PAXARETO LOS ROMEOS ÓSCAR AVENDAÑO & REPOSADO STEVEWYNN HOWLIN' JAWS SEX MUSEUM DEPEDRO POKEY LAFARGE

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

ROCK BOTTOM MAGAZINE



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Óscar Avendaño y Reposado

Rock and roll belongs on the street, man

Rock Bottom Magazine

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Paxareto



Los Romeos



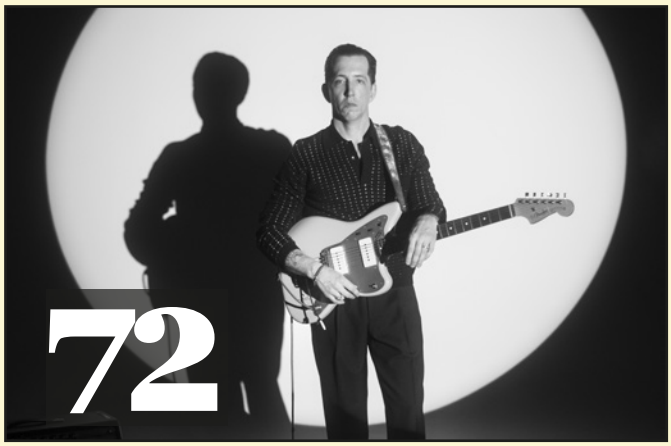
Óscar Avendaño & Reposado



Steve Wynn



Sex Museum



Pokey LaFarge



Foto de Javier Rosa

Editorial

By javistone

PASSION, TALENT, HUMILITY

THE TALENT'S STILL OUT THERE

"How can I not know today your face tomorrow, the one that's already there or is being forged beneath the face you show me or the mask you wear, and that you'll only show me when I'm not expecting it?"

"Tu rostro mañana", Javier Marías

This line from "Tu rostro mañana", a novel by the much-missed Javier Marías, which my good friend Jesse quoted to me today, fits this issue like a glove, since in it we interview Tali Carreto, one of the people behind Monkey Week SON Estrella Galicia, which takes place just a few weeks after this issue comes out. For Marías, according to what he writes in this novel, there are three distinct layers to a person: first there's the face you show me, what the other person shows today, the version of themselves that exists now. Then there's the mask you wear, what's hidden on purpose. And finally, the most interesting one: the layer of tomorrow's face, what that person will be or will do in the future, the unexpected. For Marías, that face being forged is, in fact, already there, latent, a seed that can't be seen at first glance. In the novel, the brilliant Madrid-born writer conveys a certain anguish at not being able to see tomorrow's face in what is shown today, even though it's already taking shape, for better or for worse, especially for worse, and it reveals itself when you least expect it, with the possibility that this face, this person, this entity, suddenly turns into something unknown. For Marías, behind this idea lies a pessimistic notion: we never truly know anyone. Trust is always a bet on a face we can't yet look at. In the novel, Jacques Deza, the narrator, works in London for an intelligence service whose job is to "read" people and predict how they'll behave, whether they'll betray or stay loyal. The Spanish Civil War appears in the background through Juan Deza, the narrator's father and a reflection of Marías's own father, who was denounced by a close friend. Today that friend wears a face of friendship, and tomorrow he shows another one that nobody can see, even though it's already there.

How can you "read" tomorrow's face in music? That's what Jesse is prompting me to reflect on. How can you tell that the band you're watching at a small local contest for emerging bands has a future? At what point does something click inside you in front of a stage surrounded by a sparse crowd? Good question. The last two bands that really shook me up inside were, just a few months ago, Seville's The Surroyal and, the year before that, Ubrique's Mientras las abejas duermen. Because, for instance, the moment those three musicians from the Sierra de Cádiz walked onstage that June afternoon in Plaza del Banco in Jerez, knowing absolutely nothing about them, the tingle you start to feel puts you on alert: watch out for this one. Lots of years listening to music, lots of gigs, countless overhyped artists, hundreds of bands playing a show like it's their last… that gives you experience. But no, the tingle isn't something the audience develops; that's up to the band, the artist: being able to overcome the skepticism lurking in you, even though it's always coated in an almost childlike excitement, hoping something will surprise you, knowing that experience has shown me that talent is still out there, innate in human beings, now and always. Passion, talent, humility… put all that together on a stage and you'll see it from miles away. There it is, they've got it.

And that's exactly what Monkey Week SON Estrella Galicia gives us every year, almost obsessively: here you've got, in a single weekend, more than a hundred performances by emerging artists giving it their all, young people getting up on a stage in 2026, no less, to cut themselves wide open and show themselves to an audience hungry for new songs and new sounds. It's up to you to "read".

LAYING YOURSELF BARE

"Music Is Everything"

Paxareto

"Making songs is a lot like working in a mine: you dig and dig through the dirt until you hit a seam of coal. Then you dig and dig through the coal until, at some point, you come out with a little diamond or two. Songwriting works the same way. And inspiration is life."

In Bable, a paxareto is a plain, ordinary bird, nothing special. That's how these Asturians describe themselves, with more humility than false modesty. They've been playing in bands like Cactus Jack, Mc Coyson or Amon Ra since the 90s, and have found a new nest in Paxareto. The seed lies in two recordings from 2019 that Diego Martínez, Manfred, made with Daniel Bárcena and Héctor Castañón back when they were still Hey Honcho and the Aftermaths. But it wasn't until 2024, while chatting about those songs with Roni Rio, that the idea came up of starting a band around that sound.

When you listen to them, your mind inevitably flies to The Byrds, Buffalo Springfield and that West Coast psychedelic folk pop that goes so well with the northern air, although they specifically mention Moby Grape. The difference is that Paxareto sing in Spanish, and getting there was no walk in the park: Manfred went through seven years of frustration and failed attempts, with a difficult family period along the way, until he found a formula of his own in a language where he could barely find any reference points. The result is songs like "Punks", a sarcastic dart aimed at postcard punks and the whole social media crowd; "El Pan, la Sal", catchy and bright in the vein of Reigning Sound; or "Cordero de Dios", which ended up with an outlaw, western feel. We talked



to Manfred about the Asturian scene, mining applied to songwriting, double vocals that come out almost without rehearsing, music as therapy and the hope that this adventure lasts at least one more album. And, as he puts it… about how music is everything. Impossible not to love them.

Tell us, how did the Paxareto project come about?
Paxareto came about through a series of coincidences. Originally, the band's roots lie in two recordings from 2019 (Primer Sencillo) that I made with Daniel Bárcena and Héctor Castañón when we were Hey Honcho and the Aftermaths, but it wasn't until 2024, talking about those two particular songs with Roni Rio, that we had the bright idea of starting a band based on that sound and style. In fact, starting Paxareto was Roni's idea. Héctor, on bass, has been in the project since that recording. Pedro Puma on guitar and Rubén Casal on drums joined us later to complete the line-up, with Roni on vocals… and I like to call it a band, it isn't any kind of project. For better or worse, we're a band.

You're not newcomers, and looking at the members' track records, the number of connections between bands really stands out. What is it about the Asturian scene that keeps musicians constantly moving between projects?
Yeah, the truth is we've been playing in different bands almost since the 90s (Cactus Jack, Mc Coyson, Amon Ra, etc.). I think the scene in Asturias has always been very prolific and unique. As we get older, those of us who still feel like doing something end up forming bands, as is our case. Maybe decentralisation and our peculiar terrain mean we cook it all up and eat it ourselves. The north has something peculiar and valuable when it comes to rock and roll.

The first thing that comes to mind as soon as you hear Paxareto is inevitably The Byrds, Buffalo Springfield and the West Coast. With Montefurado we also talked about similar bands. There's one band that personally left a big mark on me, and that was Pow Pow Pows, who also drew from similar sources.
I met most of the Pows' members back in the Amon Ra days. Good people, good musicians… but to be honest with you, I hadn't paid attention to them until you mentioned it, I don't know their stuff very well.

Well, you should, they've got the album on Bandcamp and it's glorious, like a lost gem. In the end… what is it about that West Coast psychedelic folk pop… that we find so appealing? And I'm not saying you're copies of those bands, not at all, but there's clearly an obvious reference. Is it maybe the mix of their melodies and the creative freedom it gives you when it comes to writing and letting yourself go?
Well, I'm not really sure, but definitely a special kind of magic. Bear in mind too that all of us here grew up with "folk" around us, on a different level, but always very close by. And in the end, all the music that came out of the United States comes from European or African tradition, so at least in the case of the European one, we're bound to find some familiarity in it. And yes, melody and creative freedom are two very appealing and necessary factors. Anyway, I've tried not to go straight to the "sources" when writing. If the influences have to show up, let it be afterwards, after the fact, not from the outset. It's been hard writing in Spanish, we've had to invent our own formula. Apart from Negativos or maybe Lagartija Nick, I haven't had much to look to in order to create music sung in Spanish that was viable and satisfying for me. So I've made up almost, almost everything. For better or worse, in that respect Paxareto is a rare bird, maybe a unique one.

I understand this project comes after a difficult period, even a bit of a songwriting drought. What happened during that time, and what had to happen for you to get back into the swing of songwriting? Are the songs "inspired" by that process or do they have a different kind of life experience behind them?
Well, the thing is, on the one hand, I went through a few difficult years on a family level that made me suffer quite a bit, and obviously that fed into the songs. On the other hand, I was already really bored of writing and singing in English. I don't disown it, it was fine, but honestly, at this point I admire Cervantes much more than Shakespeare. The thing is, singing and, above all, writing in Spanish was a process that took me seven long years of frustration and failed attempts, where I almost gave it all up for lost until something decent came out. I reached a point where it wasn't happening in either English or Spanish, and I say that with embarrassment, because finding it harder to write in your mother tongue than in a foreign language is downright absurd. The songs don't come exactly "during" that process, but they are the culmination of it. Writing songs is like mining: you pick and pick away at the earth until you hit a seam of coal. Then you pick and pick away at the coal until at some point you get a small diamond or two. Songwriting works the same way. And inspiration is life, day-to-day stuff, the things that happen to you and how you take them, how you tell them.

> ***Writing in Spanish has been tricky, we've had to come up with our own formula. Apart from Negativos or maybe Lagartija Nick, I haven't had much to look to when it comes to creating music sung in Spanish that felt workable and satisfying to me.***

Some songs have an epic feel, like "Punks".
I'm glad you see something epic in "Punks" because we didn't go looking for it. It's a simple, vibrant song that basically uses sarcasm to put the "impostors" or "posers" in their place, the ones you can see every day in the great puddle of piss that is social media. It's a critique of "postcard punks", the ones who grab a Ramones T-shirt at Zara but don't own a single record of theirs. Extend that to any well-known band or genre you can think of. It's in no way a critique of punk or of lifelong punks, in fact, we're all pretty punk in this band. Music Instagrammers, music trendsetters, I mean that whole bunch of shitty people trying to be somebody socially, building themselves a completely fake and uninformed life.

"El Pan, la Sal" is catchy.
It's a song very much in the vein of Reigning Sound, a band we adore. It's about human relationships, romantic ones specifically. At first the approach seems a bit sad and doom-laden, but the idea is the opposite: when all the hardships are overcome by willpower, in short, by love. There's hope, there's light beyond, you just have to persist, that's what it's about. Besides, Pedro's guitar arrangements and Rubén's way with the drums have had a decisive influence on the brightness of the





song. They're the ones who give the songs their magic with their arrangements. Without them, it'd be just another song.

"Cordero de Dios" has more of a border feel than other songs on the album. Where does that sound come from?
"Cordero de Dios" was a hot potato on the album. Originally it was meant to have more of an English folk vibe, more intimate, just vocals and two acoustics… but in the end we managed to put it together with the whole band, giving it that outlaw and western touch. Above all, what interests me about that song is the lyrics, it's about the martyrdom of Saint Agnes. It was recorded in one go, all of us together in a single take, and it has an unintended false start that we kept because it reminded us of something by Neil Young.

You have a very particular feature in your vocals, especially those backing vocals and double vocals. How do you work on that part of the songs? To what extent are they planned from the writing stage and how much comes later, when Roni comes in and you work on the arrangements? Getting those double vocals right is an art.
To be honest with you, we don't plan anything and we work on it very little. Basically we try to make it sound nice "without stepping on each other's toes". Roni in his "Beefheart" register, me in mine and Héctor in his. We're not trying to be the Hollies or CSN&Y, but we are inspired by the way Moby Grape handled their vocals, for example. Even so, on the album there's also a contribution in that respect from Fernando Marín, and you can tell. Fernando is very good at that.

I've read that you see music as therapy, could you explain that to me? It's something I really agree with, how music can be therapeutic on levels you'd never expect.
Music is everything. It's life, it's pleasure, joy, sadness, death and definitely therapy. Writing, singing about your troubles and sorrows, as well as your joys, makes living more bearable, more real. It also gives shape to a lot of things in your head that you're better off getting out so your brain doesn't rot. Singing in Spanish is wonderful. I can say whatever I want however I see fit, and that's very healing on a spiritual level. Being able to tell certain people to piss off in a song also cures a lot of ills.

I really like the album cover. Who's it by and what was the idea behind it? I see a bird outside a cage, singing at night, in the middle of a kind of Stonehenge, and a path of light and colour that seems to come precisely from where the bird is. Is there something of that in the original idea?
All of that is down to Héctor Castañón (Ossobuko Studio). He had carte blanche to do whatever he saw fit, and he definitely knows how to hit the nail on the head with the band's emotion and concept. He knows how to pair the songs with the artwork, he's an ace at that.

Speaking of birds, what does Paxareto mean?
Well, although I suspect it isn't standardised by the Language Academy, paxareto is a Bable word that more or less means "an ordinary, run-of-the-mill bird", "nothing special". It's not exactly derogatory, but it is very generic. I'm a country guy, I love listening to birds and I envy their freedom and wisdom. I'm also a run-of-the-mill bird, like them.

Does Paxareto look set to continue? Can we expect this to be the start of something with a future?
We all hope the adventure lasts, at least one more album and a few extra gigs. For now there's no sign of a split, we've still got things to do. But who knows, life is complicated, it's not made of certainties. Let's enjoy it while it lasts.

Thank you very much, and hopefully we'll get to see you down south.
Thanks to you, Javi, for such an intelligent interview. A big hug.

Javistone

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Since 2017 we've been making Rock Bottom in the most absurd way possible: no big publisher behind us, no chasing clicks, and for free. Every two months, around 70 pages of long interviews, stories, records, films, TV series and clubs that no longer exist.

It'll stay free. Nobody having to pay to read a culture magazine is a decision we made at the start and we're sticking to it.

But free doesn't mean it costs nothing. Behind every issue there are hours nobody sees: interviews, proofreading, layout, photos, the website, printing the yearbooks... And so far all of that has come out of our own time and our own pockets.

If Rock Bottom has introduced you to a band or a film, or kept you reading for an afternoon, you can give us a hand. For the price of a beer a month, you help make sure there's another issue, another interview and another story that doesn't get lost.

We're not going to promise you the moon. We promise to keep doing this, which is plenty already.

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Thanks for reading. And for sticking around.



You'd think that when you turn eighteen you can consider yourself an adult. That is, you're now a mature, responsible, level-headed person… But that doesn't usually apply to a lot of us, who are still, despite the years gone by (many more than eighteen, God knows), a bunch of misfits prone to distraction, to having fun and to such unedifying activities as rock and roll and the like. And one of our favourite festivals coming of age is exactly the same, no growing up at all, I want my bumper car rink! As is customary, on the eve of November we met up for a chat with our dear Tali Carreto, organiser and Rock Bottom Magazine contributor, but above all a friend, about the festival's return to El Puerto de Santa María last year and about how the next edition is shaping up, which, on top of the endless list of artists waiting to surprise you, also features people of the calibre of Nacho Vegas or Steve Wynn.

This is your second year in El Puerto de Santa María after last year's return, how was coming back after so long in Seville?
Very satisfying. And we also feel the reception was as good as it was encouraging, because both the audience and the industry professionals who came left with such a good impression that the feedback has also been tremendously satisfying. On top of that, the relationship with our city's local government is so smooth that it's a pleasure to work like that.

I've talked to friends and some of them miss having a bit more variety of venues, is it wrong to feel there were fewer spaces than in other years when it was held in El Puerto? Are there any new locations this year? I loved a house with an inner courtyard where small gigs were held; it's where, if I remember right, a La Big Rabia video was shot. I'm also crazy about a sort of ruined building you use now. How do you choose the locations?
Last year we were cautious in designing the programme and the spaces and stages where the festival was going to take place. Despite having so many editions behind us, coming back home also felt a bit like putting on a first edition. And we had to tread carefully, playing it safe. This year, on the other hand, you'll notice we're going in with more confidence: new spaces are being added and there are also changes to some of the ones we already used… Specifically, the stage you mention was Casa Happy Place, and it's now impossible to use that space again, because the building it was in was very run-down, it needed renovating and, in fact, its owner sold it to a property developer that is rebuilding it right now. But you'll see there are quite a few surprises this year when it comes to locations and stages.





Is there anything new in this edition compared to the last one?
Loads! For example, the number of showcases and gigs has gone up considerably, with more than one hundred and twenty artists. On the other hand, the Monkey PRO industry days, which were held at the Castillo de San Marcos last year, are now moving to another incredible space, Osborne's Bodega de Mora, which means we can use the whole Castillo as a performance space, hosting two stages, one in its winery and another in its courtyard… and a few more surprises still to be revealed. Since one of those two stages at the Castillo is in its courtyard, as we do at Monkey Weekend, Monkey Week SON Estrella Galicia's little brother that we hold in June, and so as not to interfere with its sound, we're moving the free stage usually located in Plaza Alfonso X el Sabio to Parque Calderón. And that stage will connect, just a few metres away, with the Pista Jägermusic, the now legendary bumper car rink, which this Monkey will be located in the car park next to the river that you come to when you cross the footbridge. As we won't have the Monasterio de la Victoria, all the stages are closer to each other, making it easier for people to get around and turning the city centre into one big open-air venue. Bear in mind that, as well as those stages, we'll also have others as fabulous as the chapel of the Colegio de las Hermanas Esclavas (another new addition this year!), as attractive as the Teatro Municipal Pedro Muñoz Seca or as urban as the Milwaukee, Padreo and NÜX venues. All in all, this year there'll be up to nine stages and, as I hinted a moment ago, a few more surprises.

I always ask you the same thing, what would you recommend to a Rock Bottom Magazine reader dropping by the streets of El Puerto during the Monkey? Don't tell me to just go with the flow, I already say that myself…
That they're going to enjoy a massive flood of music, with a range of styles and genres as eclectic as it is surprising, where they can discover not just new music, but also loads of talent ready to stop being a promise and become a reality. And also, of course, that they're going to enjoy all of that in an impressive setting. And spiced up with the freedom that comes from being right in the middle of the city, not in an isolated venue, so they can also check out the hugely varied bars and restaurants El Puerto de Santa María has to offer. Basically, they'll get to live for three days in a real city of music.

Nacho Vegas and Steve Wynn, no less… How did bringing them come about when you usually bring lesser-known people? I'm delighted, mind you.
This year we're celebrating eighteen editions. And we wanted to celebrate coming of age with a birthday party where old friends wouldn't be missing, artists who have played the Monkey or who have a special connection with the festival. There's Nacho Vegas, who played the first edition, or Steve Wynn, who not only also played a previous edition in El Puerto, but dedicated a song to the festival, "(Get Ready for) Monkey Week", together with Los Jaguares de la Bahía. But other old acquaintances are also coming back, like Parquesvr, rebe, Camellos, Cervatana, Mujeres, Lorena Álvarez, Cómo Vivir En El Campo… Some of them are also coming back (and rightly so, given such a special occasion) with one-off shows for the occasion. For example, Nacho Vegas isn't just coming with Hans Laguna, his band and the choir that usually surrounds him at a lot of his gigs, but he'll also have the children's voices of our city's Escolanía Jardín Menesteo. Parquesvr, after two nights at La Riviera in Madrid, will arrive at the Monkey on Saturday also with friends who'll be with them in the capital, like Carlangas, Ortiga or Jordi Ganchitos, among others. Los Nastys are back as a band after years of silence, and kicking off that comeback at the Monkey is as special for them as it is for us… they even dedicated one of their songs, "Los autos locos", to the Jäger rink! And Steve Wynn is coming with another legend of the American rock scene, Chris Cacavas, from the legendary Green On Red, who he's touring our country with.

To what extent do you programme with the audience in mind or with the certainty that an artist is going to smash it?
Well, at the end of the day, Monkey Week SON Estrella Galicia isn't a typical festival: it's an industry fair and, as such, we're firmly committed to being not just a meeting point for the music industry, but also a showcase for new artists. Bear in mind that artists such as Nathy Peluso, Ralphie Choo, Sen Senra, Pony Bravo, Derby Motoreta's Burrito Kachimba, Fuel Fandango and a very long etcetera have played the Monkey's showcases in their early days. And that's without counting the Weekend, which has featured names like Rosalía or Carolina Durante. For us it's a source of pride and joy to have contributed, however little, to the development of artists of that calibre. So yes, when it comes to putting the line-up together, we're always on the lookout for names, artists and trends that we hope will not just smash it, as you say, but also build themselves a long-lasting career. You know Monkey Week's motto: "Discover tomorrow's music today". We could say it louder, but not clearer.

> ***Monkey Week SON Estrella Galicia isn't your typical festival: it's a trade fair and, as such, we're firmly committed to being not only a meeting point for the music industry, but also a showcase for new artists.***

The festival was born at a time when the music industry urgently needed meeting spaces. What needs of today's industry do you think aren't being met?
Above all, talking face to face, connecting beyond emails, phone calls, text messages and video calls. Closeness builds trust. And trust is essential in any business, in any industry.

These days it's almost impossible to reach the mainstream with more or less classic proposals; there are even bands that form with the sole idea of playing festivals. How do you see the "music industry" today? Do you really think it exists or is it more of a guerrilla war?
Of course there's a music industry. And it's getting more and more solid. And more professional. And even though there are so many mainstream proposals, as you say, there's also always room for niches, for underground movements and for operating on the margins.

Things like the excessive importance given to visual image, the search for immediate impact… is there any current trend in the music industry that particularly worries you because you think it could end up impoverishing the scene?
Not particularly, although this year at Monkey PRO, for example, and in collaboration with APM, the Asociación de Promotores

Musicales, you'll be able to attend a very interesting round table on a very current phenomenon, artist residencies, the kind Shakira has recently exemplified in our country and which, according to many voices, could end up changing the usual touring circuit. There'll also be plenty of good debate about that other very common phenomenon in today's industry and, above all, in our country: festivals. The third Congreso de Festivales de Música en Vivo, designed and driven by the FMA and also being held as part of Monkey PRO, will shed light on a sector that is one of the engines of our industry, but which many voices are also starting to demonise, sometimes even. Personally, I think every action has its reaction, and that even the adverse consequences that initiatives like the ones I mentioned may cause will also give rise to other responses that could bring new joys.



