Live venue closed for summer break, during which the writing of last two songs was finished (Redwoods, Seize my Head). Another Weekend Session at a Rehearsal Complex in Kassel, followed during which the last bulk of the Guitar Tracks were recorded, except for a few overdubs, which were done be the band in their rehearsal space.

"Big Dipper" delves into the realm of a style that is currently as distorted as indie. Are you trying to recapture the essence of that indie rock of yesteryear?
While we all grew up listening to Indie Rock and all still swim in its waters, we don't really consider Big Dipper an indie rock record. The influence is probably undeniably, but we would probably highlight the impact of genres like shoegaze, emo and alternative rock, that we feel are more present.

You place a lot of importance on atmosphere in your songs, as a constant, right?
Yes, Atmosphere is very important to us. It adds a dimension to the songs that speak to us sonically.

Although it is true that there is a varied range of influences in your sound, there is always a pop base in the songs.
Well, yes.

…even so, when it's needed, you guys flex some muscle through the guitars, like in 'Circles' or 'Pizzazz'. What's your take on that?"
And yet we would consider these two songs as the most pop influenced. We think combing loud and fast guitars with catchy lyrics Is a lot of fun and also gives a nice contrast to the more somber moments on the record.

Another fundamental part of your sound is Farina's voice, right? What can you tell us about the importance of her voice in the band's sound?
Farinas Vocals carry every song. And on this record, there is a range and depth that we found together that opened up the possibilities for songwriting. When we first listened to the recording of "Barbed Wire and Pizzas" we were blown away by that power and then there's "Daughter of the Sun" which opens so much room for her vocals, which is something we have never done before.

How does music from a German band end up on an independent Spanish label like Spinda Records?
In the late Summer 2024 Julia joined us as our new bass player. She's a huge fan of Fin del Mundo, and so she just asked Berto of Spinda Records, if he would like to be interested in working with us.

How much support do you think the underground movement receives these days?
It mostly seems like The Underground Scene supports itself. We are being booked by people who play in bands that we played with before. When we play in different cities, it's so often that we sleep in the living rooms of bands that we play with. There are people that give a lot of energy and time to make shows happen and at the end that's what keeps the scene alive and are incredibly grateful for that, and every worn-out mattress that we are offered.

Do social media and music streaming work in favor of bands, or does so much information together end up limiting what reaches people?
Social media is what's there. It is what needs to be dealt with and done. I can't really tell if it helps with finding new bands and new music. Music Streaming does help by offering accessibility to more music, but it does have a tendency to reduce albums to songs, and genres to mood playlists.

What are your immediate plans, a new album, a tour...?
We have just finished a tour and have played a lot of shows after releasing the album in June. We have some more shows lined up, but we have also talked about focusing more on songwriting in the next year. We have already written a few new things that we are excited about, and that feel like an evolution of what we have been doing for the last few years.

Carlos Tizón

Chris Dale

Bass-War Veteran



Chris Dale is a British bassist with extensive experience over the last 30 years. He started in the early '90s with a band very much in the style of Red Hot Chili Peppers and later took a step forward by joining the band of then–ex-Iron Maiden vocalist Bruce Dickinson, with whom he lived unforgettable experiences such as that concert in the middle of the war in the former Yugoslavia. He would also play in other bands like Tribuzy, Tank, and the progressive outfit Balance Of Power. The Metal N' Rock radio team contacted Chris via WhatsApp to send him a few questions, which we now share with our beloved publication Rock Bottom Magazine.

You've played with many bands such as Atom Seed, Balance Of Power, Sack Trick, or Tank. What can you tell us about your musical background over these past decades?

Yes, I've played in many bands. I've been playing bass for almost 40 years now. So yes, I have plenty of experience, as you said, in bands like Balance Of Power. I've probably forgotten more bands than I can remember. I've played with Tank, Atom Seed, Kiko Loureiro from Megadeth, Eric Martin from Mr. Big… I truly believe music is about sharing experiences and I love playing with different people, you know—whether they're professionals or amateurs, we're all just good friends sharing music. I can't imagine what it must be like for someone to play in huge bands like Iron Maiden, AC/DC or Metallica their whole life, but strangely enough, I don't really wish for that, because I've loved my experiences playing with all kinds of musicians throughout my career.

