SAMMY BRUE KEVIN STEELE JON ITURBE GARRET T. WILLIE LOS DELTONOS JAY BUCHANAN NAT SIMONS STEVEN MUNAR

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

ROCK BOTTOM MAGAZINE

Jay Buchanan

From the bunker to the soul

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THANK YOU.

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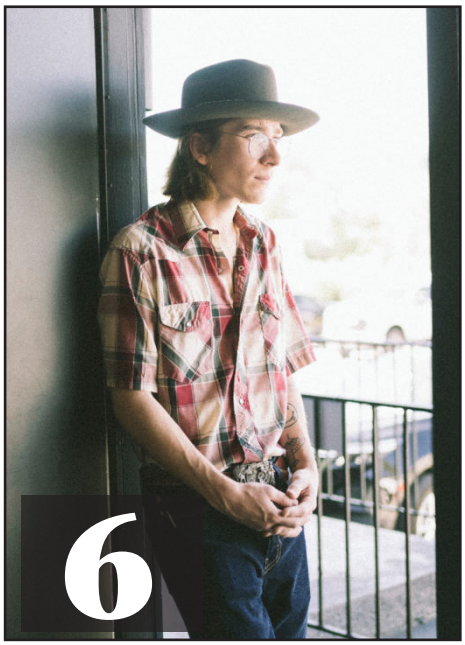
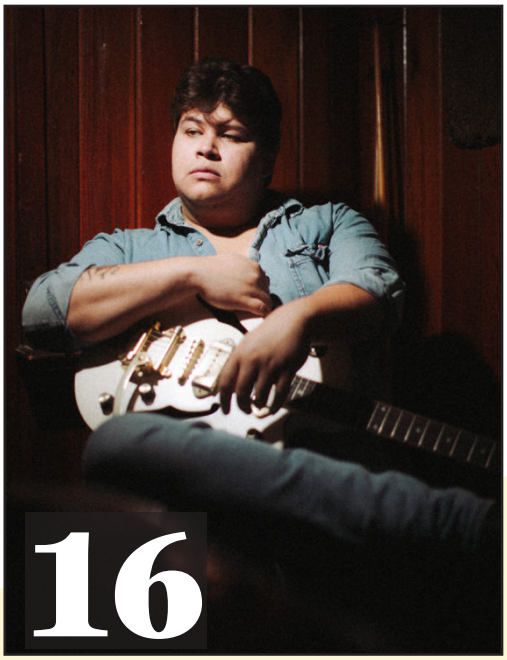


Sammy Brue



Garret T. Willie

Los DelTonos

Jay Buchanan

Nat Simons

Editorial
by javistone

FIRST

REVOLUTION STARTS NOW

DON'T STOP DOING WHAT YOU ARE DOING

"The revolution starts now
When you rise above your fear
And tear the walls around you down
The revolution starts here
Where you work and where you play
Where you lay your money down
What you do and what you say
The revolution starts now"
Steve Earle

A few days ago, while reading an interview with **Enrique Bunbury** in El Confidencial, he was asked about revolution, a curious question coming from such a conservative outlet. Bunbury, articulate and sharp-minded, and always careful to avoid certain pitfalls, stated that his revolution is artistic, and this is what he said about his song "Creer que se puede creer": "*It is a song that speaks about belief, about faith in oneself, which is important in order to find your own path. In any artistic discipline, the temptation to join a group or a movement that more or less flows along easily is tempting, because we are always more comfortable accompanied than alone*". This way of seeing things is something I had already discussed years ago with our dear **Dolphin Riot,** who, more than a revolutionary, is a revolution himself. Art as a revolutionary act, does it sound familiar? What can be revolutionary about art, about creation? "*In creation it is important to find your place. That faith is necessary to say: Yes, I know all of these people are looking over there, but I am interested in something else*". Bumm… Revolution as an individual concept.

If we turn to the definition that the Real Academia de la Lengua Española provides for the word revolution, it is defined as "a profound change, generally violent, in the political and socio-economic structures of a national community", and it is related to the word "rebellion". Ah… revolution and rebellion, words that sound like Victorian poetry to my ears. Camus said that rebellion begins in the individual who says "no". As Bunbury says, revolution must be individual and rebellion must begin with the person. And art as a weapon of rebellion is powerful. To rebel against what is established and that you do not like, to go against the current even though the current ("common, regular, not extraordinary", we turn once again to the Academy) has force and drags you where you do not want to go. But one has grown up in Rock and Roll, and despite the passing of the years, rebellion as a way of life is non-negotiable.

We have just published issue 50, while I write these words more than six hundred downloads have been surpassed, we publish in Spanish and English (do you know of any other publication that does so?), we have launched a website… and has anyone said anything? No one. Once again, the doubts about whether all of this is worth it return like a recurring nightmare. And yet, after the concert that the Norwegians Gluecifer gave a few weeks ago in Seville ("give a concert" might fall short, it would be more accurate to say "they set the Custom venue on fire"), while I was waiting for Biff Malibú to come out to the merchandise stand and sign a copy of our back cover, someone came up to me and said "don't stop doing what you are doing". So simple and so complicated. Biff never showed up there, but I went back home convinced that I am doing the right thing. Going against the current, heading towards where I believe I have to go, finding my/our own path. The revolution starts now.

AN INDIVIDUAL REVOLUTION

Diálogos con Justin Townes Earle

SAMMY BRUE

You rarely see something appear out of nowhere and feel as if your soul is thrown wide open. Works, songs, projects… that, for whatever reason, lay you bare and leave you exposed, as if they dismantled all that armour you have built around yourself over the years to protect that child who, one day, began to discover that the world can be harsh and cruel. And yet, God knows why, human beings were given the ability to perceive beauty, as well as to create it, so that, in that conjunction of feeling and creation, existence takes on a perspective capable of breaking that armour and revealing us looking inward, reminding us of all that world we carry inside each one of us. This is music that strips you bare, that disarms you, music that is purity in essence. And that is exactly what Sammy Brue has given us with this recent "For Justin".

Yes, that Justin is Justin Townes Earle, son of the great Steve Earle, another troubled soul with a talent as overwhelming as the size of the demons he carried within. Justin discovered Sammy when he was very young, and from the very beginning they became friends. The younger Earle was Sammy's idol and acted as a teacher and mentor in his early days in music. He got him a record deal when he was barely fourteen, looked after him, guided him, taught him the good and the bad of being a musician and of being human. Justin died in 2020 and left behind numerous unfinished texts and demos. Sammy wrote the song "For Justin" in his honour and sent it to Jenn, Earle's widow, and faced with such a song, it was impossible not to be moved by a composition like that. Jenn was clear: Sammy Brue was the right person to finish what Justin had left unfinished. And he was. "For Justin", the album, is a wonderful work, stripped bare and devoid of any artifice, a song from the disciple to the lost master, a tribute, a final dialogue. Did I mention it is a wonderful work?

You are very young to have taken on a project like this. It takes courage, talent and, above all, a lot of love for music to face the challenge of taking unfinished texts from a friend who is no longer here and bringing them to life. I believe it all began when you wrote "For Justin" and sent it to Jenn, Justin's wife, and she, moved by it, sent you a series of Justin's unfinished texts. How did you react to something like that? A gift? A responsibility? From the outside, it seems like a way of connecting with a friend one last time. I would give an arm to be able to say goodbye to loved ones in such a way.

When I finally saw the full picture of what it means to do a project like this, the world stopped moving for a while. I knew I could not let an opportunity like that pass, but I also felt like an impostor. I fought against those feelings of knowing I was not the right person to do it by becoming the person who does it. I studied, worked tirelessly, refined my craft in order to put myself in that place and, before becoming that person, I had no idea what my life would look like in five years. I just knew I had to create something and become someone Justin would be proud of.

Do you know what the family thinks about the final result of the album? Do they recognize Justin in your record?

They have told me it sounds like Justin, but at the core it is me. As much as I made this record for him, I also tried to make it for the family. I will soon be seeing Jenn to have a face-to-face conversation about this whole journey, and I am looking forward to letting all the emotions out.

How did you meet him? I believe he was already helping you around the time of your first album, right? Did he have any influence on you signing with New West Records?

I met Justin when I was eleven… in Utah, if you are not 21, you cannot go to shows in bars to see live music, but I made my dad go early to the show and take me with him just in case I could meet him and have him sign my guitar. I was dressed in a buttoned-up shirt tucked in, with a belt buckle and a hat I bought with money I earned playing on the street, along with some second-hand Dr. Martens boots… all the clothes were chosen because "Justin Townes Earle would wear them". As we drove past the venue, Justin was outside smoking, so I made my dad turn on the hazard lights and stop. Justin spoke to us right away and I liked to think I impressed him with the way I dressed. Then he signed my guitar and we took a photo.

But you met again years later.

At Justin's later shows in Utah, which I was able to attend, Justin saw me again, came over and said, "I have a new album coming out and I want you on the cover, you are going to play young Justin". That album was "Single Mothers". I am the kid on the cover. So Justin flew me to Nashville and we spent time together, he introduced me to people, got me into bars, and Joshua Black Wilkins (his photographer, who also ended up becoming mine) shot the cover photo. I was thirteen. At fourteen I signed with New West Records… So yes, Justin was a fundamental influence in launching my career.

What was Justin like as a person and as a musician? Do you think he somehow lived with the weight of his father's legacy?

Justin was a different person to me. When he took me on tour, I was about sixteen, and he wanted to be a teacher and a mentor. He was always a strong presence around me, telling me about his mistakes, cracking off-colour jokes and trying to guide me along a stable path, while warning me about the dangers that would come. If anything, I think Justin lived with the weight of his own legacy. He started using it again on that tour and I saw that side of his life that he wanted to protect me from. Justin is simply an intense personality. After reading his biography, I think obviously everyone had a different experience with him. He was deeply marked by his problems and his flaws, but every time I saw him, he was the hero I saw in him, so I think he truly cared about me, because now I am constantly trying to become what I saw in him.

It is a stripped-down record, but one that goes straight to the soul of whoever listens to it. Did you want the lyrics to take on a greater role by removing any element that might distract from what you are trying to say? I liked something I read in a review, "Brue does not try to appropriate Justin's lyrics, he embraces them and completes them".

Throughout the entire writing process, except for the lyric sheets that were already finished in some cases, I followed my intuition and, if it sounded like a Justin lyric or like a subject he would sing about, I simply went in that direction. Most of the songs came together very quickly because I was already, in my head, a disciple of Justin. I had an incredible number of imaginary conversations with him.

This is a very intimate and emotional record. When you write or perform songs like these, is there something of yourself that is also exposed? Is it difficult to show such a personal side to the public?

It has been refreshing to be exposed. For a long time, especially after Justin's death, I was lost, hiding and not being true to myself. I finally feel free and I am growing into the artist I always dreamed of being. I wear this album and my heart beating on my sleeve, with great pride.

> ***"Justin was deeply marked by his struggles and his flaws, but every time I saw him, he was the hero I saw in him."***

When you received Justin's texts, what was the process like of turning them into songs? Did you start from a melody you already had, or did you let the words themselves suggest the music?

The process was pure spiritual madness. All the time I asked myself, "What would Justin do?", but also staying true to myself and to the lessons Justin taught me. Justin was dark and I found light in that, so I had to balance those two worlds very carefully.

"Lonely Mornings", which opens the album, seems to me one of the most emotional songs I have heard in a very long time. Musically and lyrically, it is superb. It is incredible that such a beautiful song contains such a sad story. It reminds me of "No Rain" by Blind Melon, which apparently sounds like a happy song but is actually about depression.

I co-wrote "Lonely Mornings" with the journals. I did not realize that Justin had finished this song until after I had written it and "All In" came out on New West Records, which included unreleased demos. Instead of worrying, I was filled with deep pride when I saw that I had perceived the same potential in his early ideas for this song. Fun fact, the first verse and chorus of my version appear at the end of his version. So, I guess "Lonely Mornings" was just a seed that opened and grew in two different places. I took this song as a way of reflecting the life of the artist and how the routine of loneliness can be a powerful source for great art.

When the audience listens to these songs, what would you like them to feel or understand about Justin?
That Justin has created an art that will outlive all of us, and I sincerely believe his songs will continue to inspire and take on new life over the years and decades, as happens with any true legend.

What plans do you have? Are you thinking about coming to Europe, to Spain? We would be delighted to welcome you here. I do not know if you have toured our country before.
If enough people in Spain want to see me, I suppose I would have no choice but to come and play for you. It would be a dream come true. I love you all and I hope we can make it happen through the beauty of the organic. I am cheap, so let's make it happen.

Thank you very much.
Thank you, brother… You are a great interviewer and a true lover of music.

Javistone

MÚSICA Y GASTRONOMÍA
15·16 MAYO 2026

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CARLOS ARES
ASH ✦ HINDS ✦ VERA FAUNA

SÁBADO 16

PRIMAL SCREAM
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Kevin Steele

My approach to this album was the same as my approach to any album I've ever recorded. Have fun!

One of the surprises of the past few weeks has been "One Thing Left To Do", the solo debut from the former singer of Roxx Gang and The Mojo Gurus. A classic figure of late-80s sleaze rock who reinvents himself with an addictive record that reeks of barroom rock and roll, of dive bars, smoke, alcohol and sex. In one word, it sounds like fun, very much in the vein of The Dogs D'amour, no joke. As expected, the songs Kevin Steele presents retain that rogue-like edge, indebted to the late-70s glam rock that so strongly influenced those 80s bands. Our friends at Metal & Rock spoke with Kevin Steele about his new record and what those exciting 80s years were like.

You were the voice of Roxx Gang, then with The Mojo Gurus, and after decades you've recorded your first solo album, "One Thing Left To Do". It sounds like old-school rock and roll. I've read that this was the album you'd always wanted to make, what kind of approach did you have when you set out to write and record it?

My approach to this album was the same as my approach to any album I've ever recorded. Have fun!

The album feels very honest, it doesn't follow any script or any trend (if there even are trends in rock and roll these days, which would be a whole other interview). Are these songs you'd built up over the years, or were they written specifically for this record?

Every song on the album was written since the demise of the Gurus with the exception of "The 9 Lives Blues" which is a reworking of the song "Nine Lives" from the first Roxx Gang album. I thought it would be a cool tip of the hat to my past.

There's a bit of everything, songs that lean into glam rock, boogie, blues… Musically it reminds me of Dogs D'amour, Tesla, The Quireboys… and you can tell your love for bands like T-Rex, Mott the Hoople, New York Dolls is still there, even if the glitter's gone. How much have those classic influences shaped the final result?

I am a huge fan of 70s glitter rock. I had a very tough childhood. I lost my mother to violence at age 8. Music was my salvation. Bands like T-Rex, Mott the Hoople & The New York Dolls provided an escape from my shitty reality and they have been a major influence on my songwriting throughout my career.

Billy Summer plays all the guitars and also produced the album. What was the recording process like, working with him?

The sound is very organic, it feels like something you really enjoyed making. Were you aiming for that approach from the start?
I really went into this with no expectations. I wasn't even planning on making another album. When I met Billy he told me he had been a big fan of Roxx Gang and when he found out I was still writing songs he invited me to his studio to record some of them. Everything happened so quickly and naturally and Billy and I had such a great connection that before we knew it we had recorded enough songs for an album. I've never had so much fun making a record in my life.

> ***I don't have to answer to anyone, and I have nothing to prove. I genuinely thought I was done with all of this until I met Billy, so everything that comes from now on is a bonus. The good thing about making a solo album is that you don't have to make compromises.***

What are these songs about, and how much of your current life do they reflect?
"Snake Charmer", the first single, is about temptation and seduction. That's a story as old as Eve and the serpent. "There's A Better Day Comin'" is a song of hope because we could all use a little of that these days. "Sad, Sad Song" is a very personal song about ill fortune, mistakes I've made and the times I've let down the people in my life whom I care about the most. "Fingers Crossed" is a tongue in cheek country song about a lying lover. Most of the other songs are good - time rockers. So, some of them are a reflection of my life but not all my inspiration comes from real life events.

I really like "I Know What Yer Up To", with that strong drum groove and that bluesy feel.
Thanks! Yeah, I went for kind of an old blues stomp feel on that one. It's about the kind of person who smiles in your face but the minute your back is turned the knives come out. We've all dealt with someone like that at one time or another. I'm saying, "You're not fooling anyone".

Let's talk a bit about your past. You formed Roxx Gang in the mid-80s in Florida, a place that wasn't exactly at the epicentre of American rock, which was mainly centred around Los Angeles. What was the rock scene like in Florida in the mid-80s?
Same as all across America. A few good bands and a lot of terrible ones. The industry is certainly focused in Los Angeles but just about every big city in the U.S. has a rock scene. In those days there was no "glam rock" scene there. As a matter of fact I had to drag my own bandmates kicking and screaming into that image. They were much too macho for that, but once they saw how many girls they were getting, they couldn't put on their eyeliner fast enough.

Roxx Gang's first album, "Things You've Never Done Before," came out in 1988 and is considered a cult record among fans of sleazy rock from that era. There was a strong label behind it and a successful producer like Beau Hill. What do you think was missing for it to become a major hit? What was it like working with Beau Hill?
It was the timing. By the time it was released Nirvana, Soundgarden and similar bands had ushered in "grunge rock" and overnight all the radio stations changed their format. We still managed to sell 250,000 records but had we been signed a year or two earlier I'm quite sure it would have gone platinum. Beau Hill was a great guy. Very smart and a great sense of humor. In retrospect I think he may polished our sound a bit too much but overall it was a very positive experience working with him.

After that album, the band disappeared and later came back with a different line-up in the early 90s, what led to that break and that change in members?
We didn't disappear. We never stopped performing. The second album, "The Voodoo You Love" was recorded about a year after "Things You've Never Done Before". It took us years to find a home for it. I can't stress enough the effect the grunge scene had on bands like ours in America. The original line up became very discouraged for a number of reasons. I chose to forge on with new musicians.

You came back at a time when the scene had completely changed, grunge had arrived and had wiped out almost everything that came from the 80s. How did you experience that shift in audience taste? Was it difficult to survive in the middle of that alternative wave?
Of course it was. Our fans were always there. It was the industry that changed. So live performances weren't the problem. Record deals and radio support was.

After everything you've done in your career, what do you still feel you have left to prove?
Nothing. I have no one to answer to and nothing to prove. I really thought I was done with all this until I met Billy, so everything from here on in is a bonus. The great thing about making a solo album is you don't have to make any compromises. I write to please myself and I'm having the time of my life!

What are your touring plans? Are you thinking about coming over to Spain?
At present, I'm looking into several opportunities and I would love to come to Spain. I've never been there and I hear it is a beautiful country.

Javistone/Metal & Rock

Jon Iturbe

Today we are with Jon Iturbe to talk about the album "Sudden Deaths Revisited", a very special reissue that includes two new songs that were left out of "Sudden Deaths" back in 2003. They come in a different format and feature a new collaboration with The Radio Gangsters. A release that not only revisits the original work, but expands it and gives it a new dimension. In this interview we will delve into the origin of this reissue, the meaning of the new tracks, the creative moment he is currently in and what he expects from this new release.

Jon, to give some context to "Sudden Deaths", we go back to June 13, 2003, its release date, and after the breakup of The Hot Dogs. How did the album come about at that time and what was your personal and creative situation then?

That date marks the day the album finally saw the light, by then my personal situation was already quite different. To answer you properly we would really have to go back to mid-2001. After leaving The Hot Dogs I moved to Barcelona, but I soon realised I wasn't going to achieve much there, so although I was "officially" still there, I was spending more and more time at my partner's rented flat, whom I had gotten back together with, in Donostia, and also at Biffs' (Mikel's) Chock-a-block studio in Bilbao. Both of us, Mikel and I, were going through a pretty difficult period. That brought us very close on a personal level and that's where the first recordings as Biffs & Johnny came from. On the other hand, Álvaro Heras invited me to join Painkillers as a singer and that meant I ended up spending most of my time in Bilbao, definitely saying goodbye to Barcelona. The final key factor in the genesis of this album is that in Barcelona I had become good friends with Jaime Gonzalo, then co-director of Ruta 66. One night over dinner, I don't remember if it was in Donostia or Urretxu, I showed him the songs I had lying around. He must have liked them a lot because he offered me non-repayable funding to record an album. With that I spoke to Biffs, we started putting everything in motion and I called the people I liked the most at the time to take part: Jorge Reboredo, Guanche, the two Álvaros (Heras and Segovia) and Sara. Creatively it was a moment in which I had a lot to prove to myself and to others after my years as a member of The Hot Dogs. A bit like saying: "this is me".

You had two songs that were left out of the nine included on the 10", and twenty-three years have passed since its original release. What has happened to those songs during all this time and what led you to bring them back now for this reissue?

There's a misunderstanding here that I'm afraid I created myself hahaha. When I refer to songs from that period, what I really mean is that they belong to the time when I was still writing. I haven't written anything since 2010. These two songs are actually from around 2009 or so. They weren't written for "Sudden Deaths". Both were, let's say, a kind of last attempt to see if I could find my voice again because I was already starting to feel burned out with everything. Nothing I was doing convinced me. I even made demos of them at home, but the result lacked punch. At the time I thought it was a problem with the songs, but in reality I think it was that I had stopped believing in myself. That's when I decided to step aside, musically speaking. But the thing is that, unlike other songs I wrote and have completely forgotten, these two have never left my head all these years. They had to have something. That led me to decide to finally record them and clear out the drawer once and for all. My surprise came when Álvaro Heras offered to lend a hand when I mentioned this idea on social media. That triggered this whole process of recording them with Radio Gangsters and, in the process, reissuing "Sudden Deaths".

You went back into the studio to record these two new songs, but you also revisited the original album in full: back then at Chockablock Studios and now for this reissue at Pookah Sound Studio, always with Mikel Biffs at the controls. What was the process of going back and working from a present-day perspective like?

If I'm honest, my first idea was not to touch it. Just a remaster and that's it. But once Mikel said he had found the original tracks, a lot of possibilities opened up. I was still somewhat sceptical, but Álvaro and Biffs insisted on remixing it, and thankfully they did, because the improvement in sound is remarkable. Biffs has done an incredible job. I agree with him when he says the original album now sounds like a demo in comparison. The good thing is that he did it while maintaining the original spirit. I mean, we didn't go for polishing everything and removing the rough edges. That would have killed it. As for looking at this album from a current perspective, I think there has also been a lot of rediscovery on our part. We valued it, but we hadn't listened to it this closely in years, and certainly not sounding like it does now.

Tell us who was part of the original project and who has taken part now in "Sudden Deaths Revisited". Has the same core remained or have there been new additions at this stage?
The only difference has been the absence of Jorge, who didn't reply to my message, otherwise it's the same people. That's been the beautiful part. Their enthusiastic response after all these years has been a gift.

What has the reunion been like after all this time? Did you feel the same chemistry was still there or has time changed the way you work together?
The reunion has been wonderful, for the reasons I mentioned. But obviously it hasn't been as wild as it was during the original recording. It's true that the way of working is the same: I record a guide with the structure of the song together with Guanche and once his drums are laid down, we start adding things. Back then it was much more chaotic because we were always there at Chock-a-block or something would come to us while we were out partying and we'd go to the studio, even at six in the morning, to record it. This time it's been more like office hours, of course. But it has been recorded with the same love, right? (laughs). The nice thing about this way of working is that Radio Gangsters songs are never something closed. It's different from going into the studio as part of a "real" band, where all the work has already been done through hours of rehearsal. A Radio Gangsters song, you never quite know what it will end up becoming. I think that motivates the people involved a lot.

Let's talk about the new album design: a gatefold sleeve with two 12" vinyls, keeping the original cover photo and some texts.
Well, this also kept growing as new ideas came up. A bit like the remixing issue. My initial idea was to reissue the 10" exactly as it originally was, with an accompanying single. What interested me was to make these two new songs known and, at the same time, reissue the album people had been asking me about the most over the years because it was very hard to find. I was told that 10" records go quite unnoticed in record bins, so the LP format came up. Then the idea of the double sleeve with a maxi was proposed. I love maxis, so I thought that was a great idea. Regarding the gatefold, especially Álvaro Heras insisted that we should include new texts. Here I had another very pleasant surprise when Edu Ranedo happily agreed to write again. Another gift.

The design is by Eneko Etxeandia, right?
Yes, Eneko has taken care of organising all these elements in a readable way. I really wanted to work with him. I trust his taste a lot. We based it on my original design, because I studied and worked in graphic arts, but it had quite a few typical mistakes of the time. I won't get into technicalities, but the point is, and I think it shows, Eneko has made something very elegant out of it.