After so many years… what do you think Monkey Week does better than anyone right now, and what do you think you still haven't quite managed to sort out?
Oops, let's see how I can answer the first one without sounding pretentious (Laughs). I think that, if there's one thing the Monkey does better than anyone, it's precisely creating that really comfortable atmosphere that makes it easy for professionals, audience and artists to interact. And something we still haven't quite managed to sort out: placing the Jägermusic logo correctly on the posters and the artwork! (Laughs). It's become a real tradition: every year poor Lolo, who's in charge of Jäger, has to correct what we send him. Without fail (Laughs).



If ten years from now Monkey Week still existed but had to give up one of the things you consider essential today, what would hurt the most to lose?
I don't think we'd give up anything. Ever.



When are you going to invite someone from Rock Bottom Magazine to a talk or panel? (Laughs).
We'll talk to our dear Joan Vich so he keeps it in his prayers.

Javistone




MONKEY WEEK .ORG
MARÍA NACHO VEGAS & NASTYS STEVE WYNN & CHRIS CACAVAS (US) LORENA ÁLVAREZ
TERREMOTO EL DIABLO MAQUINA (PT) MUJERES REBE DE SHANGHAI MALA GESTIÓN FULU MIZIKI (CO)
CERVATANA MARIA GREP Y MUNDO PRESTIGIO LEILA SOTO Y DAVID CORDERO
RAGHID B PARQUESVR Y AMIGOS
CÓMO VIVIR EN EL CAMPO DUNA CAMELLOS
SIENNA LISASINSON GAF & THE LOVE SUPREME ARKESTRA THE ZAWOSE QUEENS (TZ) TOLDOS VERDES
BLAYA
CARMEN LANCHO
FILAS DE CASSANDRA JAVI MEDINA
LAS NIETAS DEL CHARLI
KABEAUSHE (NE)
ADIOS THE BLACK ADIOS WIZARDS (PT)
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BEN YART VICTORIAS BAF
ROSIN DE PALO LOS LAGOS
XALBA CALVA DE HINAULT
NATXO POSTER MACACA
MARÍA BOY RADIATA
DEL ALBA MORENA
TANGO CANCAMUSZA (CL)
KARA BOJ ANADIE
CATENACCIO PABLO Y STIVI JOES LOS CIERVOS
STUZZI (SE) DORADOS
PACO TE QUIERO ME
MAGALÍ SARE AGÜERDO
FIDJU KITXORA (GW) DE TODO
ROY BORLAND
BB ASOL (AR) CAVE
EL ICEBERG STORY (PT)
CORTADA (PT) EL VIRTUAL
ANNE LUKIN LA JUNTA
LAURA DIEPSTRATEN
LINLIN (FR) PAR.SEK (FR)
18 años haciendo el mono
MONKEY CLUBBING
BISTEC: BELLA KANELA + BRAVA (LIVE) + PATATAONSTEREO + ESTRELLAS DEL RAP NACIONAL
DABADABA PARTY: LAMIAMARI + ALAI ZEZ JUANTA
LOS DOMINGUITO: MBREAKS + CRKS290 + RAFFFAEL + MONDONGO BOY
BRECHA CLUB: KING DOUDOU (FR) + PEWII + BARANDI + PABLEAU
CLYDE
STIGMA TRIBALE: MORVO + DUCKMAN
LAS DIÑAS: LOUMA + BLANK + ARISSKA
SON Estrella Galicia
Diputación de Cádiz
Monkey Week
SON Estrella Galicia
19-21 NOV 2026 EL PUERTO DE SANTA MARIA



Los Romeos

Thirty-five years later: life is still pink

Few comebacks have got us as excited this year as Los Romeos'. The band from Castellón emerged in the late 80s and brightened up quite a few of our teenage years with a debut full of hit singles, playing non-stop on the radio, and with constant TV appearances. In 1992 came "Sangre caliente", with a harder-hitting sound. With the arrival of the 90s and the rise of alternative rock we lost track of them, although their singer, Patrizia Escoín, kept going with Lula and, later on, with Exfan. Thirty-five years after that first album, the band is back thanks to Subterfuge. They're bringing reissues, an anniversary tour and new versions of "Muérdeme" with Samantha Hudson and "Mi vida rosa" with La La Love You. The comeback, however, has run into an unexpected obstacle: someone outside the band registered the name before they did. That forces them to bill themselves temporarily as Mi Vida Rosa while they wait for the legal proceedings to be resolved. We talked to Patrizia about the reunion, the old days and the fight to get back what's theirs.

A few months ago we heard about the band's (Los Romeos) surprising reunion, how did this comeback come about?
It was Julián, Romeos' drummer, who suggested we get together to see each other, and we did it on José's sixtieth birthday, he's the guitarist. There was talk of coming back, or at least trying a rehearsal one day to see how we felt. So that's what we did and it was a cool, emotional experience. That same week Carlos from Subterfuge got in touch with me proposing a comeback for the band, with reissues and a few gigs celebrating the thirty-fifth anniversary, and we thought it was perfect.

You've already done a few gigs in this new chapter, how is the audience reacting? Are you meeting old fans or are people who are only discovering you now also coming along?
We weren't expecting such a big, warm welcome. The people who come to the gigs know and sing almost all of Romeos' songs; it makes me really happy, honestly. Lots of old fans come and tell us about their connection with the band, from people who got married with "Mi vida rosa" playing in the background to tattoos of the first album on their own skin. Anyway, lots of cool stories that really connect us with the people who come. Also, people quite a bit younger than us come too, who didn't know us back then and want to see us live.

In my case, I remember perfectly discovering you on the show Plàstic on TVE's La 2. I remember you didn't even have a record deal. What do you remember about that performance? Were you very nervous? We miss shows like that nowadays.
Although I don't remember many things from back then, I do remember Plàstic perfectly, because it was the first TV I ever did and it made a big impression on me. I'd never mimed to a track before and I didn't know whether I was supposed to just move my lips or actually sing. I was kind of frozen in front of all those cameras, and I didn't know whether I was supposed to look at them or not either… so I looked and sang over it as best I could. I loved Plàstic, so it was all really exciting.

Your first album did really well: a record with hit singles, songs that got loads of airplay on the radio stations of the time, TV appearances… How did you experience that debut and everything that came after?
We experienced it a bit like a dream. It went really well and it all happened very fast: recording a demo, then the album, gigs non-stop. A real pleasure, although I wasn't experienced at all at the beginning, so I was pretty stressed out.

Juan Antonio Morcillo played an important part in your first album. A while ago we interviewed Aroa Morcillo, from Gatas Negras. The rest of the band, apart from you, came from his band. What role did Morcillo play in that first period of Los Romeos? What did you learn from him?
Pedro, Juanki and José played with Morcillo, they were the Rítmicos, and

that's where Romeos came from. Pedro asked Morcillo to write the lyrics for "Mi vida rosa". Morcillo was always a great lyricist and he proved it with this song, nailing the lyrics. That's our connection with him on the first album.
The Rítmicos were quite a bit younger than Morcillo; I'm sure those years playing together were a big influence on them.

Then in 1992 you released "Sangre caliente", your second album, a record that, for me, was a bit more serious and harder-hitting in terms of sound. The album did well, although maybe the band didn't get as far as might have been expected.
Our second album came out in turbulent times, crisis, a change in the music scene, lots of ups and downs with the label… but it's still a great album today, we're really proud of it. With Julián joining, we were really strong and super powerful live. It's true that Romeos didn't get the consolidation that might have been expected with that second album.

How did you experience that musical shift in the 90s? By the middle of the decade, any band coming from the previous decade might have felt that the music scene was changing and that there were new trends. How did that change affect you?
I loved all the indie stuff that came along in the 90s. It's true that it's what wiped Los Romeos off the map, but personally, probably because of my age, it's the period that has influenced me most as an artist.

In my case, I was a teenager when I discovered you and I have to confess that, in my class at school, in eighth year of EGB, lots of us were Patrizia fans. We put you on the same level as Wendy James. How did you experience that growing popularity and the attention you were getting from the public? Is there any anecdote from that time you particularly remember?
I never liked popularity, it's horrible. For me, being recognised was the thing I handled worst; we did loads of TV and promo back then, so it was unavoidable.

After that album you left Hispavox and took a few years to record a new album that, for us at least, went more unnoticed. What was that period like and what led you to sign with Magna?
A lot of things changed. Hispavox released us from our contract and we started making very different songs. Juanki left the band, and "Sin conexión" (hence its name) has little to do with the early Romeos; Julián, Pedro and I wrote the album between the three of us. Everything changed a lot, but for me it was a time of real learning and enjoyment. I started playing guitar and being more active in the songwriting; in a way, I started to grow and become what I went on to be later in my career with Lula and Exfan.

Once your third album was out, the band split up. How do you remember that period and what circumstances led you to go your separate ways?
We had high expectations with the third album, it's a great album, but it had no impact at all. Magna did absolutely nothing with it. It was a shame, it left us with no strength to carry on… We decided to call it a day and go our separate ways.

When the band broke up you got involved in several projects like Lula and later Exfan. What were those years like for you? Was it hard to keep a professional career going in music, and did you have to combine it with other jobs?
With Lula it was five albums and fifteen years of struggle and joy. I've been really happy fighting it out in the underground, but, mind you, you can't make a living from it. I combined it with anything I could! Mostly, I've worked as a bartender in rock dives, which is something I loved and could combine with music. Then came Exfan, together with Tommy Ramos, and we've recorded four albums. I'm really happy touring and playing with Exfan. It's all still as hard as it's always been for me, nobody said it was going to be easy. I really know how to enjoy music and I'm a fighter when it comes to it, stubborn too!

You've signed with Subterfuge, what other news do you have? What plans do you have for the future apart from the tour?
We've re-recorded "Muérdeme" with Samantha Hudson and "Mi vida rosa" with La La Love You; it's been great recording them again with these great artists. For now we've focused on the reunion gigs celebrating the thirty-fifth anniversary of the debut album. And on getting the name back.

Patrizia, what do you do when you put down the mic and the guitar? What are your hobbies? We know full well you're crazy about cats, which I'm all for.
Well, life doesn't leave me time for much else! I like reading and heading up into the hills with the cats and Tommy. Looking at the sea. Doing nothing. Having a glass of white wine. Sometimes I like drawing or painting, but it comes and goes over the years and I haven't been on much of a roll lately.

What's the music scene in Castellón like nowadays? When Los Romeos came along, that area was a hotbed of bands. Years later we also got to know acts like Gatas Negras. Do you think there's anything left of that musical atmosphere?
There have always been lots of bands here, and there's a great music scene in Castelló right now!

Lastly, we wanted to ask you about the current situation with the Los Romeos name. How did you find out the name had been registered by someone outside the band? Where does the situation stand right now? We know you've taken legal



action to try to get it back. How are you dealing with this whole process? To what extent is not being able to use your usual name affecting you when it comes to promoting the gigs and this new chapter of the band?
We found out when we announced we were playing here in Castellón, at the Capla festival. This guy got in touch with the festival saying the name was his. And that we couldn't play or use it. We'd registered the name in '89. Names expire; when we came back, we registered it again, but this person had beaten us to it. He's someone from here, from Castellón, and that hurts us even more… He has absolutely nothing to do with the band, we don't know him at all. Why would anyone want to register a name that carries our history and our music? For us there's only one explanation, and that's taking advantage of other people's effort and recognition, so we've started proceedings to have the name registration declared void on grounds of bad faith, through lawyers who specialise in these matters. And as of today we're still waiting, optimistically, for the proceedings to be resolved. Above all, it's been complicated carrying on with the gigs we'd already booked. We want to thank Subterfuge, the festivals and the promoters for their courage, affection and support in having to use Mi Vida Rosa temporarily as the least damaging option for everyone and keep going. Meta has been the worst, because there's nobody in charge to explain it to… just machines. We won't be intimidated, and we are who we are, whatever we're called. We're coming with our songs and our live show, and people and audiences are welcoming us like never before. We've had and are still getting so much love, so not everything has been bad! And I'm about to get the Los Romeos name tattooed somewhere on my body! (Laughs) Incredible!

Thank you very much, Patrizia.
Thank you, Oscar!

Metal & Rock


MOLLY RUTH
Rock and roll, outlaw country
and cosmic gospel
BRONCO

"Country, folk and gospel are the foundations of American music"

Molly Ruth is one of those wonderful surprises waiting for you every day you get out of bed without knowing what life has in store for you. Coming across the music of this young singer from New York, now living in Nashville, is a breath of energy and fresh air in a sound as well-worn as country folk. If you stumble across "Gotta Like It Too" there's no way it won't catch your attention. With barely a couple of albums and a new EP ("Yours to Lose"), Molly makes, in her own words, a mix of rock and roll, outlaw country and "cosmic gospel" that, together with big doses of charisma, hooks you instantly. If you're reading these lines, dear reader, don't miss the chance to get hooked by Molly Ruth's voice; I promise you won't be disappointed.

"Molly Ruth" sounds like the name of a border ballad before you've even heard a note. Who's behind that name, and how did you end up making songs?
I take that as a very fine compliment. I've been writing and singing songs since I was a child. I've always had an urgent desire within me to write music, so powerful that I don't think I ever particularly decided to start making songs— it's just something that has always had to be done.

Your first release was a live album, "Molly Ruth Live", from 2013. How did the idea of starting out with a live record come about?
I believe I released that record after I released my first studio album. I have many fans who love my solo shows, preferring the stripped-down sound to the full band sound, so I wanted to put something out for them after I released the studio album.

Your first album is genuinely amazing, a record that grabs you straight away, with really powerful songs like "Million Fuckin' Whores". What can you tell me about that song? It's a title that doesn't beat around the bush. Has it ever been hard to play live, depending on the audience?
To me that song is about the contrast between the idealized fantasy of a lover versus the blunt reality of that person which intrudes upon your perfect image of them. We would like to believe we are the one-and-only to our partner and yet so often we are not. It's also somewhat poking fun at the rather infantile instincts that arise within adults in romantic relationships, where some one can actually feel threatened by something that is in the past, even in the midst of a perfectly harmonious connection. I don't have a hard time playing that song in general, although there are certainly venues or situations where I wouldn't include it in the set.

I've seen a definition, I think it's yours, of your music as a mix of rock and roll, outlaw country and "cosmic gospel" - I love that last bit. "My Revelation's Talking a Long Time to Come" has that gospel feel you're talking about; it's really not common to add that element to country-folk music. How did you come up with it?
Gospel music is my first love; in my heart of hearts, devotional music is my favorite, and I think it is an undercurrent in everything I do. Country, folk and gospel are the foundation of American music and are pretty well intertwined, so I don't think I'm innovating there, except that my lyrics are a rather unorthodox addition.

Does the concept of "cosmic gospel" have any connection to "cosmic country" or "cosmic American music", coined by Gram Parsons, which describes a crossover between traditional country, rock and an expanded spirituality, far removed from more commercial, traditional Nashville country?
I chose the term "cosmic gospel" because I tend to write about spiritual, esoteric or psychedelic themes, and I think of all of my songs as hymns, in some peculiar way. But it could certainly also be connected to the genre of Cosmic Country, as my music is definitely influenced by the out-there stylings that Parsons passed onto the Rolling Stones and so many others.

In "Odin" you bring Lucinda Williams to mind. Who would you say your influences are?
Bob Dylan, the Rolling Stones, Tom Petty, Blind Willie Johnson and Eminem.

There's a spiritual component in your lyrics, even a confrontation with God ("I'm afraid of God"). In fact, you have several songs where God appears as something to be feared rather than a comfort. You also talk about blasphemy, fear, dreams, the desert, devotion... When did that tense relationship with the sacred begin in your writing? Is it something you fight against and need to get out?
I think God is both something to be feared and a source of comfort, and that this is the only proper orientation to God if you have a conscience and a healthy amount of humility. I wouldn't describe my relationship with the sacred as tense, although I do have a mischievous inclination to joke around and poke fun at it, just as I do with most subject matter. I think the human experience of life necessarily involves feelings of being at odds with God sometimes, or that God is at odds with you, yet I wouldn't say this is something that disturbs me existentially, so much as it makes me laugh at myself. I am at peace— on most days— with the fact that life is a very great Mystery, although to be sure there is a lot of suffering to be had while the Mystery unfolds.

It's perhaps a language closer to a psalm or a border ballad than the usual personal confession of the contemporary singer-songwriter.
You are quite right that I am not the typical "confessional" singer-songwriter. The sacred is really the only thing I have any desire to write or sing about, and I enjoy finding sacred themes within mundane contexts, or even making very sacred ideas utterly blunt and bald-faced to the point of absurdity. I find confessional songwriting rather dull and banal, although many love it; personally I believe it is the job of the artist to uncover legends and myths, rather than to manufacture what I call "diary music," a kind of navel-gazing recounting where the subjective experience of the writer is given more importance than the factors of fascination or poetic power. I



think a song should stun you— it should hit you like a bolt of lightning— and to do that you have to let go to some degree of what you want to say and let something larger than you speak through you. My aim is to inspire and uplift the audience out of the ordinary and the personal, into a realm of the ecstatic and the transpersonal, even if I am using an actual incident from my personal life as the initial point of inspiration.

In ground as well-trodden as folk, americana or country, where it sometimes feels like everything's already been done, what do you think makes a song really connect with the listener?
There are certain performers that have a magnetism, a star power, or— for lack of a better word— charisma, which makes a song fascinating to listen to, and this energy supersedes all other factors like originality. At the end of the day, if there is spiritual energy emanating from a performer, it is gripping to behold, and it doesn't matter if he's singing a song you've heard a thousand times before. Beyond this, if you're talking about the actual writing of a song, there is a way to craft lyrics so that they are hypnotizing— by which I mean they put the listener into a kind of trance instantaneously. You need a certain levity in the words— I call it "floating". A lyric needs to float or hover in the air effortlessly, even if the meaning is powerful, deep or complex, so that the meaning just permeates the mind of the listener without him needing to think at all about it. Lyrics should summon whole awarenesses instantaneously— like dawning epiphanies in the mind— while the listener has an easy, pleasurable experience of beautiful patterns of sound. You achieve that effect through a certain combination of emotional overtones, simplicity of language and textures in the sound of the words.

Your first album, "Full Moon Outlaw", came out in 2017, and you hadn't released anything since, until this year, nine years later. What happened during all that time?
I did a great deal of spiritual expedition, some traveling, lived off-grid, played tons of shows and wrote my second record. Making records is very expensive and it took a while for the stars to align such that I could record my album in the way that I wanted to, which was fully live in one room with very little overdubbing, on analog tape. It also takes time to ripen songs into great arrangements, and to find exactly the right players and producers to actualize your vision. It was very annoying and painful to have such a long period between my first and second album but I'm overjoyed with the final result.

In your new 2026 songs, is that gospel feel no longer there, maybe? Is "Gotta Like It Too" a turning point where blues, slide guitar - and even guys playing guitar in medieval helmets - become more important?
I would say that the gospel blues influence is still very much present on the second album, though I suppose it has mutated into something rather unconventional and maybe it is harder to recognize from the outside. When I'm writing I never really think much about what genre my song will fit into when it is done, although I do think very much about what traditions I am drawing from while I am building it out. I think it is important for artists to remain consciously connected to their musical ancestors, even if a song transforms through the writing process and those influences are not so readily apparent to the audience.

You're from New York and you live in Nashville. I've seen your name linked to other artists on the scene, like Elijah Ocean, Jesse Daniel, Jodi Lyford, Lasers... as part of the same musical circle. What's the scene like these days in such a musically important city?
Nashville is a playground for any musician; it's really easy and quick to bring your creations to life here, and that's something I absolutely love about this city.

Any chance of seeing you in Europe, in Spain?
I hope so!

Javistone





SECCIÓN DE J. THE PERFECT DRUG

Our Friend the Algorithm

The guy you can see top left is a compulsive reader of magazines, fanzines, blogs… even this sacrosanct magazine. Someone who tries to listen to friends' podcasts, El Sótano on Radio 3 (an oasis amid the station's current stylistic rot, once a cultural hub)… and many others to find out "what's cooking out there", as they say; to find out whether artists I like are putting out albums or to discover new ones that I'm going to start enjoying as if they were a new pair of shoes. That, my friends, is called trying to have a certain amount of judgement. And yet, for years now I've been hearing people go on about the fucking goddamn algorithm as if it were to blame for the fact that you can't listen to anything but this or that artist. And then we're surprised that the same stuff is always playing wherever you go.

A few days ago I was reading an article on Substack, "La Trastienda del Hype", written by Erik Oz, that left me wide-eyed. It turns out that the band Geese (New York) released "Getting Killed" last year, and the truth is it made a big splash among the specialist press. My dear friend Jordi went on and on at me about them as if they were the next big thing, and personally I found them a drag, but hey, it's a matter of taste, and Jordi's is superb. The thing is, at a certain point Geese went from being yet another little-known band (another of the thousands you could say are snaking their way around the underground) to being absolutely everywhere. According to Oz, behind it was Chaotic Good Projects, which he calls a "boutique digital marketing agency", and which explained its strategy through "trend simulation": seeding social media with made-up stories, "creating an instant false consensus that real users end up adopting out of fear of missing out on the trend"; creating thousands of fake social media profiles (the term used, "iPhone farms", sends shivers down my spine) posing as rabid fans; music promotion that's presented as spontaneous but is actually done by paying creators of other kinds of content to trick the algorithm; using fake accounts to stir up debate… shall I go on? Erik Oz's article then goes off in another, extremely interesting direction (I highly recommend it, I'm leaving you a QR code to access it), but I, dear rockbottoner, want to talk about the fucking algorithm.

This afternoon, yet again, I came across the umpteenth person filming themselves whining about how rock is dead, how the algorithm has us trapped and how (oh my God, not again) they don't make music like they used to. We've already talked about that last one here; it's pointless trying to explain it all over again. Right, repeat after me: rock is not dead. If anything's dead, it's your ability to dig around, to not be a fucking robot, to look beyond the plate that's put in front of you. That the algorithm exists is a fact. I don't know whether they spy on us or not, but it's clear that if I start talking to my neighbour about artificial grass, when I go online I'm going to get artificial grass offers popping up. That's how it's set up; there's not much we can do about it, apart from being a bit surprised and ignoring it all, just like we used to ignore that ad from the eighties where a businesswoman cleaned a boardroom table by throwing herself on it (you didn't have to wait thirty years to throw up at such sexism). But when it comes to music… seriously? There was a time when radio stations were a key part of our learning, and they probably also acted as an algorithm, just like MTV, which dictated what was going to be a hit or not by hammering the video of the moment. But back then we didn't have millions of albums at the flick of a finger. When I read about the existence of some band called Screaming Trees or some Pavement, it took me years, not just to get hold of one of their albums, but even to get someone to tape me something of theirs on a really crappy 90-minute BASF cassette. But even then, it was interest that drove the perseverance to follow your own path, no better or worse than anyone else's, but it was yours. Now they whine because the algorithm won't let them see what's beyond the forest. Well, get moving and dive into the sources of information that so many people go to the trouble of putting in front of you, so you don't keep following some damn mathematical algorithm like a sheep while it decides what you should and shouldn't listen to. And let's not even get into a possibility that this bunch of poor wretches rarely considers: buying records! I'm sure it would blow more than one person's mind: generations who don't understand that music can (and should) come in a physical format. Of course, the thing is that a lot of records have to be bought directly at the merch stand of bands playing small venues five minutes from your house. But that's a whole other can of worms: go and see bands live, even if you don't know them! The number of bands that blow your mind out of nowhere… would surprise you, if you'll pardon the repetition.