In 1994 you joined Bruce Dickinson's band—that's where we discovered you. How did you get into his band? What do you remember from that time?

Yes, that's right. I joined Bruce Dickinson's band in 1994 for the "Balls to Picasso" tour. I had just read in a Korean magazine that Bruce was looking for a bassist and a drummer, so Alex Elena, my friend, and I went to the audition. Bruce liked us, and we got the job. We started with the U.S. tour and then went on to South America. We also played in Spain and all over Europe, and even went as far as Japan. It was a crazy, truly incredible experience. Recording music with him and seeing how a star of his level worked was important as well. And I also got to see how a band of that caliber operates on a world tour. Unforgettable.

With Bruce you recorded the studio album "Alive in Studio A" and later, in 1996, the "Skunkworks" project, where Dickinson embraced more alternative sounds. We remember some Dickinson fans not accepting that change, and there was even talk of an incident during a Lynyrd Skynyrd show. Do you think that if the album had been more successful, the Skunkworks project and lineup would have lasted longer?

I think that incident you mention happened

during the “Accident Of Birth” tour—we didn’t play with Skynyrd. I don’t remember getting bad reactions from fans. I think that if people didn’t like what Bruce was doing, they simply wouldn’t go to the show. They wouldn’t spend money on a ticket just to shout that they didn’t like it. The negative reaction was the audience becoming noticeably smaller overall. Iron Maiden fans like the Iron Maiden sound. So the fact that Bruce was doing something different from his old band may have contributed to that decline in attendance. Looking back on my involvement in the “Skunkworks” album, I realize how good that record was and how well-received it actually was despite the drop in sales. I agree with you—if the album had sold more, the Skunkworks project would have continued. But Maiden fans wanted Bruce back in the band—that’s where guaranteed success was.

Back then, Bruce didn’t usually play Iron Maiden songs live, although by 2002 he had brought several back into the setlist, like at Rock Machina 2002, where we saw you. In those early days with Bruce, did you rehearse any Maiden songs at all?

Yes, that’s right. When Bruce left Maiden, quite sensibly, he didn’t want to play Maiden songs. He had already moved on and wanted to take a different path. He wanted to play his own songs, record new music, tour with his material—he wanted to evolve. However, Maiden fans like to hear Maiden songs, and quite understandably so. You know, if I go see Ace Frehley, I want to hear KISS songs. So yes, we did end up adding some Maiden songs to the set. Also, on the 2002 tour I did with him, we played the best of his career, so we played songs from all his eras like “Tattooed Millionaire,” “Tears of the Dragon,” “Back from the Edge”… and of course a few Iron Maiden songs. In 2002 it was a journey through his whole discography, so we covered every stage. Seeing the crowd’s reaction when we brought back some Maiden material made us realize that’s what they wanted. Bruce chose songs that Maiden hadn’t played in a long time, like “Powerslave.” So I’m not sure whether we were covering Maiden or Maiden were covering us, haha. I’m not a huge Iron Maiden fan, but playing those songs was amazing, and I had a great time.

A few years ago you released a book called “Inside the Skunkworks Machine.” How did the idea of writing the book come about? Was it easy to get the musicians involved to participate?

I started working on the book during lockdown. I actually began participating in a “Skunkworks” Facebook group where people were asking me questions about the band and I would answer them. I soon realized there was potential there. So I started copying and pasting everything into a Word document, and slowly the whole thing came together. It developed very naturally, and I wasn’t the only one in the group—producer Jack Endino joined, my friend and drummer Alex Elena joined, all of us chatting and giving our perspectives on that era. I thought it was an excellent way to preserve the legacy of everyone involved in that period. Roland Grapow, Blaze Bayley—they also joined. These were people I had worked with or crossed paths with; they all had something to contribute to the story. At the same time, I asked fans to share their “Skunkworks” memories and any photos they had, and that’s how the book was built. It was truly like a reunion of friends in a bar, everyone letting their memories flow.

When we met Bruce Dickinson in Madrid in 2001, he told us one of the concerts he remembered most fondly was the one in Sarajevo during the Balkan War. What was that experience like for you?