What were you trying to convey with this new presentation and how much of it is respect for the original versus reinterpretation?
I don't know. As far as I'm concerned, these two songs are my farewell and it felt right to do something special for the people for whom this album means something.

The original edition (2003) was released through El Beasto, and I think you mentioned at the time that you were quite sure the new edition would also come out with them. However, it has finally been released with Folc Records. What happened with that change of plans?
When you don't understand something, it's better not to talk about it. I can only be eternally grateful to Folc Records for agreeing to release it when, with almost everything ready to be sent to the factory, I found myself without a label.

The first fifty copies of the album were sold at 20 euros, including a signed card, inside material and CD, a real gift for fans. Then it went up to twenty-eight euros, which is still a bargain for this edition. It's clear this is not a business, as this section of Rock Bottom Magazine says. Could it be said that all of this is done more "for the love of it"?
Of course, I have no expectation of making any money from this. That's not what it's about. What I've spent is already spent. As long as Folc can make money from their part, all good.

How do you think the two new songs fit within the album? Given that the previous release was a 10", wouldn't they have fit on a single 12", or was the decision to include them on a separate maxi precisely to differentiate them?
When the format in which we were going to release all this wasn't yet clear, the idea of putting everything on a single LP was considered. In terms of duration there was no problem, but the truth is I had no idea where to place them. As a record buyer, I usually prefer new material to be included separately. Unless it's one of those cases where the original track order was imposed by the label and now you want to show how it should have been, generally I prefer not to alter it. The order of the songs on "Sudden Deaths" was not arbitrary. It follows a logic, at least in my head.

The new songs "A Spark Is Enough" ("Una chispa es suficiente") and, on the other hand, the only one in Spanish, "Desde el principio me entendiste mal". What do you want to convey with these tracks and what role do they play within this reissue?
The role they play, now that everything has been presented this way, I suppose is that of having been the trigger. I think they have turned out very well. At least I feel they are more mine than anything on "Nothing But a Bad Day", the last album we recorded with The Hot Dogs. That doesn't necessarily mean better or worse, it depends on taste. But I did want to put a full stop that felt more personal. As for writing in Spanish, yes, looking back, I should have written more in Spanish, but I guess it's too late now (laughs).

Is there any intention to present "Sudden Deaths Revisited" live, or have you conceived it purely as a studio release for now?
No, just like the first time, Radio Gangsters is not a band in the usual sense, it's a gathering of friends around some songs.

It was bound to come up, you've gotten The Hot Dogs! back together for the twentieth anniversary of Kike Turmix's death in Deba, in your hometown, Urretxu, along with Eh, Mertxe! and at Le Bukowski in Donosti with Discípulos de Dionisos.
Iker said it in a rehearsal, the plan is that there is no plan, and I don't think there's a better way to describe the situation we're in. When we agreed to take part in the tribute to Turmix, by the second rehearsal we already realised we're in a very special moment, more relaxed than ever on a personal level and sounding great. The three shows have gone really well in every sense. We'll see what the future brings.

Is there any intention to keep playing more shows, or was this a one-off?
Are we open to doing something else from time to time? Yes, but only under these terms of absolute relaxation.

It has been a pleasure talking with you, Jon. "Sudden Deaths Revisited" seems like a masterpiece to me. Our most sincere congratulations. We wish you the best of luck with everything that comes next. A hug!
Mikesker, Néstor! A pleasure for me as well.

The Swampers, swampy sound for the soul

"Now Muscle Shoals has got the Swampers/ And they've been known to pick a song or two (yes, they do)/ Lord, they get me off so much/ They pick me up when I'm feelin' blue, now how 'bout you?". ("Sweet Home Alabama", Lynyrd Skynyrd, 1974). Barry Beckett (piano, organ), Roger Hawkins (drums), Jimmy Johnson (guitar), and David Hood (bass) combined like no one else the most genuine R&B coming out of Memphis with the country born in Nashville, achieving a distinctive sound that made them unique in their kind (apologies for the animalistic simile), mainly due to their work as session musicians at the acclaimed and legendary FAME Studios in Muscle Shoals (Alabama).

I'm not going to jump ahead to the totemic legacy they contributed to twentieth-century American music, so let's take it step by step. The dream of Rick Hall, a young musician and songwriter from Florence (Alabama), was to build a recording studio; to bring his vision to life, in 1961 he applied for a bank loan in the city to buy an old brick warehouse, abandoned on the outskirts of another town in the county, Muscle Shoals. With the location secured, the next step was to find the support needed to create the sonic spectrum he intended to develop there. Thus, FAME Recording Studios was born.

The first step in developing his idea was to form a reliable recording group he could always count on, in other words, a kind of starting lineup or house band. The first musicians to be hired were Norbert Putnam, David Briggs, and Jerry Carrigan; with them, the studio's characteristic sound began to take shape, but given their talent they were recruited to work in Nashville, leaving Alabama, logically for the lure of money. Before their departure, they had taken part in the first recording at FAME, the wonderful "You Better Move On" by the no less magnificent Arthur Alexander, a bellboy at the Sheffield Hotel who wrote his own songs and whom Rick Hall had discovered and mentored. The song was released in March 1962, reaching number twenty-two on the Billboard Hot 100. Its surprising success drew the music industry's attention to that small studio named Florence Alabama Music Enterprises (FAME), and producers of some renown began booking time to record there. Rick Hall, a visionary above all, set out to track down musicians who could take advantage of this emerging market and give it a sound that would be unmistakable. The ones responsible would be Beckett, Hawkins, Hood, and Johnson, The Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section, also known as The Swampers, the creators of the legendary Muscle Shoals Sound.

The individual backgrounds of the four musicians were "to blame" for the chemistry they displayed as soon as the machinery started rolling in the recording studio: Jimmy Johnson had been a member of The Del-Rays; Roger Hawkins was part of the band led by the legend Dan Penn, Mark V; David Hood belonged to the band The Mystics, and also worked as a trombonist at FAME; Barry Beckett joined the studio more or less at the same time as his colleagues. In short, an all-star team that elevated everything they touched.

There are several conjectures about the origin of the name (swamper = swampy), but the closest way to define them is that very characteristic blend they produced between Memphis R&B and Nashville country, an emotional, swampy sound. On the other hand, it is said that producer Denny Cordell coined the term during recording sessions for Leon Russell, in which they played in a

"funky, soulful southern, swamp sound" style. They were also described at the time like this: "But really they're just four guys who were, and still are, talented musicians who were able to stay home and make a living recording instead of going on tour". Now we keep the click under control… we press the record button…

We are now in the mid-sixties. The members of the group provided backing vocals on the anthem "When a Man Loves a Woman" by Percy Sledge, based on the style Arthur Alexander had been consolidating with his FAME recordings, country soul. It featured Hawkins's rhythmic mastery on drums and Jimmy Johnson's musical engineering. The song's success caught the attention of Jerry Wexler (a classic Atlantic Records producer), who considered establishing the company's regional music hub in Muscle Shoals. His association with that epicenter would last for several decades, with a formidable amount of music recorded and more than considerable financial backing.

The next step, which became legendary in the history of soul, and by extension of twentieth-century American contemporary music, was the recording with Aretha Franklin that marked her definitive immersion in the waters of soul music after her flirtations with jazz and pop. Recently signed by Wexler in early 1967, she was sent to the studio of the moment in an attempt to achieve that change that would place her where she belonged, as the Queen of Soul. Franklin sat down at a grand piano in the studio, well inspired by a bottle of vodka she had shared with those present, and a melody she had in her head; at that moment, Spooner Oldham (composer and FAME keyboardist) was playing around with a five-note riff on a Wurlitzer that became an intro for the diva to tell us "You're a no good heartbreaker/ You're a liar and you're a cheat", that is, the beginning of the hit that propelled her to the top of the world, "I Never Loved a Man (The Way I Love You)".

Unfortunately, that magic faded amid alcoholic vapors and the jealousy of Aretha's husband, Ted White, who accused the trumpeter, and later the saxophonist, of the session of making advances toward his wife. Halfway through the recording of "Do Right Woman, Do Right Man", it was cancelled. It is not hard to imagine what might have come out of that magical moment when everything was aligned, with musicians who did not use sheet music, fed off the studio's energy, and played almost by instinct. Shortly afterward, Wexler took the musicians to New York to finish the album.

The time had come for the four comrades to look for new horizons, so they decided to become entrepreneurs and, after leaving FAME, they opened their own studio at 3614 Jackson Highway in Sheffield (Alabama). Another legend begins, that of Muscle Shoals Sound Studio (MSSS), the step they needed to make their work as instrumentalists truly legendary. It became the first recording studio of its time to be owned by musicians, who also handled session bookings, accounting, in short, its management. Its inauguration took place in early 1969 and, thanks to his friendship with Jerry Wexler, he provided them with lucrative contacts in the music world, as well as lending them money to purchase sound equipment and instruments. It was also the moment to forge their "Muscle Shoals" sound fused with country soul.

In June of that same year, the first album recorded at MSSS, "3614 Jackson Highway", the sixth record by the diva, and personal favourite, Cher, was released. Composed entirely of covers (Bob Dylan, Buffalo Springfield, Otis Redding, Aretha Franklin, Three Dog Night), it exudes pure Southern sap, thanks, of course, to the handcrafted work of the Swampers, under the baton of Jerry Wexler. The cover shows a photo of the singer, together with all those responsible for creating this essential work, in front of the building, with the title superimposed on the façade, the inspiration for its iconic sign. By the end of 1969, the studio achieved its first gold record, with the corresponding commercial success, thanks to the wonderful single by R.B. Greaves, "Take a Letter Maria", released on ATCO, a subsidiary label of Atlantic Records.

During the same week the single was recorded, already illustrious musicians occupied the studio for three nights, recording three songs for their future new work, which they would release in 1971; the songs were "Brown Sugar", "You Got to Move", and "Wild Horses", the latter influenced by Keith Richards's friendship at the time with Gram Parsons, and according to legend, Parsons himself is the author of "Wild Horses". (Regarding the ill-fated country musician, I recommend reading the excellent book "Caballos salvajes. Gram Parsons (1968-1973)", written with an inspired pen by Jordi Pujol Nadal, and already reviewed last year in RBM).

For nine formidable years (1969-1978), the Swampers took part in more than two hundred albums recorded at MSSS, with over seventy-five gold and platinum records, and gave humanity, instrumentally speaking of course, and working for Atlantic Records, Capricorn, and Stax, eternal jewels in the form of songs for Bob Dylan, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Bob Seger, The Staple Singers, Willie Nelson, and many more artists, Percy Sledge, Joe Cocker, Leon Russell and more and more, Luther Ingram, Johnnie Taylor, Millie Jackson, Linda Ronstadt and…

From that final year onward, they purchased a larger building on Alabama Avenue (Sheffield) because they had run out of space at the original location, which became a professional audio shop and an appliance repair workshop; by the late nineties it was abandoned, to be recovered in the following decade thanks to a local citizen who bought it to reopen it as a museum and music studio. The Black Keys recorded their formidable "Brothers" (2009) in that recording room, unfortunately without the support of the Swampers. In 2013, it was acquired by the Muscle Shoals Music Foundation to restore it and return it to its former glory, although times and musical directions were different. Barry Beckett co-produced, together with Jerry Wexler, "Slow Train Coming" by Bob Dylan in 1979. In 1982, after settling in Nashville, he was appointed A&R at Warner Bros. Records. He continued to lend his keyboard skills almost until the day of his death in June 2009.

Jimmy Johnson reigned as a session musician throughout the eighties and nineties for artists of the calibre of Bob Dylan, John Prine, Dr. Hook, Willy DeVille, and Eric Clapton. He left this ill-fated world in September 2019. Roger Hawkins continued delivering masterclasses on drums in melodies for William Bell, Shirley Brown, Bobby "Blue" Bland, J.J. Cale, Ry Cooder, Wilson Pickett, and an unmanageable list of musical celebrities. He passed away in May 2021. David Hood remains, for now, among the realm of the living, with collaborations on four strings up to around 2019: Levon Helm, Jim Lauderdale, Bettye LaVette, and Dan Penn.

Four unmatched and indispensable musicians whose careers I always encourage people to explore, even if they can sometimes feel overwhelming (it is said they took part in more than five hundred recordings).

Garret T. Willie

"If you give into evil... you are a friend of mine"
Blues in the Blood

There are musicians who learn the language of the blues, and others who seem to have been born right inside it. In a time when everything leans towards overproduction and constant filtering, coming across a guy in his twenties who grabs a guitar like his life depends on every note isn't just striking, it also forces you to rethink certain generational prejudices. It's a case very similar to Myron Elkins, very, very young people making roots music and sounding like ancient souls reincarnated in young bodies, showing an almost primitive and mystical connection with the blues and rock and roll. No doubt, Garret T. Willie has been one of the big surprises of the season, and we'll be keeping a very close eye on him. It was inevitable that we'd reach out to him to talk about where the hell that deep sound comes from.

We spoke with him straight up, with the same rawness and natural feel he shows when he straps on his guitar. In the conversation, AC/DC, The Rolling Stones and that whole invisible line connecting the most basic rock with the original blues come up, but so do scars, ambition and a very clear idea of what it means to step onto a stage these days. No pre-packaged speeches, this is about playing, about feeling, and about proving that, when it's real, this sound still has a lot to say.

I'm not going to mention it because everyone does, but you have to understand that it's impressive and, at the same time, fascinating to see someone so young sounding like you do. How do you fit into a world where most young people are obsessed with technology and modern sounds?
I fit into this world with my own experiences. I live my life and I play guitar. There's still a huge audience for blues and rock and roll, and young people love it when they see it. In fact, when they see us, they don't even know they like that kind of music, and then they see it live and go crazy.

How did your beginnings in music come about? What was playing at home when you were a kid?
The beginnings of music in my life were The Rolling Stones, AC/DC, The J. Geils Band… a house full of all that, so yeah, it was pretty normal to hear "Little Pink Houses" by John Mellencamp on the radio all the time. It was just something that was there. I was really into Eminem when I was about ten, around that age. But I still loved AC/DC and live music. My dad bought me my first guitar when I was eight or nine, it was a Squier Stratocaster, back when the pickguards, the plate under the strings, weren't just plain white, they had this kind of granite look. I forgot to mention earlier that I also really liked Stevie Ray Vaughan when I was young. That's how I got started. And within those two years, I opened the music festival in Alert Bay, my hometown, playing two AC/DC songs, "Shoot to Thrill" and "Dirty Deeds". I didn't even care about getting paid back then. I just wanted to play. And my aunt Barb, may she rest in peace, gave me 50 dollars and the rest is history (laughs).

I get that your favourite band was AC/DC, and that by digging into where those riffs and rhythms came from, you discovered the blues. Do you remember the moment when you realised that AC/DC's sound came straight out of the blues?
I remember hearing "The Jack" live at Donington, or maybe watching it on an old VHS my dad had. My mum and dad tried to stop me from listening to it because of the explicit lyrics, but that riff was speaking to me without me realising at the time that it was blues. Now I know a lot of blues purists, with their tweed amps and musical notes stitched onto white suits and bowler hats, will say otherwise. But hey, it's my interview, they can deal with it. I actually discovered real blues listening to The Rolling Stones, I loved their B-sides and outtakes, like "Fancy Man", "Still a Fool" and stuff like that. When I listen to those tracks now, they remind me of my childhood, sitting in my stepdad's house, having the place to myself, drinking a bottle of Jack Daniel's and putting on old Stones records.

What did that discovery trigger in you?
I don't know, man. I'd like to say it was like Keith Richards when he first heard Elvis, that his black-and-white TV suddenly turned to colour. But I don't remember a moment like that beyond seeing Angus and Brian at Donington. From then on, I knew that's what I wanted to do. I turned a childhood dream into reality and I'm still taking it in. I'm not saying I'm the shit, but we're moving pretty fast and I'm really excited.

Which bluesmen did you find immediately behind AC/DC? Angus has always said his influences were Chuck Berry, B. B. King, Albert King or Muddy Waters.
I found a lot of Chuck Berry, for sure. Not so many Albert King licks. A lot of B. B. King, that kind of thing. And keep in mind, I didn't go back to study all these guys or learn all their songs. I know a fair bit of the history, but I'm not that Joe Bonamassa about it. I play what I like to hear. I play what I like to feel. Above all, I play what gives me a jolt.

A lot of the time it feels like this is a kind of music destined to disappear, but then you guys come along, you, Marcus King or Myron Elkins, and it sounds fresh and exciting again. In Spain we even have a woman called La Perra Blanco who's shaken up the more classic side of rock and roll, she's just recorded with Jimmy Sutton. What is it that draws you to the blues? How is it possible that something so "simple" is still so captivating?
I think the difference between a cliché and something real is whether you've lived it, whether you come from something real. I've had a lot of good moments in my life, in my 26 nice little years, but I've also had my fair share of shit. Things no kid should go through. But they toughened me up and made me the man I am today. So I don't regret anything and I'm not going to get into that, that's for the book. When I'm up there and I really get into it, I'm not trying to feel something, I'm not trying to access something, I am it. And I hit the guitar with everything, it's like a big "fuck you" to everyone who told me I wouldn't make it, everyone who called me a loser, everyone who never saw the pain I had. Look where I am. You can get here too, you just have to get out of the cave and get serious about your life. I'm a self-made man.

I'd say you've listened to a lot of classic guitar players like Stevie Ray Vaughan, Rory Gallagher or Johnny Winter, as well as Angus Young, of course, but also more contemporary artists like Joe Bonamassa. Is there any guitarist or singer you pay more attention to?
I listen to some of Joe's stuff, I definitely like his older material more, when he sang with more grit. There isn't really a lot of people I pay that much attention to. Like I said, when I listen to music, I have to feel it. I have to feel like you're telling me the truth. Not throwing on a bunch of reverb and playing a Bo Diddley beat while you talk into the mic about things you think sound cool and bluesy. You have to be honest, man. Like the great Hank Williams Sr. said: "If you wanna make it, you can't fake it". I don't listen to much beyond the 80s.

Your debut, "Same Pain", gave you international exposure. What changes in "Bill's Café", musically and personally?
Not much, just more life experience.

I love "Devil Doll", it sounds like old-school boogie, like the road, a smoke-filled stage, alcohol, sex, is it a more instinctive song or more constructed?
I got help from Tom Hambridge and Richard Fleming on that one. They basically wrote it. Of course, I had the final say on the lyrics and parts of the guitar and that kind of thing. But it's a song they gave me. Once we recorded it, I could really relate to it, so we play it live nowadays.

I think "Bill's Café" is a kind of tribute to your grandfather.
My grandfather had more influence than anyone in my life. We listened to a lot of Johnny Cash. He was the chief of Alert Bay for over twenty years, he was pretty well known in those circles. I really looked up to him, and he was a great pool player and a great man who loved his Canadian Club whisky. I guess I'm trying to follow in his footsteps, in my own way. Calling the album "Bill's Café" is just another excuse to keep talking about him. He had a pool hall in Alert Bay that was also a café, which sadly burned down in the early 2000s. He started rebuilding it, all it needed was tables and chairs, and the kitchen equipment. But around then he started slowing down in life. So he'd let me practise there with my guitar and make a lot of noise. People remember it from when I was a kid and they talk about it a lot, about driving or walking past and seeing me playing guitar in there, or sometimes on the front porch.

Do you see yourself touring Spain anytime soon? There's a very receptive scene here for this kind of sound, we'd love to sweat it out with your music.
I love that line, "we'd love to sweat it out with your music". Yeah, I'd love to tour Spain. We just need to lock in some dates there and put a tour together. I'm sure it'll happen after the UK tour.

What would you say to convince someone to come to one of your shows? What are they going to find there?
If you like feeling a jolt, if you like loud rock and roll and you want to have a good time, come see us. Like Brian Johnson said in "Hells Bells": "If you give into evil, you are a friend of mine".

Javistone

Los DelTonos

"Rock Is an Attitude... Not a Specific Sound".

Hendrik Röver

At the end of 2025, Los DelTonos gave us a new compendium of wisdom in the form of an album. A record titled "El Futuro" to understand the present, as explained by their singer, guitarist and main songwriter Hendrik Rover, with whom it is always a pleasure to talk about songs and how they always bring you back to the right place. One of those interviews you enjoy doing (and, hopefully, reading).

Forty years of career and twenty albums. Are there still things left to say?
The best ones, the most sensible, the most well thought-out, I suppose. I truly believe we are at our best moment.

> ***Aquí el rock siempre ha sido un producto de importación, algo exótico venido de fuera por lo que no puede estar tan incrustado en los genes como en otros países a los que llegó y se normalizó casi desde sus comienzos.***

Is "El Futuro" a manual to cope with the present or a warning about what may come?
A bit of both. Singer-songwriters chronicle and critique society and sometimes we even venture into fortune-telling!

Is there a "future" for rock in Spain?
If we stop considering rock to be only "classic rock", there won't be a problem. That's the one I like most and connect with the most, but we have to accept that influences and stimuli have changed and you can't do the same thing as in 1975. In the end, rock is an attitude, not a specific sound. On the other hand, here rock has always been an imported product, something exotic that came from outside, so it can't be as embedded in our genes as in other countries where it arrived and became normalised almost from the beginning. That said, sometimes one would like technical or compositional skill to matter more than just fooling around, but maybe that's age (laughs).

After "Evolución", where lost songs were recovered, "El Futuro" appears as a counterpart, with entirely new material. Are they two stages of the same journey?
"Evolución" was a small detour that had to be made so those songs would stop echoing in my head demanding their place. Now new ideas are already echoing for Los DelTonos and Los Míticos.

You are still joined by Sergio and Javier Arias, two long-time collaborators. What is it like working with them? Is the trio format the one that best suits Los DelTonos?
Never, in any previous line-up (this is number seven), had it been so easy and enjoyable to work. There had never been such alignment of ideas and the level of proactivity had never been so high. We've been together almost five years now and sometimes I still find it hard to believe.

Once again we get to savour various "sonic dishes" ranging from rhythm and blues to classic rock, passing through more power pop and pub rock-oriented songs. Is it possible to define the sound of Los DelTonos?
Say it's rock and you'll be right, and just change the main ingredient as needed. Blues, classic, country, pop… I like many sounds and I don't mind it showing. From this album we're playing eight or nine songs because we're especially happy with the result and we wouldn't like them to remain only as phonograms.

The level of the songs is as incredible as ever. I have to say there are tracks I can't get out of my head, like the title track or especially "Naufragio". I love how you craft those choruses, how you play with melodies and rhythms… Why the figure of the leviathan?
Thank you very much! I see "Naufragio" as a more or less obvious nod to Gary Clark Jr.'s early records, which I liked a lot. Songs like "Bright Lights" or "When My Train Pulls In"… I even bought an Epiphone Casino back then. The story is about a castaway on his last legs. What better way to die than in the jaws of a gigantic leviathan.

"Andrés Muñiz" is already a familiar character. Are there more episodes left in this story?
I would say so. In episode two, "Lo Que Parece", he was going through a rough patch and feeling a bit down, but he recovered and now he's thriving. It's worth mentioning that he has even inspired a great crime novel, "Escorpiones en el alambre" by Víctor Parra (Ed. Atlantis). Many would wish for that!

In my opinion, your way of writing is what truly defines the band, that sharpness and sarcasm fit the songs perfectly and usually blend seamlessly. How important are lyrics in your songwriting? Do they usually come before or after the music?
A few decades ago I understood that lyrics are at least half of the song and that people are not going to go home singing or remembering a guitar flourish, but humming a chorus or recalling a story. Lyrics are what establish communication, a bond with the listener. That's why I never considered writing lyrics in English or German because no one would understand me and it would have been pointless. Writing lyrics in Spanish is infinitely more difficult, the learning process is painful because you have to listen to yourself in the early stages, but once you find your formula it is tremendously satisfying. I have dozens of loose phrases and dozens of riffs that I keep. When it's time to make an album, everything goes into the blender. Usually the music comes first and the job is to perfectly adapt the song's rhythm to what you want to say. That said, without shortcuts like misplacing stress in words or the massive use of infinitives. That's punishable by life imprisonment by the Royal Spanish Academy. Go stand in the corner with your arms outstretched holding the RAE dictionary in one hand and a thesaurus in the other, haha…

Do you prefer studio work or do you still enjoy going out on tour?
There's nothing better than going out to play. The songs are the excuse. What I enjoy most in a new project is the writing and the pre-production arrangements. Recording it is already a routine step and we get it done as quickly as possible.