Óscar Avendaño y Reposado





“Bo Derek’s is a flat-out, full-throttle fucking rock and roll band. It’s all about energetic, really direct songs, and at the end of the day everything rests on the commandments of Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley and Little Richard, and you play around somewhere in the middle of that. Reposado, on the other hand, is way more open. In Reposado almost anything can happen, from a song with fucking massive distortion the whole way through to another one where it’s just me on my own playing an acoustic guitar.”

Óscar Avendaño is one of the most genuine guys on this country’s music scene. Involved in several projects from a very young age, Avendaño first felt like a professional musician when he joined Siniestro Total as bassist, staying with them until the Vigo band split up. That also gave him the visibility he needed to take a qualitative leap and start becoming better known, so that, after a lot of hard work, he managed, with The Bo Derek’s, to make a name for himself nationwide. And that’s because, thanks to that Dr. Feelgood-indebted pub rock sound that got us so hooked, everything seemed to start taking off. But Óscar, as you can see if you read his book “¡Lo tengo en vinilo!” (NeoPerson Sounds), has a wide musical spectrum, and his folder of songs that didn’t fit with the Dereks kept filling up, so he decided to put his famous white dress aside (although not really, as he’ll tell us later on) and give free rein to his more eclectic interests, where there’s room for folk, psychedelic sounds, blues… and even touches of Pink Floyd! A well-rounded album, this new work, “El Huevo de la Serpiente” by Óscar Avendaño & Reposado, the third he’s released with Mauro Comesaña and Andrés Cunha.

It had been a while since I'd chatted with Óscar, although I've been lucky enough to have him appear in Rock Bottom with occasional contributions that are always appreciated, a guy with clear ideas and the gift of the gab, by Jove. The truth is this album deserved a good chat with him. "El Huevo de la Serpiente" is an album that needs more than just one listen, you have to get inside it and let yourself be carried away by the sounds and the lyrics, which are, possibly, what sets it apart most from its two predecessors: from the concept of the title to many of its lyrics, the band breathes into us their own vision of the world, of the one we're leaving behind, of the one we have in our hands and of the one we seem doomed to have. We talked about all of that at length, but also about open tunings, arrangements, Ronnie Lane… about music, in the end, which is what we love, right? It ends up being more of a chat at a bar than an interview, but what do you expect, those are the ones I enjoy most.

Congratulations on the album, it's going down well, isn't it?
From what I can see, yes, it's going down pretty well. The truth is I don't know why. I mean, OK, I really like the album, I believe in it, but I think it's been received differently from the previous Reposado albums, and deep down I think it's because of the work we've been doing these years with The Bo Derek's. I think with the Dereks I've got to a point where people know me for my work, so putting this album out has surprised them, because it's very different from what I do with Bo Derek's. And well, I think it's a fucking great album, honestly.

Because before, beyond the Vigo scene, you were less well known. People maybe knew you for being Siniestro Total's bassist.
Yeah, and that's even though I'd already been working, I've been doing little things for many years that reached the specialist press, but nowhere else, a small audience that was really interested. But of course, I couldn't move around much, because with Siniestro, in the end, making plans while they were going was a bit frustrating: you'd have a tour organised, suddenly a Siniestro gig would come up and you'd have to scrap the whole tour. The truth is it was really frustrating. And even before Siniestro ended I started going all out with the Bo Derek's, because I found a formula: if I booked something with Bo Derek's and in the end I couldn't go because something came up with Siniestro Total, I'd send my bandmates with the Wavy Gravies, which is the other band the rest of the Derek's have. We always came to that arrangement, and neither they lost the date, nor whatever venue it was lost the date, nobody lost too much.

Juggling.
Exactly, that's when we started working much harder with Bo Derek's than I'd ever worked, also because they were much more willing than other bandmates in other bands, for personal reasons, because they don't have another job or because they're in a position to do it.

Anyway, that first The Bo Derek's album also hit big. I even think you were a bit surprised by how well it was received.
At that moment I felt we'd arrived, with all the inverted commas in the world, of course, at the right place at the right time. I missed bands like the Bo Derek's, and I thought that, since I missed them, I'd do it myself. There are some, of course, sure, but since I couldn't find many bands doing it, and even fewer in Spanish, I was going to do it myself. And I realised there were people at the same point as me, who also missed that kind of band. I think that's why it worked. And it was really cool too because we were able to get around like crazy. Suddenly we were everywhere. During the first year we did the whole peninsula.

Almost all of it.
Yeah, almost. The truth is I'm dying to go to Jerez, man. Let's see if it happens this year. And so, we got around loads, and that's why I think that, apart from the Bo Derek's, people started to know my name too, because in the end I was the guy who came from Siniestro and started that band, I was the main songwriter and, above all, the frontman, that was me.

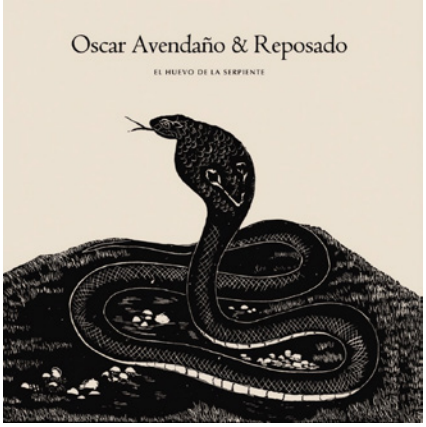
It's put you on the map a bit.
That's it. So, getting to this moment, I think I'm at a sweet spot, again with all the inverted commas you like, because I notice that on a certain level I'm appreciated. And when I say a certain level, in the end we're in the underground of the underground. But I've got certain fans who are real fans, or the press starts paying attention to me, as is the case here. I'm not saying you're starting today.

At what point do you decide to put the Bo Derek's aside and go back to Reposado? I imagine you keep writing songs and stashing them in the drawer depending on how they sound to you, and that the Reposado drawer must have been a bit overflowing.
Exactly. Anyway, the Bo Derek's aren't on hold. We're still playing, and what's happening this year with Bo Derek's is something that tends to happen every so often, it's cyclical. Over the previous years we've already played every rock and roll festival in this country, so this year we're playing much less because, of course, all those festivals aren't calling us anymore. When the statutory time has passed they'll call us again, because it always works like that. It's also true that we've raised our fee, because I thought it was the right time, and so each gig might be as profitable for us as two or three of the ones we used to do, which is great. But what I was getting at: they're not on hold. It was simply a moment of, since we're getting fewer calls, let's do things with the other bands we have. They've also just recorded an album with the Wavy Gravies, which is the other band they have. It's not out yet, but they've already recorded it.

Sure, and Comesaña is also in Zålomon Grass, and they really do make it all the way down to my neck of the woods.
Yeah, Zålomon Grass are about to record a new album too. I think they're going to Holland because one of the DeWolff guys is going to produce them, I don't know if it's the guitarist. I'm more modest (Laughs). I've kind of got my formula now: I record the Reposado albums with Hendrik, and with the Bo Derek's I've recorded two with Martín Guevara, Capsula's guitarist. And the next one we do, though there are no plans to do it yet, will be with him too. And I'll tell you that the decision to record this album was exactly for the reason you mentioned: things were quieter with Bo Derek's and it seemed like a good time to record it. I had lots of unfinished songs, because I don't finish songs, what I do is record sketches of what could be a song and leave them in a drawer, but I don't fiddle with them too much, I just leave them there. I had lots of stuff I liked, I called Comesaña and Cunha and said: "Do you fancy recording an album?". They said yes, and in a month or two, rehearsing once a week, we got all the songs ready and recorded the album.

And Hendrik is one of those who tells you that you have to come with all the songs already worked out, at least that's what he told me once.
I don't know what Hendrik thinks about that, the truth is I've never talked to him about it, but I always come with the songs worked out.

But things get created in the studio too.
Yeah, of course, things happen in the studio, but I come with the songs finished. When I record with Bo Derek's we do things like recording thirteen songs in a day and a half. It's like: come on, right, let's record. It's also true that Bo Derek's is a very energetic, very meat-and-potatoes thing, with very few arrangements. So it's done quickly, because it's recording the song, recording the vocals, recording the odd solo that's left over, maybe some backing vocals and a harmonica, and that's it. The whole album's recorded on the first or second take. Sometimes with a song you might say: "That one didn't come out very well, play it again", and on the second go it's done. That's how it works with Bo Derek's. Martín, the Capsula guy, was blown away the first time we went there, because he couldn't believe how fast we could be. But it's because we go for the simplest and most effective thing. With Reposado it's not like that. With Reposado we let ourselves be carried along by the studio a bit more: you've got the songs, you've got the structure finished, the lyrics finished, and then in the studio we get creative with backing vocals, with some guitars. For example, there's a song on this album where Hendrik suddenly



says: “Record a baritone guitar on this”, and he hands me a baritone guitar, which I’d never fucking played in my life. It was the first time I’d ever held a baritone guitar.

What’s a baritone guitar?
Visually it’s like a normal guitar, but its range is halfway between a guitar and a bass. Its strings are much thicker than a guitar’s and thinner than a bass’s.

Electric, acoustic or Spanish?
Electric. It has really thick strings. The sixth, the thickest string on a baritone guitar, might be almost like the thinnest string on a bass. It already gives you a deep, very thick sound.

Is the tuning the same as a conventional guitar?
The relationship between the strings, yes. But if on a guitar the sixth is tuned to E, on a baritone I think it’s a B. So it gives you a super beastly, super thick sound. It’s used a lot for some country stuff, they’re really chunky guitars.

Which song do you play it on?
On “Cuervos”, the album’s murder ballad. It has a solo where, when you listen to it again, you’ll notice the guitar is super fat, super thick, and that’s a baritone guitar. I’d never played one of those in my life, but Hendrik goes: “Here”. I said to him: “But you record it”. And he said no. And you think: well, I’m also excited to record it myself. He would have done it better, but it means more to me to record it myself.

What are the stylistic differences between Bo Derek’s and Reposado?
Bo Derek’s is a flat-out, full-on rock and roll band. It’s about energetic, very direct songs, and in the end everything is based on the commandments of Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley and Little Richard, and you play around in between. Sure, there’s more to it, but you get the idea perfectly. Reposado, on the other hand, is much more open. In Reposado almost anything can happen, from a song with fucking massive distortion all the way through to another where it’s just me on my own playing an acoustic guitar. On this album there are super chilled, pretty songs, or whatever you want to call them, and others that are really dirty.

It’s funny, because before I heard it people were telling me: “It’s a more intimate album”. But afterwards, when I listened to it, it didn’t strike me that way. There are more intimate moments, yes, but as a whole I think the word is “open”, like you said, because there are blues moments, rock and roll moments. And the lyrics are much deeper.
I think what people say about intimacy might also come from the lyrics. The Bo Derek’s ones are more party lyrics, I try to make them funny, but they’re sort of cheeky lyrics, and the Reposado ones are more serious. I stick my neck out more, maybe.

How do you see the band’s evolution from “Burros” (2015), through “Perros negros” (2021), up to this “El Huevo de la Serpiente”?
I see a natural evolution. I think the three albums, in terms of songs and lyrics, hold up pretty well together, although each of them maybe broadens the range a bit more, which also seems normal to me, desirable. I really like all three, but I especially like this one, and I don’t think it’s because it’s the latest or because it’s fresher, but because, first, I think it sounds better. I think it’s the best recorded. Yes, all three were recorded by Hendrik, but I think this one sounds bloody amazing. I have to say Mauro was really important in the mixing, he started coming up with ideas that, to be honest, were beyond me. He’s much more interested in the production side, and I’m more interested maybe in songwriting and lyrics.

With Zålomon Grass, when I interviewed them, we had a good chat about arrangements. I think it’s an art.
When it comes to arrangements we’re on a par. He’s a really good song arranger, I also really like arranging songs, even Andrés is pretty creative with that stuff. But no, I’m talking purely about mixing and production. Out of the blue he’d say: “Hey, why don’t you put...?”, and he’d tell you a specific kind of reverb for a vocal at a particular moment. We’d do it, we’d sort of follow his final instructions and everything worked fucking great. He deserves a lot of credit there.

I’d say that’s also kind of arranging.
No, that’s a different thing. It’s more mixing. That’s when everything’s already recorded. The arrangements are what you record, and once everything’s recorded, from there on the rest is mixing, producing. Arranging is what the band does, what we leave on tape. And he does these things like: “Take this guitar out here, don’t let it come in there, delete what’s before and have it come in right at that point”. And suddenly you go: damn, these things work really well.

There are great arrangers in the history of music who didn’t have a bloody clue about music. Brian Wilson is the perfect example: he was the typical guy who couldn’t read a score, but he’d tell the Wrecking Crew: “Here you have to play this”. But of course, those were arrangements, because he was doing it during the recording.
But then he produced too. It’s crazy. Let’s say arrangements are: you play this, you play this, let’s do these backing vocals here. And then, when it’s already recorded, saying: “Hey, put some kind of effect on this, turn this down, turn this up here”, that’s all mixing. And Mauro’s really good at that, man. He did a hell of a job on this album.

> ***When you write lyrics, you write about what unsettles you or what’s caught your attention at that moment. And I think the rise of the far right is just something that’s there right now. It worries me.***

Let’s carry on with the differences between the three albums.
Personally, I play much better than before, so I handle a lot more of the guitars. That makes the album a bit dirtier, for better and for worse. That depends on the listener’s taste. But I think the album is dirtier because the guitars, the vast majority, are me. On the previous albums the lead guitars were almost always Hendrik’s. I might record one or two, but with Hendrik around, why would I? I’ve improved loads over these years, I’ve gone for it and recorded guitars myself and they have more of my personality. On top of all that, I’d say we worked on the previous albums more in the rehearsal room. This one comes across as really fresh. We’d go to rehearse, every day I’d bring a song or two and the three of us would get to polishing it, structuring it and turning it into what a song has to be, and everything came out really fast. Everything was really fresh. I wrote the lyrics really fast too, and suddenly we had the album finished, and really well finished, much sooner than I thought. I think it’s come out really fresh and that, in the end, maybe you don’t notice it, but your brain appreciates it.

I’ve been listening to the three albums non-stop for the last two or three days and I do see a difference. What you say is true, this latest album has a slightly different personality. It sounds better, with more depth. And the lyrics are different. If you like, let’s get into it: with the title you’re kind of setting the tone and the theme of the album, aren’t you?
When you write lyrics, you write about what worries you or what catches your attention at that moment. And I think right now the rise of the far right is something that’s there. It worries me, so it’s impossible for there not to be at least a couple of lyrics revolving around it.

The first one is called “Nuremberg”, and



the album title, "El Huevo de la Serpiente", refers to an Ingmar Bergman film. The metaphor is fantastic. The serpent's egg thing, which looks really cute until suddenly it hatches and eats you.

At first I was thinking of calling the album "Nuremberg". I work a lot through visual stimuli: going out into the street and seeing something, or putting the TV on and seeing a couple of images. In fact, there are several songs on this album that actually have to do with films too. It always happens to me. That day some channel was showing that film about the Nuremberg trial, the Spencer Tracy one. I watched a bit of it, because it's a film I really dig, and suddenly it stirred something in me. It was like: damn, man, we're at the same point again. We'll have to apologise again, if it ever goes to trial. Of course, I was thinking more about Palestine. They're things that resonate with you somehow. That caught my attention and I started pulling on that thread. Then I also started looking for stuff on Filmin and I came across a film called "Dies irae", the day of wrath, which isn't by Bergman, it's by Carl Theodor Dreyer. We're going full arthouse snob here (Laughs). The day of wrath... I don't know much about the Bible, I think it's from the Apocalypse, although the film doesn't really talk about that either. I pressed play and didn't watch it, but I started watching how it began, and that's where I started getting inspired, pulling powerful images. The thing about seeing the serpent smile, since serpents are one of the representations of the devil. And that led me to the serpent's egg. I started pulling on the thread a bit and in the end, instead of "Nuremberg" for the album, I said: hang on, "Nuremberg" for the song and "El Huevo de la Serpiente" for the album. I don't really like giving an album the same title as a song, because somehow it seems like you're focusing attention on that song. I want all the songs to carry their own weight. Besides, I don't think there's a single song on this album that's even remotely filler.

And maybe there isn't one that represents the album, because the repertoire is so wide that it would have been like focusing it on one song, one style, one theme. I wanted to talk a bit about fascism, about the fear it causes some of us. As it happens, I have a WhatsApp group with my friends from my teens. We became friends at fifteen or sixteen, we drank, we smoked, we started listening to bands like Nirvana, Extremoduro… with a message, and we talked about revolution, about freedom… even about anarchy. And now all of them, except me, are hardcore fascists. I don't know what the fuck has happened to this world, because today they were talking about roadside ditches and shots in the back of the head. I think it's a global issue, but in this country, with what we've been through, which is still very recent for us, it's unbelievable. We're a generation, ours, and I include you, because I'm reading your book and the records you discover are very similar to the ones I discovered, who grew up in the 90s and, culturally, it seemed like we were finally going to change things a bit, with a more open mentality, and it turns out we didn't. And the generation coming up behind us, where I thought this should already be a thing of the past, people aged twenty or twenty-five, they scare you. It's not the posh kids anymore, it's poor people, middle-class people, kids who've lost perspective, who've been kind of conned, I think through social media or who knows what. I'm not going to do a sociological analysis of the issue here, but it's really scary. And I especially liked your album because of that vision. The serpent's egg thing seems wonderful to me. I'm glad, in inverted commas, because I'd rather not have this feeling, but I see you talking, I see your lyrics, and I see that I'm not the only one who sees it. I don't know what the fuck has happened.

Sometimes I have the feeling, or maybe the hope, that these things are cyclical, that after what's happening now a generation will come back and say: damn, what the hell are you playing at, you fucking lunatics? I have the hope that, yes, now we have a rise of the far right, but that soon all that will change again. Anyway, it's what I'm telling you: we're at a point so similar to exactly a hundred years ago that it's unbelievable, man. Back then it was Hitler rising to power, and Mussolini and his fucking mother, and right now there's Trump and there's Netanyahu, and there go all the rest of us.

With the tech companies behind it, which is a new element that means you can't predict things based on what's happened in the past.

Of course, the far right's promotional machine

is brutal, because on top of that the biggest broadcasting channels are controlled by Zuckerberg and Elon Musk. Ninety per cent of what comes up for me on social media, supposedly at random, is fascist propaganda. I get loads of it. This thing that happens now and didn't happen before, where suddenly on Facebook you get stuff from people you don't follow, it's always ultra-fascist. I keep blocking, and when you block they give you the option to say why, so I say it doesn't match my interests, or it offends me, or whatever, and I keep getting more and more, and it never ends. The propaganda machine is brutal.

The difference is that your head's already sorted, and the kids' isn't. I'm in the process of teaching my daughters to understand the stimuli that reach them. My daughter, at seventeen, has her head pretty well screwed on. We've taught her pretty well what empathy is and to understand a bit about where we come from, and we're doing well there. But you have to explain to her really clearly not to believe everything that shows up on the screen, and it's complicated. Anyway, let's talk about music. I really like "Estrella fugaz", which has an Allman Brothers vibe.

Yeah? Look, I've had the opening music of that song for ages. It was something that came to me one day, and I think it was the first song, after a long time, where I said: damn, this would be cool for a Reposado album. And there it stayed for years. I record them sort of roughly on my phone, then I dump all that into a folder on the computer that says "song sketches", and every now and then I open it, listen and say: damn, this is good, this one's got a song in it.

Phones are amazing for this, anything occurs to you and you can record a melody right away.

I write lyrics on my phone now. I don't write on paper anymore, I leave myself WhatsApp voice notes with the lines, because that way I remember the phrasing exactly, because later it might shift a bit and you can't figure out how you fitted it in at first. Then I write it out properly, but that helps me remember the phrasing and it works really well for me. And "Estrella fugaz" was kind of the first one. I hadn't thought of the Allman Brothers thing; now that you've said it, I do get it. I wasn't really sure what it reminded me of. At first, played on an acoustic at home, it seemed like a sort of folky song, 60s American, that kind of half-beatnik, half-hippie late-60s vibe. You switch to electric guitar and things change. And then there's the final part: the song has a part that's the song itself and then an instrumental development and then a change. It's funny that it reminds you of the Allman Brothers; it reminded me of Led Zeppelin, go figure. But the best thing is that it reminds everyone of something different, because if you nail a band's sound, you're screwed: in the end they're going to compare you and you're going to come off worse.

"A todos mis amigos", which you mentioned earlier, has a Ronnie Lane feel that I love. I don't know if the word is cosy, but it doesn't have that pessimistic feel that maybe marks the rest of the album, quite the opposite. It's a very Ronnie Lane song, he used to do that kind of beer-in-hand song, picking up the guitar and deciding to sing about friendship.

We saw it a bit more like The Byrds' country period, but the Ronnie Lane thing works perfectly for me too. Ronnie Lane has been one of my great icons for ages. This isn't to score points, which would make no sense, but there was a time when Ronnie Lane's records were dirt cheap at record fairs, because nobody was interested in them, and I'd buy them. I was the only Ronnie Lane fan I knew of. Then suddenly a kind of cult started and it spread, and thank goodness, because the truth is his work deserves it. But at that time I felt very alone as a Ronnie Lane worshipper. So obviously Ronnie's music is always there, I've got it embedded in me. There are bands you carry embedded inside you, that you listened to above all at a defining time in your life. I think the music you listen to between fifteen and twenty-five stays there for your whole fucking life. Especially in our day, because things have changed now, but back then you'd buy an album and you had to play that album to death, because it had cost you a fortune.

Even if you didn't like it, you'd listen to it twenty times.

That's it. And that had its good side, because maybe, by listening to it twenty times, you started to understand it and started to like it. Suddenly you'd discover that an album you didn't really get the first time ended up being a fucking masterpiece for you. That's happened to me with quite a few albums. It's harder now, of course.

Have you read the Ronnie Lane book, the one that came out a couple of years ago?

No, it's on my list and I haven't read it yet, but yeah, it's there.

Well, I highly recommend it. For any fan of the British Invasion, of the Faces, of Humble Pie, of the Small Faces and, above all, obviously, of Ronnie Lane, it's a joy. It's like the Gram Parsons one, which came out recently too. They're books I know I'm going to read more than once.