The Sarajevo thing was quite special, because Bosnia was at war and we had to travel in an aid truck through the front line. Honestly, it was absolutely terrifying. You could hear gunfire in the distance, buildings destroyed, people starving… It was pure horror—worse than I had imagined. It was not fun or glamorous at all; I was certainly very nervous being inside a war zone, and all I wanted was to get out of there as soon as possible, to be honest. But we played the concert and got home safely—it felt like a victory for everyone involved in that show. And afterward, what happened? We had filmed everything with home video cameras and released it as a documentary, which I highly recommend you watch.

We’ve read that you had to self-publish the book “Inside the Skunkworks Machine.” Was it difficult? Where can we find it?

Yes, that’s right—the “Inside the Skunkworks” book was self-published. Basically, it tells the story from our auditions for the project with Bruce all the way to our breakup and also our later projects, such as the 2002 tour with Bruce that I just mentioned. I published it myself because I’ve worked with publishers before on other kinds of books, and they always want to add, change, or remove things—and I didn’t want any of that. I wanted the book to look exactly the way I wanted it to. I wanted to tell the full story with no compromises. I put it up on Amazon so it would be available in most of the world. I’m not Amazon’s biggest fan as a company, but they do have great distribution, which is what I needed. So you should be able to find it there, although sometimes their algorithm doesn’t work well for searches. It’s also available on my own website at www.chrispaulodale.co.uk.

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We know you write articles for Metal Talk. What can you tell us about that side of your career?

Yes, that’s right—that’s where I wrote my memories of the San Diego show. I’ve written quite a few articles about metal and rock—around forty or fifty. They’re all available online if you’re interested. Some of them are quite serious, and others are simply memories.

To finish, what can you tell us about your musical activity nowadays? Are you still active as a musician? What’s your take on the current hard rock scene?

Well, to be honest, I’m not the right person to talk to you about the current state of hard rock. I’m an old man (laughs). I went to see Iron Maiden at the Hammersmith a few months ago, but you know, I don’t know much about modern music. I listen to some new bands—some of them sound great—but it’s not really my field. You’d have to ask someone with more time on their hands than me. As for your question, yes, I’m still active, though mainly playing in cover bands, which still makes me happy. I’ve got a Maiden cover show coming up soon, but I also play other covers just for fun, like Queensrÿche. I really enjoy playing those songs from my youth, you know, more so than forming a brand-new band and going through that whole process again. Recently, I recorded some instrumental music as if for a soundtrack and I have some upcoming shows with Eric Martin from Mr. Big. I usually do a few things here and there, mainly for fun—I’m not trying to be in the next big band. I still enjoy performing in places like Belgrade and meeting fans and having a good time talking to people like you. I hope to play in Spain again someday.

Metal N’ Rock Radio

The Violet Cluster

La particular galaxia violeta nacida en un rincón de Murcia



The Violet Cluster are Yolanda (vocals), Patxi (guitar), Carlos (guitar), Javier (bass) and Hermes (drums), a quintet formed in Cartagena (Murcia) in 2019, sailing through the warm waters where soul, blues and folk rock blend together. A year ago they released their first LP, titled "Five Are Coming", a record that clearly shows their love for the rootsier side of rock. We spoke with their guitarist and founder, Patxi Navarro, who tells us how the album came to be and reflects on the current music scene.

I'd like you to tell us the story of the band. How did The Violet Cluster come together?
Our story actually goes way back. Yolanda and I met in high school, around '96, and we started a musical project called Malagüero, which took us to stages like La 2 de TVE and plenty of festivals—we spent over twenty years with that band. After taking a break, she and I decided, together with Javier Cabrera, to start something new because we were dying to get back on stage. But this time, we wanted to focus more on Yolanda's strengths and the musical tastes we shared

Where does the name of the band come from?
It was kind of by chance. While throwing around ideas for the band name, we found out there was a galaxy cluster that experts associated with a violet tone (we're a bit geeky), and since music is ultimately a cluster of things and people, we figured—what better than using that name and that shade of violet as references to bring together experiences and stories?