You will soon return to Jerez for the second time in a row, which we celebrate. How was the experience, are we an appreciative audience?
If we're coming back, it's because last time there was a connection and we had a great time. This year we'll give it everything again. We don't know how to do it any other way.

Thank you for everything and hopefully there won't be two without three.

Marcos Sánchez

Jay Buchanan

“I don’t think it’s possible to separate the sound and tone of the album from the environment and the isolation in which it was, for the most part, written. The vast desert sky, the mines, the coyotes, the solitude and the silence reinforced a sense of patience and open space within the music”.

The first time I heard a Rival Sons track, I felt I was in front of a special band, old school, but with a contemporary sound, a powerful, raw, hard personality… A sound built on Scott Holiday’s incendiary riffs, a solid rhythmic backbone, but above all, a Jay Buchanan whose vocal power placed him alongside the great singers of those mythical seventies bands that made blues rock something tougher, an impossible blend of Steve Marriott and Robert Plant, even with shades of The Black Crowes. After a huge number of memorable albums they have given us, what many of us had been expecting for a long time has finally happened: a solo journey from their singer so he could explore beyond the riff-driven power of his band and show what else he had to offer. And I don’t use the word “journey” lightly, because what Buchanan has done is exactly that, a journey, a passage, but not towards any physical place, rather towards himself, one in which the tempo has slowed, but not the intensity. Because even when his voice does not roar, it moves you just the same.

It is a pleasure to finally have him in our pages, and rightly so. “Weapons of Beauty” is, in its own right, one of the most moving albums I have heard in recent months. A work that cannot help but be covered by the mantle of the desert where he disappeared for weeks in a bunker just a few miles from where Gram Parsons used to lose himself under the stars, among snakes and scorpions. And as I tell him, the Jay Buchanan of this “Weapons of Beauty” sounds as if The Flying Burrito Brothers had Jim Morrison on vocals, just to give you an idea. A pleasure to talk with him.

First of all, let me offer my most sincere congratulations on “Weapons of Beauty”. It is a work of enormous emotional depth. It is one of those albums where you feel yourself getting lost among its songs and, in some way, it embraces you. It is like an emotional journey, almost cathartic.

Thank you very much.

What has it been like finally taking the step to go solo? We had been hearing for some time that you intended to do it, what has happened for you to finally take that step? I think it may have something to do with a small role you had in the biopic “Springsteen: Deliver Me From Nowhere”.

It was something assumed and expected by all of us, by myself, by the band and by anyone who knows me, that I would write and release solo records, go on tour, etc., ever since Rival Sons began. At first, I set that identity aside to focus and stabilise myself while adapting to the identity of being a rock musician touring the world. It was a blinding contrast with almost every way I had been functioning before, and in fact it took a lot of energy to maintain my sense of identity. In terms of songwriting, Rival Sons was always so busy that the moment never seemed right, but on the other hand, art is not meant to be convenient. Before I knew it, years had gone by and that identity had drifted far away from me. Fast forward to now, yes, getting a small role in the Springsteen biopic was the turning point to finally set everything aside and embark on a long journey to recover that solo identity. I’m still recovering it even now.

As I was saying, it is a very intimate record, at least from the perspective of the kind of music we were used to from you with Rival Sons. There is a lot of folk here, country touches, even soul (Joe Tex came to mind at one point)... traditional American music, ultimately. What was it you needed to express with these styles that you could not with the band? Because even though your voice is still powerful, you lower the tempo and seem to become a kind of storyteller, almost a bard.

From a stylistic point of view, “Weapons of Beauty” sits at the opposite end of the spectrum from most of what I have written with Rival Sons. The band has certain preferences in its sound: thunderous drums, big guitar tones and solos, and a lot of shouting from me. It is energy music, Rock’n’Roll. This solo music is much more like a play with a reduced cast, fewer voices, completely dependent on dialogue to express any nuance. It is much more narrative, no doubt. Folk? Yes. Country? Yes, but really it is more Western than country. Soul? I think I am practically incapable of not putting soul into everything I do.

At times you remind me of The Flying Burrito Brothers with Jim Morrison on vocals, what references did you have in mind when you composed these songs, went into the studio and chose the musicians to record them?

I didn’t really have any references in mind while writing these songs, I was simply searching for fragments of my own truth, in its best form, while also exposing and exploring some of the most sensitive nerves I might be hiding. Having written most of it alone in the desert, I think that naturally gives it a sense of landscape. At that time, I had no idea or goal in terms of genre or style. The musicians had already been chosen for years in my mind, each one is a lifelong friend and absolutely devastatingly good at their instrument.

The record has moments that strongly recall the tradition of American music and it made me think of artists like Gram Parsons. I know you were working in the Mojave Desert, so I can’t help asking whether you went to the Joshua Tree Inn, the place so closely linked to Parsons. Is he an important artist for you?

Joshua Tree was a couple of hours

southeast of where I was camped. I was in an underground bunker about 40 miles from the nearest town, north of Barstow, in the hills where all the old mining camps used to be. Sometimes I would go out walking through those mines, it was quite an experience. A lot of canned food, but every few days I would go back to town to get fuel for my generator and sometimes treat myself to a taco. Gram Parsons? Yes, who doesn't like him?, but he's not in my top five or anything like that.

How did that experience influence the creation of the album?

I don't think it is possible to separate the sound and tone of the album from the environment and the isolation in which they were, for the most part, written. The big desert sky, the mines, the coyotes, the solitude and the silence reinforced a sense of patience and open space within the music. When I brought the songs to the brief recording session, Cobb and all the musicians knew where I had been and how those songs had come about, so when it came time to record, I think the general idea was to play with restraint and expand the space within each track. It takes an incredible amount of skill and confidence to play with that level of restraint and subtlety.

In "Deep Swimmin'" you seem to reflect with a certain nostalgia on love, everyday life and how time slips away while we are busy doing things that may be more trivial. You sing "Damn this job, damn yours too / You know there's a lotta good livin' that we forget to do". Is the song about that adulthood in which obligations end up distancing us from what really matters?

I think the song can be about carrying experiences with gratitude, celebrating both the effort and the complicity of everything we have lived through. The night before, I had burned in a bonfire a box with old letters, photographs, high school yearbooks and other memories from my youth as a way of claiming ownership of my present and my future. While going through them, a lot of feelings came up that I wanted to leave behind for good, and burning it all seemed like the best way to do it. The next morning I woke up with "Deep Swimming" in my head and wrote it all quite quickly that same day. Looking back, I think it was a way of reconciling the young man I was with the one I am now and of emotionally digitising those analogue memories in a lasting way.

The album opens with "Caroline", a very restrained song, especially if we compare it with Scott Holiday's usual riffs in Rival Sons. Here the tone is more narrative, almost folk or americana, with images of frontier, sin, redemption and loss, very much in the most tragic tradition of American folk/country. What can you tell me about this song?

I wrote that song some time ago with my friend Blair Daly. I wanted to write a song that illustrated an inextinguishable, unresolved pain. Like when you know what has happened, why and how, but none of that heals or comforts you. We came up with the story of an old cowboy who loses his wife to a terminal illness and cannot accept it, cannot and does not want to move on, so he spends the rest of his days self-destructing and creating chaos because he feels that the purpose of continuing to live has been taken away from him. It's not pretty, but I've seen it. There is something about these sad songs that comforts us in a very particular way. With films and books it's different for me. If I read or watch a sad story, I feel worse, but a song somehow gives you a break, something to lean on and take weight off your legs for a few minutes.

Another song that I find moving, and where your voice seems to tear the soul apart, is "Sway". It is impossible not to be moved by it, by the way you sing… truly overwhelming, one of those songs you don't want to end. The song seems to be about having found someone who gives meaning to life and wanting to build something lasting with that person, beyond fleeting desire. What can you tell me about this song?

Well, I think you have already covered a lot in your description. I wrote this song for my wife, not about her, but for her. Love has levels and stages. At first, in its youth, it is a verb: I love you. Then, if it is cared for and respected, it grows and becomes a noun: this love I feel for you. A thing, like a sovereign entity or a shelter. I wanted to write about that patient aspect of love as a slow dance, the slowest and most passionate dance.

"The Great Divide" is one of the songs that sounds least like folk on the album, it even reminds me quite a bit of the sound of Fleetwood Mac on "Rumours". What can you tell me about this song? Are you a fan of Fleetwood Mac?

I originally wrote this song on a dulcimer (a string instrument with a trapezoidal soundbox, where the player strikes the strings with small hammers. Ed.). Yes, this one is about division, the absurd bipartisan political division has reached an apparent peak here in America, and now we are all disillusioned, heartbroken and exhausted. Divided. Cultural mitosis. Although it was written on an Appalachian instrument, the melody and chord progression do have that Fleetwood Mac feel, so we leaned straight into that direction. I love the Peter Green era of Fleetwood Mac and also the late seventies period, but after that I lost interest. I would also throw some Tom Petty into the song.

> ***This solo music feels much more like a work with a reduced cast, with fewer voices, completely dependent on dialogue to express any nuance. Folk? Yes. Country? Yes, but in reality it is more Western than country. Soul? I think I am practically incapable of not putting soul into everything I do.***

In many of your lyrics there is an almost spiritual or biblical language, even when you talk about love, desire or loss. In songs like "Caroline" or "Sway", it feels as though the emotional and the spiritual are very connected. Is that something conscious when you write or does it arise naturally?

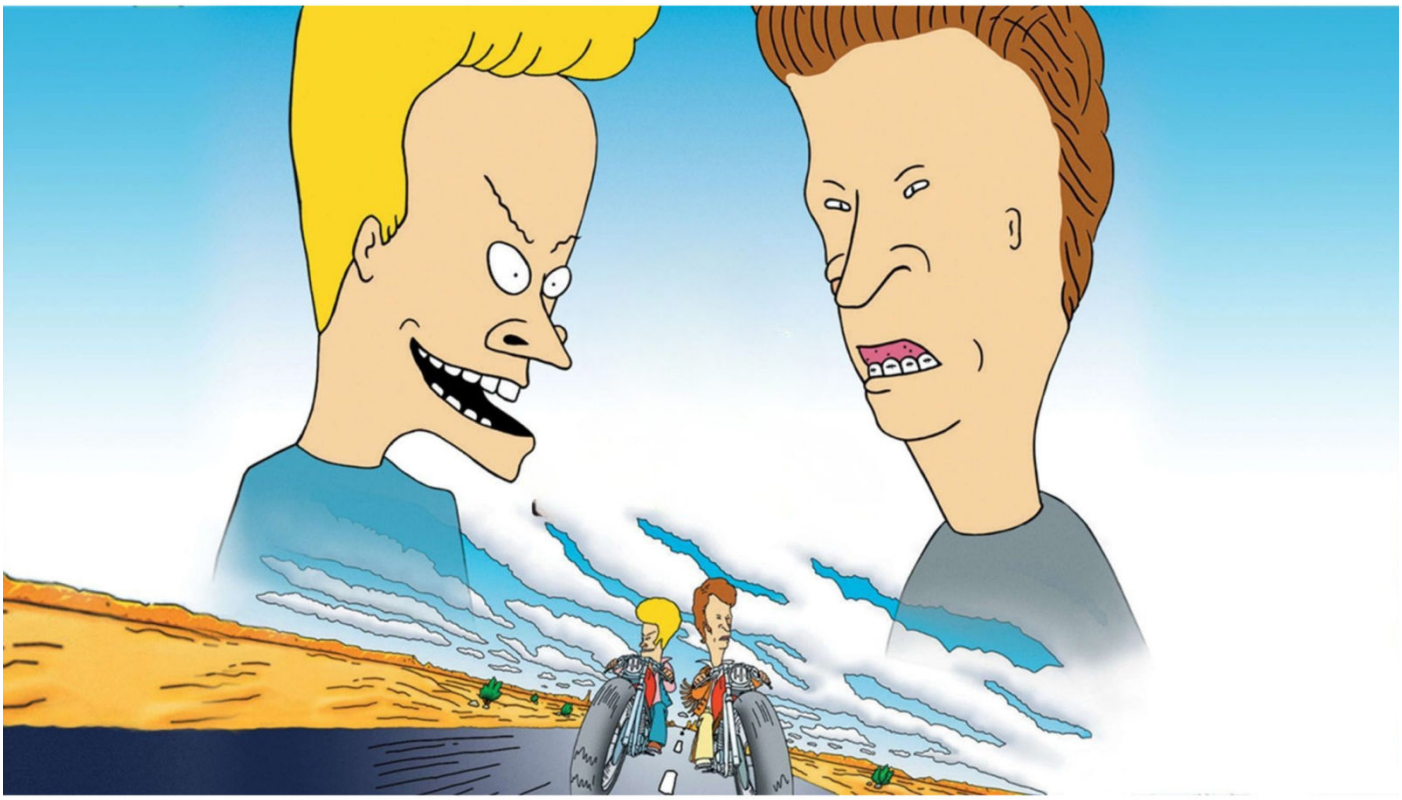
Man, I'm an artist. Brushing your teeth is a spiritual act, it's the only thing I know. Biblical texts were burned into me from a very young age, so I probably reach for that out of basic efficiency or maybe laziness. Like salt for a cook. I think I'm always searching for the vulnerable side in my narratives, the soft and unprotected part of myself that can only tell the truth. Otherwise, I tend to try to be clever, which almost always ends up with me saying complete nonsense.

You do a remarkable version of Leonard Cohen, "Dance Me to the End of Love". Why did you choose it? I really like Cohen, but when his songs fall into the hands of singers with different vocal ranges, new nuances emerge.

Leonard Cohen has his own path, period. All songwriters love him, he is the patron saint of the sacred heart for us. The silent giant, burning and eloquent. I wanted to take the lyrics of this song and reframe them with joy and celebration. I wanted it to sound as if Van Morrison were covering it during his "Street Choir" era. The lyrics are very passionate and profound to me and, although I know where the original imagery comes from, Jewish prisoners forced to play music in Nazi extermination camps during the Second World War while people line up to be executed, I wanted to turn the lyrics into a celebration as a form of joyful protest. I can do that.

Javistone

"Beavis and Butt-Head Do America" (1996)



In the mid-90s, one of my greatest teenage pleasures came when the weekend was over, which might sound contradictory since the next day meant getting up early to go back to school. That pleasure was switching on MTV on Sunday night to enjoy Vanessa Warwick's Headbanger's Ball, but as a starter we had half an hour of the antics and mischief of the two characters we're dealing with today. Exactly, Beavis and Butt-Head, a series that I believe was heavily inspired by the Bill & Ted films starring Keanu Reeves and Alex Winter a few years earlier.

This animated series, created by Mike Judge in 1993, followed the adventures of two metalheads living on their own, spending their days causing all kinds of trouble and watching music videos on that glorious MTV, all while delivering sharp, sarcastic commentary on whatever was playing on their TV. Its success was such that the music channel quickly set things in motion to bring these two idiots to the big screen. As is often the case, there were complications. MTV partnered with Geffen to get the project off the ground, but from the outset Mike Judge had reservations, as he was not keen on making a feature film based on his creations, partly because he was already burned out from producing so many episodes in previous years.

Judge's problem was that he was under contract with the network, and they offered him the chance to make the film in exchange for releasing him from that contract. That was when he agreed and got to work, telling this story in which Beavis and Butt-Head are hired by a shady character to kill his wife in Las Vegas. During the trip they go through all sorts of increasingly absurd and hilarious situations. At first, the producers considered making the film with live-action actors, but Judge dismissed the idea.

With a budget of twelve million dollars, the film premiered worldwide and grossed over sixty-three million, not counting all the merchandising that was produced and sold around it. It is ironic how MTV made a fortune from a series starring two metalheads when, at the time, the channel had largely sidelined that genre. As expected, the film came with a strong soundtrack featuring artists such as AC/DC, White Zombie, Rancid, Red Hot Chili Peppers and Ozzy Osbourne. It's worth remembering that a Beavis and Butt-Head-related album had already been released a few years earlier. The film's opening weekend in North America was also remarkable, breaking records and outperforming the successful "Scream".

The success was so significant that MTV and the production company considered making a sequel shortly afterwards, but Judge was busy with other projects and it did not materialise until many years later, when a new instalment was produced for streaming platforms.

As with many releases of this kind, there were notable collaborations, with well-known figures lending their voices to various characters, including David Letterman, Bruce Willis, Demi Moore and veteran Robert Stack,

who initially did not want his name in the credits because he thought he had signed up for a ridiculous project. His opinion changed once he saw how successful it became.

As always, some scenes were cut to avoid a stricter rating that would have limited the film's release, including a couple of controversial moments, one involving Butt-Head and the American flag, and another with Chelsea Clinton that might have caused outrage. Even so, the former president's daughter still appears in the story, throwing Butt-Head out of a window. It is also worth noting the appearances of characters from the TV series, such as the protagonists' teacher and their unfortunate neighbour Mr Anderson, who suffers endless pranks at the hands of our beloved idiots. One odd omission was Stewart, the Winger T-shirt kid, a recurring character in the series.

Finally, I couldn't ignore how the series arrived in Spain, specifically on Canal Plus, and how, as often happened, it was distorted by the monopoly system. We got Beavis and Butt-Head watching music videos by Joaquín Sabina or Alaska, something that, like many other things, I have never forgiven the Prisa group for.

Nat Simmons

“I needed to pour out everything that was weighing on me. At the same time, it’s also true that it’s a very reflective record. It feels quite personal to me, about telling things from a moment in my life that I needed to express. But it was never intentional. Across the repertoire there are very diverse emotions. There’s anger, frustration... but also something very optimistic “.

With the release of Nat Simmons’s latest work, “Pregúntale a Sarah Connor”, we took the opportunity to talk with her and learn about the stories that always lie behind new songs. It has been a different album, somewhat removed from the sound she had accustomed us to, but no less interesting for that. So we connected via video call and greeted the artist.

How are you, Nat? How are you doing?
Well, good. Getting ready for the upcoming shows, we have two gigs back to back and there's a lot going on. But very happy with the release of the album. So far the feedback has been good and, according to the label, quite a few records are being sold, and things are going well on streaming platforms. And that's despite the fact that selling physical formats is already difficult. I have always sold records, but at concerts. Like with the previous one, "Felinas", which we released independently. There was no distribution in shops, no website or anything. There I noticed it sold well, but I was worried about when people had to buy it in stores. And above all, a lot of vinyl is being sold.

Yes, it's true that now we're really into buying vinyl again. I don't know if it's a trend or pure nostalgia.
Right? I think we like the large format, it feels like you actually have a real record. CDs sound great, but since cars got rid of CD players, it has actually helped us sell this format.

Well, Nat, as you mentioned, we're coming from "Felinas". It's a work that brought you quite a lot of success, and now, with "Pregúntale a Sarah Connor", it seems to me that you continue along a very feminist line, bringing, in this case, eighties heroines to the forefront.
Well, besides the fact that I think we already have plenty of male references in the world of rock, which I myself look up to, like David Bowie, I believe we need female role models. Especially for younger generations. I think it's important to highlight that. I try to push myself towards it, although it's normal, we've been brought up with what we've been brought up with. And regarding the eighties, it's curious. I was born in the eighties, so I didn't really experience them much, because until you're five or six you're not aware of what's around you, but it's true that many people tell me my music reminds them of the eighties. Although I pay more attention to seventies music. Still, I find that reference amusing, like when people say I remind them of Luz Casal.

Very much a heroine, Luz Casal, actually.
That's right, absolutely.

I love that you mention female role models because it's true that it's not that there aren't enough, the problem is that they're not made visible. I think works like yours are absolutely necessary.
Yes. Look, for example, I recently wrote the book "Felinas", where, besides interviewing female artists, I also interview women journalists because I think it's also a very male-dominated sector where female music journalists need more visibility.

That's another issue within the industry, for sure (we both laugh). But let's continue, Nat. I think this latest album you've made is incredible. But I want you to tell me whether it was born with a clear concept.
Well, the truth is that it wasn't born with a clear or single concept, like "Felinas". But in this case, they are songs from a specific period and once I saw the repertoire I was going to record, I realised there was a recurring thread. Although I think that has to do with the fact that I was going through a complicated time in my life, with a lot of uncertainty and anxiety in which, as psychologists say, I needed to get it out in order to release it. I needed to pour out everything that was worrying me. Also, it is true that it's a very reflective album. It feels quite personal, about telling things from a moment in my life that I needed to share. But it was never intentional. In the repertoire there are very diverse emotions. There is anger, frustration… but also something very optimistic, because my personality is like that and I always want to bring that side into my records.

Of course. Each work should show a part of you and place it in context, right?
Yes, although it so happens that almost all my albums are quite eclectic in the sense that no song resembles another. My father used to say that to me a lot. It has always happened to me that since I like many styles, I don't stick to just one. I try to include that variety and, for that reason, I need a good producer to bring coherence to the musical work.

In fact, now that I think about it, the different songs on the album come to mind and I find a great variety not only of styles but also of emotions.
Exactly. Look, for example, "Alain Delon" and "Ojos el Peligro", one is very classic and the other much more modern. That's why sometimes I think they don't fit on the same record, but I always realise that in the end… they work. That is also the job of the producer and the musicians who dress the songs and give them that coherence. That's the beauty of it.

And, by the way, you went back to Nashville to record this latest album. How was the experience?
Wow, for working and for someone like me who's very into musical mythology and loves music, it's amazing. Every time I go I feel like a little kid. Also, you turn over a stone there and twenty musicians come out. But twenty amazing musicians. So every time I go, I'm surprised.

> ***"Look, Andalusia is tough. It is far away and hard to get to, but if you go and what happened to me happens to you, when I went to La Guarida del Ángel in Jerez, and you see the venue packed, it is a real high."***

This time I went more aware that I would find something magnificent from the musicians, but every time I leave the studio, I'm still surprised by how great it is. Also, we went with Álex, and it's not the same going as a tourist as going with someone like him who lives there, knows every corner and makes it easier for you to have different experiences. We had some beautiful moments, like the time one of The Black Crowes showed up, listened to one of my songs, "Alain Delon", and said it was great. You never forget that. I never thought something like that could happen to me and it was thanks to Álex Muñoz. Also, it was the first album he produced in Spanish and that fills me with pride.

Going to Nashville is like going to a musical mecca. And not just because of

country music, which people might think. There are studios there where everything is recorded.
Exactly. Just think that the person who mixed our album is the producer of Kings of Leon's most famous record, "Only by the Night", or of Norah Jones… These are musicians who are used to playing absolutely everything. They master it brilliantly.

And you had the chance to perform there, to top it all off.
That was incredible. It was the first time I performed outside Spain, and on top of that, not just anywhere, but in Nashville. Álex advised me not to do the whole set in English and to sing some songs in Spanish. I did it and the audience's reaction was surprising. They loved it and many people congratulated me, while I was amazed, of course. They even liked the Luz Casal song. I think they even found it exotic.

Let's talk about collaborations now. For example, José Ignacio Lapido.
That was incredible. I didn't expect him to say yes, even though we got along really well after I did that 091 cover and he came to the Madrid show, which I actually remember as one of the best nights of my life, to perform the song live. But I was working on the songs and thought it would be nice. I look at people who write really well and obviously José Ignacio is one of them, so I thought I'd send it to him and see. It wasn't immediate, but suddenly one day he came and told me he had a new song that, if it fit me, was for me. I couldn't believe it and that's when I received "Tan extraño para mí", an incredible song. Then I gave it my touch and sent it back. It was spectacular. After that, I had a song that was missing something and I asked him if he could add his touch, and well… it was amazing. Everything he does is very close to my tastes.

You also collaborate with Depedro on the video "Nieve en el desierto".
Jairo is incredible, both as an artist and as a person. When I met him he gave me very good advice and I personally think he is one of the best singers we have in this country. Besides, he really fit the song.

Depedro, in my opinion, a somewhat underrated singer.
Absolutely. I really think so. There are several reasons. Of course, it's not commercial and younger generations are not used to going to this kind of shows. They go to other things and that leaves artists like him behind. Then there's also the issue of audiences attending concerts, which is another big topic...

That's another controversial issue, for sure.
Yes, there are many factors. I see how things work in each place and talk about it with colleagues, but there are some places that

are very difficult. For example, it has been harder for me to fill a venue in Barcelona than in Navalmoral de la Mata. There are certain places that are very hard to fill and when you do fill a venue it is celebrated a lot. More population does not necessarily mean more possibilities. Then there is the issue of competing events, for example. You more or less know what you're up against, but it's costly. Look, Andalusia is tough. It's far away and it's hard to get there, but if you go and something like what happened to me at La Guarida del Ángel in Jerez happens, and you see the venue full, it's a huge high.