I'll read them, because I really fancy it, but it's also true that they're two artists whose lives I know really well. I could have written the book myself (Laughs). I'm sure I'll discover things, but I know both their lives really well and, above all, I've got Ronnie Lane's down cold, man: all his appearances after the Faces, the times he got back on stage with them, in a real state by the end. There's a Pete Townshend solo album and at the end of the album there's Ronnie Lane, on his own, playing a song, drunk as a skunk, and you can really tell, and it's delightful to listen to. I've got it all well covered, that's maybe why I'm in no rush, but I am going to read them. You know how it is, the pile of books you've got there on the bedside table keeps getting higher.

Well, I thought you'd have had Ronnie Lane in mind when you did "A todos mis amigos". In fact, you talk about grabbing a bottle and opening it. Very Faces.

Well, I'll tell you something: not on that one. The one where I really had Ronnie Lane in mind was this one called "El último show del increíble hombre voltereta". I actually did write that one thinking of Ronnie Lane, believe it or not. But then it went off in a slightly different direction, and that's great. I don't like telling the band: "I wrote this song thinking about such-and-such". I like bringing the song and letting them interpret it wherever it takes them.

You were talking about "El último show del increíble hombre voltereta", which is dedicated to Piti Sanz, who you mention in your book.

Piti died just before I started writing the lyrics for the album. He had a heart attack. I was in the shower and, when I got out, I had a WhatsApp message from a mate who's an actor and worked with him a lot, Evaristo Calvo's his name, a guy who's pretty well known here in Galicia. It said something like: "Sorry to be the one bringing bad news, but Piti has died". I called him in a hell of a hurry and he explained, he told me it seems they found him dead, that he'd had a heart attack. And five minutes later, not even ten, social media started filling up with messages saying "damn, Piti's died". Man, you have no idea how grateful I am to Evaristo for sending me that WhatsApp, because if I'd found out through social media it would have hit me really hard. It was already hard enough without reading it on Facebook on top of that.

It's a sad way to find out about certain things.

Of course. Piti and I were really close friends, thick as thieves for a while. Lately we'd drifted apart a bit, but because of circumstances, because he'd gone to live in Coruña, and Coruña and Vigo, even though they seem close, are really far apart financially. The motorway is really expensive, it's one of the most expensive in Spain. Getting to Coruña is more complicated than getting to Santiago de Compostela, which is where he lived before, when we were always together. So, because of circumstances, we saw each other less. He'd also been through some pretty rough times and we talked on the phone a lot. Just when this happened I was starting to write the lyrics for the album, and it was obvious that at least one song had to talk about Piti, because I had it inside me. I really like the song because I think it remembers him in a happy way. It's not a sad song at all. And the people who knew him, his close friends... For example, a guy who was really close to him,

a lifelong friend as well, was Luis Tosar, the actor. Tosar told me he was blown away by the lyrics because in two lines they captured the spirit of who Piti was, that I'd really nailed his personality. Of course, that happens when you really know someone, when you really love someone.

You seem proud of that.
I'm as proud of having written the song as I am of having paid my friend a tribute that I think is beautiful. Actually, I think I'm prouder of that. His work speaks for him.

But having been able to express who he was and having someone else see it, that's beautiful.
Yeah, but it's what I'm telling you: when you love someone a lot, when they're really close, in the end it's easy to write.

Don't think it's that easy. It takes something, you need those moments of inspiration.
Well, I'm a guy who writes about everyday life. If you look, everything I write is very everyday, very day-to-day. I'm not a guy with great inventiveness, I'm more of an observer of life, and that's where my strength lies. But look, going back to "A todos mis amigos", the other day my brother wrote to me. I don't talk to my brother much. We love each other a lot, but we don't see each other much, that's why we get on well. And I wasn't aware he'd never heard that song. The other day a mutual friend played it to him and he told me: "I heard that really beautiful song where you talk about Mum and Dad at the bar". And I said: of course, in the end my brother is the only one who can understand what I'm saying there. He remembers that bar, and he remembers what it was like waiting for my father while my father was there doing his accounts.

He used to send you to the cinema before, didn't he?
Yeah, well, that was when I was younger. But that's it, when you remember someone really well or you know them really well... Thing is, I'm not one for very long lyrics either. I try to capture everything in four lines. The same thing happens in my book, the chapters are really short, because in the end it's already been told. Everything else would be embellishing it. That's all I have to say. And it's not that I'm proud of how I write, but that people can recognise what I saw and say: damn, it's true, that's how it was. I have a special fondness for that song. It's not the only one that talks about Piti, because there's another one that also refers to him in some way, at least in my head. I've always liked songs about saying goodbye to friends that aren't sad, songs that celebrate life instead of mourning the farewell. For example, "Tócala, Uli", by Gabinete Caligari, seems to me the same kind of song: let's celebrate the life of this mate who's left us.

With a beer in your hand.
That's it. And I like that.

I also really like "Con el labio partido". I admit I really like cowbell, it brings a song to life. I can't help thinking of Christopher Walken on "Saturday Night Live" saying "more cowbell".
More cowbell! (Laughs). It's a song that's obviously in the tradition of the Faces and the Stones, where we treated ourselves to a fucking great horn section, and piano and Hammond, played by fantastic musicians. There's not much more to say. It's a song I really dig and I'm really excited about, because it's the first time I've recorded slide guitar, even if it's low in the mix and it's a simple little slide part. I'd never played slide guitar before.

What's it tuned to? What tunings do you use?
That was open G. I use, and that's saying a lot, open G and open D.

There was a band in the late 90s, Raging Slab, and the guitarist, Elyse, was incredible on slide. She passed away. My first or second interview for the magazine was with the singer, because he'd vanished off the map and I managed to talk to him. We talked about his wife's guitars and he started telling me about some weird tunings that blew your mind. I thought: damn, that's how she played so well. Anyway, let's go to my favourite song, "Osos en la era espacial". I don't know if anyone's told you, it has an opening, a riff that's very bluesy, very 70s, as you were saying earlier, and then it goes into a kind of ecstasy reminiscent of Pink Floyd's "Shine On You Crazy Diamond". At 5:10, I think it starts. I think the song is brutal, I think the lyrics are brutal. That Humble Pie-style 70s riff drives me crazy, and then I really like Pink Floyd. How did you come up with it? You throw in blues and Pink Floyd, what balls, man (Laughs).
It sounds crazy, but in the end it's not such a big deal.

No, it sounds fucking great. Once you hear it, it seems to make sense, but if someone tells you beforehand...
This song comes in two parts. One is the song itself, which was a guitar riff I had lying around and developed a bit, and that's where the whole blues part comes from, the main part of the song. And then, in the rehearsal room, once we had the song, you get there and suddenly it's like: now what? Because it's missing something. The song is missing a section. And I think I said something like: "Now it'd be cool to do the Pink Floyd thing, let's float here", go off into a bit of a trippy vibe. And it came out of a bass riff that's Andrés's. If you notice, this is the song all three of us are credited with on the album, because for me that development belongs totally to the three of us. Mauro's a guy who, also, when he plays, especially when you get into improvisations, manages to give it a kind of narrative. That's the word. It's not just improvising for the sake of improvising, he takes you along and everything makes sense. Mauro does that, and you go with him.

> ***There are people who, when this turns into an obligation, end up burning out. Not me. I love what I do. I really, really love playing and I love writing songs. I thank the cosmos for letting me make a living from this.***

On drums.
Yeah. And I, as the guitarist, follow him. When we do these things, not only in the studio but also live, both with this band and with the Naipes, which is the other band we play in together and which is really into trippy improvisations, I always follow him. It's like: get behind him, he knows when to stop. So that's a riff by Andrés, and then, at some point, I think it was me who said: "And now we go back to the chorus". That way the song is rounded off and it's not a bolted-on bit, but it makes sense for it to come back again. I think it was me, but maybe it was someone else, the truth is I don't remember anymore. And I started the song's lyrics, and wrote a good chunk of them, on the night of the blackout. Suddenly it was… for God's sake, we've just been through a pandemic and now this. OK, you assumed there'd be power the next day, but... Have you seen a French series called "El colapso"?

Yes, I've seen it.
That's what it brought to mind, man. I thought: this is the start of the collapse. Luckily, no, but that's when the first lines came to me.

And the resemblance of that part to the Pink Floyd song, was it a coincidence or did it head that way a little?
"Shine On You Crazy Diamond"? I hadn't thought about it either. I'd have to listen to "Shine On You Crazy Diamond" again now to see that resemblance. Obviously it was a coincidence, we weren't going for that.

I imagine it wasn't on purpose, but that Pink Floyd streak came out there.
That's for sure. But I was thinking more of "Echoes" or something like that. Whenever I think of Pink Floyd, for me the pinnacle is the Pompeii concert. It's mind-blowing, seeing Pink Floyd at Pompeii.

I missed seeing it at the cinema. I thought nobody would go and, when I got there, they laughed in my face and told me: "They sold out half an hour after going on sale". We even tried to buy the disabled seats, man, and they'd been snapped up too (Laughs). I never got to see it in a proper cinema.
I couldn't go either and the truth is I was


Solomon Burke

gutted, because that must be incredible at the cinema, in a good cinema, with good sound and with the remastered, restored picture.

There's another song I really like, "Playas desiertas", which is pure soul, with those horns that sound like classic Stax, like Solomon Burke, like Otis Redding. What did you have in mind when you recorded it with all those arrangements?
I had that song lying around. As you can see, it's a song that doesn't even have a chorus. It's like three verses without a chorus, but I don't think it needs one. I think it's the song I like most on the album. I like them all, but I'd say it's my favourite, above all because of the final result, the way it's turned out, partly because of the horns. This is the other one I told you has a lot to do with my friend Piti, because that line about "we saw kites flying over deserted beaches" refers to a day when he phoned me and says: "Hey, I've got a two-line kite". Piti was a really peculiar guy, given to really funny impulses, really crazy, and suddenly he took me to the beach to fly the two-line kite there. That's where the lyrics come from. Then it also refers to other friends who died. In the end that's what the song is about. And when we were putting it together in the studio I said: the horn section, and this turns into pure soul. But without Hammond or any of that crap, because the logical thing would have been to put Hammond on it. And I said: no, no Hammond, just the horns, dry like that, balls to the wall.

Balls to the wall?
It's what we use here, to go for the throat.

I love it. I could picture it, but I'd never heard it.
Balls to the wall, have them come in like that, to go for the throat. And I think that's what suddenly gives it a hell of a lot of drama. You don't see it coming. I've seen people listening to the song saying: "It's cool", and suddenly, when the horns come in: "Holy shit!".

Was there a budget for that?
Well, the budget was mine, whatever I wanted to spend. I found Miguel Herrero, a young guy who has a studio in Asturias and who's also the cousin of Dani Herrero, a sax player who plays with everybody. I think lately he's with Loquillo, believe it or not. Miguel plays trumpet, he did the arrangement and called his cousin Dani to add saxes, and the two of them recorded it for me. Besides, it was really easy to understand each other. I sent him the two songs I wanted to have horns, which are this one and "Con el labio partido". For a start, I knew his work, I'd already heard horn sections he'd recorded and it was what I wanted. On this one he listened and said: "OK, what suits this one is a Stax, Booker T. kind of thing". And I said: "OK, that's it, you know what you have to do". And on the other one he told me: "I'm going to go for a vibe like 'All Down the Line'". And I said: "Say no more, man, 'Exile on Main St.', you know full well what you have to do".

It's a joy working with people like that.
Yeah, I'd let him record on the whole album. The thing is there wasn't a budget for that much. But look, I think songs should have what they need.

And what they ask for.
And not stick bolted-on bits on them. There's no point sticking bolted-on bits on. These were the two that I thought deserved that section.

Great, I love it. I wouldn't have said no to the Hammond either, but it's fine like that. I understand what you're saying.
It does call for Hammond, but if you don't put Hammond on it, it seems like it's going to stay that austere, and then suddenly the horns come in and it gives it a massive lift.

I'll never say no to a Hammond, but I don't miss it on that song.
That's what I'm getting at. Hammond would have sounded great on it, I'm telling you it would have been perfect, but if it had come in on the previous verse, for example, then the horns wouldn't surprise you so much. You can see where the song's going. I think this way it's more surprising and it's drier, and I like it.

Very well thought out, Óscar.
I have my moments (Laughs).

In the thank-yous you mention Asís. Who is he?
Asís is a saint, Francis of Assisi. It's funny because the guy is called Francisco de Asís too. He's a friend from Almendralejo, from Extremadura, who was a big Siniestro Total fan. He came to every Siniestro Total gig, and let's say I inherited him. Now he's been a superfan of mine for many years and he helps me out a lot financially. He puts money in so I can get things off the ground, but he does it because he wants to. For me he's a real patron. Sometimes it even makes me feel awkward, but it really makes the guy happy.

I'll tell you something: if I had money, I'd be producing albums for half of Spain. What you're telling me seems wonderful and at the same time logical, because those of us who are crazy about art, about music... Just like there are patrons of painting, or there were in Renaissance Italy, who'd take Michelangelo and tell him: "I'm going to pay you, you won't want for anything, you just devote yourself to making art". It's logical that there are people like that. More understandable than logical, because people find it hard to part with their money, but it's understandable that someone who's well-off invests in things that make them happy, and maybe it makes him happy to help you put out an album. I swear: if I had money, there's no doubt whatsoever I'd be helping loads of people, especially in the province of Cádiz, where there are tons of artists who are struggling to get by.
I have no doubt at all that you would, because in a way you already do. You do what you do, and that's already really needed. I think that, in any art, but let's say, in music, there are people like us who make songs and then other people thanks to whom the rest of us have something to do. Thanks to you, people who weren't going to listen to me will listen to me. Everyone does their bit however they can, and you do it with your magazine. And he, who doesn't have a magazine but wants to belong in some way, wants to do his bit there, does it by helping me put out albums every now and then.

You've explained it really well. That's how I feel, trying to do my bit for something that has given me so much in life and still does, which is music and rock and roll.
Sure, that's it. And the same thing happens to him. If you see how he lives it, man, how he gets at any gig... He really lives it. He's a guy who deserves a monument, I really mean it. And that's why it makes me laugh, because he's called Francisco de Asís, although he's Asís to his friends, and as I say, Francis of Assisi is a saint.

This rock and roll thing is a lifestyle, but it's also how you make a living. Doesn't it lose a bit of its charm when it becomes your livelihood, or in the end is it all one thing?
Not for me. There are people who burn out. There are people who, when this becomes an obligation, end up burning out. Not me. I love what I do. I really love playing and I really love making songs. I thank the cosmos for letting me make a living from this. Sure, there are days when, for whatever reason, you have to play and you don't feel like it, because you're not feeling well. I remember a gig we did with the Bo Derek's in Toledo, man, where I had a temperature of thirty-eight, and I did a gig like the ones I always do, with all the intensity in the world, but of course, afterwards I was shivering in the dressing room, I had a really rough time. Or you're really tired, or that gig, for whatever reason, doesn't particularly

excite you, because you get to a place where you don't like the promoter or he's an idiot, and you think: damn, I'd go home right now. But you do it anyway. That's why I'm telling you, I thank the cosmos for being able to do this and make a living from it, and I'm more and more grateful every time.

I'm going to tell you something, but in many ways you're a bit of an inspiration for a lot of us, man. At fifty-something, which is more or less my age, seeing you out there with so much passion and so much conviction in what you do is amazing to me. I'm telling you this from that little bit I contribute, which is my magazine, a crazy thing that a lot of people say makes no sense. A lot of the time I get up and say: what the fuck am I doing? But when I see people like you, I see…
That it makes sense.

Exactly, that in the end it does make sense. This ties in with the last question, which isn't a question, it's an opinion. You know I'm an amateur musician and I make my own songs. I have a friend who's like a brother, but he also has that typical Granada bluntness, and he asks me why I make songs, even as an amateur. He says there are things I'm good at and things I'm not, and by the ones I'm not he means making songs. On the one hand it hurts a bit, and on the other I don't care, because writing songs, even though it took me a long time to dare to write music, is something exciting. So, what do you think about creation and about the mere fact of creating? Can we call anything that's made art? Do I have the right to create songs, even if I'm a nutter, or if you don't have much talent is it better not to even try?
When I was writing my book, I'd say: but where am I going with this, I'm not a writer. And talking to an acquaintance who's a writer, she told me: "Look, if it works for you, it already makes sense. If doing it fulfils you, it already makes sense". Then, if nobody publishes it, well, they don't publish it, but you've already done what you had to do. And I think it's exactly the same with songs. You make songs because you need to, because it turns you on, and I think everyone should be able to do that. In fact, I think the ones who shouldn't make songs are the ones who do it as a trade, out of obligation. That whole writing-on-a-production-line thing, like a factory: I'm going to make a song and see if the girls like it and I make it big. Those are the ones who shouldn't make them. But if you feel it, if you carry it inside you and your body's asking for it, even if only you like them... And if you like them and I like them, that's two of us, and if it's three, it's three. Besides, whether you have talent or not is so relative... What can I tell you? With my first band we started making songs before we knew how to play. Since we couldn't play anybody's covers, because we didn't know how to play, we made our own songs. It was easier. They were crap songs, of course, but you've broken the barrier, you're not shy anymore about making your own songs. And then all you can do is get better, because, of course, the first ones are shit. What else are they going to be? Unless you're a prodigy, which none of us were. Then it's just learning how to do it. I think everyone should make whatever art they have to make. What I'm saying about making songs I'd also say about painting, or whatever, if it's what your body's asking for and it really isn't a pose. Because, of course, then there's posing. But if it's not a pose, if your body's asking for it, do it, man. And then, if it's bad, you'll polish it as you go.

It's a bit frustrating sometimes, because I'm not a professional musician. I play guitar relatively well, but I'm no prodigy, so it's always really hard for me. There are other things that come really easily to me and where I have a lot of confidence, a lot of self-assurance, but with music it's not the same.
I get it.

I always have Antonio Gala in mind, whom I never read, but he did some brutal interviews with Quintero, and one sentence stuck with me that said something like everyone should have that creative side, but they don't necessarily have to show it. It's always stuck with me, because the process of showing it can often be painful, it can be frustrating, you might not be good enough. I found it interesting coming from Gala. Although I think art has to be shared.
I'm all for doing it if your body's asking for it.

Also, another thing I heard back in the day is that developing creativity in children is essential for developing in life, in any area, even at work. Being creative isn't just writing a song, but being creative when it comes to solving a problem or helping someone. That creative ability isn't only artistic. Nobody taught me to create, it was an urge from when I was little, but with my daughters, for example, I really encourage that. They draw bloody brilliantly. I leave them the ukulele, I leave them stuff lying around so they can mess about with it.
To tell you the truth, something like that happened to me. My parents weren't into any of that. The thing is they didn't clip my wings at all either. It was like: well, if you want, go for it. My mother gave me my first guitar when I was really little. This is funny to tell: my mother gave me a guitar she'd actually stolen from where she worked. She worked in a shop here in Vigo, which closed many years ago, called El Sport. It was a sports shop, but it had a toy section with stuff like that, and there were Spanish guitars. She stole the guitar and came home with it. From what I found out years later, she knew they were going to fire her, because they were firing all her colleagues, and she said: for the time I've got left in the convent, I might as well shit in it (Laughs). And that's how she walked out with that stolen guitar.

Your musical career started with a theft (Laughs).
Go figure. It's fine, rock and roll belongs on the street, man.

Javistone



PALANTE FEST 26

26 de diciembre de 2026

DE MEDIODÍA A MEDIANOCHE

La Bodega Skate (Jerez DLF)

PARQUESVR

«Los garbanzos imprescindibles de cualquier buen cocido» (Mondo Sonoro)

MADDENING FLAMES

«La mítica banda portuense de rock» (La Gaceta de Cádiz)

ZERO AZÚCAR

«Una banda con muchas calorías» (Lacontradejaén, elDiario.es)

FECTION

Desde Algeciras. Ya pasaron por Londres y Brighton; ahora les toca Jerez.

ALDEAQUEMADA

«Un himno de blues oscuro con carga feminista» (Andalucía Información).

WATER VIOLET

«Making emocore sad again» (El Ecualizador)

NO MAMUT

Post-rock distópico sin una sola palabra.

FIN DE FIESTA **ALEXANDER GROSS** EL ÚLTIMO SÁBADO DEL AÑO

DISEÑO GRÁFICO: WWW.COULDBETHEWEATHER.IE COMIDA CASERA, FAMILIAS BIENVENIDAS Y DOCE HORAS DE MÚSICA. TRAE A LOS CHIQUILLOS Y HASTA AL CUÑADO. TIRA PALANTE.

Orgullosos Patrocinadores Palante Fest 26

Ayuntamiento de Jerez
radio 3
generalife EL PATIO DE ALGARABIA
MATRIA COCINA MATERNA
CANDIÉ
DAMAJUANA Cafe. copas. bar
Fifty Pounds GIN
LA LIBRERÍA
EL RINCÓN BAR DE LA BARCA
Bar Juanito
LA GLORIA TABERNA
IL SICILIANO
Jaramago SOUND
LA BODEGA SKATE CENTER
LA ESCENA

Escanea y Tira Palante



How many scenes from a TV series or a film do you remember where, as you do, the music that went with them plays in your head? The number of moments where the action and the song come together on screen and become inseparable, so that often you can't understand one without the other, is countless. Tarantino is a genius at that: some of his classic sequences can't be understood without the songs that completed them, like Uma and Travolta's dance to Chuck Berry's "You Never Can Tell", and "Misirlou" is now linked for life to that incendiary opening of "Pulp Fiction". But there are many less obvious cases that have stuck in our memory, and we wanted to dig around to find some scene/song pairings where the symbiosis is perfect, as if the song had been written for the scene or the scene for the song, making everything fit perfectly. As I say, we've tried not to go for the obvious and we've rummaged through our dusty subconscious to bring you some examples from works like "Mindhunter", "Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid", "Midnight Mass" or "Cruella". Follow us on this cinematic and sonic journey.

"In Every Dream Home A Heartache", Roxy Music - "Mindhunter"

"Mindhunter" is one of those series that left a great taste in your mouth and a feeling of "coitus interruptus" when it was cancelled after the second season. In my opinion, the first was simply a masterpiece. The second starts well, but runs out of steam halfway through. However, the opening scene of the first episode of this second and final season is one of those that leave you completely breathless, hypnotised. One of the characters in the series is Dennis Rader, a character who never actually interacts with the protagonists, the FBI agents, which doesn't change the fact that he is, in the shadows, the one the series revolves around. Rader is a real person, a serial killer from Wichita, Sedgwick County (Kansas), who between 1974 and 1991 took the lives of ten people. He was known as the "BTK strangler", letters standing for bind, torture and kill, which described his modus "operandi". A little angel. The murder of the entire Otero family shows Rader's level of sadism, perversion and psychopathy. In the first season of "Mindhunter", Rader's nature is deliberately only hinted at: we're just shown his everyday side as a family man and diligent worker. However, in that first scene… Right at the start of the season, the first thing we see is a hallway in a 70s house where a housewife (who we later find out is Mrs. Rader) comes in in the distance to the rhythm of Roxy Music's "In Every Dream Home A Heartache". And I say rhythm for want of a better word, because the everyday scene of a woman coming back from the shopping contrasts with the suffocating sound of Bryan Ferry's near-spoken delivery as he talks hypnotically about houses, the sky… As Mrs. Rader puts the shopping away, she starts to hear some banging, a rattling that's completely foreign to her. Surprise gradually turns into unease while Ferry starts talking about the fascination his inflatable doll holds for him. The tension builds in Mrs. Rader as she gets closer to the bathroom door, where the noise seems to be coming from. In a single sequence shot lasting exactly three minutes and ten seconds, which is the moment when the tension is piercing your chest, the woman opens the door and



the song stops just as Ferry says “Inflatable doll, Lover ungrateful, I blew up your body, But you blew my mind”. Right at that moment there’s silence and Mrs. Rader discovers her husband practising autoerotic asphyxiation with a rope, dressed in women’s underwear and a mask. The scene shatters with the woman’s scream, Rader’s lost gaze and the epic ending of the song where Ferry keeps repeating “In every dream home a heartache”, with a clear message: domestic normality as a façade. Without a doubt one of those sequences where a song seems to have been designed down to the last millimetre for a scene (when in fact it was the other way round). Absolutely brilliant.