A couple of years ago you released an EP, but this is your first full-length. What was the studio experience like?
The reception—both from the public and from the press and music critics—has been amazing. Ever since its official release in October 2024, we've continued receiving very positive reviews. It still overwhelms us. So we're really grateful for everything. And one of the reasons for that was our producer, Pepe Ludeña, who understood from the very beginning what we had in mind and the direction we wanted to take. With his help and expertise, recording the album became a truly beautiful experience. In a few months, we'll be heading back into his studio

The influence of roots-based American music is very present in your album, but what would you say are the key elements of your sound?
We believe our musical influences have a lot to do with our sound, because within the same song you might find folk aromas that evolve into a swampy tone and end up in blues or soul rock. But without a doubt, it's the chemistry among the musicians that completes it. On one hand, you have Javier's bass playing, very soul-oriented and delicate, leaning into bands like The Faces or The Band. On the other, there's Carlos Orenes, whose mastery of slide guitar transports you from the deep, swampy American South to the Stones-like crunch, with touches reminiscent of Blackberry Smoke. Then there's Hermes Alcaraz, who joined recently in June, and he's completely changed how we perceive our live shows and compositions—his playing blends delicacy and aggressiveness in a way that leaves no one indifferent. All of this lets Yolanda's voice sit in a space where she can truly express her full potential, jumping from shades reminiscent of Nina Simone to the rawest Janis Joplin.

M-Clan, Nacho Para, Arde Bogotá, you… What is it about Murcia and rock? How do you see the local scene?
This December marks a year since the terrible news of Nacho Para's passing—someone who opened the world to everything he knew. Going back to the question, I think Murcia has something Nacho also had: closeness. Let me explain—not that it doesn't happen elsewhere, but the truth is that Murcia's community isn't very big, and that makes it easier for all of us to know one another, share projects, ideas… Most bands go through similar things and knowing each other helps us join forces.

The success of these bands, and many more, comes from curiosity, from coexistence, and because musicians in the region have always stayed alert to what's happening nationally

and internationally. It's a hotbed of artistic creation. At the Asociación Por Amor al Arte in Cartagena (run by drummer Jorge Gens), there are more than 170 active bands—so the scene is vibrant, despite the terrible conditions when it comes to venues. That's why we decided to play outside. There are very few places that let you play for free or offer anything back (most places you have to rent the room, and the band always ends up losing a lot of money), and other venues only book tribute or cover bands. Those of us who write original music have no place, no help—except for people like Jorge and his association, Esteban from Mister Witt, Yago from The Island Pub, among others, who keep an annual schedule going. And some other friends in the small scene who also lend a hand—we're really grateful to them. Thanks to them, we can keep going.

Back to the album. It's impossible not to stop and talk about Yolanda's voice—how important is it within the songs?

Yolanda's voice is absolutely central here. Without taking anything away from the musicians—who, in my opinion, are the best—the songs are built around her voice. I've been working with her for years, so I know where she shines. After that break we had, it became clear to me that what mattered most was giving her space to develop her full potential. So we sacrificed whatever we needed in terms of harmony or arrangement to create a musical environment where she would feel comfortable. That's something we all agreed on—including Pepe Ludeña, our producer, who understood it right from the start. And there's not much more to say—just listen to her.

Let's talk about the songs. Titles like "Weapons to Survive" or "I'll Sing What I Want" show a lot of determination and strength. Do you let the song speak through the lyrics, or do you see it all as one whole with the music?

Yolanda writes all the lyrics, and although it may not seem so at first, they are very personal—like the things that help you survive each day ("Weapons to Survive"), or experiences that led her, at a certain point, to decide to do whatever she felt like doing, as in "I'll Sing What I Want". So everything the lyrics express comes from Yolanda. And who better than her to express exactly what she wants—saying what she feels and how she feels it?

Since the album came out a year ago, you've been performing all over the place. Will you continue touring in the coming months?

Yes! The tour began in 2024 and we're already booking dates for 2026. We named it "Five Are Coming", after one of the songs. And it will last as long as our bodies—and our wallets—allow (laughs), because the will is definitely there. I invite everyone to check out our social media and our website, www.thevioletcluster.com , where we post all upcoming dates and keep adding more shows and more content, like our latest "Live Studio Session".

Marcos Sánchez



THE CRYSTAL TEARDROP SPIDERS AL9 SHAUN RYDER MIENTRAS LAS ABEJAS DUERMEN DIAMANTE WUCAN SCOTT EVIL CHRIS DALE

"...we are ugly but we have the music".

ROCK BOTTOM MAGAZINE



Wucan

Expanding psychedelia

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