Well, since we're talking about venues, how is the tour preparation going?
We already have quite a few dates. We start in Madrid and Valencia, we go to Sala X in Seville on May 29, although we will return to Andalusia after the summer. We have a lot of dates piling up between now and June and festivals in the summer. It's shaping up to be a long tour, really. Since I released "Felinas", we haven't stopped touring. At most, I've stopped for one month.

Earlier you mentioned the book you've written. Shall we talk a bit about it?
We'll promote it going forward, but I can tell you a few things. It's called "Conversaciones con Felinas", since they are conversations with women in rock, DJs, producers, women journalists like Marta Vázquez from Rock FM… there are many national and international voices. And on the other hand, telling my story. Not as a biography, but sharing things from when I started and linking them with these conversations. Everything has a narrative thread. I honestly think it has turned out nicely. There are very tough testimonies, but also quite a lot of humour.

There must be some very hard anecdotes and stories, for sure.
There are things that surpass fiction. Things that are already known, but when they are told to you in the first person, they hit much harder. For example, I spoke with Virginia Maestro and she told me about her trauma with "OT", very personal things… it felt like therapy. Something similar happened with Vega. Sometimes I came out of those conversations quite shaken. It was like going to a psychologist. Thanks to Anchel Solana, I have been in contact with people of the calibre of Margo Price or Lucinda Williams when I have had to interview international artists. That has been a dream. I think it is a book not only for music fans, but something sociological. There are stories that need to be known and should be of interest to everyone. And I am also sure that there are people who can feel identified.

We'll leave it there, Nat. We hope to see you live soon, and we are also looking forward to reading that book, which sounds very interesting. Thank you very much for your time, once again.
No problem, thank you very much to you, of course. And I'm sure we'll see each other very soon.

Ada Salas

Nat Simons, Sala Changó (Madrid), March 19, 2026

Madrid woke up to a spring day, a mirage of what the news tells us is about to hit, another storm that will wipe out, in the blink of an eye, our hopes of good spring weather. But that storm was nothing compared to the hurricane we witnessed at around nine o'clock and a few minutes in the evening at Sala Changó in Madrid, in the Bilbao area, that wonderful part of the city Mamá sang about in the early eighties, when life in Madrid felt different.

This hurricane was exactly that, a tremendous explosion of sound and lights, of sharp yet sensitive guitars, of keyboards that richly support a voice that tears itself open and breaks through everything on this cold Madrid night. Sala Changó has improved a lot since it opened and the sound is spectacular, but if they had opened the upstairs area it would have eased the congestion a bit near the stage and we would have been more comfortable, as the downstairs was packed to enjoy this concert.

The show kicked off with the intro from "Terminator", as if to ask Sarah Connor, and a small issue at the start of the first song did not stop "Delorean" from sounding like what it is, a single that, if there were any justice in this country, would be playing on major media outlets. The show continued at a relentless pace, steady, never letting off the accelerator, not even to catch a breath.

The investment in this concert gives you a return ratio well above average. This is not about spending money on a ticket, it is about investing in quality, in well-being, in good vibes, in enjoying three and even four guitars on stage, with raw sensitivity, supported by a spectacular bed of keyboards and a rhythmic foundation that binds everything together, making the sound distinctive and superb. The closest thing to Tom Petty we are going to experience in this country from a national band.

The songs kept coming: "Quién lo impide", "Ley animal", "El verano del 96" asked us where we were, if I tell you, you will know I am not that young anymore nor do I see it as idealized, but everyone looks back with the memories they have, and this song is a great exercise in nostalgia. The master, Jose Ignacio Lapido, who, as Nat introduced him, not as her favorite singer but as her favorite songwriter, took the lead of the night singing and accompanying on guitar "Tan extraño para mí", premiered that very night and part of this gem of a new album by Nat. Lapido takes this song to another dimension live.

The show continued without lowering the emotion. Two more special guests joined Nat on stage that night: Granada's Pablo Perea, singer of La Trampa, who performed "Alain Delon". Pablo made a dark joke before starting. The song also featured Dani Herrero, Loquillo's saxophonist. This track leans more toward the nineties than the seventies, more power pop than classic rock, and it works very well live. The guests gave it a roguish edge.

From there to the end, the songs kept flowing without rest: "Gritar", sweat, beers going down, the night heating up, the band raising the temperature in a rollercoaster of new and not-so-new songs. The Blondie cover "Call Me" had the crowd applauding wildly. The show reached its finale with two encores. The first, not content with being seven musicians on stage, featured a trio of violins that made "Más que a todo lo demás" sound beautiful. Now you understand why investing in live music should always be a must when it is done like this, offering so much. The show closed with "Big Bang" and, true to its name, the venue received it as such.

A great presentación of an album that is a faithful heir to the "Felinas" saga, energy, passion, and work well done. After more than one hundred minutes of rock and roll, everyone headed home happy, with a smile that will last several days before the reality we live in makes us long for nights like this.

Bands That Had It Within Reach

These days, the concept we are dealing with is usually called "hype", a term that very efficiently describes when something starts generating a lot of noise, unusual expectation and disproportionate intensity. The "but" is that it is often seen as excessive, inflated, sometimes driven by expectations built on trivial elements, other times by trends, by gaps in markets or industries, or perhaps by the sheer interest of record labels (I assume the reader understands we are referring to the music industry, although the concept clearly extends to any other social sphere), which blow up the balloon to the point where it risks bursting, leaving behind little more than the shattered remains of the artist, who, typically, no one cares about, since the void left by one hype is usually filled by another. History is full of inflated balloons: artists, bands, singers… who, with their debuts, seemed destined to be "the next big thing" and either never released another record, fading into the saddest oblivion, or saw their careers lose momentum immediately, the hype collapsing as quickly as Trump changes his mind. Overblown egos, drugs, problems with record companies… the reasons tend to repeat themselves. In this article we will revisit some examples of artists who seemed set to become generational beacons and ended up buried beneath their own excessive expectations.

Buckcherry

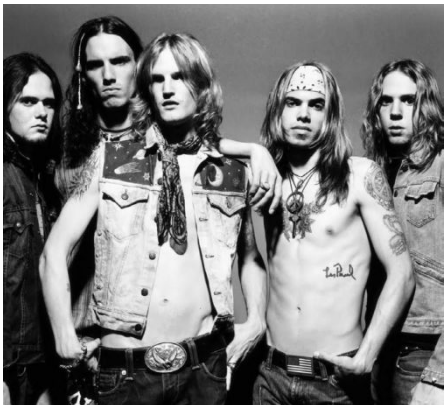
A perfect example of a band that looked like they would be "the new…" insert whoever you like. It was 1999, grunge had already disappeared and those of us who were still young and missed the rawness of early-decade rock, looking towards Scandinavia, suddenly turned our eyes to a band that sounded brutally exciting and raw. DreamWorks saw in them a new Guns N' Roses and went all in, even convincing the great Terry Date (Soundgarden, Pantera, Screaming Trees, Deftones, Ozzy Osbourne…) to produce their debut album. The record, self-titled, felt like a breath of fresh air in North American rock, saturated with nu-metal sounds and post-grunge pastiches that provoked more nausea than yawns. Josh Todd, a singer overflowing with charisma, a bastard child of Axl Rose and Steven Tyler, with a devastating look, shirtless torso covered in tattoos (including a huge "chaos" across his abdomen), fronted a band that revived that dirty old-school sound and, above all, arrived with an absolutely devastating single. That "Lit Up", with Todd screaming at the top of his lungs about how much he loves cocaine, was a runaway rock and roll train, exactly what any twenty-something lover of the devil's music needed: visceral, direct, energetic…

The album did not fall short of the single, quite the opposite, a handful of songs that stuck in your head and made you move every time you listened. It seemed they would be the band to rule the following decade, but none of that happened (in fact, nothing anyone expected happened in that decade). A weaker second album, without a single anywhere near "Lit Up" (something virtually impossible, only within reach of bands like The Black Crowes or Guns N' Roses), internal conflicts and a DreamWorks that quickly lost faith in them led to the band dissolving in 2002 amid total indifference. They would return years later with a new line-up, but nothing was ever the same. A completely residual band, followed only by the most devoted fans, if any are still out there.

Javistone

Silvertide

Careful, this was the band people said were the new… Buckcherry! If Buckcherry burst onto the scene with a killer single, Silvertide did the same with the overwhelming "Ain't Coming Home", overflowing with fury, swagger, youthful energy and charisma. However, Silvertide's trajectory was as promising as it was short-lived. Formed in Philadelphia in the early 2000s, the band led by Walt Lafty and guitarist Nick Perri quickly positioned itself as one of the



great hopes of the hard rock revival of the time, drawing from classic influences like Aerosmith and Led Zeppelin. Their debut, “Show and Tell” (2004), captured that raw, street-level energy with an accessible approach, producing singles such as “Ain’t Coming Home” and “Blue Jeans”, which performed well on radio and opened doors for them as support acts on major tours. Lafty brought charisma and attitude, while Perri stood out as a guitarist with strong projection, fuelling expectations of rapid growth. However, that initial rise never solidified. Internal issues, creative differences and tensions with the label slowed the development of a second album, which never fully materialised. This was compounded by the difficulty of fitting into an industry that, by the mid-2000s, was shifting towards more commercial sounds, leaving little room for contemporary takes on classic rock. The band gradually slipped into inactivity before dissolving without a clear ending. Later reunion attempts failed to revive the project in a stable way, while its members pursued separate paths, especially Perri, who built a career as a guitarist for other artists. Silvertide exemplifies a recurring pattern: a powerful arrival, a convincing debut and evident potential that, due to internal and contextual factors, never translated into a sustained career. A band that aimed high but remained a promise.

Javistone

Violent Femmes

On August 23, 1981, The Pretenders played a show at the Oriental Theatre in Milwaukee. While people queued outside, a street band entertained them. Their skill caught the attention of Peggy Sue, wife of James Honeyman-Scott, who mentioned them to her husband, and the band was invited to play a few songs just before their set, between the opening act and the headliners. That moment can be seen as the starting point of Violent Femmes. Their freshness and boldness, along with the skill with which they wove their distinctive sound, caught the attention of local musician Mark Van Hecke, who recorded a demo for them. They sent it to countless labels, but no executive took a chance on Gordon Gano, Victor DeLorenzo and Brian Ritchie. Eventually, in 1982, Violent Femmes recorded their self-titled debut LP on Slash Records, a label specialising in punk rock. A folk-punk slap infused with a strong pop component that neither they nor anyone else has managed to match. This is not a case of decline in quality, as over the years they have demonstrated unquestionable consistency and value, but it is almost impossible to follow the trail of that first album, where most of the songs, written by Gano, are hits that have become part of the collective imagination: “Blister in the Sun”, “Gone Daddy Gone”, “Add It Up”, “Prove My Love”, “Kiss Off”… On their second album, “Hallowed Ground”, they darkened their sound and leaned towards a less mainstream country approach, distancing themselves from immediate audience connection in favour of remaining true to an identity that has endured to this day.

Juan Carlos León

Wolfmother

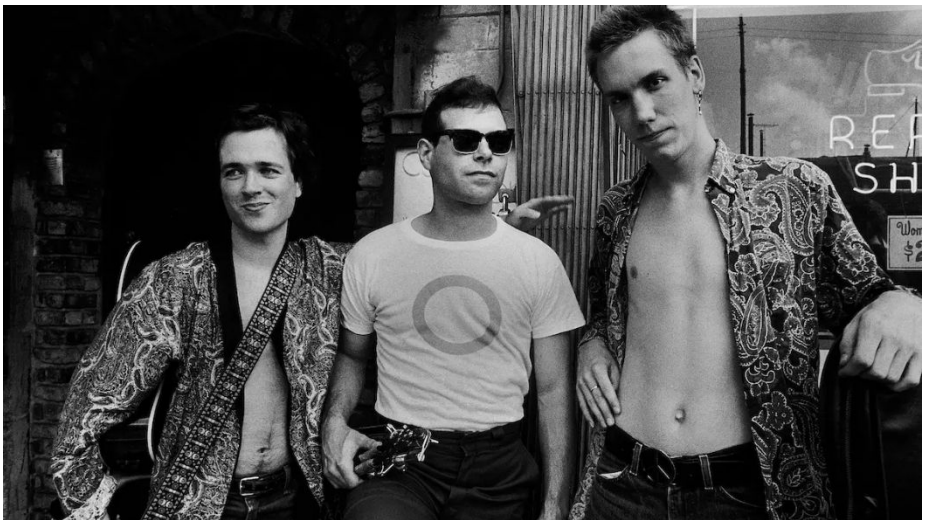
The Australian band appeared around 2005 and, with their genuinely seventies-style psychedelic revival sound and a handful of near-perfect songs on their self-titled debut, made us feel we were witnessing the beginning of a legend worthy of succeeding all those great bands they drew from: Led Zeppelin, Jethro Tull, Black Sabbath, Deep Purple… we were young and highly impressionable, I know, but… the level of those songs was sublime. I remember a concert they played on a large indoor stage, something like a big TV studio, and it was absolutely magical, watching those three Australians tackle those songs, with guitarist and singer Andrew Stockdale screaming like a madman and unleashing incendiary riffs, while bassist and keyboardist Chris Ross was a force of nature… If they swept Australia, it didn’t take long for them to conquer Europe and the United States, where the reaction was the same, we all fell at their feet. The future was entirely theirs. But what so often happens, happened: ego. Stockdale began to believe that Wolfmother was basically him and nothing more, and that Ross and drummer Myles Heskett brought nothing special. The mistake was, of course, enormous. Just as the Robinson brothers believed that being the songwriters made the rest of the band expendable, losing their mojo completely, the same thing happened to Stockdale. Their second album, absurdly titled “Cosmic Egg”, was a complete failure. A record that sounded like more of the same as its predecessor, but empty, soulless. Needless to say, Wolfmother did not become anyone’s heirs.

Javistone

The Darkness

Another clear example of a band that turns everything upside down and then dissolves like sugar in water. In 2000, the band led by the Hawkins brothers, Justin on vocals and guitar, Dan on guitar, recorded the explosive “Permission to Land”, a majestic collection of songs, each a potential single. But it was “I Believe in a Thing Called Love”, “Growing on Me”, “Get Your Hands off My Woman” and “Love Is Only a Feeling” that made The Darkness one of the biggest bands on the planet. Their mix of seventies rock, glam elements, echoes of Queen and Justin’s powerful, playful voice, often pompous and operatic like Freddie Mercury’s, along with their hilarious videos and hedonistic attitude, even that distinctly British awkwardness, made it seem like we were witnessing the birth of a star destined to shine for years. The band went from playing clubs in Camden to filling arenas in a matter of months. Touring intensified and the pressure to sustain success grew. The music industry, having found an unexpected goldmine, began demanding quick results.

In this context, Justin Hawkins started to carry a significant burden: maintaining the public persona, leading the band creatively and meeting external expectations, all of which clashed badly with his heavy cocaine and alcohol use. Their second album followed shortly after and, frankly, “One Way Ticket to Hell...And Back” was, for me, a complete



disappointment. Apart from the title track, which lived up to "Permission to Land", the rest lacked the freshness and inspiration of their debut. An excess of misguided pretension, perhaps overproduction, but the truth is the magic had gone. Justin eventually left the band and bassist Richie Edwards took over vocals. Imagine Bono leaving U2 and Adam Clayton stepping in as frontman. The usual revolving door of members, name changes, Justin with his own band, all with equally poor results, led to their reunion in 2011 with a renewed Justin, healthier, with a new image, which everyone was glad to see, but the fun and feeling that defined their debut had completely faded.

J. The Perfect Drug

Los Negativos

In 1986, with the Madrid scene cruising at full speed and bands watching each other closely, from Barcelona came a group of young musicians passionate about the sixties, psychedelia and creativity, releasing "Piknik Caleidoscópico", a pop panorama infused with psychedelia, lysergic undertones, freshness and rawness in equal measure, and unclassifiable lyrics ("Hay un tren para ir allí / nunca va a su hora oficial / depende de si el conductor / se ha comido un pez"). Initially it sparked surprise, then admiration, a record from which several singles could have been drawn: "Moscas y Arañas", "Pasando el Tiempo", "Graduado en Underground", "Habitación Realmente Pequeña"… Youth, a strong image, carefully crafted songs and approval from critics and audiences. They had everything except a wide audience, as, while not exactly a cult band, their target remained selective and limited compared to dominant acts of the time such as Gabinete Caligari, Radio Futura or Duncan Dhu, who that same year released the successful "Canciones". The label's desire to broaden their appeal, combined with the band's own urge to evolve, diluted a set of strong songs, "Bagdad" being in my national Top 10, that made up "18º Sábado Amarillo" a year later. Songs that failed to connect like the previous album's anthems. That, combined with a temporary split due to military service, brought disillusionment and fatigue into the band, two elements capable of destroying any project. From there, the band entered an intermittent trajectory which, despite everything, has kept them active to this day. That's something we all gain from.

Juan Carlos León

The Stone Roses

The Stone Roses in this article? The Stone Roses in this article… can you think of a better example of a band that, with their first album, caused a seismic shift in music and then vanished? Yes, they returned with "The Second Coming", but as in all previous cases, it was never the same and that was effectively the end. It was 1988 when they released their third single, "Elephant Stone", one of those timeless gems that make you rethink life. But it was in 1989, with the release of "The Stone Roses" (their lack of imagination for titles was remarkable), that the impact was massive. In a Manchester where dance culture had taken over every corner, it was inevitable that it would influence the bands reshaping British pop. The Happy Mondays, The Charlatans, The Inspiral Carpets formed part of that wave, blending danceable rhythms into their sound. In this case, it is impossible not to surrender to the psychedelic magic of "Fools Gold", a danceable pop gem where Alan Wren's drums sound almost like a drum machine, John Squire's guitar overflows with magic, Ian Brown is brilliant on vocals, but it is the bass of the late Gary "Mani" Mounfield that turned my room into a dancefloor every time I played it. And if you saw that hypnotic video, the effect was devastating. A superhuman track among an album of astonishing songs: "I Wanna Be Adored", "She Bangs the Drums", "Made of Stone", "This Is the One"… an ABSOLUTE masterpiece. Although the album drew from various influences, especially British psychedelia and sixties pop, while they were listening constantly to Public Enemy, they became the standard-bearers of the Manchester sound. Ironically, Ian Brown and the band were never fully satisfied with what they considered an overly pop sound. Combined with disputes with their label, Silvertone, this led to years of legal battles until they signed with Geffen Records, who gave them full freedom, allowing them to self-produce "The Second Coming" and steer it towards a heavier, more American sound, which did not sit well with critics or many fans. After five years, they seemed like a different band. That said, I consider it another masterpiece, with a huge sound and songs like "Ten Storey Love Song", "Breaking Into Heaven", the wild "Beggin You" and the spectacular single "Love Spreads". However, the sense that their moment had passed, those five years were their downfall, and disappointing sales led to internal tensions. John Squire left in early 1996 and nothing was ever the same. They even recruited the guitarist from Simply Red, which says it all, and it didn't work. The Stone Roses ceased to exist in 1996 after just two albums, when they seemed destined to become the new kings of pop.

Ian Brown, John Squire and Mani all had notable careers afterwards, Brown solo, Squire forming The Seahorses and Mani joining Primal Scream. They reunited in 2011 with plans for a third album that never materialised. A couple of underwhelming singles became their epitaph, despite occasional live shows continuing until Mani's death a few weeks ago.

Javistone

Azkena Rock Festival
June 18, 19 and 20, 2026 | Vitoria-Gasteiz

Azkena Rock Festival, A Place of Resistance and Authenticity

Vitoria-Gasteiz beats again to the rhythm of a new edition of the Azkena Rock Festival, an event that cuts across generations and reaffirms its place as one of the essential gatherings in European rock. Three days where the history, attitude and present of the genre come together without artifice. From June 18 to 20, 2026, Mendizabala hosts a line-up that blends legends like Alice Cooper and Social Distortion with new voices, and a city fully immersed in an experience that goes far beyond the stage.

The Azkena Rock Festival returns in 2026 with the confidence of something that doesn't need to reinvent itself to remain essential. From June 18 to 20, Vitoria-Gasteiz will once again become one of Europe's great temples of rock, hosting at Mendizabala a new edition that reaffirms its identity: unfiltered guitars, legendary names and a natural coexistence between the past, present and future of the genre.

The festival's 24th edition arrives with a line-up that once again shows its fine balance between icons and artists capable of engaging with today's sound. At the top, names like Alice Cooper, Social Distortion or The Hives lead a programme that isn't about nostalgia, but about a living legacy. Around them orbit acts as diverse as Counting Crows, Imelda May, Jason Isbell & The 400 Unit or Sleaford Mods, shaping an edition that moves between classic rock, punk, americana and more alternative sounds. And the final additions have only reinforced that sense of range, with names like Carpenter Brut or the most authentic blues of Robert Finley, taking the festival to the next level.

The day-by-day layout keeps that narrative pulse Azkena has refined over the years. Thursday kicks off with a direct burst of energy, where the explosive garage of The Hives sets the tone for an opening day that also highlights acts like Imelda May or Corrosion of Conformity, striking a balance between rockabilly elegance and heavier hard rock. Friday shapes up as the most hard-hitting day in terms of the genre's history, with Alice Cooper, who despite the passing of time will still deliver the goods, leading a line-up where rock meets the punk of Social Distortion. A night built for shouting along to classics non-stop. Saturday, meanwhile, leans into a more cross-cutting mix, with Counting Crows bringing a melodic, emotional edge that contrasts with more alternative-leaning bands, closing the festival with the feeling of a full journey across different generations of rock.

Another element that continues to set Azkena apart from other festivals is its commitment to the local scene. Far from being just a showcase for big international names, the line-up once again makes room for emerging bands and nearby projects like Nhil, Rodeo, Lepora or Alcalá Norte, who find here a prime platform to connect with a broad and diverse audience. That coexistence between established artists and new voices is part of the festival's DNA, which understands rock as an ecosystem in constant evolution.

Beyond the Mendizabala grounds, Azkena once again spreads across the city, strengthening its relationship with Vitoria as something more than just a location. The free shows in Plaza de la Virgen Blanca during the mornings and early afternoons turn the city centre into a natural extension of the festival, creating that unique atmosphere where rock seeps into every corner. The truth is, Azkena isn't just a line-up, it's a shared experience that transforms the city for three days.

As for access to the festival, Azkena stays in line with previous years, with general passes hovering around 175 euros and more accessible options like youth passes or day tickets, allowing different types of audiences to shape their own experience. The organisers also continue to push formats like group passes, reinforcing that collective spirit that has always been part of the event.

In short, in a context where many festivals tend to dilute their identity with increasingly homogeneous line-ups, Azkena Rock Festival 2026 once again positions itself as a space of resistance and authenticity. There are no concessions to passing trends here, no need to dress rock up as something else. There's history, there's a present and, above all, there's a community that understands that music is still at the centre of everything. You go to Azkena, no questions asked.

Ada Salas

Black Maracas
Evolving Towards the Dark

Black Maracas have been one of the latest additions to the line-up of the upcoming Azkena Rock Festival. In a short time, the Madrid band have shaken up the scene with their mix of garage, goth and stoner. We spoke to them about their sound, their latest release and what to expect from their live show in the following interview.

In just seven years, and with only three albums, you've turned the national rock scene upside down, but I understand you've actually been around for quite a while. Where do Black Maracas come from? What's your story?
Black Maracas come from a creative urge driven by trying to express the worst parts of yourself and to say things you wouldn't dare to otherwise.

As we said, three albums since "Prehistoric Ghost" (2019), where the band's sound has been constantly evolving, but without losing that darkness and sense of danger. How has that evolution been? Where do you think the band's sound stands right now?
That progression has come from the darkness you encounter as you move forward through life, with its moments, people, betrayals… Right now, I think the band is at the most experimental point in its career. We've got a new album coming out soon and it's quite a big shift, maybe a bit more illuminated and with a completely different sound.

Your three albums have been very well received by critics, but it's your latest work, "The Anecdote" (2025), that has unanimously caught almost everyone's attention. What can you tell us about this record?
The album tried to express as much as possible with as little ornamentation as possible. It's a visceral reflection of how I felt during a specific period of my life.

Tell us a bit about your experience playing in the US. I think you've been to Seattle and Texas, right?
As we've said before, the US experience was incredible. In particular, in Seattle and Texas we played the Levitation and Freakout Seattle festivals. We had the chance to play with big names on the international scene and meet a lot of other bands. We came back with a lot of friendships from there and, maybe, with more credibility regarding what we want to do.