Javistone

“Stuck in the Middle with You”, Stealers Wheel - “Reservoir Dogs”



One of my great cinematic experiences was getting to watch this “Reservoir Dogs” strictly in the original version with subtitles, back in ‘92. It was my first entry, and that of many of my mates, into the Tarantino universe. Its crushing soundtrack served as inspiration and discovery, just like in his later films, of a whole world we didn’t know. And it would be hard to pick just one scene to represent this monument of celluloid. Going by the feelings I had when I saw the film for the first time, the torture scene with the ear being cut off to the sound of the flamboyant “Stuck in the Middle with You” would take first prize. The charm of the always fondly remembered Michael Madsen, moving to the beat of the music with the razor in his hand, even makes me feel nostalgic and affectionate. I’m a romantic, thirsty for the morbid.

J.L. Crespo “ZepiSoul”

“Ted, Just Admit It...”, Jane’s Addiction - “Natural Born Killers”

I remember once reading in Popular 1 (where I first saw the expression “psycho killer”, among many others) that César Martín, after the recent death of serial killer Ted Bundy in 1989, commented that Perry Farrell, author of “Ted, Just Admit It...”, could finally sleep easy, since it seems good old Ted hadn’t found the song fucking funny at all, a song that talks about society’s fascination with violence and how the media turn horror into spectacle. In “Natural Born Killers” (1994), Oliver Stone treats music as one more narrative element, on the same level as the image or the dialogue, and few scenes show this as well as the petrol station one. The film already works in itself as a frenetic collage of film and video, black and white and colour, fast and slow motion; and the soundtrack follows that same logic of accumulation and clash.



The sequence starts when Mallory leaves the motel where Mickey is holding a hostage and drives at night to a petrol station; the script already states that the Jane’s song is playing on her car radio. There she flirts with the mechanic and they end up on the bonnet of a car, but a memory of her father’s rapes shatters everything; he recognises her as the killer they’re looking for and she kills him violently. The song works almost like a parallel script. Its slow, enveloping opening, with Perry Farrell in an almost narcotic register, goes with the seduction, with that air of night-time calm and empty road. As the song tightens, so does the scene, and the explosion coincides with the leap from desire to violence. The mantra “sex is violent”, repeated to the point of obsession, is practically the thesis of the sequence and of a good part of the film, in which the desire between Mickey and Mallory is inseparable from the way they kill. Added to that is the creepy spoken fragment with Ted Bundy’s voice saying he hadn’t done anything, that the real killer was still out there, a killer denying his crimes inside a film about killers turned into stars by television. Stone was pointing precisely at that circus: in the film, the presenter Wayne Gale (an unhinged Robert Downey Jr.) turns the couple into folk heroes thanks to his show “American Maniacs”, with Bundy among the faces in the opening credits. Curiously, Farrell claimed the song wasn’t about Bundy and that they found the tape with his voice by sheer coincidence, before knowing who he was. In Stone’s hands, however, the song takes on a meaning it perhaps never had, and fits naturally into his message about the spectacle of violence.

Javistone

“Knockin’ On Heaven’s Door”, Bob Dylan - “Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid”

It’s not until minute forty-five of Sam Peckinpah’s film that the good-natured figure of retired sheriff Colin Baker, played by Slim Pickens, appears. He’s quietly building a wooden boat when Pat Garrett bursts in to ask for his help to capture Billy the Kid. True to his sense of duty, and thanks to a little gold coin, Baker will embark, without knowing it, on his last service to the law. On this final adventure he’ll be accompanied by his inseparable wife, played by the wonderful Katy Jurado. The two of them guide Garrett to the hideout of Black Harris and his henchmen, Billy the Kid’s cronies. As soon as they arrive, Baker gets shot in the shoulder. OK. His wife fires left, right and centre; but, lo and behold, in the heat of the skirmish, Baker takes another bullet, in the stomach, while trying to take cover behind a low wall. Bad news. The acoustic guitar and the mournful backing vocals start playing while Garrett dispatches Black Harris (who was shaving when they surprised him, the poor guy, which is kind of funny too). But the action isn’t there: that’s just one more execution in the world of the West, nothing new. The camera puts the action elsewhere, focusing on Baker feeling his fatal wound, walking slowly with faltering steps, moving away from the scene, from life. His wife sees him, she knows instantly, drops her rifle and follows him at a prudent distance, a distance that signals respect, love, pain, acceptance. It’s sunset, twilight, and Baker sits down on a rock at the edge of the river, with his hand on the wound trying to stop his life from spilling out. Katy Jurado goes with him, respecting that



devastating distance (death is a selfish act), and sits down on another stone nearby, with perhaps the sweetest and most painful look in the history of celluloid. She can't manage to say a word, she just looks, loves, curses, cries and smiles. The dialogue between them is provided by Dylan. "Mama, take this badge off of me": it's her, Mrs. Baker, who has to take the sheriff's star her husband won't wear any more, and to whom he says that darkness is closing in on him, that he feels he's knocking on heaven's door. Pat Garrett, with a certain sense of guilt, watches life crumble from afar as the chorus of the film's central song fades out, immortal from that moment on.

Juan Carlos León



It may be, right at this moment, my favourite scene from a music-themed film. And "Almost Famous" has music, and how. It's impossible for this moving and at the same time exciting journey through mid-seventies rock America, with the motto sex, drugs & rock'n'roll as its banner, to stop making the hairs on my moustache stand on end every time I watch it, and I've lost count… The moment on the tour bus, after a fucking massive row between the members of the band Stillwater, when maestro Elton John's delicate anthem plays while the band members feel every verse of the legendary melody, is totally legendary and immortal. Me, I cry easily, what can I tell you… Crying with happiness like this is a pleasure.

J.L. Crespo "ZepiSoul"

"Singin' in the Rain", Gene Kelly - "A Clockwork Orange"

Cine Usera, Usera neighbourhood, Madrid, 1983: "enjoying" this film at sixteen, in a continuous-showing cinema, can turn into something pretty traumatic. The disturbing images of Alex and his droogs committing their misdeeds to the sound of the ineffable Gene Kelly's world-famous "Singin' in the Rain" still echo in my brain: that contrast between the joy of the song and the extreme, gratuitous violence still strikes me as chilling. Kubrick covered himself in glory by magnifying the protagonist's cruelty towards his victims in this way. Although I still prefer Anthony Burgess's 1962 book to its screen version, every time I hear "Singin' in the Rain" I get goosebumps.

J.L. Crespo "ZepiSoul"

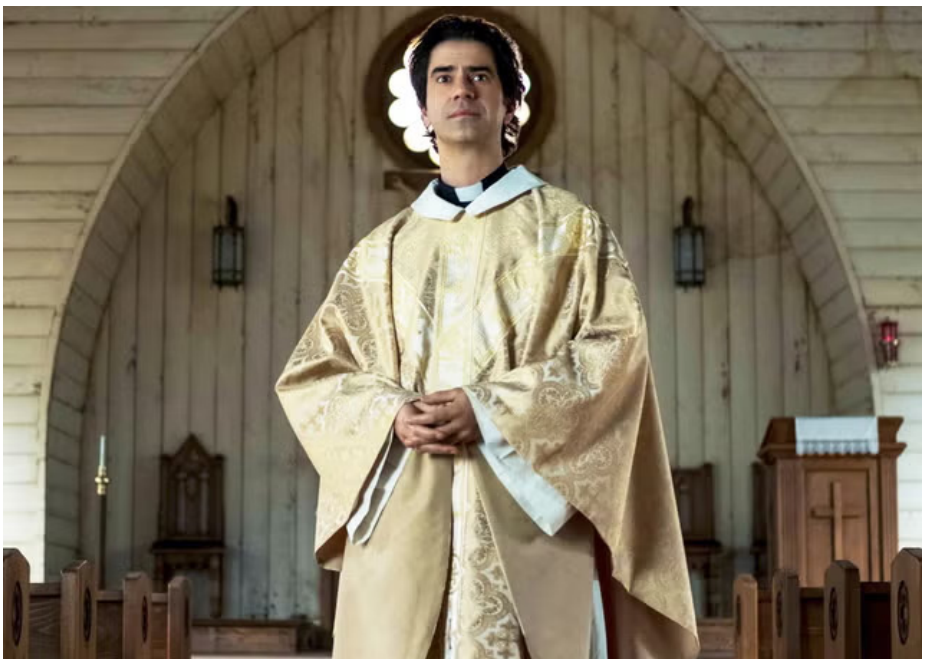
"Holly Holy", Neil Diamond - "Midnight Mass"

Neil Diamond simply didn't exist in my musical spectrum until one November afternoon in 2021, when he appeared out of the blue and knocked me completely out. Netflix had recently put Mike Flanagan's series "Midnight Mass" on its platform, and he'd already left us with a great taste in our mouths with the fantastic "The Haunting of Hill House" (2018). This time the director, born, mind you, in Salem, went for a fascinating horror story mixing religion, vampires, miracles and, as always, the convoluted nature of human beings. The story takes place on Crockett Island, a small, isolated and declining fishing community where Father Paul arrives, a priest apparently capable of giving its inhabitants back their hope. Sure enough, soon miracles start happening: sick people recovering, old people getting younger and people walking again. And it's at that moment of rebirth that Flanagan manages to express, in the barely three minutes "Holly Holy" lasts, what's happening in the fishing town, that transformation, that awakening towards a light that seemed lost, following the song's building, in crescendo rhythm. In the third episode, Ed Flynn (Henry Thomas, the famous boy from "E.T.") takes out a Neil Diamond record, puts on "Holly Holy" and starts dancing with his wife Annie in the living room. What a song, good heavens! It starts restrained, soft, and grows until it becomes an epic performance, with backing vocals that make what seemed like a love song end up closer to gospel, a kind of religious or spiritual chant. In those three minutes the song lasts, everything starts with that simple, domestic image of a married couple dancing in their living room, something unthinkable a couple of days earlier. The song becomes more and more epic as you see the townspeople regaining their lost happiness, the church gradually filling up with more parishioners, even the days look less cloudy. It's not just that the song fits the sequence, it's that Flanagan wrote the sequence specifically with it in mind and specified in the script that it had to play in full, because it works both as a representation of the community's revival and as a narrative foreshadowing of what's going to happen: "Call the sun in the dead of the night / And the sun's gonna rise in the sky", "Touch a man who can't walk upright / And that lame man, he's gonna fly". That's why that scene, which on the surface is one of the brightest moments in "Midnight Mass", ends up being one of the most sinister. We're watching the birth of the miracle and, at the same time, the birth of the tragedy through a hypnotic spiritual performed by an absolutely glorious Neil Diamond. Impossible not to surrender to a sequence like that.

Javistone

"Just Like Honey", The Jesus & Mary Chain - "Lost In Translation"

Although the iconic musical moment in "Lost In Translation" is perhaps Bill Murray's half-hearted yet heartfelt rendition of "More Than This" at the Japanese karaoke (the moment when Charlotte and Bob realise there's something random, impossible and inexplicable between them), the part where the music merges with the scene and gives voice to what neither of the two protagonists dares to say comes right at the end of the film. Bob Harris says goodbye to Tokyo and heads to the airport in a taxi, on a grey, dull morning. When he spots Charlotte's perky figure in the crowd (you've got to have good aim, too, in the middle of Tokyo), he gets out of the taxi and goes to meet her. The viewer might think Harris is defying his fate and is about to throw caution to the wind, but it's just an aside, a little emotional settling of accounts. He hugs her, she breaks down, he whispers to her, kisses her, they smile at each other. Bye. The whisper we don't hear, but hope will somehow be revealed to us. Something Sofia Coppola decided to mute and leave to the viewer's imagination: "I was thinking of the Italians, because they used to film and add the sound later. I didn't intend for it to be silent, and then in the edit we said, 'Oh, it's better if it's just between them and the audience brings their own interpretation', it's much stronger that way". It's at that final Bye that what seems to be the drumbeat of the Ronettes' "Be My Baby"





begins, but it isn't: the distorted guitar that cracks through it bears William Reid's stamp. As the two protagonists accept their reality and part forever (she to plunge back into the strange city, he to the airport, looking out of the window at a soulless city), Jim Reid sings, whispers, about submission, melancholy and devotion in "Just Like Honey", the song that opened The Jesus & Mary Chain's stunning debut album.

Juan Carlos León

"The Revolution Starts Now", Steve Earle - "Andor" Trailer

What the hell is a folk rock song doing in a "Star Wars" series? And, above all, how can it fit so damn well? The answer is in the title: "The Revolution Starts Now". I won't be saying anything new by saying that both the first and the second season of "Andor", like "Rogue One", strike me as some of the best stuff ever made in the Star Wars universe. In the last few issues of the magazine, references to the universe of the story starring Diego Luna have popped up here and there (one day I'll have to tell you about my surreal run-in with Diego), but it's unavoidable, everything in it is done with exquisite taste and excellent cinematic quality, and it manages to deliver a complex product that doesn't pander at all. Personally, "Andor" would have worked much better for me as a prequel to the classic trilogy than the first three episodes, which seemed almost a caricature of what we'd fallen in love with twenty years earlier. Because instead of getting lost in meaningless scripts, palace intrigues, those damn midi-chlorians or embarrassing characters, it would have been much more valuable to give a realistic, raw and adult view of how the cell that rebelled against an empire spreading terror across the whole known universe was formed.

The first season of "Andor" showed how individuals who didn't yet see themselves as revolutionaries began to understand that they could no longer stay on the sidelines. The second, which leads directly into "Rogue One", turns that scattered resistance into a war, into a revolution. And then in comes Steve Earle with a guitar that seems to come from another planet. The riff kicks in from the very first second and the trailer starts firing off images to the beat of the song. Cassian, explosions, Imperial soldiers, Mon Mothma, Saw Gerrera, the Death Star... And above all, a line that stops being just a line in a song and becomes the perfect motto reflecting what that second season has to be: the revolution starts… right now. Obviously, when Earle wrote the song he wasn't thinking about fighting the Sith Lords; Earle has always been a committed, combative musician, and "The Revolution Starts Now" is an example of that, a political, down-to-earth, direct song, with that mix of rock, country and folk that has always accompanied his social message. And, like any good revolutionary, Earle says the revolution has to be here and now, in your home, at your work… it's the little details that are truly revolutionary, the small gestures, the small changes. "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", you'd say it sounds like it was taken from some argument between Cassian, Mon Mothma, Luthen or Saw Gerrera, wouldn't you?

"Andor" is probably the "Star Wars" work that has gone furthest in stripping the mythological varnish off the fight against the Empire. There are no heroes dressed in black and white facing each other in a fairy-tale galaxy here, there's barely any humour and not even any happy endings. There's espionage, repression, propaganda, prisons, political interests, sacrifices and ordinary people discovering that the only way to change things is to take risks. And that's where Steve Earle's folk rock seems more fitting than any John Williams orchestra. What's more, the song doesn't try to sound like "Star Wars". What the trailer does is lay an unmistakably human, recognisable and political song over images of a fictional revolution. The result is strange and, precisely because of that, it's so powerful, because it fits the meaning of the story and also humanises the story and its characters. An American folk rock song, written about the need to rise up, lose your fear and start changing things, accompanying the birth of a revolution in a galaxy far, far away. Top that, Williams.

Javistone

"Pet Sematary", The Ramones - "Mr. Mercedes"

I wasn't sure whether to include it, but what the hell. I'm in a very Stephen King phase and this summer I read "Cementerio de animales", whose original English title is "Pet Sematary". A hugely entertaining book, maybe not one of his best works, but twisted and suffocating the way master King likes it, making you enjoy yourself while you have a nice rough time. The images I conjured up reading the book, I can tell you. If I'd read it when I was younger I would've had nightmares about baby footsteps behind the door or about a fucking cat purring between my feet, the same cat I'd buried days before. In any case, Stephen King has always shown great taste in music and regularly drops rock references into his work. In fact, The Ramones' "Sheena Is a Punk Rocker" is the song playing in the truck that runs over little Gage on the big road that passes in front of the Creed family's house. The funny thing is that a few weeks later I started watching the first season of "Mr. Mercedes", based, surprise surprise, on King's novels, and in one of the first scenes we see Mr. Mercedes, the psychopath Brady Hartsfield (who usually has a varied serving of punk rock as his musical





diet), and… what do you think he's listening to? Correct! He's listening to The Ramones' "Pet Sematary"! A really curious coincidence, don't you think?

Beyond the coincidence of coming across a Ramones song right after reading the book, it's worth mentioning that Dee Dee wrote the song specifically for Mary Lambert's 1989 film adaptation of the novel, with a script by King himself. The writer invited the bassist to his house, gave him a copy of the novel and he, in barely an hour, had already written a sketch of what would end up being "Pet Sematary", the song, which practically works as a summary of the story. Dee Dee was clear about it: "I don't want to be buried in a pet sematary, I don't want to live my life again". Who would?

Javistone

"Always Look on the Bright Side of Life", Monty Python - "Life of Brian"

How distant those days seem when going to the cinema to see a film in its original version was a magnificent adventure. "The Commitments" (1991), "Bad Lieutenant" (1992) or "Fargo" (1996) took on a new dimension for me and my mates when we watched them in their original language. But the one I have the fondest memories of is "Life of Brian" (1979), maybe because it was the first, because of the general fun it gave off, because of how original and absurd its plot was, or because of that song that played in the final moment of the crucifixion, a dramatic scene that, thanks to that melody full of life



and hope, became a real symbol of freedom and happiness. And I left the cinema whistling the tune. Written by Eric Idle and performed by the masters of irreverence, Monty Python, in the tradition of British music hall, it's about the attitude of keeping your composure in the face of adversity (stiff upper lip), so typical of the British. And what better stoicism than dying on a cross while singing and whistling "always look on the bright side of life".

J.L. Crespo "ZepiSoul"

"Thunder Road", Bruce Springsteen - "The Boroughs"

"The Boroughs" has been one of the season's entertaining TV surprises, despite going pretty unnoticed. With this Netflix series, created by Jeffrey Addiss and Will Matthews and produced by Matt and Ross Duffer, the people behind "Stranger Things" wanted to repeat the formula of the hit series with very similar ingredients, but, instead of turning to teenagers on bikes and blatantly eighties imagery, this time the protagonists are retirees. In fact, the Duffer brothers themselves have acknowledged that there's an obvious link between the two series. They've described the protagonists of "The Boroughs" as a sort of adult equivalent of the Hawkins kids, although here, instead of bikes, there are golf carts. A galaxy of top-notch actors, like Geena Davis, Alfre Woodard, Denis O'Hare, Clarke Peters, Bill Pullman… give substance to a really entertaining series, as I said at the start, although the absolute lead is the great Alfred Molina, who plays a retired widower whose daughter takes him to a retirement community lost in the middle of the Albuquerque desert,



as if she wanted to get rid of an old household appliance in the middle of nowhere. And just like in "Stranger Things", in "The Boroughs" music is very present: Bob Seger, Earth, Wind & Fire, David Bowie, Santana or Bill Withers fit into scenes where the music is a companion to the action rather than just a background soundtrack. The number of moments where the songs raise the emotional tone is high, almost constant, I'd dare say, and that undoubtedly has its merit: knowing how to mix the action well with songs that weren't written for the occasion. And it's something I appreciate more and more, because lately a lot of productions just about limit themselves to putting one song after another, losing the impact of a "Heroes" or a Wet Leg song, for example, as happens in Craig Gillespie's "Supergirl" (2026).

That doesn't happen in "The Boroughs", where they go for what we're talking about in this article, music and action merging so the scene takes off. And that happens in one of the final scenes (spoiler warning). Throughout the series, Sam Cooper (Alfred Molina) thinks he sees his wife (Lucy, played by Jane Kaczmarek, known for her role as Lois in the series "Malcolm in the Middle"), who has recently died, which makes it clear that his greatest pain is the loneliness her passing has caused him. One of the things Sam turns to in order to remember her is music, specifically the vinyl of Bruce Springsteen's "Born To Run", a 1975 album that fits into what would have been the soundtrack of that golden, longed-for time of his youth. And from that album, the main song that hovers over the whole series is "Thunder Road", the track that opens Bruce's record. I've said it several times: I'm not a Bruce fan. I have the "Born To Run" album and, despite trying, it's never hooked me. But precisely this scene, in which (again, spoiler alert) Sam is given, as a gift, one last dance with his beloved to the rhythm of "Thunder Road"… made me fall madly in love with the song. Impossible not to be moved by the joy of both of them at seeing each other again, at touching, at dancing while Springsteen talks about love as a vehicle for escape. Molina, who throughout the series comes across as sullen, bad-tempered, frustrated and deeply bitter, lights up at seeing his beloved again while the notes of the song run through every atom of his body. Absolute happiness always comes with the right song.

Javistone

"Where Is My Mind?", Pixies - "Fight Club"



It may seem incredible or strange that a song that plays over a film's closing credits should



be so significant, without taking anything away, of course, from the rest of the score. When I saw the film at the cinema, I got the impression that the anthem from that crown jewel called “Surfer Rosa” (1988) had been written to bring to a close that hallucinatory critique of rampant consumerism that is “Fight Club”. The iconic, devastating final scene, when bombs start exploding all over the city in a moment of mass destruction while the song’s chords gradually come in, froze me so completely that I left the theatre pretty shell-shocked, thinking about what had just happened in there. The film shows us that all extremism is dangerous and that falling into violent anarchy doesn’t solve anything. Or does it, who knows where we’re going to end up in these turbulent times we’re living in, maybe knowing ‘where is my mind’?

J.L. Crespo “ZepiSoul”

“The Wanderer”, Dion - “The Wanderers”

I don’t like being a bore, even though I am one. That’s why I’m not going to get carried away by the emotions I’ve already shared on other occasions about this film. A film called “The Wanderers” couldn’t have had a more fitting final scene than the one that goes with the great Dion’s song of the same name. It’s true that, at other points in the film, there are memorable songs that stay in your memory, associated with certain passages (for example, Kennedy’s death with “Stand by Me” as accompaniment), but obviously the sequence that closes the film, with Richie and his family and mates singing Dion’s anthem in unison at the top of their voices, laughing, toasting and having a great time, can’t leave anyone indifferent. Word of a wanderer.

J.L. Crespo “ZepiSoul”

“Five to One”, The Doors - “Cruella”

To finish, I couldn’t let one of those scenes go by that knock you sideways because of how unexpected it is and how well song and action fit together. First of all, I have to say that “Cruella” is a pretty peculiar film within the Disney universe. It’s not a biopic about the character we all have in mind, that unhinged psychopath dead set (if you’ll pardon the clumsy pun) on the hundred and one Dalmatian puppies whose skins she wants to make into a coat. Rather, it uses the “101 Dalmatians” universe to tell us the story of a version of Cruella de Vil who, although she has her outbursts, humanises the original and makes us doubt she’ll turn into that despicable character from the 1961 animated classic. This Cruella is a young woman growing up among the rubble in late-60s London, in a film that mixes fashion, rock music, black humour and melodrama, and where Bowie- or Marc Bolan-style glam is constantly hovering. A very free reinterpretation, as I say, of the original film’s Cruella de Vil.

“Cruella” (a film I love, I don’t know if you’ve noticed yet) is based on the life of Estella (the gorgeous Emma Stone), who, from the slums, tries to break into the world of fashion (the fashion designer who’s a carbon copy of David Bowie is priceless) and runs into the usual classist problems that reject her for her humble background. It so happens that after continued mistreatment by the repulsive manager of the clothes shop where she works (Jamie Demetriou, another one who’s superb), seeing she has to stay very late to clean the place, Estella decides to get her revenge by grabbing a bottle of whisky from the boss’s office, with the inevitable consequences you can imagine. When she wakes up, she realises that on her lysergic-alcoholic trip she has turned a stale shop window for middle-aged ladies into an extravaganza of outlandish and hugely attractive modernity, which provokes her boss’s fury, and he decides to fire her on the spot until… right at that moment a limousine pulls up, and when the door opens… The truth is nobody would expect a song as deliberately aggressive as The Doors’ “Five to One” to turn up in a Disney film, with Jim singing with a raw, defiant nerve about the coming revolution, a cultural and, above all, sexual revolution. The person who steps out of the limousine is the extraordinarily arrogant Baroness von Hellman (a formidable Emma Thompson, as always), a fashion designer ruthless to an unbelievable degree. I don’t need to tell you that the force of her entrance, with her whole retinue of flatterers, her dogs, her pompous style and her aggressiveness, fits “Five to One” like a glove; it sounds like an onslaught on the establishment that’s soon going to start cracking. And although that moment is my favourite, watch out for the scenes where Black Sabbath’s “The Wizard”, Ike & Tina Turner’s “Whole Lotta Love” or my second favourite moment, when The Stooges’ “I Wanna Be Your Dog” plays. A Disney film? A Disney film.

Javistone

Steve Wynn
"Success doesn't sit well with everyone."



There was a time when indie rock still seemed like a reasonable way to make your life complicated. Steve Wynn knows that well. Fronting The Dream Syndicate, he turned noise, psychedelia and hungover guitars into one of the most exciting adventures of that 80s American scene we now call the Paisley Underground. Then came other albums, other bands and a career that has outlived fashions with a lot more dignity than many of his contemporaries.

In "I Wouldn't Say It If It Wasn't True", published (at last!) in Spanish by Liburuak under the title "No lo diría si no fuese cierto", Wynn sits down to settle accounts with his own history. From his first musical epiphanies to success, excess and self-sabotage, these memoirs portray a musician who came close to wrecking everything he loved most. There's rock and roll, of course, but also insecurities, alcohol, some pretty questionable decisions and that old human habit of making life complicated just when things start working. A book about growing up, screwing up and learning to tell what's essential from the noise.

It's always a pleasure to chat with a guy with a clear mind and a sharp tongue. After exchanging compliments about the shelves around us (his packed with records, mine with books), we talk about his book, and the first thing I ask is whether, before sitting down to write, he already had a clear idea of which direction he was going to take.

"Yes, I was pretty clear about the structure I wanted to follow. I divided it into four big blocks, following a chronological line: my childhood in California and discovering music, my teenage years away from rock and focused on my journalism studies, the return to music and the birth of Dream Syndicate, and the conflicts and the end of the band in the late 80s. That way I had the foundations to build a narrative without going off on too many tangents."

The feeling I was left with after reading the book is that it doesn't do justice to his solo career or to Dream Syndicate's second life.

"I know, I know. If it's any consolation, there's a second part that I'm already writing, I'd say finishing, which is exclusively about that period. When I started working on "I Wouldn't Say It If It Wasn't True", I wanted to focus on that first part of my life, but I realised straight away that if I wanted to cover my whole life I wasn't going to be able to do it in less than seven hundred pages (Laughs)."

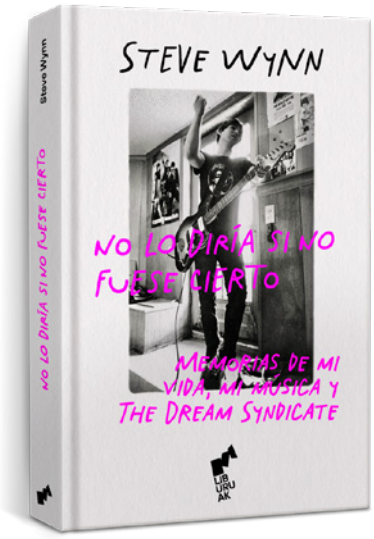
I understand that, like so many others, it was the pandemic that pushed him to sit down and write.

"True. I'd had some sketches and the general idea since 2018, but, as you know, I'm constantly on tour, and I'm not able to work, to sit down and write, if I'm not at home. It's not the same with music: I can write songs, fragments, ideas, but the discipline of writing is something else. During the pandemic, Linda (Pitmon, his wife and also drummer on some projects. Ed.) had to go away to take care of her parents and I stayed in Queens, home alone. It was the ideal opportunity. At first I set myself the task of writing at least five hundred words a day, but soon I found myself writing about three thousand; I worked incredibly hard."

I ask him whether his training as a sports journalist helped him speed up the process and whether he enjoyed sitting down to write.

"Yes, I enjoyed it enormously, really. Not so much the corrections and editing (Laughs), but I'd get up every day looking forward to getting to work. I have an advantage that comes from my studies, which is that I type super fast (more laughter), so I was able to keep up with my train of thought. That turned out to be an advantage, because I focused on remembering and not so much on reflecting."

Along those lines, while reading I got the



feeling that personal conflicts are a burden for Steve, and in the text he tries to exercise empathy and put himself in other people's shoes, he doesn't let himself get carried away by resentment and he owns up to his screw-ups. I ask him if it wasn't painful to relive his clashes, especially with Karl Precoda and Sandy Pearlman.
"No, not particularly. I mean, I'd already thought about it a lot, it didn't catch me by surprise. Unfortunately, with the two people you mention I haven't been able to resolve those conflicts. I haven't heard from Karl (Dream Syndicate's first guitarist. Ed.) in years, we have no contact and I don't think that's going to change. Sandy died years ago, although that conflict was purely artistic."

In his memoirs Steve meticulously breaks down that conflict during the recording of "The Medicine Show", the band's second album, and he does it in a disarming way: he admits his attitude wasn't the right one, and that it took him a while to realise that his way of making music wasn't the only right one.
"After three months of fights and disagreements there came a point when I realised what album Sandy wanted to make, which was nothing like the one I had in mind. The only thing we agreed on was that we didn't want to put out a second part of "The Days of Wine and Roses". It's true that Sandy pushed us in a more cinematic direction, with more layers of instruments, a more polished sound. I ended up accepting his vision; I was in my early twenties, I really didn't know anything, the rest of the band didn't have a clue either, I found myself alone and isolated during that recording. The result? I've always loved that album; I suffered enormously to finish it, but the result was excellent."

"The Medicine Show" could have been the album that opened the doors to success for them, but for some reason the band always remained at cult status.
"Actually, I think the concept of success is very relative. I mean, three weeks after starting out as a band we were already filling the clubs we played, and "The Days of Wine and Roses" exceeded all our expectations. The idea of the band reaching greater commercial success came more from the label, A&M, who put us on a tour with U2 where we had no business being. Actually, we were in the best possible situation. And that's when I decided, for whatever reason (fear, insecurity, alcohol or anything else), to try to sabotage everything (Laughs). If I could go back and tell the twenty-four or twenty-five-year-old Steve Wynn what was waiting for him, something like: you're going to make records and tour the world for the next forty years, I guess he'd tell me: 'Great. Count me in.'"

I let slip that the theme of redemption is very present in memoirs in general, as a need for confession and forgiveness. At this, he clicks his tongue.
"I think my redemption consisted of pulling myself together enough to get back on the road and get down to work. As I say in the book, it was simply a matter of saying: it's time to work, to start writing good songs, making good records, playing good gigs and making that the most important thing in the world. I simply had to stop thinking about how much I could drink, how weird I could get or how difficult I could become. Stop worrying about whether I was on one label or another, or with this agent or that one, and devote myself to writing songs, recording them and playing live, not just as well as you can, but with the heart of that ten-year-old kid who listened to the radio and fell in love with it. Be that guy for the rest of your life and see what happens. That was my redemption: getting back that original motivation and getting rid of all the garbage that had built up along the way."

Following on from this, I press Steve: they also toured with R.E.M., a band much more in tune with their background and ethos, who were about to make it big without compromising their convictions (too much).
"You're right, the success R.E.M. got didn't change them, although, from what I could see first-hand, they had to fight like crazy. I have a theory about that, which is that the mainstream was only going to accept one singer with a weirdo voice, and, let's face it, Michael Stipe's voice is better suited to success than mine." We laugh, but I point out that in the 80s there were other "weird" singers who made it big.
"Sure, I'm thinking of Mark E. Smith, for example, it's not like The Fall sold millions, but there were some peculiar voices. But let me remind you that what you found back then was Human League and that kind of band, which is exactly the opposite direction to the one we wanted to take in Dream Syndicate."

In those 80s there was the Paisley Underground revival, which included bands like the Long Ryders, Green on Red, the Three O'Clock or the Bangles. I try to find out how Dream Syndicate fit into all that.
"To tell you the truth, it never bothered me that we were included in the movement, I have no problem with that label. Bear in mind that we had friends in all those bands, we played together and helped each other out. And of course there was an affinity, we all had those 60s reference points. It's true that most of them looked to the Beatles, and we looked more to the Velvet Underground, but I loved all of them. I really liked The Bangs, who would later become The Bangles, and they have lots of songs better than the ones that made them so popular, like "Eternal Flame" or "Manic Monday". And when it came to playing outside L.A., being under that umbrella really helped us. In Spain you called it something else…"

Yes, I remind him: Nuevo Rock Americano.
"That's it (he laughs), it was American rock, for sure, and there was a new approach. So, answering your question: we had no problem with the label and, in fact, during my career I've played with a lot of those musicians in different projects."

To give one example, on his upcoming Spanish tour he's joined by Chris Cacavas, from Green on Red, a regular collaborator on different projects.
"Sure, Chris was Dream Syndicate's keyboard player for years, I played with Dan Stuart in Danny & Dusty with the rest of the Long Ryders, I played with Stephen McCarthy in Gutterball… we're all part of one big family."

> ***"I've always found it funny when artists go solo and sound exactly like their old band. What did you split up for, then? (Laughs). On my solo albums I wanted to explore other sounds, I really needed to."***

Dream Syndicate split up in 1989; in the book he says that when he heard Sonic Youth's "Daydream Nation" he suddenly felt outdated.
I've always thought that, if they'd held on a couple more years, the story would have been very different, with all those bands like Dinosaur Jr. or Wilco, where Dream Syndicate's influence is clearly visible.
"Well, when we split up, apart from the personal conflicts, the exhaustion and the audience's indifference, I was clear that I wanted to play a different kind of music. I've always found it funny when artists start a solo career and sound exactly the same as their previous band, what did you split up for, then? (Laughs). On my solo albums I wanted to explore other sounds, I really needed to. It's true that when I listened to some of those bands you mention I saw a direct line, but I never felt jealous of their success, you know? If I hadn't made those decisions, today I'd be somewhere else, I wouldn't be playing with Peter Buck, I wouldn't have met Linda… I don't know, I feel I made the right decisions. Then you look at people like Kurt Cobain and I can tell he came from a place similar to ours, you know, punk, the underground… and you see what success did to him. Not everyone can take it the way R.E.M. did. I'm happy with the place I occupy."

His Instagram account is CultArtist; I get the feeling he takes the whole thing as a joke.
"And that feeling is correct (Laughs). I was told so many times that I was a cult artist that I ended up taking the title for myself. Social media? Pfff, it's a necessary evil, in the end you become your own publicist, but it's not something that bothers me. Before, on tour, I'd spend the day writing letters and sending postcards; the forms change, but the essence remains the same."

At the start of this chat Steve mentioned his intention to carry on with the memoirs; I confess I was surprised that he barely

mentioned Dream Syndicate's second life.
"Yeah, as I was saying, the new book will cover from the band's split in '89 to the present. My whole solo career since the 90s, projects like Gutterball or The Baseball Project, and, of course, Dream Syndicate's second phase."

A reunion that, if I'm not mistaken, was sparked by a gig in Bilbao.
"Well, that's how it all started. There was a festival in Bilbao organised by a friend of mine (the WOP Festival. Ed.). I'd played there the year before and he wanted me to come back with one of my bands, The Miracle 3 or The Baseball Project, but neither of them was available. I really wanted to be part of the festival and, suddenly, I made the spontaneous, impulsive decision to suggest The Dream Syndicate, without thinking about it too much. At first there was no idea that it would last, but it felt right from the very first moment."

So there were no plans to record an album at first?
"No, not at all. In fact, something we wanted to make crystal clear is that we'd only release material we were a hundred per cent proud of. There was no pressure at all; in fact, if we went into the studio and nothing special came out, we weren't going to release it."

But then, of course, they record an album like "How Did I Find Myself Here?", and how could they not release it?
"Exactly. I think it's an album that perfectly reflects where we were at that moment. You can recognise it as a Dream Syndicate album, but with many more layers, we're not the same kids who recorded those first albums, we're better musicians and we know each other better as people. It was a smooth recording, I enjoyed it enormously, and a lot of fans consider it one of our best albums."

I already told Wynn this a while ago in another interview, but I take the opportunity to tell him again: a lot of people have their "pandemic album", the one that helped them get through those uncertain, stifling days. At home, that album was "The Universe Inside", that majestic and liberating explosion of psychedelic jazz rock. I remember putting the album on again and again and, even though we couldn't leave the house, I felt my mind escaping, that "universe inside" merging with the one outside. A strange and fabulous album that I know he loves too.
"Wow, let me first thank you for saying that, I really appreciate it. I can tell you it's the album we're proudest of as a band, and its origins were pretty random, one of those things that happen once in a lifetime. The thing is, we were rehearsing and recording for another album ("These Times". Ed.) with John Agnello in Richmond, Virginia. One night, after rehearsal, I decided to call Stephen McCarthy (Long Ryders, Gutterball… Ed.), who lives there, to come over for a while for a drink, maybe a jam, and after a while we got wrapped up in a jazzy jam that we loved. Nothing planned, a happy accident, one of those magical moments. The next day John said to me: listen to this. He'd recorded the whole jam and I could clearly see that the foundations for the whole album were there. We played for almost eight hours; at one point Mark, our bassist, went off for about seven minutes to make some tequila shots, and that's on the recording too. Everything worked, I don't know how to explain it. While I was listening to what John had recorded I could clearly see: this is the verse, I can sing here, look, a chorus… I've always said we're like a jazz band, and people don't take me seriously, but I think this album shows a side of us that has always been there, I'm deeply proud of it and I'm really glad it means that to you."

Apart from the book on its way, he also told me there's music ready to be released.
"That's right, my last album, "Make It Right", was actually a sort of compilation of outtakes, although the label begged me not to say so (Laughs). So I'm dying for you all to hear what I've recorded with Peter Buck, Linda, Scott McCaughey (Young Fresh Fellows, R.E.M.… Ed.) and Jay Gonzalez, from Drive-By Truckers. To be honest with you, I have another two albums ready, but this will be the first one; in fact, I'll be playing some songs on the upcoming Spanish tour."

A Spanish tour that also serves as the launch of the book in Spanish, on which he'll be joined by Chris Cacavas, and whose dates are: Wednesday 18 November in Barcelona; 19 November in Madrid; the 20th at Monkey Week; the 21st in Murcia; the 22nd in Hostalets de Balenyà (Barcelona); 24 November in Valencia; the 25th in Segovia; the 26th in Santander; and Friday 27 November in Bilbao.

Javier Sanabria



SERIE BOOTLEGS

By Sob2026



Rod Stewart, Seattle, Washington, Tacoma Dome (8 July 1984)

In this new series of historic bootlegs, this issue takes us back to 1984. We have to put ourselves in the context of the time: what was going on musically, where the industry and the public's tastes were heading. In that context, which I'm sure we all have in mind, came the reunion between Jeff Beck and Rod Stewart. The two musicians got together to record Rod's album "Camouflage", his eleventh. The chemistry was good and the recording powerful; the problem would come on the tour. Rod and Jeff, two top dogs with enormous egos, were in different planetary orbits when it came to live music back in 1984: Rod had everything measured and calculated, backing singers and stage props all worked out, while Jeff was still anchored in the 70s, when musicians would improvise long jams or change songs without warning. The Seattle concert combined the raw, classic blues rock of the 60s with the commercial, synth-driven sound Rod Stewart was using in the 80s. Beck, an absolute purist when it came to guitar and improvisation, hated playing within the strict structures of such a commercial production.

There's an anecdote where Jeff's manager bet a hundred dollars that Jeff wouldn't finish the tour, and he didn't: he only did four shows. The concert we're bringing you in this issue is one of those four, in Seattle, a radio broadcast that has done the rounds in the trading and collecting world. Listening to Curtis Mayfield's "People Get Ready" is a treat fit for the gods, one of the six songs the great English guitarist plays with his old comrade.

Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, Hersheypark Stadium, Hershey, PA (5 July 1999)

Our concert from the 90s, the decade when going to this kind of event was a pipe dream, a music lover's crazy dream. I missed this concert by just a few weeks and it still hurts: I never got to see Tom Petty. Mind you, in exchange I got to see Bad Company at that same year's reunion with Paul Rodgers in Las Vegas. But, with hardly any information back then, you got whatever fate had in store for you. In future instalments I'll share a show from that legendary reunion. Now let's see what our friend Tom has in store for us. He was touring "Echo", his tenth album. That album had very personal songs that he didn't consider playing live in front of big audiences (let's remember he hadn't toured stadiums since 1995), and he didn't want to air his personal business by performing these songs, which had to do with a difficult divorce; we already knew what state of mind Tom was in. On this tour the big classics take centre stage, which makes the show amazing, with a tremendous atmosphere. Listen to it with the volume cranked up. I'm also leaving you a short review from a local newspaper.

Nick Cave, Suvilahti, Helsinki, Finland (16 August 2026)

Lastly, a good friend told me he'd like to see Nick Cave featured here. I'm sorry to say he's not a musician I've paid much attention to, a mistake I'll try to fix little by little. Even so, I'm leaving you a show of his in Finland this very summer. I hope you enjoy it as much as I enjoyed tracking it down. Very good quality. The photo of the show is from Nick's official social media.

HOWLIN' JAWS



The Paris trio cut their teeth on roots rock and recorded their first two albums with Liam Watson at Toe Rag Studios in London, on analogue and take by take. The easy thing would have been to repeat the formula, but, instead, they spent months writing in their own studio in Paris, Studio Griset, and went to Sweden to record with Kalle Gustafsson Jerneholm, bassist of The Soundtrack of Our Lives. Click track, loops, synths and even the Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra. The result is "Living The Dream", their most ambitious album: psychedelia, disco, country, French Touch and echoes of King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard, without losing their usual immediacy. It's the album where they stop being just an overwhelming live band and become a group with a sound of their own. An absolutely addictive album that sounds refreshing without falling into copying King Gizzard's patterns, as so many artists have done lately. This is, without a doubt, one of the best albums of the year, and I dream of them doing a proper tour all over the country.

With "Half Asleep Half Awake", a lot of us discovered you, an excellent album, no doubt about it. But I think with this "Living The Dream" you've taken a big step forward. I admit I've been listening to it on loop since this morning: it sounds incredibly fresh and addictive. I understand that the recording of the two albums was very different and that this shows in the result. You've compared making "Half Asleep Half Awake" to cooking an omelette and making "Living The Dream" to preparing a bœuf bourguignon (a classic stew from French cuisine). The comparison is pretty vivid, but what was behind that image? What has really changed in the way you work for making this album to become a much more elaborate process?

Baptiste: Yes, the truth is this album is a bœuf bourguignon: lots of ingredients that you leave on a low heat for a good while so the flavours come out. We've always been interested in arrangements, but it's the first time we've really had time to put everything we wanted on the album, even a symphony orchestra. All of that is thanks to the fact that we wrote the whole album in our new studio, Studio Griset. We had time to try out loads of possibilities and new instruments!

Djivan: And let nobody be fooled: in French cuisine, the omelette is one of the hardest dishes to master! (Laughs). Even though it has few ingredients, cooking it is very delicate. I think the comparison is very vivid. The previous album was a flash, because of the live feel and the immediacy; this one has had more time to simmer on a low heat, to get its flavours and its seasoning right during the cooking.

A few weeks ago we were talking to the Spanish band The Soulbreaker Company, who told us how hard it had been to record with Liam Watson at Toe Rag Studios in London. I understand it wasn't so hard for you, since you worked with him on your first two albums. The easiest thing would have been to go back there and keep exploring a formula that had already given you great results. However, you decided to do exactly the opposite and go to Sweden with Kalle Gustafsson Jerneholm, The Soundtrack of Our Lives' bassist. What pushed you to leave your usual surroundings and what were you hoping to find there with him? Did you like the work Kalle had done with bands like The Hives?

Baptiste: We needed to try something new, to explore. And the way we made this album isn't compatible with Toe Rag Studios or with Liam's way of working. He does everything without a computer, and we had tracks with a click and loads of arrangements. Actually, we were looking for something less garagey. But the two albums we made with Liam gave us the maturity to make this third album! Yes, we listened to Kalle's work and knew straight away it was what we needed.

Djivan: I think we needed to put ourselves in danger again, to try swimming in different waters. To learn new ways of recording.

Sweden has become one of the world's rock epicentres; the amount of music coming out of that country is incredible. In the Rock Bottom Magazine newsroom we're always arguing about this. I stick up for Goat, I don't know if you know them, but if you don't, listen to their 2012 album "World Music"; and for First Aid Kit, while others stick up for Graveyard or Ghost.

Lucas: I'm crazy about GOAT! We also love The Soundtrack of Our Lives, Kalle's band, and of course the Hives, who we grew up with.