Mad Cool and now Resurrection Fest and Azkena back-to-back, how do you approach those shows in front of such "select" and, at **first glance, different audiences?**
We usually just go out and do what we do best, which is play however the hell we want with the volume cranked all the way up.

Do you put together a specific setlist for festivals or is it the same as when you tour venues? I'm asking because festival audiences tend to be more mixed, with different styles on the bill.
We usually put together a specific setlist, mixing the latest releases with some tracks from previous albums. In the end, the setlist we choose is what we want the audience to take away from us, no matter where we're playing.

What does it mean for you to play these festivals and, especially, Azkena, one of the most established and, let's say, rock-focused festivals out there?
A step forward. You build credibility in a complex music landscape and you get the chance to open up your music to an audience that maybe didn't know you.

Was playing Mendizabala something you had in mind?
Yes. It's a festival that's been on our radar for a long time. Especially since the release of "The Anecdote".

What can people expect, those who, like me, haven't had the chance to see you live yet and will catch you for the first time at Azkena?
I'd rather people don't expect anything and just come and see what the hell they find.

Thanks a lot for everything, I hope things keep going well for you. See you in Vitoria.

Marcos Sánchez

Danny Vaughn

Rocking forever young from Andalusia

"Closer to the Sun" is the first album by Tyketto in ten years. A band led by the powerful voice of Danny Vaughn, a Cleveland-born singer who formed the group in the late '80s in New York, taking its name from a graffiti they saw on the streets of that city. Vaughn, the only original member still in the band, has been living in Andalusia for years with his wife. The Metal N' Rock team got in touch with his record label to send him a set of questions, which the vocalist kindly answered. As always, we share this interview with our friends at Rock Bottom Magazine. Thanks to Serena Furlan from Silver Lining Music.

Your new album "Closer to the Sun" has just been released to a very positive reaction from both fans and critics. The advance singles already sounded very promising. What can you tell us about this new record?
So far, the reaction from the public has been absolutely rewarding and wonderful. We've released three videos and all of them have reached 100,000 views or more; the fans have waited patiently for a decade for our new album and, thank God, many of them are still with us, and so far all the reactions we've received have been very positive, no one has been disappointed, which makes me really happy. As for what kind of album it is, I can define it with a single word: uplifting. We wanted to make a record that you could put on in the car and simply enjoy while driving, not having to take it off, feeling good for the 45 minutes it lasts, or simply letting it help you forget everyday problems.

It's your first album in ten years. Were the songs that make up the record developed over the last decade, or are they more recent?
Different songs have different origins along our timeline. Most of the tracks were written very recently and all the members have contributed their part, it has been a group effort. There are also a couple of songs that already existed and that I had kept stored away for many years with another co-writer, a gentleman from Boston named Ruben Demello, with whom I co-wrote "The Picture" and "Closer to the Sun". These songs were waiting for the right moment to be recorded, and that moment has come now.

Danny, on this album you decided to take on the production duties. What led you to that decision? The album sounds really good. Is this the first time you've taken the controls?
Well, thank you very much. Yes, we're very proud of the production on this album. We worked very hard on it, but it wasn't just me. I did it together with my partner in crime Chris Childs. Chris and I work together and we make a very good team, each of us plays to the other's strengths, and I really enjoyed doing this. We simply felt that we were ready after many years of working together and being involved in many albums, we felt we could take it across the finish line with a great sound, and hopefully we'll produce more of our own records in the future, and maybe even some for other bands or artists.

We've seen that you already have several dates scheduled for April in England with Warrior Soul, and later another one with Black Star Riders. What are your touring plans? Is it complicated for you to tour considering that the band members live in different countries?
Traveling is never easy, no matter where everyone lives. It would be great if we all lived in the same country, but that's not the case. Fortunately, we all live in Europe, which makes things a bit easier. As far as Spain is concerned, we're always in talks with various promoters to play here. We'll be performing at Barcelona Rockfest this July, but we are definitely working on securing several shows in Spain. We always have a great audience here, especially in Madrid, so I don't know exactly when, but we will definitely be coming to Spain, don't worry.

On this new record you have Johnny Dee on drums, your old friend from Waysted.

Are you happy with the current lineup? You seem very tight as a band.
Yes, I'm incredibly proud and happy with the lineup right now. You know, we started playing together after COVID and there was no way to quickly record an album with new band members so soon. I wanted them to get involved, for all of us to get to know each other and play a lot together so that when we went into the studio everyone would understand each other's moves and how we work. And I'm very lucky that they're all genuinely great people outside of their musical careers, which is extraordinary. We get along very well and travel well together. We enjoy each other's company and all of that is reflected in the album.

Danny, you've been living in Andalusia for some years now. It seems you've integrated very well, almost like a local. How did you discover Andalusia? What do you like most about living here? (First, he says a few words in Spanish explaining that he doesn't speak the language well.)
I first came to Andalusia because I met Melissa, who is now my wife, but back then we were dating and I was living in Ireland and she was here, so I started coming over, and when we fell in love, I didn't just fall in love with her, I also fell in love with Spain, I fell in love with a country and its sunshine. I love Spain. We've been here for 16 years, which is embarrassing for me because my Spanish is very bad, but we love the people. We love the food, it's an amazing country, you never run out of places to go and things to see, and I still have so much more to explore. So yes, we're very happy to be fully integrated into Spain.

"Closer to the Sun" marks a change of label for Tyketto, signing with Silver Lining Music, while your previous albums were released through Frontiers. How has the move to the new label been? Have you noticed many differences compared to the previous one?
After many albums with Frontiers, both with Tyketto and with From the Inside, I really felt that I wanted to explore other paths. I'm not going to put anyone down or say anything bad about anyone. I just felt that we weren't connecting in terms of how I believed an album should be promoted, how it should be represented, and I wanted to see if there was someone else who might have a deeper interest in the band, and that's when Silver Lining Music came along. They've simply done everything step by step the way I would have imagined, with great care and great pride in what we're releasing. So yes, right now I couldn't be happier. They're a great label.

Speaking of record labels, this year marks the 35th anniversary of your debut "Don't Come Easy", released by Geffen Records, a major label that had powerhouse bands like Guns N' Roses and Nirvana. What was it like working with Geffen? Looking back, do you think things might have gone better with a different label?
Looking back, I don't think we would have done better with another label. I think Geffen was incredibly powerful. They invested heavily in us, but no label could predict the shift in musical style that was about to happen, and it happened across the board, regardless of which label bands were on. You know, bands that were at the top of the charts one day had no impact the next, and that was a decision made by the audience, so I have to respect that. It was sad for people like us whose careers were accelerating. But I thought Geffen was a fantastic label to be with. I supported them on some occasions and political decisions they made at the time, involving difficult decisions and lawsuits related to rap music, and I was impressed with how the Geffen organization handled all of that. So my relationship with Geffen Records was absolutely fantastic.

Do you still keep in touch with former members of the band, people like Brooke St. James, Michael Clayton, or Jimmy Kennedy?
Have they said anything about the new album? I've never lost contact with any of the original members of Tyketto. Michael and I talk almost every day. We're great friends and always will be for the rest of our lives. Brooke is a bit further away, but we talk regularly and, you know, I support him in his projects. He's making great solo music and I'm looking forward to it being released so everyone can hear and enjoy it. For example, Chris Green and Michael Clayton were instrumental in helping me integrate my new guys Johnny Dee and Harry Scott Elliott. They helped them understand how we do things live, any questions, any doubts. We're very happy to say there's no bad blood in Tyketto, regardless of who has come through our doors. We've all gotten along well and we've understood our fans very well, our relationship with them is fantastic. So yes, I talk to all the guys from time to time. I know Brooke reached out after the first single was released and gave me his approval. Michael has heard the entire album and loved it. I haven't heard from Jimmy in a while, but I'm sure we'll be in touch soon.

To wrap things up, we have to ask you about your anthem "Forever Young", a song that drives audiences wild at concerts, a true classic. What do you think that song has that others don't, allowing it to remain so alive 35 years later?
Ah, "Forever Young" is a song I have a changing relationship with. I mean, there was a period in my life when I thought I couldn't believe I would have to play that song every time I performed, whether it was acoustic or electric or even on a banjo, you know, and then I realized that when you release a song into the world, it no longer belongs to you. It belongs to the world, and if people like it, it becomes part of their lives. So you're very fortunate because of that, and it gives you a real positive charge to see people light up when we play that song.

> ***"Looking back, I don't think we could have done it any better with another label. I think Geffen was incredibly powerful. They invested heavily in us, but no label could have predicted the shift in musical style that was coming, and it happened across the board, regardless of which label you were on."***

Why is it still so strong 35 years later?
I don't know. It's a simple message, you know, being forever young is something we all wish for, and if someone figures out how to achieve it, please call me immediately.

Finally, we want to ask you about your voice. You still have a very powerful voice both in the studio and live. What do you do to preserve that vocal treasure you have?
Thank you very much, I get asked that a lot, how my voice has stayed intact, I think it's pure luck. But I treat my voice the same way a football player treats his knees: my voice is pampered, cared for, and very rarely abused or mistreated in any way. So, you know, I've given up many things, as I don't drink alcohol and I've never smoked. I'm currently a pescatarian, so I don't eat red meat or dairy. These are things that work for me as I get older. I understood the need to stay in shape in order to perform at my best on stage for as long as possible. You look at someone a bit older than me like Dave Meniketti from Y&T, who is simply amazing, always in great shape, one of the best guitarists and singers I've ever seen in one package, so he's a kind of hero for me. I tell myself that if Dave is doing it, I can do it. But as you get older, you have to be smarter and stop pretending you're 25 or 30, and recognize your limitations. We do our warm-ups before rehearsals and performances, I drink a lot of water, and I do my best to take care of myself because the most important thing I do all day is the 90 minutes to two hours I spend singing in front of people, and that's everything. Well, it's my life and it's what makes me who I am. So I take it very seriously.

Metal N' Rock Radio

BOOTLEGS SERiES

By Sob 2026

We are now at issue LI of the magazine, a tricky one. After celebrating the half-century mark, it's time to look ahead and keep going. Believe it or not, I think this is the first time I've ever used Roman numerals for something useful in my life. They could have taught us a bit more rock history at school and a bit less of the same topics repeated year after year, until they drilled our heads with shallow, second-rate myths, leaving contemporary history, including musical history, largely forgotten, despite how much it enriches our lives.

Nothing feels more fitting than going back to the early months of 1972. Humble Pie were constantly touring the United States, more than 100 shows a year, an endless tour that saw them opening for major contemporaries and headlining their own gigs. It was a relentless run that took them to both sides of the Atlantic. The concert I'm presenting here is their night at the Winterland Ballroom in San Francisco on April 21, 1972. They played two nights, the 21st and 22nd. Nearly 80 minutes split into nine tracks, including an almost 23-minute suite on "Rolling Stone", where Steve Marriott delivers a towering vocal performance. Turn up the volume and you're transported there, into the American counterculture. The musical epicenter was in that very city, San Francisco, which gave us so many legendary concerts throughout that remarkable decade. As I said, if you want to travel back there, here's our own DeLorean. Enjoy it.

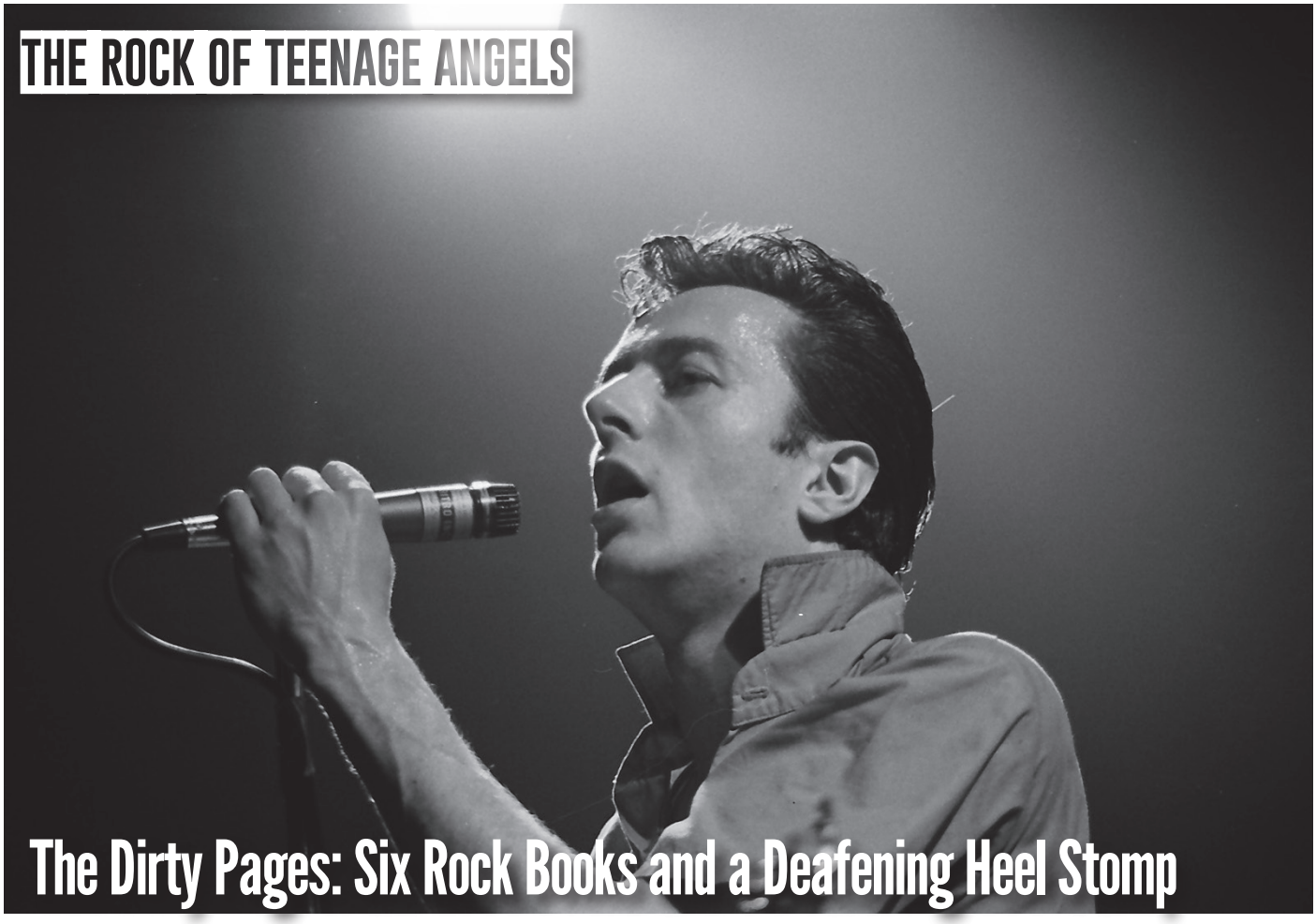
The second bite of pleasure is a recording I didn't even know existed until a few days ago. During the 1990s, the festival boom exploded worldwide. On both sides of the ocean, events were flourishing and reaching cruising speed. In Europe, it was already part of our DNA more than in the U.S. Over there, several festivals took off, including Lollapalooza, an alternative festival spearheaded by Perry Farrell. The show I'm bringing you in this issue is the first concert of the Florida leg on June 25, 1997. We travel nearly thirty years back to hear Tool. They had just released "Ænima". It's one of the few

recordings with truly high quality that I've been able to find. This album blew my mind. It struck me as one of the most complete records of the '90s. I spent countless nights listening to it in my room, imagining how it would sound live and how difficult it would be to bring it to a stage. I searched for years for a recording that could match the album, and the best one finally came to me just a few days ago. This concert will leave you speechless. One of the most powerful bands of the '90s tearing through a festival as headliners on that tour. It was never the same again.

Setlist: 01 Intro, 02 Hooker with a Penis, 03 Stinkfist, 04 Forty-Six & 2, 05 Prison Sex, 06 Eulogy, 07 H., 08 Sober, 09 Opiate, 10 Ænema.
The third and final piece I'm leaving you with in this wonderful issue is a current concert. It's from just a few days ago, specifically April 3 this year, at the Forum Melbourne in Melbourne. It marks the start of the tour by The Black Crowes. Here you can see how the Crowes are holding up today, how they perform new songs from their recently released album, which has received mixed reviews. I'm sharing the show they'll likely perform this summer at Mad Cool Festival. The sound is very good and, to me, the concert is solid and highly enjoyable.

A strong setlist, with those classic songs we've been singing along to for years: 01 No Speak No Slave, 02 Go Faster, 03 Cruel Streak (Live Debut), 04 Twice As Hard, 05 Wanting And Waiting, 06 Waiting Guilty (first live since 2010), 07 Sister Luck, 08 A Conspiracy, 09 Walk Believer Walk, 10 Good Friday (on Good Friday), 11 Hard To Handle, 12 It's Like That (Live Debut), 13 She Talks To Angels, 14 Thorn In My Pride, 15 Jealous Again, 16 Remedy, 17 Torn And Frayed (Rolling Stones Cover).

I hope you enjoy it and, if you get the chance to see them this summer, that it serves as a guide to what they'll be bringing to the stage.



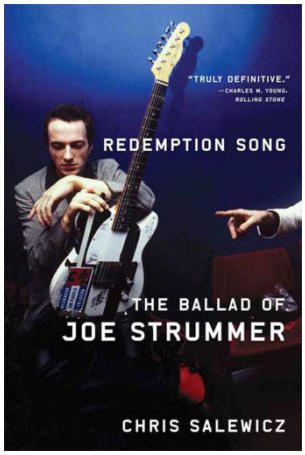
The Dirty Pages: Six Rock Books and a Deafening Heel Stomp

The big shots in the business don't want you to know this: being a successful artist gives you access to an exclusive club where rock stars enjoy unimaginable perks. Premium membership includes the right to two divorces and an overdose, a voucher for cosmetic surgery and, for an extra fee, a biography you just have to download from a secret server based in the Bahamas. You check the manuscript, fill in the blanks with your name and the publishing contract pops up already signed on the screen. I've just made that up, but it might explain why all musician biographies are exactly the same and, well, so dull to read. Your beginnings, your first deal, the fight with the producer imposed by the label, your rise to stardom, the excesses with drugs and alcohol that nearly cost you your career, your retirement, the comeback album, the royalties dispute with the bass player, your debts with the tax office and the forgettable performance at the last Coachella, it's all in the template, and the most you're allowed is to shuffle the order of a chapter or two.

Rock Bottom has put a lot of effort into tracking down a handful of books that don't stick to this script or that at least let you enjoy reading something other than the eternal rise-and-fall storyline that turns most rock literature into a drowsy experience. Take note and don't thank us, it's our job.

"Redemption Song: The Ballad of Joe Strummer" (Chris Salewicz, 2006)

We're starting strong with a full-blown encyclopaedia of the life and career of Joe Strummer, founder of The Clash. Salewicz, who's written a fair number of books on rock and film, portrays the musician, the persona and the human being behind both. From his early days as a hippie in love with Woody Guthrie and protest songs to his years in Granada, going through the whole punk explosion and the turbulent career of The Clash, Strummer multiplies across the more than 600 pages of this book, rounding out a portrait of a character shown with both his strengths and his flaws. The book benefits from contributions by many people who knew Strummer closely or worked with him, and from a perspective that steers



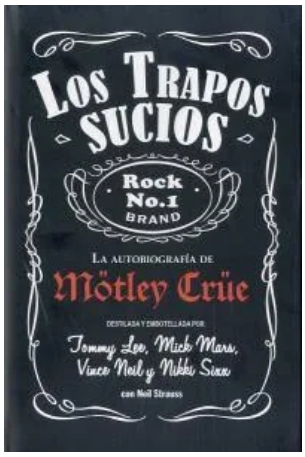
clear of myth. Unfortunately, it hasn't (yet) been translated into Spanish.

"Street-Level Superstar: A Year with Lawrence" (Will Hodgkinson, 2024)

Published in Spain by Es Pop, "A Year with Lawrence" is the anti-rock book just as its protagonist is the anti-pop star. Lawrence, frontman of the band Felt in the 80s, scrapes by in a small flat in London. He drifts through the streets with little to do other than keep dreaming of landing a hit that will make him famous and rich, something he's been fixated on his whole life. He lives exclusively on liquorice bars and carefully avoids contact with other human beings, putting bands together and taking them apart that never rise above the B-league, while recalling the days when he thought he was about to make it, even though he ended up living on the street. The most endearingly pathetic and, at the same time,

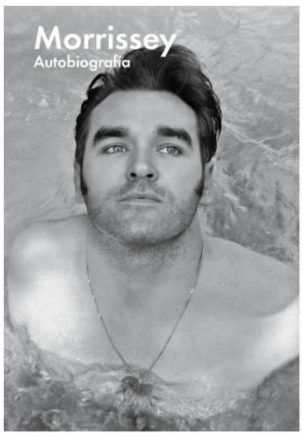
heroic character you can imagine.

"The Dirt: Confessions of the World's Most Notorious Rock Band" (Neil Strauss, 2001)



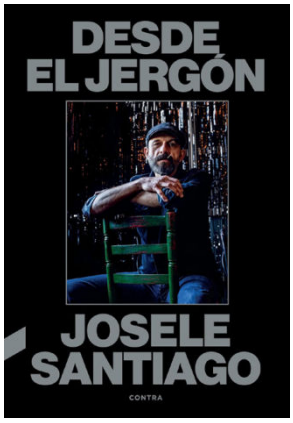
In truth, this book ticks every single cliché in rock literature, but it's on this list because it pushes them so far that it ends up feeling like a runaway ride down a packed motorway. The collection of excesses and outrageous stories that the members of Mötley Crüe entrusted to Neil Strauss turns "The Dirt" into a kind of guide to the deepest depths of the rock and roll underworld: overdoses, out-of-body experiences, car crashes, arrests, probation officers, DEA helicopters, fights, industrial-scale self-medication… a mosaic of madness that flips from farce to tragedy in just a few lines and leaves you with images as surreal as Nikki Sixx lying in bed reading Antonin Artaud while, on the other side of the door, the rest of the band are trashing the hotel floor they're staying on. Another courtesy of Es Pop.

"Morrissey: Autobiography" (Morrissey, 2013)



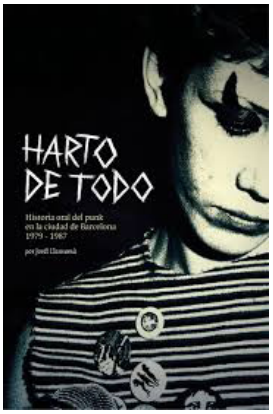
Morrissey's self-indulgence knows no limits, and his autobiography is, as you'd expect, a long ode to himself. Morrissey doesn't remember ever making a mistake in his life, or being wrong about anything at all. Morrissey has suffered like an Ecce Homo: the rigours of his Catholic upbringing, the lack of understanding from critics, the gratuitous hatred of the media… then there's the outrageously unfair verdict that forced him and Johnny Marr to split the band's profits evenly with the other members of The Smiths, or the lack of stature in audiences who fail to understand that whenever he cancels a concert, it's for a completely justified reason. Morrissey doesn't eat meat, Morrissey levitates in the mornings. We haven't done enough to deserve Morrissey. The upside of "Autobiography" is that, with all this laid out, it turns into a great work of comedy. In Spain it was published by Malpaso.

"From the Mattress" (Josele Santiago, 2026).



At the opposite end from Morrissey, as if he were sitting on the other side of the ring on a stool, there's Josele Santiago. "From the Mattress" is his story at the helm of Los Enemigos, but really it's a feverish journey through an era that kicks off at the end of Madrid's Movida and winds its way through the Malasaña neighbourhood across years so wild people were dancing, without knowing it, on the edge of a knife. If drugs and their wreckage are a recurring theme in rock literature, Santiago's seasoned, knowing взгляд in this book manages to dodge the clichés and slip under the slightly grubby sheets covering the mattress from which, in his songs, he hurled curses at the whole world. A rough book, but with a warm humanity lying in wait at the end of the corridor. Published by Editorial Contra.

"Fed Up with Everything" (Jordi Llansamà, 2011)



Oral history books are a plague we should get rid of as soon as possible. Hundreds have been written and I still wonder what the point is of chopping up interviews only to put the interviewer's name on the cover. Unless they focus on rescuing a gripping episode or

are backed by very extensive documentation ("Pequeño circo" by Nando Cruz has at least that merit), you can skip them. Still, "Fed Up with Everything" has the virtue of diving into the exploration of a not particularly well-known landscape, the Barcelona punk scene between 1979 and 1987. Well written, with a brisk pace and first-hand contributions from survivors of the first wave of punk rock, "Fed Up with Everything" brought news from the front with the same immediacy it would have had if all of that were happening right now. The most compelling portrait of a moment in time, of a city and of the kamikazes who threw themselves headfirst into punk rock and the early hardcore scene, sometimes only to smash themselves on the asphalt. Essential, even despite the absence of Desechables. Published by BCore.

BONUS TRACK

"La Chana, Dancer" (Antonia Santiago Amador and Beatriz del Pozo, 2018)

It's not a rock book, but it's so good you might end up becoming a flamenco enthusiast. Antonia Santiago Amador, known as La Chana, started dancing at fourteen and kept going for decades. La Chana didn't have it easy in any sense, but she pushed through with a courage that becomes the real star of the book, like a guide to putting heels on in a life where a dancer has to fight to move forward both artistically and personally. La Chana faced a deeply unhappy marriage and years of abuse that she could only escape when she stepped onto the stage, working a kind of magic reserved for true artists, like a protective spell. Includes a special appearance by Peret in his role as an evangelical pastor. Published by Capitán Swing.

"How to Get to Heaven from Belfast"

Jesús Sánchez, my dear Jesse, and I argue heatedly on many occasions, we find countless topics on which we will never agree. And yet we do share a taste for British series, always with a distinctly particular edge, especially crime dramas. We are constantly recommending music or films to each other, and he insisted that I watch "How to Get to Heaven from Belfast", which I had already started but which, on a first attempt, did not convince me too much. However, as I said before, I trust Jesse's judgement and gave it a second chance, something I now have to thank him for as I write these lines.

Because the beginning of "How to Get to Heaven from Belfast" is, without a doubt, chaotic. And I admit that the Northern Irish accent was hard to follow. Yes, there are subtitles, but even so, I did not quite understand what on earth I was watching at first. In any case, what seemed chaotic to me was, in fact, part of the enormous charm of this production. Four friends, apparently very close in their youth, with a mysterious past full of fire, blood and secrets, marked forever by tattoos that read "Separated but inseparable". And yet, in the blink of an eye, those teenagers are now women in their forties, and whatever happened in a cabin on the outskirts of Belfast has been buried deep in their subconscious. Did I say completely? No, impossible, it remains there, latent, waiting to be awakened, and that chaos I mentioned earlier begins again. And that trigger comes in the form of news of one of their deaths, forcing them to reconnect, much against their will.

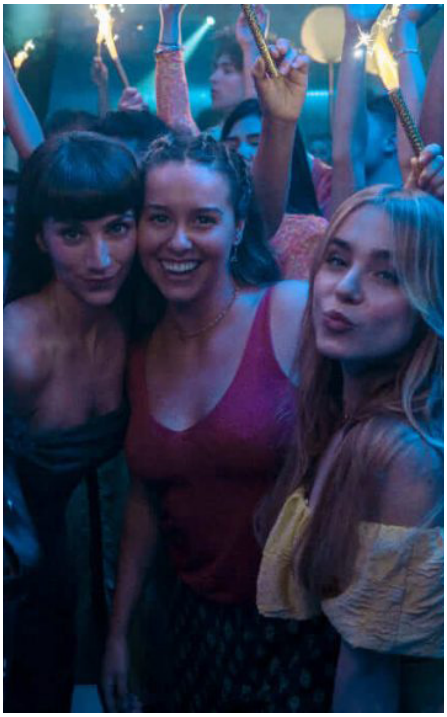
Is it a thriller? A comedy? A horror story? A bit of everything, but above all it is a story where what truly matters are the characters. Each and every one of them, all women, are what make "How to Get to Heaven from Belfast" so compelling and addictive. The three central characters form a deeply dysfunctional trio: Robyn (Sinéad Keenan), a housewife with a fiery temper; Dara (Caoilfhionn Dunne), equally Catholic, lesbian and hysterical; and above all Saoirse (Róisín Gallagher), a whirlwind who embraces any chaos that comes her way as a lifeline from what seems like a dull life as a television writer. It is not that the plot does not matter, because it is brilliant, no doubt, gripping you and carrying you intensely from the first to the eighth and final episode. But the story is convoluted, full of twists and turns, even nodding to the universe of David Lynch's "Twin Peaks", with the protagonists embarking on a continuous and bizarre road movie through Belfast, Derry and even Portugal. Still, as I said, the actresses are all outstanding. Every time I see Michelle Fairley, Catelyn Stark in "Game of Thrones" or Marian Wallace in "Gangs of London", I am completely won over, what an actress. And what can be said about Bronagh Gallagher, that tough-as-nails "gunslinger", the unforgettable Bernie from "The Commitments" (and appearances in classics like "Pulp Fiction" or misfires like "Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace"), here she is SUBLIME.

The series is created by Irish writer Lisa McGee, also responsible for another gem, "Derry Girls", with an obvious connection between the two, the four friends in "How to Get to Heaven from Belfast" in their flashbacks seem lifted straight out of "Derry Girls".

Smart, sharp, funny, absorbing and tremendously entertaining.

Javistone

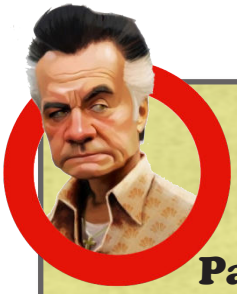
"That Night"



An intense Spanish series directed by Jorge Dorado and Liliana Torres, whose six brief episodes keep you on edge and work more than effectively as a thriller that shows how morality and the sense of family can gradually collapse under the pressure of emotional and physical survival. The starting point is so familiar it is almost deceptive. A family holiday, a paradisiacal setting, three sisters carrying their own tensions and, suddenly, an accident.

The series is built in an austere way, you do not see it coming, but the tension builds and at times becomes unbearable, especially through the absent maternal figure who somehow haunts Paula, played superbly by Claudia Salas, who feels compelled to protect her sisters under any circumstances, even from their own father, portrayed by the outstanding Pedro Casablanc, a pharmacist, or from their own mistakes. It is a miniseries structured through time jumps and constant flashbacks, a device increasingly overused, much to the frustration of many, myself included, which ends up complicating a story that might initially have had less depth, but which succeeds in gradually intensifying the tension. In any case, beyond its restraint and its ability to maintain rhythm, what truly makes "That Night" an enjoyable piece is its cast, undoubtedly the engine of the series. Clara Galle, Paula Usero and Pedro Casablanc all deliver the necessary dramatic weight to each scene, conveying fragility and despair. Special mention must go to Claudia Salas, who carries an overwhelming emotional charge in every scene she appears in, completely owning them, without a doubt the best part of a series that is as enjoyable as it is easy to forget.

J. The Perfect Drug



Paulie's Corner
Little Bill Daggett ("Unforgiven")

I've always thought you have to be a real bastard to harm someone like Morgan Freeman, an actor who has consistently embodied characters of great human depth, Ellis Boyd "Red" Redding in "The Shawshank Redemption", Detective William Somerset in "Se7en", Lucius Fox in Nolan's "Batman" films… and yet there is that piece of pure scum that is Little Bill Daggett, the sheriff in "Unforgiven", who tries to control everything around him through a strict and very particular code of honour. One of the most detestable characters portrayed by one of the greatest actors in history, none other than the immense and dearly missed Gene Hackman, who won the Oscar for this performance, under the direction of one of the great filmmakers of our time, Clint Eastwood, in one of the greatest films ever made, the last great western, sombre and masterful.

Little Bill Daggett is fully convinced that he is dispensing justice and doing the right thing. He presents himself as courteous, polite and even friendly at times, but the moment you cross him or get in his way, you become subject to his ferocious violence. His concept of order strongly resembles that of a certain orange president we all know, even echoing the Fisk of "Daredevil: Born Again": I am the order, I am the law. Throughout the film, Little Bill is constantly building a house, a metaphor for how he constructs his own "kingdom", both structures built with crooked tools. Where roofs are badly fitted, there are men under his command mutilating prostitutes with impunity, because what Little Bill seeks is to protect the balance around his own idea of justice, one that serves a status quo tailored to his needs, when it should be the other way around. When the prostitutes hire gunmen to take revenge on those who harmed them, the outcome is always the same, they return as broken masses of bruises and shattered bones, if they return at all. His obsession is absolute control, and if that requires humiliation, torture or murder, so be it. The truth is that Daggett does not see himself as a villain, but as the adult in the room. He does not revel in it, nor boast, nor linger. He executes. He administers. He decides. He is the kind of predator who does not recognise himself as such, and therein lies both his true danger and his fascination for the viewer.

As I said at the beginning, you have to be the worst kind of bastard to take down someone like Morgan Freeman. And not only that, Eastwood knows exactly how to make you feel the vertigo of the horror that Ned Logan must have endured. Freeman's character appears, without any torture scene shown, hanging, broken and lifeless at the entrance to the town. As is often said, there is no more terrifying scene than the one that is only implied, recall the ending of "Se7en", no one sees inside the box, and the horror is overwhelming.

Little Bill Daggett, top-tier scum, with an ending worthy of his vileness.

Javistone

“Bitter Christmas”

Spanish cinema is highly underrated. The general audience does not value its high quality, since its most visible face is commercial filmmaking. For that reason, in a context where the Spanish box office is monopolised by a film that whitewashes abusers and sex buyers, it is important that Pedro Almodóvar returns to his purest style to try to rescue us from the ignorance of this generation.

Pedro Almodóvar Caballero is the most decorated Spanish director of the century and once again proves why. “Bitter Christmas” is fantastic, even if it is not the best work by the filmmaker from La Mancha. Even so, he is his own genre, and the magic he brings through his way of making cinema still turns this film into a fully immersive experience. His characters and their relationships are what prevail, giving us a powerful story in which he returns to his stylistic roots after several years more involved in Hollywood.

Just as he explored pain and glory, here he tackles reality and fiction through the use of multiple layers of reality in which some characters create others. The exploration of all these layers culminates in a very interesting ethical reflection on creation and its sources of inspiration. This questioning, clearly something lived by the artist himself, connects us with his life as he often does, and manages to portray the environment surrounding a creator, giving voice to those close to him and explaining how the filmmaker’s decisions affect their lives. A tribute to those who are part of the process without being directly involved in it.

Pedro’s magic and personality are very explicit throughout the film through his most recognisable elements. These are widely present across his work and form part of his cinematic identity. One of them is the exaggerated yet justified use of Chavela Vargas. This time she is more present than ever, providing two impeccable and deeply moving scenes. My favourite features the outstanding Amaia Romero, who performs a version of “Las simples cosas”, much like Rosalía once did with “Me quedo contigo”, turning yet another singer into an “Almodóvar girl”. Other unmistakable traits are also there, such as a playful striptease scene or the recurring presence of countless Madrid taxis, something I now associate with witnessing an Almodóvar masterpiece.

Probably the most remarkable aspect is the acting, where there is not a single weak performance. Led by a superb Bárbara Lennie, Aitana Sánchez-Gijón and Victoria Luengo stand out as the finest among a large cast. The ensemble is extensive and several actors have very small roles, yet all of them command the screen. In the case of Aitana Sánchez-Gijón, she more than delivers in the film’s powerful final scene. The highly experienced actress has stated that it was the most difficult scene she has ever filmed.

Now that the festival season is beginning, we will be watching closely to see whether Pedro takes it to Cannes and whether it might finally be awarded there. We will also see how audiences respond, considering that our beloved Pedro is admired worldwide and has achieved major success at international box offices. Let us not forget who truly carries Spanish cinema out into the world.

Francisco La Rubia

“28 Years Later: The Bone Temple”

The brilliant British horror franchise returns following its previous installment, this time more sadistic than ever. “The Bone Temple” is a film very different from the others in the saga and, nevertheless, it continues its legacy of high quality and original storytelling, offering a fantastic and entertaining cinematic experience. Horror feature films are going through a particularly fertile period and this one joins that current that invites us to reconsider the genre with greater respect and attention. Moreover, after the strong cultural presence of “Sinners” last year, we are reminded that this type of film continues to shape generations.

After the box office success of the first film, “The Bone Temple” has not performed well. Many attribute this to poor marketing, but the reality seems to be that the divided critical response to its predecessor has only brought into theaters those who actually enjoyed it. Its director, Nia DaCosta, shows that directing for Marvel Studios was merely a bump in her career. In this film, she manages to give great development and depth to those rather ordinary characters we had already seen in the previous installment by Danny Boyle. This time, the story focuses on the core elements it previously relied on and provides them with a superbly refreshing storyline for the saga. It is very different from all the others, it is comedic and brutal, but above all, different, I had never seen a film like it and, truth be told, this originality is appreciated.

This time, the film takes as its lead one of the most underrated geniuses of our century, Ralph Fiennes. His performance, alongside that of Jack O’Connell, is outstanding, among the best of the year, once again demonstrating what no longer surprises anyone, their remarkable acting range, from a cult leader to a vampire, or from a post-apocalyptic doctor to a future pope. The rest of the cast is also excellent, from Erin Kellyman to, surprisingly, Chi Lewis-Parry, who, even while playing an infected character, manages to deliver a tremendously difficult performance.

So, I can state that, as many of us already believe, films made out of a genuine love for the craft and with solid narrative foundations yield strong qualitative results. Unfortunately, cinema is an industry and the low box office performance will deprive us of the third installment of this horror trilogy, but at least those of us who truly go to the movies to enjoy the magic of storytelling have been able to have a great time.

Francisco La Rubia

091

091, Sala Custom, Seville (11/04/2026)

On April 11, the Granada band 091 returned to Seville to present their acclaimed new album, "Espejismo n.º 9". As Lapido himself pointed out at one moment during the show, Seville has always been one of their key cities, ever since the first time they played in a courtyard in Triana back in 1983. I remember that on the "Maniobra de resurrección" (2016) tour they came twice, both shows sold out. They also sold out in 2020 on the "La otra vida" tour, their comeback album twenty years later. This time was no exception. In front of a veteran crowd, much like the band themselves, Sala Custom was packed to the rafters, and that's quite an achievement considering everything they've been through over the course of their career, the latest being the pandemic, which forced them to postpone the "La otra vida" tour. Some people, with an imminent Third World War looming, feared the worst.

Fortunately, that wasn't the case, and the now four-piece, Víctor García Lapido left the band in 2024 and is replaced live by Víctor Sánchez, took to the stage after the classic intro of "Duello Finale" by Morricone from "Once Upon a Time in the West". Hardly anything seemed to have changed: all dressed in black, Pitos with his iconic sunglasses at centre stage. Lapido to his right, Jacinto to his left. Tacho at the back on drums. The "new" Víctor slightly further out. It was brutally hot, like a western, something that especially affected Jose Antonio García.

When I say they presented their new album, I'm not exaggerating: they played up to eight of the ten new songs, skipping their previous album this time, in other cities they've played "Vengo a terminar lo que empecé" or "Leerme el pensamiento". They started with a somewhat dense guitar sound, but reached excellence as the concert went on. The powerful opening with "2000 locos" and one of their biggest hits, "Zapatos de piel de caimán", gave way to a run-through of "Espejismo n.º 9". The main difference in how these new songs come across live is that everything sounds rawer, more rock-oriented, there's no room for keyboards or a more laid-back atmosphere. "No tiene sentido escapar", "Nadie quiere oír tu llanto", "Dormir con un ojo abierto" or "Ven vestida de nube" followed one after another, blending with long-time staples like "El baile de la desesperación", "Tormentas imaginarias", "Cómo acaban los sueños" or treats like "Un hombre con suerte". In this first stretch, which ended with "Otros como yo", "La torre de la vela" and "La calle del viento", as many as seven songs from "Espejismo" were played, including "Una revelación". The feeling was one of celebration, of a band more alive than ever: sharp guitars, Pitos in top form, total cohesion between bass, rhythm, drums, José Ignacio Lapido acting as musical director and a fully committed audience.

There were two encores, one with five songs, including the acoustic version of "La canción del espantapájaros", which had gone back to electric on the previous tour, with just Lapido and José Antonio García on stage, "Piezas de desguace", "Nubes con forma de pistola" or "Huellas". And a second encore with three songs, that apotheotic ending with "Esta noche", "Siglo XX" and "La vida qué mala es".

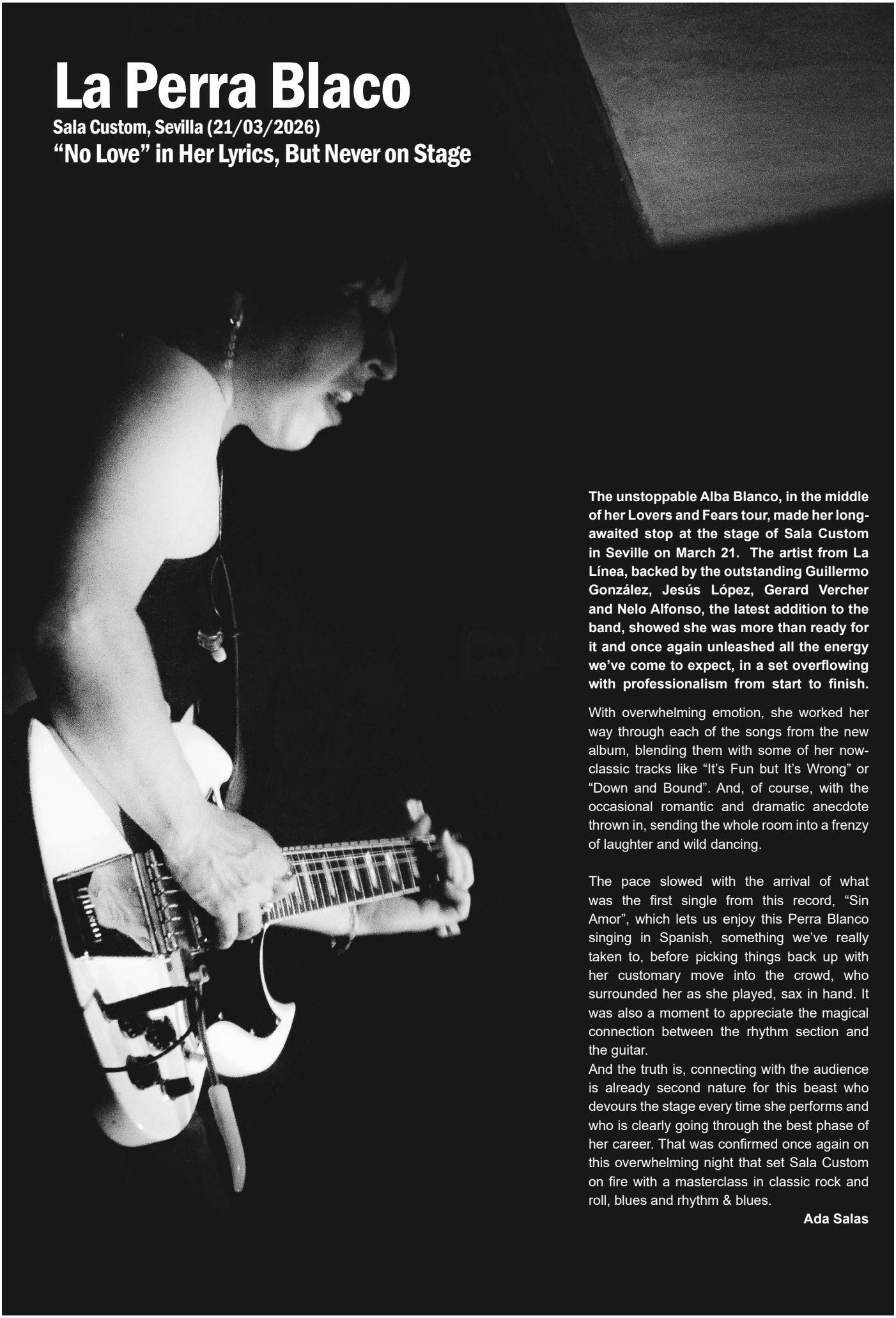
No fewer than twenty-four songs, just over two hours of show, a band that now plays almost on instinct, a colossal Pitos. The new songs fit perfectly into a repertoire that may be missing a few gems, but has nothing extra. It's probably the best songbook in Spanish rock. The air conditioning tried to take the edge off the heat of an electric night, but in the end, exhausted, we all left smiling. There isn't a trace of nostalgia in these Cero. They bring out their new songs to play alongside their classics, and we all win. If you get the chance to see them on this tour, don't even think twice. They'll end up reaching legendary status, if they haven't already.

Jorge Borondo

La Perra Blaco

Sala Custom, Sevilla (21/03/2026)

“No Love” in Her Lyrics, But Never on Stage



The unstoppable Alba Blanco, in the middle of her Lovers and Fears tour, made her long-awaited stop at the stage of Sala Custom in Seville on March 21. The artist from La Línea, backed by the outstanding Guillermo González, Jesús López, Gerard Vercher and Nelo Alfonso, the latest addition to the band, showed she was more than ready for it and once again unleashed all the energy we’ve come to expect, in a set overflowing with professionalism from start to finish.

With overwhelming emotion, she worked her way through each of the songs from the new album, blending them with some of her now-classic tracks like “It’s Fun but It’s Wrong” or “Down and Bound”. And, of course, with the occasional romantic and dramatic anecdote thrown in, sending the whole room into a frenzy of laughter and wild dancing.

The pace slowed with the arrival of what was the first single from this record, “Sin Amor”, which lets us enjoy this Perra Blanco singing in Spanish, something we’ve really taken to, before picking things back up with her customary move into the crowd, who surrounded her as she played, sax in hand. It was also a moment to appreciate the magical connection between the rhythm section and the guitar.

And the truth is, connecting with the audience is already second nature for this beast who devours the stage every time she performs and who is clearly going through the best phase of her career. That was confirmed once again on this overwhelming night that set Sala Custom on fire with a masterclass in classic rock and roll, blues and rhythm & blues.

Ada Salas

NEW RELEASES

The Brass Buttons, "Last War Lullaby: A 10.000 Years Story" (Rock Indiana)

There are albums you can play in the background and others that demand a bit more attention. "Last War Lullaby: A 10.000 Years Story", the new work by The Brass Buttons, clearly falls into the latter category. It is not an album designed to click on first listen, but rather a longer, more narrative proposal built around a fairly well-defined prior idea. The starting point lies in "Last War Lullaby", a song by Adam Levy included in "10.000 Years". That piece already set out a dystopian scenario with social and environmental conflicts as its backdrop. Here, The Brass Buttons revisit that universe and develop it into a suite of over thirty minutes that expands the story and focuses on its protagonist, Vadikyn. The album works as a single piece divided into different passages, where the band alternates more restrained moments with more expansive ones. A clear foundation of rock and americana can be perceived, but with broader arrangements. On a narrative level, the story maintains that dark tone of the original, with references to war, displacement and survival. However, the weight of the concept means that in some sections the music takes a back seat to the overall idea of the work. This approach fits within the band's evolution. From their earlier works, more focused on the song format, to later proposals with a stronger conceptual load, The Brass Buttons have gradually expanded their way of working. This album continues along that line, opting for a less conventional structure. Ultimately, "Last War Lullaby: A 10.000 Years Story" is a work consistent with the group's trajectory, although not especially immediate. It works better when listened to with time and in full, more as a whole than as a collection of individual tracks. It does not aim to be an easy listen, and that, at least, is something to be appreciated in these times.

Ada Salas

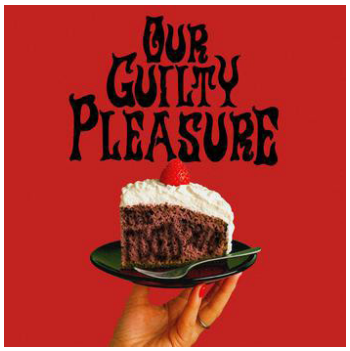
Tangomango, "Tangomango" (Self-released)

Surprising bands keep coming out of Galicia. Among them, Tangomango, who have nothing to do with Can, as their name is drawn from Celtic mythology. At the front of the sextet are Toño and Guille, singer and guitarist respectively, from the highly recommendable

The Soul Jacket. Alongside them are other seasoned musicians who have seen it all, such as Cro!, Zamaramandi or Laroá. Their original sound breathes psychedelic funk combined with soul and with plenty of aromas of the early '70s Stax sound. The "curti-dos" tag suits them well, as their sound will appeal to fans of the Curtises of yesterday and today, whether it be Mayfield or Harding. To that you can add greats of the genre such as Sly & The Family Stone, Parliament, Funkadelic, The Fifth Dimension, The Meters, or more local proposals such as Cherry Boppers, La Fundación Tony Manero or the unjustly forgotten Cool Jerks. A great and danceable self-titled LP featuring standout singles such as 'Hermano', packed with groove and bursting with fire. Plenty of wah-wah on the guitar, powerful sax and very polished backing vocals close to those of the aforementioned Tony Manero. 'Club de Funk' is another torrid delight to dance to, with more wah-wah, more organ and more echoes of our beloved The Cherry Boppers. A great chorus, fine picking and really warm sax solos with rich percussion wrapped in truly tasty backing vocals. Carefully crafted lyrics in Spanish and excellent presentation, but you have to dance to them live!