Djivan: It makes no sense at all that a country with fewer inhabitants than Paris produces so many talented musicians and so many producers. Swedes are aces at music!

Before going to Sweden, you built your own creative refuge, Studio Griset, in Paris. This idea interests me because it seems like you first needed to create your own space before moving away from it. What happened at Studio Griset and what part of what would end up being "Living The Dream" was really born there?

Lucas: It really was at Griset that we wrote ninety per cent of the album, in a basement for months, from ten to eighteen hours. Having our own space meant we could sometimes spend a whole day on a synth line. It may seem over the top, but we needed to explore and discover the possibilities that having our own studio gives you. There are also guitar and synth tracks on the album that were taken straight from the demo instead of being re-recorded. That's the case with the guitar solos on "Do What You're Gonna Do" and "Sunset Laundromat".

Djivan: The way modern music production has evolved doesn't give artists the same chance to spend a month in a studio on a whim anymore. When some artists release albums straight from their bedroom, why bother with a big, expensive studio? We needed a place of our own to do this kind of sonic experiment. It's our pocket Abbey Road.

You've also changed the way you work. You've used the click track much more to cut sections, move them around, create loops and build atmospheres. Using a click track is an eternal source of debate between those who are in favour and those who think it kills the naturalness of music. I admit I'm a disaster with a click, but at the same time it's really useful when it comes to recording. In your case, has it allowed you to be freer or, paradoxically, did you need to control things more in order to experiment afterwards?

Lucas: The click was necessary to work the way we did, with tracks rescued from the demo and because sometimes the three of us were working in three different parts of the studio in Sweden on three different songs. Sometimes Djivan would be recording the vocals for one song while Baptiste was doing the synths for another and I was doing the guitar solo for a third song. Also, the click lets you change the song's structure right up to the last minute. And also, knowing you're playing to a click and that you can replay a part more easily lets you loosen up a bit more, without being afraid of screwing up on what could be the final take. Actually, both methods work for us!

Djivan: It's a very different approach, honestly. For example, some songs don't work with a click because when we write them we put pauses in certain parts, in a bridge or a chorus. When we play them to a click they lose their flavour. On this album, since we brought the click in from the start, it wasn't a problem. The songs are designed to be steady and danceable. When you manage to groove over the click, it's amazing. Then, on stage, live, playing to a click is out of the question for us; making an album and playing a gig are two very different exercises. On stage we need to be free!

You've described working with Liam Watson as a series of sprints and working with Kalle Gustafsson Jerneholm as more like running a marathon. You've worked with more takes and left more options open for the mix. Have you discovered anything about yourselves as a band by working like this?

Baptiste: We discovered that, in fact, that immediacy never left us. Even while we were recording the demos, ideas came shooting out and you had to capture those magical moments of creation and musical osmosis. On the other hand, we had time to experiment more and to go in search of perfection, without ever reaching it.

Djivan: For us it was a natural and necessary evolution! You go crazy if you repeat the same things on loop. We need to feed our minds. Nothing's set in stone for what comes next, we're going to keep exploring, probably hybrid ways of recording. Now that we know them, we can keep the best of both worlds.

"Living The Dream", the song, is about a man who seems to have it all: a career, a pool, an Alfa Romeo... and who, however, isn't happy. It seems like a good way of questioning that widespread idea that getting certain things automatically means you've made it. What does "living the dream" mean to you?

Djivan: In this song, "living the dream" is something very ironic when you see the state of the world, the state of the "American dream"... I think the con is becoming more and more obvious. There have never been as many billionaires as there are today and, as a result, never so many poor people. Energy crises follow one after another, the climate is getting more and more out of control, "moral" armies commit genocides… Anyway, I think for us living the dream would be living in a fairer world, more respectful of human life and of the planet. But we're still far from that, we have to mobilise!

There's something pretty curious about this album. Several songs talk about grief, break-ups, separation or resentment, but many of them are musically bright, even euphoric. "Troubled Mind", "Do What You're Gonna Do" or "So Sorry" could have been much darker songs. Are you interested in that tension between lyrics that talk about pain and music that, on the contrary, seems to want to escape from it?

> ***When you manage to groove over the click track, it's amazing. Then on stage, playing live, there's no way we'd play with a click; making a record and playing a gig are two very different exercises. On stage we need to be free!***

Lucas: Yes, there's a contrast within some songs that leaves a kind of bittersweet taste. I think that corresponds to another kind of feeling, close to melancholy, which is neither completely sad nor completely euphoric. In the case of "Troubled Mind" and "Do What You're Gonna Do", there's also hope: it's a call for change. For us all of that makes sense!

Djivan: I also think an emotion is rarely one-sided, it's more of a spectrum. It's very rare to feel just one thing: soppy love or blind hatred. If you listen to yourself a bit, you'll quickly find feelings that contradict each other. Why is it so hard to leave someone you love but who hurts you? Why do you still feel love for that toxic ex who made your life a misery? Why does smelling their perfume in the street still give you strange feelings years later? That's what makes us human: the sum of all our emotions mixed together at the same time.

"Maximum Speed" is probably one of the best examples that accidents can be more interesting than set plans. It was born from a jam and in the end it changed because of a simple copy-and-paste mistake that took apart the second verse. You call it a "happy accident". How many times, in Howlin' Jaws' history, have you discovered something interesting precisely because something didn't go as planned?

Djivan: It happens a lot! You have to know how to go with the flow and let go sometimes. Doing everything between the three of us also lets us be surprised. If someone isn't inspired, one or the other two take the lead, and a lot of the time what comes out of that is surprising. Also, during the recording, since our time was very limited and we were recording different parts in three studios at once, our motto was: "stick to the plan, trust the process". We got loads of nice surprises from those recordings!

Baptiste: I think there have been happy accidents on almost every song. It goes hand in hand with the anarchic, lightning-fast creation, Howlin' Jaws style. Those unexpected things were what really interested us about Liam Watson's analogue, vintage recording, but we managed to get that immediacy back by creating on the computer, precisely by using the software

almost like electronic music producers.

Listening to the album, you discover lots of different doors. There's psychedelia, disco, country, French Touch, rockabilly, pop, Eastern sounds... but if there's one influence running through the album, it's King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard, one of the most influential bands of recent years. "Terminal Buzz", my favourite song on the album, is a perfect example.

Lucas: It's a band we've listened to loads and we love! I think their approach to music is really free, they do whatever they feel like and that inspires us. But Eastern sounds have always been present in our music. We weren't particularly thinking about King Gizzard when we wrote "Terminal Buzz", but I can see the resemblance! It was mainly when we saw it worked better with a disco groove that the song found its identity.

Baptiste: King Gizzard inspire us a lot musically and also in the way they create. They're kind of the ones who made us want to have our own studio.

You end the album with "That Kind of Pain", a really delicate song, with echoes of Air and the participation of the Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra. You say you'd been dreaming for a long time of recording a song with strings and that when you heard the result, almost six months later, you were really impressed. Having got that far, is there still anything you haven't done with Howlin' Jaws that you'd like to explore?

Lucas: Recording with two philharmonic orchestras! We have loads of ideas for things we'd like to try on the next albums. Maybe even more synth and electronics? Or, on the contrary, recording everything on a four-track cassette?

Djivan: It was a really magical moment! I'd written the string lines on my old Mac with some crappy VSTs and the computer keyboard. Originally it was meant for a quartet. So going from that to the philharmonic orchestra was truly incredible. Above all, because an orchestra is alive: you hear the music, of course, but also the musicians breathing. That's not something you can get with VSTs or AI.

Spain has been an important territory for Howlin' Jaws practically since you started. You already toured here in 2017 and you've been back several times. What's so special about this country that Howlin' Jaws found such a receptive audience here at such an early stage in your story?

Lucas: We love touring Spain because you have a big rock culture! The audience is super receptive and you really love this music, it's a pleasure to tour like that. We're really looking forward to coming back!

Djivan: Spain is always where the best party is! I also remember that, when we toured with Wanda Jackson, I was really pleasantly surprised to see different kinds of audiences mixing. There were punks, rockers, mods, psychos… Everyone had come to have a good time together. It was incredible!

Baptiste: Spain really is a country we're very fond of. I think some of our best gig memories were there with you. Also, the big cultural difference between the regions makes every gig truly different.

Thank you very much. We hope to see you again in our country.

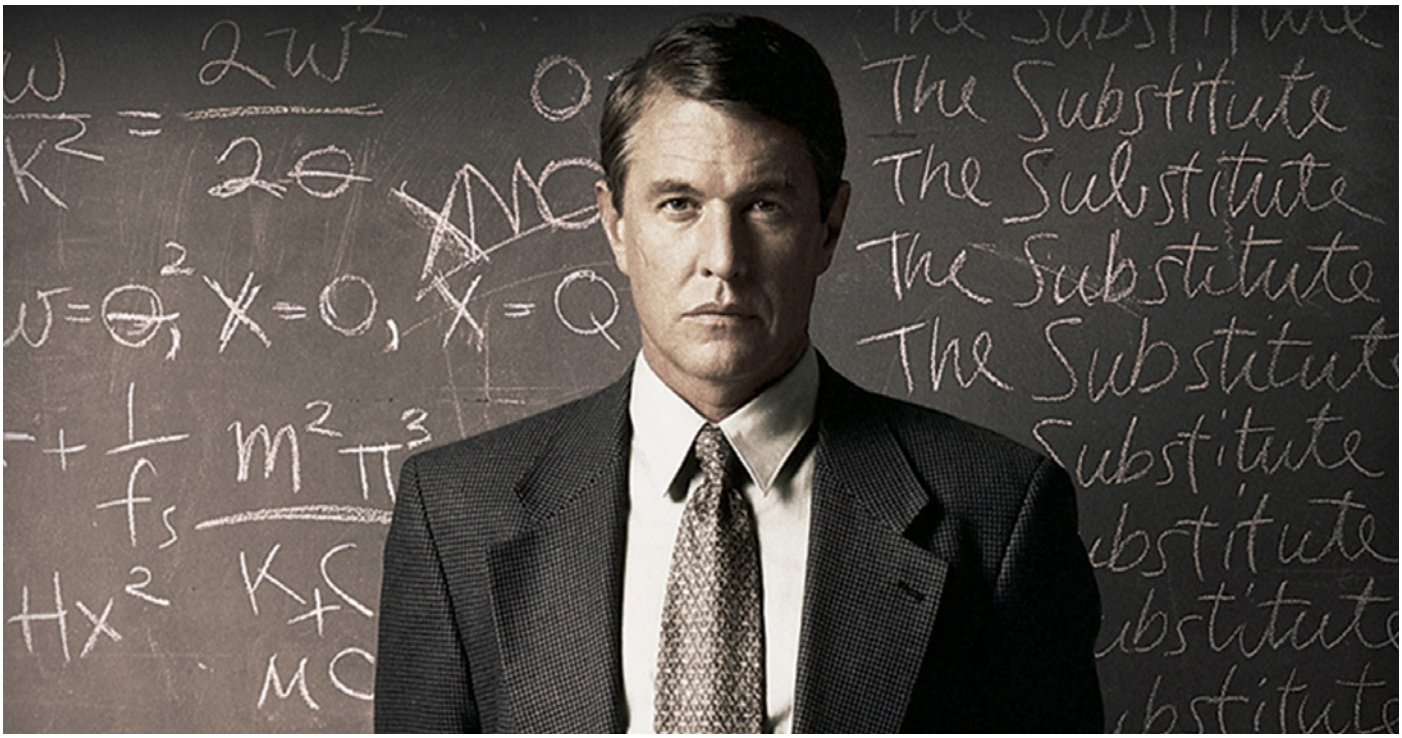
Lucas: Thanks! We'll be in Santiago de Compostela on 28 November, come along if you're in the area! See you soon!

Javistone





"The Substitute" (1996)



We go back thirty years in this grand section to remember a flick I'm hugely fond of. We're going to talk about "The Substitute", an action flick in which we have a mercenary turned teacher to avenge the assault on his missus, and to do so he doesn't hold back on giving two-bit gang members a good hiding, throwing smoke bombs, turning the library into a war zone and uncovering a trafficking ring dealing in stupidfacients… sorry, stupefacients.

It stars someone I'm fond of, Tom Berenger, who plays Shale here, a guy who leads a group of mercenaries for hire on any mission, basically like "The A-Team". A Berenger we remember for such enjoyable titles as "Betrayed" or "Shattered". The actor demanded that all the action scenes feature real tactical moves. To that end, several military advisers were hired, who trained with the cast. What's more, part of the cast moved to a military camp for a few days to perfect their weapons handling.

As a curiosity, the film used real guns modified to fire blanks to make everything more realistic. Directing, we have Robert Mandel, who'd had a big hit a few years earlier with the flick "F/X". To keep the tension between the leads, the filmmaker made sure the actors playing the good guys had no contact with the bad guys, that is, the gang members of the day, so contact behind the scenes was almost zero. By the way, the leader of the gang of villains is none other than a skinny Marc Anthony: yes, the salsa or Latin music singer, who made his screen debut with this film. As a reward, near the end of it we get his character's death, a guy called Juan Lacas.

Shot at a Miami high school in the height of summer, to take advantage of the empty classrooms, we see a lot of people of Hispanic origin. What's more, the students who came in during the summer for catch-up classes were hired as extras. To motivate them to put in extra hours, they were given free pizza. The cast also includes familiar faces who've appeared in dozens of films, like Glenn Plummer, the always reliable William Forsythe or Ernie Hudson, known as the Black Ghostbuster, by the way, my favourite Ghostbuster. I can't stand the rest of them, especially Bill Murray.

The director wanted to give the flick a more dramatic angle, trying to turn it into a social protest film, but the producers said no way, José, and demanded more action, something Berenger was very grateful for. What's more, they imposed an ending with loads of mayhem, shooting and explosions to make it more commercial and, although it didn't make more than fourteen million at the box office, it did make a big splash in video rental stores. By the way, in later years three more sequels to the film were released, without Berenger, mind you, but with the late Treat Williams as the badass teacher.

You know the drill: if you liked "The Principal", with James Belushi, you're going to enjoy this "Substitute" and, if you didn't like that brick of a film with Michelle Pfeiffer called "Dangerous Minds", yes, the one with the unbearable Coolio song, you'll enjoy it even more.



In the late sixties, Leon Payne, a blind multi-instrumentalist, singer and country songwriter, wrote a honky-tonk-style song, deeply disturbing, to hand over to his friend, fellow Texan Eddie Noack, another countryman, who released it in the autumn of 1968 on the K-Art label, without much impact or exposure. This article isn't just about the song, but also about the obscure artist who relaunched it in the mid-seventies and who still doesn't have a Wikipedia entry or a description on Spotify. We're talking about Jack Kittel.

Jack Morris Kittel Jr. was born on 19 October 1946 in Muskegon, Michigan. He served in the US Navy during the Vietnam War and in 1966 was posted to Da Nang, where he carried out logistical support duties. Little is known about his music career except that in 1973 he went into the studio in his native Muskegon to record a single for the Michigan label Belt Records, as cursed as the song that would be the A-side of his single (released, what's more, with his surname misspelt on the record labels: it appears as Jack Kittle). Frank Rogers played all the instruments on the song, except the drums, which were handled by Steve Foster. As was to be expected, the commercial impact of the release, by then in 1974, was minimal, so they resorted, visionaries that they were, to fake news to try to get the song some attention: they played the card of censorship and of the song being mistreated because of the content of its lyrics. In one of the few written references to Kittel and "Psycho", in the Atlanta Journal of 11 September 1974, we find this bait thrown out by the distributor of the acetate, General Recording Corp (GRC), with a claim by its performer: General Recording Corp., an Atlanta-based company, says one of its new records is stirring up controversy at radio stations across the country. The recording is titled "Psycho" and is about a man's compulsion to commit murder. The song was performed by Jack Kittel, who defends the grim story the song tells: "In our society crimes are committed every day... you can't overlook human actions, whether you like it or not".

Kittel hitting the road to promote his product wasn't exactly anything to write home about either, quite the opposite. In a banner ad in the Herald-Palladium newspaper of Benton Harbor, Michigan, on 19 December 1975, there's an announcement for a show in that town, at the Red Carpet venue, by Jack Kittle (again misspelt, not only his surname but also the title of his hit, "Phycho") with his band, The Now Country Band, sharing the stage with "the sex symbol of the South" Elmer Fudpucker Sr., in an adult comedy show…

Another press appearance by Kittel, dated 21 September 1976 in the Detroit Free Press, doesn't exactly mark a milestone in his career either: he's announced as a guest on Buck Matthews' TV magazine show (the "Buck Matthews Show" on WOOD-TV in Grand Rapids, Michigan), alongside dentist William K. Najjar: "Dr. William K. Najjar, dentist who invented the Daily Double toothbrush (a toothbrush with dental floss at one end); Jack Kittel and «Now Country»". At least here they spelt his surname right.

His real, certified moment of glory can be placed on 2 November 1975, when the Grand Rapids Press, in Michigan, announced a Jack Kittel gig at the L. C. Walker Arena in his home town, opening for a country and bluegrass figure like Tom T. Hall, who had seven number ones on the country charts at the time of the concert. In 2021, Tom shot himself at the age of eighty-five. By then he'd racked up twelve number ones.

There's little else documented about Jack Kittel. What is known for certain is that he died unexpectedly in a traffic accident on 28 September 1996, at the age of forty-nine. The accident happened at 12:18 p.m. in Shelby Township, Michigan, when another vehicle ran a stop sign and fatally rammed his Jeep. Kittel



wasn't wearing his seatbelt. He was buried on 2 October 1996 at St. Mary's Cemetery in his native Muskegon. His headstone, simple and plain, simply reads Husband and bears the epitaph "In God's Care".

Ironically, it was right after his death that he gained a certain renown thanks to his version of "Psycho" being included in the film "Larger Than Life" (1996), in which Bill Murray takes charge of a female elephant and Matthew McConaughey plays a deranged truck driver. After the song appeared in the film, the posthumous album (known simply as "Psycho") was released, also on Belt Records, which would release barely anything else, cementing his status as a cursed artist.

OK, but what does the song say? Why has it earned that reputation for being disturbing, unsettling, unnerving? How did it come about?

Although the 1997 album's liner notes place its writing, by Leon Payne, in the late fifties, the truth is that, according to his own daughter, Myrtie LePayne, the song was written by her father in the late sixties, after a conversation about serial killers with Jack White, the steel guitarist in his band. Although initially the subject of their discussion was Richard Speck (in July 1966, Speck murdered eight student nurses from South Chicago Community Hospital in Chicago), Payne and White got carried away and brought up other killers, like Charles Whitman (in 1966, Whitman killed seventeen people from the clock tower at the University of Texas, after killing his mother and his wife), Ed Gein (the "Butcher of Plainfield" desecrated several graves and murdered two women between 1954 and 1957), Mary Bell (as an eleven-year-old girl, in 1968, she strangled two little boys to death in Scotswood, a district of Newcastle upon Tyne) and Albert Fish (a murderer, rapist and cannibal of children from the late 19th century). There's material for a song there, don't tell me there isn't. Well, that's exactly what Leon Payne did, peppering the lyrics with macabre nods and taking no prisoners. The narrator is the sociopath himself talking to his mother, asking for her approval for each of the outrages he describes, and asking her if she really thinks he's a psycho. In the first part, after opening with a reference to Mary Bell and Albert Fish through a play on words ("Can Mary fry some fish, mama?"), he tells his mama that he's got rid of his ex-girlfriend and her boyfriend, Jack White (that name rings a bell, doesn't it?), after seeing them dancing, and that he's buried them under Jenkins' sycamore tree. In the following verses, the narrator strangles a little dog, strangles its owner and kills a little girl who was sitting on a park bench with a wrench. "You think I'm crazy, don't you, Mom?", he asks rhetorically at the end of each verse, proud of being a fucking psychopath. But perhaps the most unsettling and demoralising line is the last one, when the listener has no stomach left to keep processing atrocities:

"Say something, Mom.
Mom, why aren't you getting up?
Mom?"

Apart from Eddie Noack's original and the seventies revival provided by Kittel, "Psycho" benefited from two top-notch remakes in the eighties: on the one hand, Elvis Costello recorded it live at the Palomino Club in Hollywood and released it as the B-side of "Sweet Dreams", and it later appeared on his themed country album "Almost Blue", released in 1981; on the other, three years later, the Australians Beasts Of Bourbon set the bar very close to the hell where the song's protagonist is rotting, thanks to Tex Perkins' disturbing performance. This version, which we used to sing along to at the much-missed Café Arenal in Jerez in the late nineties, was the one that set me on the path back to the original. So, thanks to, or because of, Tex Perkins, you're reading this now.

And if you still feel like listening to more songs cooked up around famous psychopaths, in this playlist you've got "Psycho" and nine more. Almost fifty minutes of horror.

Juan Carlos León

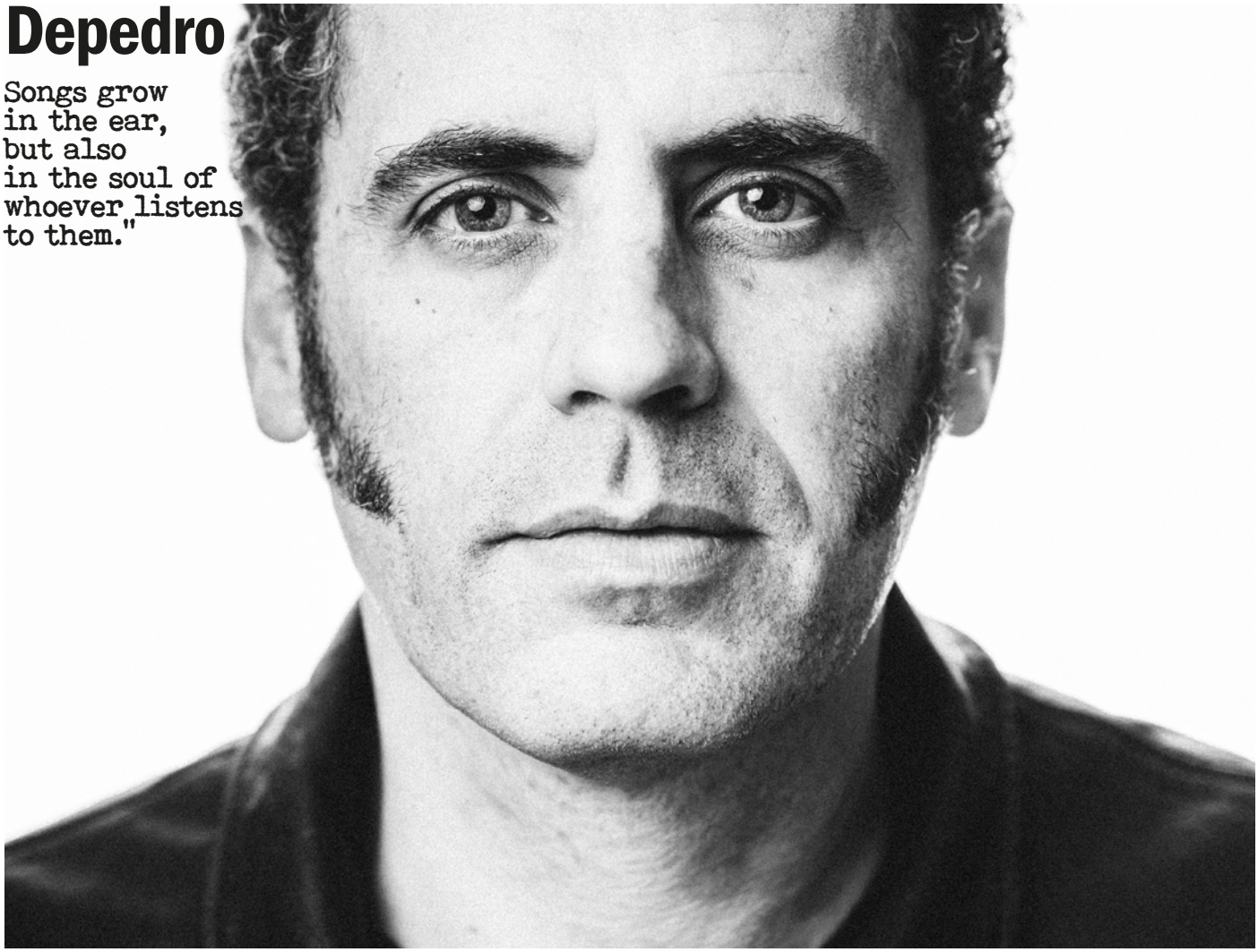
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Depedro

Songs grow in the ear, but also in the soul of whoever listens to them."