Txema Mañeru

"Our Guilty Pleasure", The Fixed Trio (DiscMedi)



What a fantastic album from this band from Granada, presenting their second release. This "Our Guilty Pleasure" is a true blessing for any lover of classic rock who also wants to feel that there is fresh blood in it. I would be lying if I said the album hasn't been playing on repeat in my car (blessed CD player) for the past two weeks, it is genuinely addictive. A record that opens with something as hypnotic as "Pair Abd Sexy Fire" has to grab you, and straight away. It's impossible not to picture Christopher Walken shouting at Will Ferrell "more cowbell… more cowbell!". As if they were a kind of homegrown The Steepwater Band, The Fixed Trio knows how to play with tempos and, although in some songs it starts with almost jazzy rhythms, don't be fooled, because they soon begin to push harder, and it is in that sonic chaos where the band from Granada feels comfortable. A true whirlwind of guitar riffs, distortion, power and class that draws unapologetically from our favourite classic bands, from Jimi Hendrix to Black Sabbath, from whom they include, or rather insert, their "War Pigs", which is on a par with the original.

A great band to keep an eye on, with an extensive tour that will be worth following. One small note: there are font styles that are hard to read and are more typical of thrash metal festivals, guys. Otherwise, an 11 out of 10 album.

Javistone

Periferia, "Lo Que Queda Por Sentir" (Kasba Music)

A surprising and very cool new EP from last year's breakthrough band in Catalonia, Periferia. Following their "Rincones de Nadie", this "Lo Que Queda Por Sentir" arrives with a powerful, catchy, pop-leaning title track featuring a great chorus. They will be visiting our festivals this summer and the record sounds terrific thanks to the strong recording and the sound crafted by the García brothers. More melody and fine guitars on 'Si No Existe La Verdad', and more punk in the Catalan-sung 'Pacte De Sang'. A strong slow and emotional opening with keyboards in 'En Reconstrucción'. It is the romantic, emotional and even epic moment of the record. The six new tracks close with 'Este Instante', featuring the welcome company of Cala Vento. Another epic anthem to be sung at full volume at their upcoming festivals, with another strong chorus. Everyone speaks wonders of their performances, even more punk in a live setting!

Txema Mañeru

Tito Ramírez, "Sonido Conquistador" (Antifaz Discos / El Volcán Música)

If you enjoy the best Latin and tropical vibes and like to dance without inhibition, Tito Ramírez and Su Orquesta Los Verdaderos Reales are your band, and this third album, "Sonido Conquistador", will conquer your heart… and your legs for dancing. First came "The King Of Mambo", although many of us wanted to read "The King", because he is the current King of the style. Then came "El Prince", because he is still young. Now he becomes a full-fledged "Conquistador" of old times, yet innovative at the same time. A splendid vinyl with great presentation featuring mambo, cha-cha-chá, descarga, swing-a-ling, Spanish soul, boogaloo, rumba, copla, Latin soul, cumbia and even Latin rock. Nine great tracks that begin with trumpet and a brutal rhythm on 'Man With A Plan'. Mambo and guaguancó. Spectacular backing vocals and torrid percussion, along with that trumpet and a strong blend of English and Spanish. A finale in the style of Fania All Stars, with horns and backing vocals chanting chévere chevereveré and chiviriviri for over five minutes on 'Verdadero y Real'. Something that truly is and defines Tito Ramírez, even more so in his fiery and sweat-soaked concerts, which we recommend from now on!

Txema Mañeru

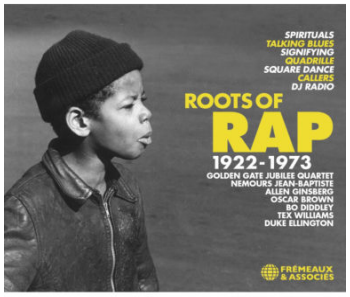
Javier Sólo, "Oveja Negra Con Piel De Lobo" (Self-released)

Only two years have passed since the Catalan Javier (Sólo) presented "El Astronauta Que Soñaba Con Estrellas De Mar". Now he returns with four tracks that are essentially four singles, further exploring his sound, which combines street rock with a Mediterranean and border flavour, alongside combative, streetwise ska and some Latin rhythms that recall musicians such as Andrés Calamaro, La Cabra Mecánica and even Fito & Fitipaldis. Driven by a ska rhythm and packed with horns, the record opens with 'Amores de Combate'. It continues with a

preview single such as 'Mañana Cambiaré El Rock Por Una Suscripción del ABC'. A great title for a great song (with excellent lyrics), featuring Kutxi Marea and Fernando Reincidentes. Smooth, elegant rock somewhere between Extremoduro, Fito and Marea. He has always had "big" friends, as previous records have featured Lichis, Rebeca Jiménez, Jenny And The Mexicats, Santero y Los Muchachos, Litus or Daniel Higiénico. The final and very strong single is another infectious ska-rock rhythm titled 'A Dos Portales Del Mundo'. A rich horn section and pure celebration once again. Carlos Narea, who produced the recommended "Un Buzo En América" (Rock CD), has once again handled the solid mixing.

Txema Mañeru

VV.AA., "Roots of Rap 1922-1973" (Frémeaux & Associés)



We love these instructive compilation box sets from the French label, revisiting the roots of various musical styles. Some previous examples come to mind, such as those dedicated to Soul, Funk, Surf Rock and even "Roots of Punk Rock". You would be surprised by the artists and tracks you can find. In this volume they begin with the rich chapter "Spiritual". From there they move to "Spoken Word" with Allen Ginsberg or Marcus Garvey. In "Forerunners Of Rap" we even find Alan Freed. Within the extensive "Talking Blues" chapter we highlight Bukka White, Tex Williams, John Lee Hooker or Bo Diddley. Equally extensive is the "Jazz" section, with essential names such as Oscar Brown or Max Roach, and surprises like Duke Ellington, Jack Kerouac or the rich collaboration between Alfred Sanvi Panour and the Art Ensemble of Chicago. All this adds up to a total of 43 tracks and two and a half hours that truly resonate as rap in their delivery, although some date back more than a century and all of them predate the very notion of rap or hip hop. Once again, it comes with a beautiful cover and a detailed 16-page booklet.

Txema Mañeru

Clara Peya, "Nuca" (Hidden Track Records)

A truly pleasant and excellent surprise is the emergence of pianist, composer and improviser Clara Peya. "Nuca" is a delicate and minimalist record in which Clara's upright piano with mute takes centre stage. Many classical cadences that might bring to mind Wim Mertens, Tori Amos, Keith Jarrett or a more stripped-back Rosalía, as in the beautiful 'Veo Incendios'. All

this is combined with some more contemporary electronic textures across sixteen pieces that converse with one another, forming a musical journey with truly heartbreaking lyrics and melodies full of sensitivity and strong feeling. Then there are the many guest voices across the different tracks, including names such as El Niño De Elche, Anna Andreu, Rita Payés, Sharim Aresté, Juan Quintero, Soca, Judit Neddermann, Mar Pujol or Didak Fernández, among others. Clara herself also contributes in this regard. A solemn opening with the beautiful 'Hi Ha Un Moment Que Som Immenses', and a peak moment with the great voice and flamenco feeling of El Niño de Elche on the outstanding 'Cambiar La Danza'. Other emotional highlights include 'La Palabra Justa', 'Me Olvidé Del Mar', 'Bienvinguda Epifanía', and the closing with '100 Vidas' and 'La nuca'. A remarkable discovery and one of the best debuts of the year without a doubt.

Txema Mañeru

Elliott Murphy, "Under The Volcano: Vintage Series #13 (April 2010)" (Murphyland)

Elliott continues to recover older recordings, especially standout live shows, in his "Vintage Series" collection, which he always sells at his splendid concerts to satisfy his many fans. "Under The Volcano" was recorded in Berga with very good sound. He is accompanied by the French quartet The Normandy All-Stars. A strong opening with a classic such as 'Niagara Falls'. Olivier shines in many moments, as he does in all his performances, and here he begins to do so on a fine 'Lady Stiletto'. Then comes a run of classics, starting with Elliott excelling on harmonica in 'Sicily'. It is followed by 'White Middle Class Blues', a beautiful and very slowed-down 'Caught Short In The Long Run' (with strong harmonica from Elliott and emotional backing vocals from Olivier), an aggressive yet acoustic and catchy 'Something Like Steve McQueen', with more standout lead work from Olivier, and the gripping ballad 'Anastasia', which for some is as appealing as his 'Rock Ballad'. Here the refined bluesy lead lines are a real delight, as well as a pleasant surprise. His version of 'Like A Rolling Stone', by Dylan, is very good, and the record closes spectacularly with a very epic 'Destiny', a powerful classic which, incidentally, is the only track from this album that he has been playing in his most recent concerts.

Txema Mañeru

Kike Babas & Kike Turrón: "Rosendo. Quiero que Sueñes Conmigo" (BAO Bilbao Ediciones)

A deluxe hardcover edition, 336 pages long, expanded with 32 new pages featuring cool comic-style illustrations by different artists who have portrayed Rosendo's life and work at various points in his career. High-quality paper with over 400 photographs spanning every era of the musician. Many of them are full-page, and visually it's also a real pleasure to get lost in. The book had a first edition in 2022. The Kikes have gathered and reorganised all the interviews conducted with Rosendo over more than two decades of relationship, conversations that originally served as the basis for books, documentaries and interviews in radio, press and television, and which show the integrity, honesty and humility that the rocker from Carabanchel has always embodied.

As if that weren't enough, it opens with four consecutive and glowing forewords written by Moncho Alpuente, Nancho Novo, Josele Santiago, back with Los Enemigos, and El Kutxi from Marea. After that, the book features six extensive chapters that begin even before his time with Ñu and the creation of Leño. It covers his early days in Fresa and his work playing alongside Jeanette. In other words, it explores his entire biography, both personal and artistic. His clashes with the record industry and his unwavering devotion to the electric guitar are also addressed. The book also dives into his lyrics and the way he composed classic songs like "Pan de Higo", "Flojos de Pantalón", "Maneras de Vivir", "Loco por Incordiar" or his first big solo hit, "Agradecido". It's no surprise that such simplicity and genius have earned him something as rare as having a street named after him. Finally, there are closing epilogues written by Kike Babas and Kike Turrón, of course. Any follower of Leño and Rosendo will be completely hooked on this book, and very deservedly so. Yes, the definitive one.

Txema Mañeru

Tom Doyle: "Running Up That Hill – 50 Views on Kate Bush" (Liburuak)

It's been pretty unfair how few books there are about one of the greats like Kate Bush. That's been properly addressed with the publication of this work by the highly regarded Tom Doyle, originally released four years ago and now excellently translated by Patricia González Barreda. At just 19, Kate became the first woman to reach number one in the UK, with the unforgettable "Wuthering Heights". She didn't let fame carry her away and even turned down major tours and interviews, hence her well-earned aura of mystery. A mystery you'll partially unravel by reading this great book, which will also attract many fans of "Stranger Things". In fact, the book acts as a bridge between the original devotees who witnessed her debut at 19 and the new generation who climbed the hill with "Stranger Things".

Tom Doyle, author of biographies of Paul McCartney, Elton John and Billy MacKenzie, offers fifty different perspectives through moments, songs, images and testimonies that together form the most complete and human portrait of such an elusive and fascinating creator. Based on conversations with her, but also with collaborators and family members like John Carder Bush, David Gilmour (Pink Floyd), John Lydon (Public Image Limited, Sex Pistols), Youth (Killing Joke) and many others. The narrative is agile, with humour and deep empathy. A collective, luminous and revealing biography that celebrates both the genius and vulnerability of a woman who made music her own universe. "I never wanted to be famous. My desire was not to be famous. My desire was to make a record. That's something very different from wanting to be famous". And yet, with her ten albums, all different and all above average, she has achieved exactly that, even if she remains relatively unknown to many. Her influence goes far beyond pop, and this 364-page book from Liburuak's "Bihotza" collection is ideal for getting to know her.

And while we're at it, it's worth recommending two other books by veteran and outstanding female singers, starting with Tracey Thorn from Everything But The Girl. Her book is "My Rock And Roll Friend", a story about female friendship, what it means to be a woman in a band, activism, art, motherhood, love and men taking credit for your work. It tells the story of the friendship between Tracey and Lindy Morrison, drummer of The Go-Betweens. They became confidantes, comrades and best friends, sharing both the joy and the struggle of being women in a band, trying to dodge and confront a sexist music industry. Another equally great one is "Resistance", the literary debut of Tori Amos.

Txema Mañeru

Marcelo Gobello: "Blind Faith: The First Supergroup" (Lenoir Ediciones)

Even if the claim of being the first is debatable, it really was a significant supergroup. That title might well belong to Cream, Eric Clapton's previous venture with Jack Bruce and Ginger Baker. Still, the self-titled Blind Faith album, its iconic and controversial cover and, above all, the musicians involved and the songs it contained, ensured that both the band and the record have gone down in rock history in golden letters. Bringing together Eric Clapton, Stevie Winwood, Ginger Baker and Rick Grech, all of them already highly influential, was a major event, and the anticipation leading up to the album only kept building momentum.

The album itself features standout compositions, mostly written individually by the members. Winwood shines with three gems, including the nearly nine-minute opener "I Had To Cry Today". Also etched in history is their version of Buddy Holly's classic "Well All Right". The closing

track, Ginger Baker's "Do What You Like", stretching beyond fifteen minutes, is quite something too. But the crowning moment is arguably Eric Clapton's finest composition, the stunning ballad "Presence Of The Lord". Each track is analysed in this book, along with rarities and unreleased material, all under the pen of respected Argentine writer Marcelo Gobello. He previously wrote the best Spanish-language biography of Ramones for Lenoir, as well as a book on Peter Hammill & Van Der Graaf Generator. There are also books on Rory Gallagher and Dr. Feelgood, though not as successful.

Across its 206 pages, the book stands out for its extensive photographic content, full pages in each chapter and several well-curated sections of four or six pages. After a solid introduction, it explores British music in the 60s and highlights Otis Spann as a key influence. The substantial chapter "Blind Faith: The Architects" examines each musician individually. The album's lyrics are also translated and analysed. As a final touch, there are strong interviews with the musicians and the band in the closing appendices. An important album, still, almost 60 years later.

Txema Mañeru

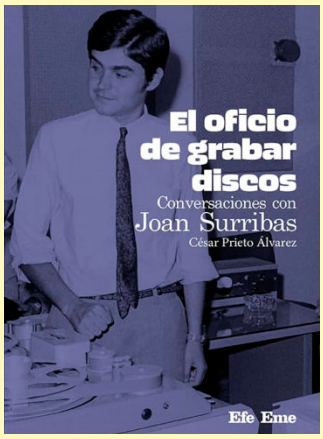
Various Authors: "Radiohead. The Present Is Impossible" (Nórdica Libros)

There aren't many music books published by the elegant Nórdica Libros, but when they do, the quality is always there, hardcover editions, great paper and top-notch printing. Just over a year ago they released a gem titled "Björk: Una Constante Mutación". Now it's Radiohead's turn. Both are among the most important alternative rock (indie) acts to emerge since the 90s. Thom Yorke's band, in particular, are one of the most daring and influential, shaping entire generations through essential albums like "OK Computer" or "Kid A", though they first broke through with a more pop-oriented record like "The Bends". This new volume runs to 342 pages and is once again a collective work featuring exclusive articles by notable names such as Abraham Boba (León Benavente), Sebas E. Alonso, Ángel Carmona, Quim Casas, Juan Manuel Freire, Gustavo Iglesias and Music Radar Clan. Their albums, filled with quality, have accompanied the cultural and technological shifts that took rock from the CD era into the digital ecosystem of the 21st century. From alternative rock to electronic experimentation, from teenage outbursts to the cold emotions of an android. All with undeniable creative freedom and a commitment solely to music. Artists admired, and rightly so, by both critics and a broad audience.

This outstanding anthology brings together articles, interviews and reviews from national and international media, alongside essays written specifically for this book. It covers the band's entire, immaculate career, from their early days in Oxford to their most recent and acclaimed tour last autumn. It opens with Abraham Boba's insightful texts in "Radiohead. Tiempo Presente" and closes with "Radiohead. Tiempo Futuro", featuring contributions from Pablo Gil, Sebas E. Alonso and a very sharp Ángel Carmona in "Radiohead. Escribiendo Canciones Para Los Nietos Del Siglo XXI". In between, there are extensive chapters dedicated to each album, in chronological order, from "Pablo Honey", "The Bends", "OK Computer" and "Kid A" to "In Rainbows", "The King Of Limbs" and "A Moon Shaped Pool". The latter chapter includes a solid interview with Thom Yorke by Pablo Gil. Radiohead fans will be more than satisfied with this excellent book, especially with the hopeful note at the end suggesting they're recording a new album this very year.
Txema Mañeru

César Prieto Álvarez: "The Craft of Recording Records. Conversations with Joan Surribas"
Engaging and informative conversations with a man who isn't widely known but is truly significant in this country's music scene, Joan Surribas. Something similar to what happened with the previous book in this collection featuring Esther Zecco, the first female producer in Spanish pop. One of our most legendary sound engineers, now 85 and with a life well lived, shares hundreds of anecdotes gathered in recording studios across Barcelona, Madrid, London, Paris, Miami, Los Angeles and Havana, through conversations with César Prieto Álvarez.

Trained as a sound engineer at La Voz de su Amo, the most important record label in Spain, he recorded artists like The Shadows or Antonio Molina from his mixing desk. Over more than



six decades, he also worked with Joan Manuel Serrat, Cliff Richard, Rafael Farina, Peret, Cecilia, Lone Star, Los Mustang, Dyango, Los Canarios, Luis Eduardo Aute, Burning, María Dolores Pradera, Los Salvajes, Los Burros, Parchís, Manolo Escobar, Los Chunguitos, El Fary, Mojinos Escozíos, Sergio Dalma, Loquillo, Manzanita, Paco de Lucía, Parrita, Joan Baptista Humet, Gato Pérez… He was left in shock watching The Beatles recording at Abbey Road, recorded the immortal anthem that brought together Montserrat Caballé and Freddie Mercury, witnessed Paco de Lucía creating magic with a half-broken guitar, and from his own initiative came the album Cuba le canta a Serrat. He was also the first to mic a bass drum in Spain, discovered Mojinos Escozíos and turned down becoming Julio Iglesias' full-time sound engineer.

Moments close to noir fiction and a lot of sharp humour. It's well worth it, just like every volume in the "Cuadernos Efe Eme" collection, the most comprehensive and respected magazine on music history and culture. More than a magazine, they're essentially quarterly books that have been running since 1998, featuring some of the best music writers around, many of whom also publish highly recommended books through the same publisher. For example, issue 46 includes the brilliant Diego A. Manrique with his regular section "La Última Bala", this time with the very interesting "My Problems with Led Zeppelin". Luis Lapuente contributes two solid chapters, one on prog rock and another on Jim Croce. Add to that Arancha Moreno with a compelling interview with Amparo Sánchez, Eduardo Izquierdo with an excellent overview of Dave Edmunds, plus Woody Guthrie covered by Felipe Cabrerizo, complete with a great cover photo and an extensive feature on his life and work. There's also Steve Lillywhite (interview), Ignacio Reyo, Camilo Sesto (historical interviews) by Rafa Cervera, Fred Neil by Carlos Rego, "Mucho ruido y poco flamenco" by Antonio Jesús García and Ramón García, Dennis Wilson by Xavier Valiño… and plenty more across its rich 224 full-colour pages.

Txema Mañeru

Dann Huff: A giant of rock and music

The name Dann Huff may not mean anything to many of you, but we are talking about a musician in the fullest sense of the word. Dann began his career in music in the early 80s, soon moving into session work, where he took part in dozens of successful records from that now distant era. In the late 80s he formed the band Giant with his brother David, a group full of quality that delivered two impeccable albums but never became big sellers. After the arrival of alternative rock, Huff brought Giant to an end and returned to working as a session musician and producer, collaborating with highly successful artists and earning notable awards. The Metal N' Rock team got in touch with Dann Huff, who kindly spoke to us from the porch of his home in Nashville.

In the early 80s both you and your brother left the band White Heart. How did the idea of creating Giant come about?

In fact, I left the band White Heart before my brother David, who stayed on for a while. I had the opportunity to move to Los Angeles, I had just gotten married, and my wife Sherry, who is still my wife, or I am her husband, however you want to put it, we packed up what little we had and took the risk of moving 2000 miles away to the West Coast. It was a good decision for us in many ways. The idea of forming another band didn't come until six years later. Before that, I worked as a session musician from morning until night, and I was very fortunate at the time. At some point in the middle of the decade, I joined a rehearsal band with Alan Pasqua, a great keyboard player, and it happened purely by chance. We recorded some songs together. Nothing really came of it, except the friendship between Alan Pasqua and me, and we started writing songs on our own. Out of necessity, I began singing them, and that's how Giant came together. A record label became interested and signed us. I asked my brother David if he would like to be part of the band, and he said yes, so he moved to the West Coast. Mike Brignardello, the bass player, also from Nashville, didn't move to the West Coast, but he would stay there for long periods. That's how the band was formed, I think in '88, because I believe we released our first album in '89, and that's basically how Giant came about. There was no expectation of being part of a band, at least not on my side, I can assure you. I was simply interested in being a studio musician and I was very happy, it just happened, strange things that happen in life.

Giant's first album "The Last of the Runaways" is a masterpiece for us, and over time it has become a cult record. Looking back, what do you think of that work? What do you think it lacked to become a multi-platinum success?

Thank you for saying it's wonderful. What do I think of the album? I still enjoy listening to it. I think it sounds pretty good, I believe it was the best thing we did. To be honest, the second album had some good things, but the first one simply had that essence. You know, it just happens when people dream something up, the initial idea is usually the real spark.

What did it lack to become a multi-platinum success?

Well, honestly, I don't know, I could speculate. We had a couple of hits. There was the song "I'm a Believer", which was a big hit, we called it AOR rock at the time, and it did quite well for us. And then we had a Top 40 hit with "I'll See You in My Dreams", which was our biggest success. Alan Pasqua and Mark Spiro wrote that song, it's a very beautiful composition. I think the problem was probably me. I probably wasn't a great leader. Remember, that was the 80s, when singers were larger than life. I mean, the big bands had big singers like Steven Tyler, David Lee Roth with Van Halen, or Sammy Hagar… those guys were monsters. I was a good singer and a good guitarist, but I don't think I had that star quality to be a frontman, and that was probably what held us back. Also, we were right at the end of an era, with grunge music just around the corner, so in retrospect, I don't feel that bad about it. In fact, I'm a little glad because it paved the way for the life I have now, which I really enjoy. In the end, it's my fault. I just don't think I was that good.

In 1992 you released Giant's second album "Time to Burn", a more compact and heavier record. It was the time when the alternative wave had taken over everything. Was that the reason why Giant disappeared?

Yes, on that second album you could feel the winds of change, not so much when we were making it. We recorded it in Nashville, Tennessee, while the first album was done in England. So we had a clear idea of who we were, and we took our time making it. I thought it had good musical pieces, and I also thought we were great lyrically. I specifically remember we were mixing that album. I think we mixed part of it in New York, I remember being in the Sony building. At that time we were signed to

Sony or one of its sub-labels, and I remember someone showed me a video by Pearl Jam, "Even Flow", and when I saw Eddie Vedder doing what he was doing, I thought: "Man, our days are numbered, because if that's what's coming, it's not for us." It was a prophetic moment. You could feel it. Also, I remember specifically being on tour, especially in Western Europe, and you could feel that things had changed. The so-called hair metal we were part of, melodic rock, or whatever you want to call it, just felt a bit outdated. We felt that things were changing. People were hungry for new ideas, and we weren't that, we were part of the past. I think the record was good, but simply, it wasn't the right time. You're probably noticing that I sound quite optimistic about it. You know, looking back, being in Giant was the best experience. I loved it, the friendships, the tours, just being able to see that side of life. But it was never my dream to be a rock star. So you have to put it in context. For me, especially after that period of making records, it was like a sign that, yes, I was meant to be a studio guitarist and not a rock star. So it simply confirmed that I had gained a lot of valuable knowledge and great experiences, but it was time to move on. Well, after that second album, that was it, as far as I was concerned, that was the end of Giant for me.

After several years of silence, you returned with Giant's third album in 2001 on the Italian label Frontiers. We remember being sent that promotional album and we really liked it. How did the idea of recording new music again come about?

As for the album "III", I don't think I had much involvement in it. There was some music that hadn't been released, not a lot, but there was something. I don't even know much about that third album. I should listen to it again. I know there were demos, some of them quite developed. So I imagine that David, my brother, and Mike Brignardello added some drums and bass, completing those demos. But the guitars were the ones I had recorded, whether they were demos or some unreleased Giant tracks. So I wasn't a big part of that album, but I know there were some good songs on it, which makes me curious. I'll have to look it up and see what songs are on that record. At that time I had continued with my career, I was playing as a session musician, working in country music in Nashville. Sherry and I moved back from Los Angeles to Nashville, so I resumed my career as a session player, and you asked me: "How did the opportunity to get back together and record come about?" Well, that's already in the answer. Maybe it was a kind of reunion, but it was really David and Mike leading the musical side. And as I said, I was glad they did it, and I may have played something around that time, but the truth is I don't really remember. I think they developed the demos we had when we stopped after our second album.

We were very surprised in the late 90s to see you producing two Megadeth albums, with a sound less metal than usual, since Dave Mustaine was obsessed with reaching number one. What do you remember from that experience with Megadeth?

First of all, the connection was that our manager, the great Bud Prager, also represented Megadeth. When I stepped away from Giant, Bud thought I would be a good fit for Dave Mustaine and his team. We recorded two albums. "Cryptic Writings" was the first one I did with them and I thought it was pretty good. The second one, I don't even remember the name. It wasn't a good record. I simply shouldn't have done it. I mean, it wasn't their fault or mine, it just didn't turn out as well as we expected. That said, I enjoyed working with Dave. It was quite an experience. I wasn't used to making records that way. But again, I learned a lot from Dave. Megadeth was a larger-than-life band. They had a hardcore sound, and for me it was a fusion of two worlds. I think the first record was really good because Dave was looking for a more accessible, more melodic approach than what he had done on his previous albums, and since that's where I come from as a musician, it was a good match. It wasn't without its difficulties. But what good record isn't? It was the beginning of recording with Pro Tools. We were learning all that, we recorded that album in Nashville. So I would put it down as a positive experience.

Looking at your credits, we were blown away by the people you've worked with, many of whom were part of our childhood and youth, like Belinda Carlisle, Paula Abdul, Michael Jackson, Tina Turner, Michael Bolton… and later Shania Twain or Faith Hill. Of all those collaborations, which would be your favourites?

Oh my God, I don't have an answer to that question. They all meant something to me. I mean, they were all part of me. On some of them I just played guitar or produced. I've been producing records since the early 2000s. I didn't go back to playing guitar until this year or last year. I have to say that when I made my solo album, I got on that production train and it just seemed to keep moving forward. My work with Michael Jackson, Paula Abdul, Belinda Carlisle was when I was living in Los Angeles and playing as a session musician. That was before creating Giant. On the other hand, it was with Shania Twain or Faith Hill that I had already returned to Nashville, playing on their records and working there for about eight years. Later, I decided to try my luck as a producer, and Shania Twain's husband and producer, Mutt Lange, really encouraged me. In fact, he was the reason I had the opportunity to start producing some Faith Hill records, and then everything changed. I don't know if you're familiar with the artists I've produced, but in the early 2000s... Following in the footsteps of people like Keith Urban, whom I produced, Rascal Flatts, they were big artists at the time, no pun intended. And that led me to all the other artists I've produced since then.

As a producer, when did you realise the radical change that was taking place in music with the issue of downloading albums on the internet? Did it surprise you?

Yes, yes. I'll never forget the tremendous fear when CDs were being left behind. It was strange to see how we would record rough mixes in the studio and then find them online the next day. That was the beginning of it all. Suddenly, download platforms appeared. It's funny, I can't remember the name of the first platform to publish music for free. I remember being very afraid of what was going to happen. It was as if suddenly, you know, it was as if the whole music industry was being torn down, so to speak, because of digital platforms. The ease with which you could share music was astonishing. And of course, there was no way to monetise it in those days, so there was a lot of fear. And along with that fear, as with any new technology, you can also observe and enjoy some of the advances it brings. Pro Tools and all those technological platforms that were booming allowed us to do things we couldn't do with analogue tape. So yes, I think both technologies go hand in hand, just like AI, again, fear and fascination in equal measure.

> ***I remember someone showed me a video of Pearl Jam playing "Even Flow", and when I saw Eddie Vedder doing what he was doing, I thought, "Damn, our days are numbered, because if that is what is coming down the line, it is not for us". It was a prophetic moment. You could feel it.***

Last summer you released a solo album called "When Words Aren't Enough". What can you tell us about it?

Yes, wow, thanks for asking about my recent solo album. Basically, I've been immersed in the world of production, and over the years I've had friends encouraging me and saying: "Why haven't you made music on your own? Why don't you focus on the guitar?" And my usual answer was: "Well, I don't have time," and I really didn't. You know what it means to raise a family and everything that comes with it, now having five grandchildren. So, well, I have a very full life. But about a year and a half ago, I'd say in the middle of summer, I had an unusual moment where I didn't have much to do and, for some reason, I sat down in my studio, found a couple of grooves and thought: "You know what? If I don't try this, I never will." I was 64 years old. So I found a groove and settled there with a loop in my studio and a guitar, and I started improvising. What came

out in the first few hours was a song called "Colorado Creep", track number one. I didn't name them until after mixing, but I started writing one and building little fragments. After a couple of hours, I had something that resembled a song and I felt good about it. I made a rough mix, saved it, and the next day I did the same, and so on for a couple of weeks. After maybe a month, I don't know if it was that long, but I had about ten songs and I thought: "Wow, this is something important!" I liked how they sounded and thought maybe I should take it seriously and record everything properly and then produce it myself. I spoke with Sherry, my wife, and said... Hey, do you mind if I spend some money and do a project? And she said: "No, go ahead, you should do it." So I hired some musicians like Jerry Rowe. At first, the idea was that all my friends would take part, like a big celebration. We went into a studio and basically recorded the whole album in about two days. So that was it. I remember taking the material back to my studio and thinking: "Okay, now I'm really going to focus and play this properly." I changed my perspective and basically put things in order. Then there were certain things I re-recorded because they didn't come out as well as I wanted. I was just doing things like that in my studio. Then I called my friend Gordon Mote to play some keyboards. My friend Eric Dark plays percussion. My dear friend Chris Wilkinson, who is a great arranger, I asked him to play strings on a couple of songs. There's also my dear friend and collaborator of the last 25 years, Justin Ebank, who has mixed almost 95% of my records. He came in and recorded the album. I told him I wanted it to have that dry, tight 70s style. He did it and helped me mix the record. I appreciate you asking about my solo work.

In recent years, Giant have released several albums with new material where you have collaborated occasionally. Do you still hold any rights to the band? Is there any old Giant material that has not been released? We remember a concert of yours that is on YouTube at the Town and Country in England.

No, not that I know of. I remember a great performance that's on YouTube from a show at the Town and Country in England, I've watched it a few times. My brother David and Mike Brignardello are the ones who handle everything related to Giant. I'm not aware of what they're doing, but every couple of years it seems like they record new material, hire guitarists and singers, and they ask me to contribute by playing a solo, which I always enjoy. But I have nothing to do with the band. I can tell you that I'm going to play a show in Nashville in about two weeks, and we're going to play some Giant songs, four or so, and Brian Cole is going to sing, because lately I can't really sing anymore. After leaving Giant, I never sang again. It will be fun to play those songs again.

You've been a singer, producer, composer, guitarist, session guitarist… which role do you enjoy the most?

Session guitarist and producer, I have to say both have been wonderful. I've been very fortunate, very grateful for all the opportunities I've been given, I'm still producing quite a lot of records. I don't know how long I'll keep up this pace because, as I've said, there are other things in life I want to experience. Music is great and I love this profession. I doubt I will ever stop making music, but I don't think I'll be doing it much longer in a commercial sense. Most likely, I'll just make the music I feel like making. Maybe I'll do another solo album. Who knows? We'll see if inspiration comes. I'm glad I had the opportunity to make a solo record. I released it simply for the pleasure of it. Thank you for your kind words and for getting in touch with me.

Metal N' Rock Radio

AÑO 8

NUEVO ANUARIO EN PAPEL

YA DISPONIBLE

Otro nuevo anuario de la revista digital Rock Bottom Magazine que recoge en formato físico un resumen del trabajo realizado durante los doce últimos meses. Con los enormes Goat en portada, el contenido es apabullante: 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...

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A QUEMARROPA

La sección de cine de Javier Sanabria

The Neo Noir of the 90s or How Hollywood Got Its Hands Dirty Again

There was a brief, dirty, and deliciously uncomfortable moment when Hollywood abandoned its polished, groomed reflection and finally faced its own smell. That moment was the 1990s, and that stench had a name: Neo Noir. Or Neo Thriller, if we want to get fancy. I prefer Noir, because in the 80s the pseudo-erotic thriller started to smell like expensive cologne, whereas this was more like stale sweat, cheap bourbon, and dried blood on the carpet.

Classic Noir had died several times. First, color killed it, then television buried it, and finally nostalgia taxidermized it. But like any corpse vampirized a thousand times, it never completely stopped moving inside its coffin. And in the 90s, like any good vampire, it came back to life. It didn't return as a respectful homage, that's for academics and festivals, but as a bastard mutation: more violent, more ironic, more self-aware, and above all, more cynical. Films like "Pulp Fiction", "Seven", or "Basic Instinct" are not Noir in the strict sense, but they don't need to be. They are something else, something like the illegitimate children of "Double Indemnity" and "Chinatown", raised on MTV, reading James Ellroy, and consuming violence like chewing gum. What's compelling about 90s Neo Noir is that it doesn't seek redemption. It doesn't even want moral coherence. Its thing is the spectacle of demolition, and it does it with a crooked-toothed grin.

End of the century, end of innocence

If classic noir was the child of the Great Depression and postwar paranoia, 90s neo noir is born into a world that has lost even the right to paranoia. The enemy is no longer external. It is systemic, invisible, and structural. And that, dear readers, is a hell of a lot harder to film. The 90s begin with the mirage of the "end of history" after the fall of the Soviet bloc. Francis Fukuyama proclaiming the definitive triumph of liberal capitalism while American cities filled with inequality, corruption, and suburban anxiety. And the poor, ugh. The American Dream was no longer broken, that was a 60s thing. Now it was also mortgaged. Crime stops being an anomaly and becomes part of the landscape. Films like "Fargo" (1996) show it through that false snowy calm where greed is more ridiculous than tragic. Another, like "Heat" (1995), turns Los Angeles into a jungle where cops and criminals share the same existential void. And then there's pure nihilism: "Fight Club" (1999), which, okay, is not Noir in essence, but it is in spirit. Because if anything defines this decade, it's the suspicion that everything, work, identity, relationships, etc., is an artificial construct ready to collapse. If classic Noir asked, "Who is the culprit?", 90s neo Noir answers, "Everyone, and it doesn't matter anyway."

From Reagan to the hangover: the thriller of the 80s versus the 90s

To understand 90s Neo Noir, it helps to take a quick look at the 80s. The thriller of that decade, in the middle of Ronald Reagan's reign, operates within a world that still pretends to be stable. There are cracks, of course, but also the illusion that they can be sealed. Films like "Fatal Attraction" (1987), "Body Heat" (1981), or "Blue Velvet" (1986) play with the intrusion of danger into apparently orderly environments. Evil appears, contaminates, and, to a greater or lesser extent, finds a response. Even in David Lynch's most twisted

universes, there remains the idea of a surface that can be torn open. In the 90s, that surface comes already broken from the factory. The thriller shifts its axis: “Seven” (1995) or “The Game” (1997) move through scenarios where corruption, manipulation, and emptiness are part of the landscape. No one expects the system to work, because the system itself is the problem. The texture also changes: the glossy 80s sheen gives way to a dirtier or colder image. And desire abandons any moral alibi: in “Basic Instinct” (1992) there is no exemplary punishment, only power play. The shift is clear: in the 80s the thriller revolves around the fear of losing control; in the 90s, what’s unsettling is realizing that control was never really there.

Miramax, Sundance, and indie as moral alibi

And as in any con artist movie, this is where the big magic trick of the 90s comes in: selling independence as a premium product. Peter Biskind, in “Sex, Lies, and Hollywood” (recently reissued by Anagrama, hallelujah), explains it without much mercy: indie cinema was not so much a revolution as a larval phase of the system itself. They weren’t outside, as they proudly claimed, they were in the antechamber. And the door was opened by figures like Harvey Weinstein, who understood something fundamental: rebellion sells, as long as you package it well. Do you want to talk about Weinstein? I’ll just say I hope he rots in prison, and that the structural silence of the film industry in this case is nauseating. Let’s move on. Biskind describes Sundance as a pirate bazaar, not a sanctuary. A fresh meat market where studios went hunting. They weren’t looking for free filmmakers who would push back; they were looking for new voices they could domesticate before they learned to say “final cut.” Independence, in that context, was not an ideological position, let’s not kid ourselves, it became a mere visibility strategy. Miramax was the perfect machine for that operation. They took small films, inflated them with aggressive marketing, built narratives of “transgressive work”, and placed them in the mainstream as if they were cultural dynamite. How many indie films from the 90s did we swallow with the “explosive” label. Biskind sums it up with his trademark bite: Hollywood didn’t destroy independent cinema. It bought it, dressed it in gold, and sold it at a higher price. Tarantino’s case is paradigmatic: a guy out of a video store turned into a generational prophet in a matter of months. A revolution? Yes. Spontaneous? Not a chance. There was a perfectly oiled machine behind it. What’s fascinating, and unsettling, is that it worked. For a few years, the system managed to convince us it was being attacked, by itself no less, while raking in millions with every supposed blow. And that, friends, is not a contradiction. It’s chapter two of advanced capitalism.

The new priests of cynicism

90s Neo Noir doesn’t organize itself as a movement with a manifesto and membership card. It functions more like a viral infection: ideas, obsessions, and aesthetics spreading from film to film. Some names stand out because they managed to channel that murky moral climate into images that are hard to shake. And it’s only fair to start with Quentin Tarantino, nihilism turned jukebox. Tarantino enters the scene like a dealer of references with encyclopedic memory, a lot of ego, and zero complexes. In “Reservoir Dogs” (1992) he already makes it clear that his thing is not telling a heist, but dissecting its consequences among men who talk too much, those dialogues, and feel very little empathy. With “Pulp Fiction” (1994) he turns that impulse into total spectacle: fragmented structure, stylized violence, and conversations that turn the trivial into liturgy. He then rounds it off with “Jackie Brown” (1997), his most mature work and, curiously, the least celebrated at the time. An adaptation of Elmore Leonard, with a slower tempo and tired characters negotiating with what little they have left. Here noir becomes twilight-toned, I really like that word, without giving up its sarcasm. Tarantino doesn’t invent the genre, true, he simply loots with taste, mixes it with pop culture, and returns it as a cult object. An alchemist with a fetish for hemoglobin, and, ahem, feet.

David Fincher arrives from the world of music videos with a very clear idea: the world is a sick place and the image must smell like damp clothes. “Seven” (1995) is his definitive calling card: perpetual rain, a nameless city, and a killer who turns sin into narrative architecture. With “The Game” (1997) he plays at blowing up the perception of reality through waves of paranoia, corporate paranoia. Money as a mechanism of control, identity as something malleable, the constant feeling that someone is pulling the strings from somewhere else. And the decade closes with “Fight Club” (1999), a fantastic adaptation of the fantastic novel by Chuck Palahniuk, turning generational malaise into violent spectacle. Consumerism, broken-down, toxic masculinity alongside a narrator who disintegrates before our eyes. Fincher doesn’t just film crime, he goes much further and lingers on the systems that make it inevitable.

For his part, Michael Mann strips noir down to the bone. “Heat” (1995) works as a symphony of obsessive professionals: cops and criminals who share an ethical code, discipline, and an almost pathological inability to live outside their work. He had already explored that territory in the now-forgotten “Manhunter” (1986), but in the 90s he reaches his definitive form. Los Angeles appears as a geometric board where every move is calculated, chance has no place here. Nor does the inherent dirtiness of Noir, everything is clean, cold, surgical. And in the middle of that asepsis, characters living on the edge of emotional collapse. The face-off between Al Pacino and Robert De Niro in a diner is enough to justify the entire film: two men who recognize each other all too well. And the bank heist shootout. Cinema with a capital C. The fact that Mann hasn’t quite hit the mark since then is something someone will have to explain to me very slowly.

Let’s now talk about the Coen brothers and how they turned human stupidity into a narrative engine. Joel and Ethan observe noir from the ironic distance of an insect collector. “Fargo” (1996) presents a botched kidnapping in the middle of snowy Minnesota, where violence erupts with a mix of clumsiness and brutality that dismantles any sense of epic. They had already toyed with the genre in “Miller’s Crossing” (1990), a stylistic exercise mixing gangsters, betrayals, and razor-sharp dialogue. Possibly a precursor to this entire revival and one of the best films of the decade. Later they twist Noir in a hilarious way in “The Big Lebowski” (1998), where the detective becomes a bathrobe-wearing slacker incapable of following his own case. In the Coens’ universe, crime elevates no one. What it does is expose the ridiculousness of its protagonists. “Donny, you’re out of your element.”

Without reaching the heights of the previous names in this article, Curtis Hanson deserves mention for “L.A. Confidential” (1997), one of the most solid bridges between classic noir and its 90s version. Based on the novel by James Ellroy, it unfolds a Los Angeles where institutional corruption coexists with postcard glamour. Ambitious cops, compromised journalists, and mass-produced stars. All wrapped in an elegant narrative that recalls the 40s while introducing much more explicit violence. A difficult balance that works here with surgical precision, in the only Ellroy novel that has received a truly worthy treatment in Hollywood.

And we can’t forget Paul Verhoeven, who brings the most provocative dimension with “Basic Instinct” (1992). An erotic thriller that plays with the codes of classic noir, femme fatale, obsessed investigator, constant manipulation, and pushes them into a more explicit, more uncomfortable terrain, and above all more aware of its ability to scandalize. Verhoeven has always understood cinema as both intellectual and physical provocation. Here he turns desire into a weapon and power into a psychological game. Subtlety. Nah, everything here is pushed to the limit.

Taken together, these directors don’t revive noir the way one restores an old painting. They use it as a testing ground to explore a world where morality is negotiable, identity unstable, and violence just another tool within the everyday landscape. Each in their own way contributes to that sense that something doesn’t quite fit. As already happened in the 70s, and as Biskind explains so well in the book I mentioned, every revolution in Hollywood ends up being absorbed, packaged, and resold. Neo Noir was no exception. What began as a cynical and violent reaction against the system ended up becoming visual style, cool aesthetics, product. Nihilism became a registered trademark, and that, inevitably, drained part of its strength. But for a few years, American cinema looked into the abyss without blinking. And that, in times of correction, franchises, and formulas tested in Excel, still feels like a small miracle.

Steven Munar, live performance as truth

There are careers that are built without fanfare, far from the most obvious spotlight, yet with a coherence and elegance that end up making them essential to understanding a scene. Steven Munar's is one of them. For years, the Barcelona-based musician has been weaving together a solid songbook, where British-rooted pop, folk, certain echoes of new wave, and a Mediterranean sensibility that naturally surfaces in his compositions coexist. A trajectory that, without the need for grand gestures, has gradually found its place thanks to albums that grow over time and to a deeply honest way of understanding music.

His most recent release, "Family Live" (Miracle-Espora, 2026), works as something more than a simple live album. The record captures a very specific, almost unrepeatable moment, in which the former leader of The Tea Servants decides to bring the songs from "Family" (Belmarh, 2024) to the stage with an unusual scope in his career, incorporating strings, backing vocals, and an expanded band that elevates the repertoire to new emotional heights. Recorded in Barcelona, on home turf, the album becomes a kind of celebration and assessment, a meeting point between different creative stages that, seen in perspective, outline an increasingly defined artistic identity. But "Family Live" also looks forward. Far from sounding like a definitive closing statement, it conveys the sense of being at the beginning of a new phase, marked by the chemistry with The New Miracle Band and by a sonic ambition that does not renounce warmth or closeness. With new songs already on the way and the studio just around the corner, Munar seems to be settled into that sweet spot where experience and curiosity go hand in hand.

In this conversation, the musician reflects on the making of the album, the importance of live performance as a unique act, the role of the band, and that delicate balance between planning and spontaneity that defines his concerts.

"Family Live" captures a very specific concert in Barcelona. At what point did you decide that this particular night deserved to be documented forever?
When we finished recording "Family" (Belmarh, 2024), I had no intention of presenting it live, but encouraged by the good reception it had and by my friend and close collaborator Hug Salvat, drummer, backing vocalist, and soul of the project, we decided it was worth giving the album the presentation it deserved. Since there were several songs with string arrangements, we decided to perform with real strings, backing vocals, etc. Seeing the scale everything was taking on, recording it became a natural step.

This album works almost like a "photograph" of your musical universe. What exactly did you want that live snapshot to reflect?
The album is based on my most recent releases, with an emphasis on "Family", which was the album we were presenting. I wanted it to reflect the stylistic variety I've explored in recent years, British-rooted pop rock, folk rock, singer-songwriter material, some new wave, country rock…

The setlist mixes songs from "Family" with material from earlier stages. How did you approach that balance between present and past?
Having a string quartet and additional backing vocalists, the repertoire was also chosen following those premises, that is, taking advantage of having the support of these musicians and selecting songs from my career where I had already used that kind of arrangement, such as "The Sun and the Moon" or "Berlin", and enjoying the fact of having them live.

In the live performance there's a very organic naturalness among the musicians. How much of that concert was planned and how much was spontaneous magic?
With so many people involved, I think we reached twelve musicians at certain points, plus those in charge of recording, lights, video, it was very risky to leave loose ends, to be honest. But once the engines start running on stage, it's very difficult, at least for me, not to be spontaneous.

You've said that releasing this live album has been almost a dream come true. What does it mean to you, after so many years in your career, to put out a record like this?

Those of us who grew up in the 70s and 80s saw how our musical idols, at some point in their careers, released a live album, I'm thinking of Dylan, Wings, Talking Heads, and many others. Those records represented a summary and a recognition of the work done up to that point and were often considered peak moments in their careers. Living in times as fleeting as today, leaving a record of a live performance on vinyl is an act of romanticism.

The album shows many layers, British pop, rock, folk, even that "Mediterranean warmth" that always appears in your music. Do you feel this live record sums up your sonic identity better than any other work?
I think so, it's a very good example of where things have been heading in recent years and a good introduction for anyone who hasn't approached my music until now.

There are songs like "Berlin" or "To Disappear" that gain a new emotional dimension live. What changes for you when you perform them in front of an audience?
A live performance is an unrepeatable moment, a unique and exclusive act, or at least it should be. There shouldn't be two exactly the same, otherwise there's something of a scam. You're not exactly the same as you were yesterday and that should be reflected on stage, especially when singing, which is where the emotional component takes center stage.

The concert was recorded in a very special venue and in front of your audience. To what extent did that context influence the artistic result of the album?
It was like playing at home. They made us feel very comfortable and loved. Logically, that had a positive influence on the final result.

This album also has something of a recap of your trajectory. Do you see it as the closing of a chapter or as a new beginning?
Honestly, I see it as both. A chapter that began with "Violet Koski" in 2017 is closing, and a new one is opening, with a new band that's very in sync. In fact, we're already preparing new songs for a future album. We're going back into Marc Tena's studio, Feelback, in mid-June.

There's often talk about your elegance and that background position from which you've built your career. Do you think that discretion has been a creative advantage?
I suppose to some extent it has. I've been able to make and unmake songs, styles, etc., without it causing any trauma for anyone, and it has given me total creative freedom.

If someone discovers your music for the first time through "Family Live", what do you think they will understand about Steven Munar that they might not perceive in your studio albums?
I think the album reflects the passion with which the songs are made and performed. That we put everything into every note and that, whoever it reaches, the record shows that we take our work with great dedication.

Eduardo Izquierdo

SAMMY BRUE KEVIN STEELE JON ITURBE GARRET T. WILLIE LOS DELTONOS JAY BUCHANAN NAT SIMONS STEVEN MUNAR

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

ROCK BOTTOM MAGAZINE

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Nat Simons

The Voice That Was Missing