"Furia y Calma" is Depedro's latest work. An album arriving in instalments that seems to open a new cycle in the artist's career. We talked to him to dig a little deeper into the feelings the project is leaving behind. Jairo Zavala appears on screen looking serious, perhaps under pressure from the number of interviews that day, and asks us to keep it moving so he can carry on with the promo throughout the morning. So we get straight to it.

Jairo, I've just realised we're recording this interview on the very day you release one of the singles that make up "Furia y Calma", "De momento", is that right?
Yes. That's the method now: with all the information and artistic noise out there, you have to drip-feed the music to poke your head out a bit.

Soon we'll have the complete work, but "fury" and "calm" are two concepts that, a priori, might seem opposed. Why is the new album called that?
Well, there's a song on the album with that name and I think it reflects not only the times we're living in, but also things on a personal level. A person gets up in the morning, and by the afternoon different things have happened to them that can change their mood, and that's something we all live with constantly. I still haven't found constant tranquillity and balance, and I think there's a lot to dig into in that reflection, and I wanted to work along those lines.

"Furia y Calma" is your eleventh solo album, is that right?
Actually, I don't think so. Because there have been some covers albums. In any case, it seems like a huge number to me, I'm the first to be surprised when I look back, but I want to keep enjoying the emotional connection with the audience. A circumstance I know is unique.

But you do celebrate twenty years in your career next year. Are you planning anything special to mark the anniversary?
Not yet, but all in good time.

Well, focusing on "Furia y Calma", it seems like you're entering a new cycle. "Un lugar perfecto" couldn't have gone better: Best Pop/Rock Album at the Spanish Music Academy Awards, a nomination for Best Music Production at the MIN Awards... Are you hoping this album brings as much excitement as the last one?
Well, I do everything out of the excitement of finding different ways to tell things along new paths. This time, for example, I went to Mexico to record it with my friend Camilo Lara to bring in his creative vision, and he's helped me bring this album safely home. Contrary to what you might think, it does have elements of Mexican music, but it also has lots of melodic, poppy elements. I'd say it's the most melodic one, in fact. Camilo has done a tremendous job on the vocal side, he's guided me and made me feel really comfortable in that process.

Speaking of which, I was reading about the production process with Camilo, who, as you mentioned, if I'm not mistaken, has the Instituto Mexicano del Sonido project...
A really interesting project that's been going for almost twenty years, yes. Apart from being a producer, he's an artist and understands both sides really well, of course.

Going back to what you were saying, it's true that it's a very melodic work, but, coming from you, it's no surprise that we expect a mix of very distinctive musical styles. Do you think there's any style left for you to explore?
Music is immense. I've approached and touched on things very superficially (because to really know a genre you have to live it),

but my curiosity does work as a tool for me and helps me grab colours and flavours from all the rhythms that inspire me to dress up songs.

And to dress up songs we also see that you like bringing in collaborations, something you've got us well used to. This time, I'd like to highlight the collaboration with Iván Ferreiro on the song "Va a llover", because I thought it was beautiful. I understand you talked to him about writing it together, didn't you?
I started the song and said: "This sounds really familiar, I think I've copied it from him" (laughs), and I called him. At that point, he was in the middle of his tour (with which he's treating us to beautiful songs from his whole career), and I finished it myself, but I wanted Iván to sing it. He helped me a lot and I'm really grateful that he found a moment in the middle of preparing his tour to sing it and record it. As I said once, with Iván everything's easy. He's always been very generous with me.

You say you were writing the song and thought of Iván. Does that usually happen to you? When you write a song, do you have in mind the artist you want to do a particular collaboration with?
Yes, that's usually how it is.

We've already heard some of the previews, but are there more collaborations on "Furia y Calma"?
Yes. There's Vivir Quintana, who lives in Mexico City and was able to come over to the studio to record. The result is there, it's great. And then there's another collaboration on the album, which will come out later and I don't want to give the game away, but it was a coincidence, a very happy accident. And that one really has given the song a new angle.

Is there any collaboration you'd like to have in the future?
Well, I don't know, but I hope there'll be lots of interesting conversations and collaborations along my way.

They say there are artists who make albums to tell what's happened to them and others who make them to try to understand what's happening to them or to the world. Where would you place yourself?
It's a strange thing, because someone who isn't in this world doesn't need to tell the world, or doesn't have the confidence to tell anything and feed our ego. It's an interesting question that opens up a deep personal debate. I think, sometimes, there are songs that come from a story or a circumstance and others come from an inner feeling. The reasons that give rise to songs are very varied in my case.

And at what moment in your life does "Furia y Calma" sit?
I'm not sure, but, despite the title, I think I'm at one of my best moments of personal balance. Sometimes you need to be calm to talk about precipices.

And going back to the single you're releasing today, "De momento", what can you tell us about it?
It's a song that aesthetically does fit in with the songs I've done before. The way I look at current world events has crept into it, and it's a show of support for the hope that the collective and the "us" can help us much more than exclusionary, sectarian lives.

In fact, I was recently talking to another artist about the burning issues in today's society and he told me he felt this sector has a responsibility when it comes to speaking out and being in the world. Do you agree?
I don't think so. I think that's something you earn. What I think is that, simply, offering a hug in the form of art is our biggest contribution; it's an act of peace, an act of rebellion nowadays. We have to create an artistic scene and I think that's what drives me. It's a path you choose.

Let's start wrapping up the interview, I know you're in a hurry. Thinking about all your work as a whole, all your styles... which do you think would define you best?
Well, I don't know. I think that's for the audience to decide, because there are sounds that, if you care about them, you pay attention to, and, if not, they go unnoticed. I do what I can and the result, a lot of the time, is things that stay after others have been discarded.

As for "Furia y Calma", do you think it was the coherent step you had to take in your career?
I'd say so. Although I'm aware I have a lot of room for improvement. Music and writing are infinite, so I'd like to think I've been honest along this path.

And to finish, recommend us a song from "Furia y Calma" that has meant a lot to you.
It's not out yet, but it's called "Horizontes". I'll leave it there, because songs grow in the ear, but also in the soul of the people who hear them; that's why I don't want to say anything about it and influence its meaning.

Well, thank you very much for this little while and for talking to Rock Bottom Magazine in the middle of all the album promo.
Thank you all very much, always.

Ada Salas



KEEP THE SOUL ALIVE

BY JL. CRESPO ZEPISOUL

The Catacombs (1967-1974)



A spot-on quote from legendary DJ Carl Dene summed up the importance of this club perfectly: 'Before The Catacombs there was r&b, after The Catacombs there was Northern Soul'. It's 1967, and two local businesspeople, Steve and Helen Dobson, want to make a splash on the emerging 'northern soul' scene by opening a new venue in a rather unusual place: an old metal foundry in the centre of their town, Wolverhampton (Midlands, UK). Its industrial past and underground feel will give it its name, 'the catacombs'; it will be on the building's second floor, an open-plan, windowless space reached by two flights of concrete stairs. Although the music starts out with r&b and jazz sessions, in October 1968 the decks are handed over to rare soul, the seed of what would soon become known as northern soul.

The town is a real youth hotbed where various subcultures (sorry, I don't like the term 'urban tribe') roam the streets freely: from skinheads to rockers, Hell's Angels, teddy boys and, of course, mods, they all have their territory in Wolverhampton's cafés, bars and clubs. Despite such an explosive mix, there are hardly any fights, and a kind of underground peace hangs in the air. The main focus starts to be 'The Cats', the name Catacombs begins to be known by: it was basically a long, narrow corridor with vaulted alcoves where the old furnaces had once stood. This corridor led to a vaulted dance floor with low ceilings, which created a particular acoustic that became the club's trademark, helped by the speakers surrounding the dance floor. The atmosphere on a night out was electric and incredible, shaped by its architecture and the passion of all the young people who came to dance and sweat through the night. A highlight was, above all, when they played the electrifying, crazy "Psychedelic Soul" by Saxie Russell, an essential track at other clubs too, such as the Blackpool Mecca or the Pendulum Club in Manchester. The heat was intense because of the crowd of dancers packed on the floor, and the walls, covered in graffiti and soul slogans, were dripping with condensation from all those bodies dancing en masse. The dim lighting, with just the glow from the DJ booth and a few coloured bulbs, led to widespread madness on those nights, with sweat and speed ruling in the near darkness.

One of the club's DJs, the late, much-remembered Ian 'Pep' Pereira, recalled the Catacombs' unique atmosphere: "People were running up the walls and doing somersaults. It didn't matter what you looked like because it was so dark… Northern soul was the start of solo dancing". He was referring to the fact that the typical souler who went there, or to other clubs, danced alone, focused on their steps and acrobatics, in their own patch of the floor, oblivious to everyone else, lost in the melody running through their whole body.

Another important feature of the Cats, and one that made it different, was the fantastic 'camaraderie' among its regulars, although it's true that a feeling of brotherhood reigned at practically every 'northern soul' club. The movement's motto, 'Keep the Faith', took on special meaning in its narrow nooks

and crannies. Along the corridor leading to the dance floor there were several wooden benches where young people would gather, either to rest and get their strength back, mainly because of the chemical extras, or to swap records and talk about the tunes that had been the stars of the night. Those who didn't need a rest also danced outside, on the fire escapes, by the emergency exits that were kept open to ease the oven effect the dance floor turned into. A night at Catacombs was the closest thing to attending a ceremony of the soul, with the noise of the crowd, the clapping and 'stomps' (a characteristic move where you stamped hard on the floor at a specific moment in a song) every time a hit came on, the hugs, in short, a total celebration of friendship in a special place, in an intimate atmosphere where you could forget the hard weekly grind at the factory or in the dole queue. This amazing atmosphere, together with the spectacular, almost improvised layout of an old factory, meant that, thanks to word of mouth, its legend spread across counties in the Midlands: Northampton, Cheltenham or Cardiff were the hometowns of hundreds of kids who travelled by coach, by car or hitchhiking to a temple of soul called 'the catacombs'; on top of that, these journeys helped forge friendships that lasted over time. Another of its trademarks was its swear box, a box at the main entrance meant to discourage people from using 'swear words', with the money collected going to charity.

As I mentioned at the beginning, when the club first opened, the programming was mainly jazz with r&b standards, played by two young local DJs, 'The Saint' and 'Gibbo'. The shift towards soul music came soon after, thanks to a young mod who lent his impressive singles collection to the Cats to bring about that change of musical direction: Carl Dene. What really mattered was that many of those import singles were unknown in England, and some were even one-off copies, which became known as 'rare soul'; one of those rarities that became a trademark of the club, since it could only be heard on its dance floor, was "That Beatin' Rhythm" (1966), an irresistible rhythmic gem that I even used as the theme tune for my podcast "Keep the Soul Alive". He was also an expert at getting ahead of the charts with songs like the historic "Hey Girl Don't Bother Me" (1964, The Tams), which some purists consider the first song with a genuine northern soul pedigree; for me, the first one is "I Can't Help Myself" (1964), by the fabulous Four Tops, the archetype of the authentic Motown sound, the cradle of 'northern'. Thanks to Dene's work spreading gems like "I'm Gonna Run Away From You" (1965), by the fantastic Tami Lynn, at Catacombs, this and many others later reached high positions in the British charts, which shows how important DJs were in the music and dance movement.

Another obscure object of desire for fans and DJs was "Baby Reconsider", by Leon Haywood: Carl Dene owned the only copy in the country, which meant that if you wanted to hear that song, you had to go to the Cats. Dene's successors arrived in 1969, two key figures in spreading the sound at the club: Alan 'AJ' Smith and 'Major' Bob Crocker, obsessive, compulsive hunters of vinyl treasure all over the UK, which even led them to open a record shop to offer all those gems to soulers, both regulars and those who went to other clubs. Sadly, 'Major' died in a car accident while travelling in search of records to play at Catacombs, a tragedy that shook the whole scene; his partner carried on the legacy into the early 70s, when Dave 'Froggy' Taylor and Paul 'Blue' Max came on board, also experts in picking obscure songs that would later be played at the competition, the Wigan Casino.

In 1972, after a brief closure due to a change of ownership, there was a small refurbishment in which the building was painted completely red, and it became known informally as 'The Blood Tub'. The DJ line-up was also renewed and another key name was signed, Ian Pereira, a dancer and record dealer who started DJing in late '72; his weekly selection of new tracks helped The Catacombs reach its peak in this period, while, musically, the club was constantly evolving. Thanks to the significant investment in buying unknown singles, its prestige on the scene was considerable: it was the club where you could hear songs for the first time before they were played on the rest of the circuit. That quality of programming made it number one in northern soul until it closed.

But it wasn't all rare soul within its walls; a surprising number of artists who played on its stage also contributed to its legendary aura, such as David Bowie in 1969, Judas Priest in 1971 and Oscar Toney Jr. the following year. On top of that, several soul singers touring the country would drop by the Cats to do impromptu performances, say hello to their fans and also play records. The Catacombs was unique.

When the Wigan Casino opened in December 1973, many young people from the town travelled there for its all-nighter. The Cats didn't have a licence for that, so attendance started to drop alarmingly. The dreaded end came on the night of 13 July 1974, with more than a thousand soulers packed into a venue with a capacity of five hundred, saying goodbye to a club that had been part of their lives. The heat from all that sweat made the paint on the walls run as if it were blood, while all the great moments that had made it a legend up to that day were played in the DJ booth. The last song, at dawn, was "Where Have All the Flowers Gone" (1965), by Walter Jackson, a folk song with a powerful anti-war message that left almost everyone there in tears. The next day, Wolverhampton woke up sad; The Cats would never again fill its nights with sweat and soul, although its spirit would always be there.



Sex Museum





“Over the years we’ve turned the value of slowness into our own artistic philosophy. For an independent band, slowness isn’t failure or delay; it’s more like a synonym for maturity, for resilience and for being deeply rooted in our essence. Not in what we set out to be, but in what we’ve ended up being.”

After the overwhelming lead single “We Are Not Dead” (a real statement of intent) and “Sugar”, which they’d already been playing live, listening to the new album (thanks to our boss Javi Torreira) has been a real test of faith for yours truly (I have to confess, I wasn’t sure this set of songs could top or match their previous album), one that has been fully rewarded by the content of “TLSW”. Talking to Fernando Pardo, guitarist and founding member of Sex Museum along with Marta Ruiz and Miguel Pardo.

The album title is “The Long Slow Way”, could it be a kind of “The Long and Winding Road”? Does it have to do with the difficulties you’ve had in finally getting it out?
I don’t think so. McCartney wrote that song when he was under thirty, at a time of tension within the Beatles, and you can sense in it the difficulty of bridging a personal distance. Ours has more to do with the moment when, after a long journey, you stop, look back and take in the road you’ve travelled. “The Long Slow Way” represents a long, patient journey.

Over the years we’ve turned the value of slowness into our own artistic philosophy. For an independent band, slowness isn’t a failure or a delay; it’s more a synonym for maturity, for resilience and for being firmly rooted in our essence. Not in what we wanted to be, but in what we’ve ended up being. This album in particular has been complicated because we ourselves are difficult and the relationship within the band is pretty explosive. That doesn’t mean we don’t get on; it’s simply that we have a congenital difficulty in all pushing in the same direction first time round. But even so, we keep going. We have to negotiate everything, every step, however small. And that constant negotiation takes time. I think we also carry a burden from our generation, those of us born in the sixties: the obsessive need to be absolutely pure, real and honest in a deeply inauthentic world. That legacy makes us very impractical; we defend principles so rigid that sometimes they end up paralysing us. We have an almost self-destructive tendency to prefer putting the brakes on a project rather than giving an inch on those ideals. It’s neither good nor bad; that’s how we are, we accept it, and that’s why we take so long to put out an album.

The instrumental framework of the songs was recorded at the “Graba Graba Hey” studios (Seville), owned by the multifaceted Álvaro Suite, last year if I remember right. Was the band clear that it had to be recorded there? How was the experience with a musician who’s been through so many battles like him?
Honestly, we couldn’t agree. We’d been weighing up several options without settling on any of them, so I insisted on working with Álvaro until I brought the others round to that path. I had to force it a bit, but in the end we were all delighted with the experience. Álvaro has a fucking great attitude and energy; he’s a pure enthusiast. With him everything was really easy and flowed really well. We needed a good studio, but also someone who’d bring ideas, suggest solutions and know how to mediate between us when needed. What’s more, Álvaro “is rock”. He’s not a metal producer, or a converted hardcore guy, or a former rock’n’roller who’s turned his back on it; he IS ROCK, just like that, in capitals. He knows our references and our roots, and he likes them as much as we do. From the very first minute we spoke the same language. The idea of working with him went back a long way. After one of our gigs in Barcelona, he helped us pack up the gear and mentioned in passing that he’d love to produce a song for us. I held on to that and, when years later I saw he was setting up his studio in Seville, I thought it was time to take him at his word.

Was it already decided that the vocals would be recorded later at another studio? Specifically at Garlic Records, with Edu Molina at the desk.
Yes, it was planned that way from the start. Miguel couldn’t travel to Seville on the dates we’d booked, so we decided to go into the studio to record the whole instrumental backing live and in very few takes. We left everything all set up, completely on track, so that he only had to turn up and sing. And the truth is that with Edu exactly the same thing happens as with Álvaro: he’s a believer. He knows perfectly well what we do, he knows what we’re after and, besides, we’d already worked with him before, which got rid of any adjustment period. That trust was key. Miguel felt right at home at Garlic Records; in fact, he told us he hadn’t recorded vocals so comfortably and happily in years.

It’s time to unpack “Long Way” from the sonic block it’s wrapped in. I have to say, first of all, that the feeling the album has given me after several listens is of a hard, raw sound overall, and of a pretty significant importance placed on the vocal side and the voices, what can you tell me about that?
The sound is that direct because we all recorded at the same time, in few takes and with the idea of playing the songs straight through, including most of the arrangements and solos. We wanted to focus as much as possible on the instrumental side. The funny thing is that we arrived at the studio having played only two of the ten songs all together. With Loza in Galicia and Marta in the Alpujarras, getting together in Madrid had become complicated, so we prepared the set separately. I was the only one who got to play all of them before recording, with some or others. Marta did hers on her own and I finished them off with her, and the rest we rehearsed in the rehearsal room, Loza, Javi and me. The three of us work really well together, we read each other well. The songs were demoed, Javi’s more fully formed, Loza’s less so. In a few rehearsals we had them. Then we sent them to Marta so she could work on them her way and at her own pace. In the end everything was easier and quicker than we expected. We did it all in two and a half days; we started on a Monday and by Wednesday afternoon Loza and Javi were already back in Madrid. We used Thursday to get creative, finish off details and see which songs needed some extra arrangement to round them off. I added some rhythm guitars on the looser songs, because in the group takes I preferred to focus on playing the more improvised, crazier parts with the whole band, and Marta added some synths where she’d already recorded the Hammond. That edge of rawness is precisely the result of trusting the band’s craft and intuition.

With “Just Killing Time” opening the album, I had the feeling of coming home, back to Sex Museum, to those sounds that define you as a band. A song by Marta, with a crushing, organic wall of keyboards and, in my personal opinion, an echo of your beloved Magazine. And speaking of echoes, with undeniable vocal support from Pandora Pardo and Juan Pardo, wrapping themselves around Miguel’s ragged voice in no uncertain terms. Were you clear that this song had to open the album? How did Pandora’s collaboration come about? The truth is I had no idea until then about that musical streak of hers, unlike her sister Tábata, whose musical adventures I do try to keep up with.
The truth is we didn’t think about the running order until we had them all mixed. Once we’d heard them finished, we tried to get both sides balanced in running time for the vinyl and to make the progression make sense. As for Pandora, she has brutal talent and musical instinct. Like Tábata, she studied at the conservatory from a very young age, but when she reached intermediate level she took against it (because of the institution’s absurd rigidity) and put the piano aside. Luckily, she picked it up again a few years ago and started writing, singing and recording her own songs. For us it’s an absolute luxury to have her close by and, of course, we make the most of her whenever the opportunity comes up. She sings wonderfully and has an incredible knack for structuring backing vocals and nailing vocal arrangements. That cushion of voices she builds with Juan wraps around Miguel’s voice perfectly and gives the song an expansive, magnetic feel.

And then comes the jewel of “TLSW” for me, the tremendous, devastating “Nothing Lasts Forever”, with vocals from the tireless soul voice of Koko-Jean (The Excitements, Koko-Jean & the Tonics). If my calculations are right, I think it’s the first time someone from outside the band has collaborated on a song, is that correct? How did this incredible Koko/Miguel duet come about? Could there be a collaboration at a gig too? And, by the way, congratulate Loza on the lyrics and music of such an anthem.
Your calculations are only slightly off. It’s not the first time we’ve had people from outside, although it’s true that on this album it takes on another dimension. If you look at the credits of “United”, there were already backing vocals and second voices from Judy Clericuzio, the singer of Cañones y Mantequilla, a real pioneer of country in Spain who was also a lifelong neighbour of ours and someone we were hugely fond of; Pedro Perles, an all-round artist from Cádiz who was then part of the Carne Lovers, along with his partner at the time, Ana Álvarez, sister of Pax, La Vacazul’s original drummer; and Iván “Chapo” González, an all-terrain bassist and producer we met in Mieres with La Ruta and who has ended up playing with Sabina, M Clan, Tarque, Amaral, Xoel López or Zahara. Not bad at all.

And Koko?

We discovered Koko when she started singing with the Excitements and she blew us away from the start. We'd crossed paths at quite a few festivals, but the real spark came in early 2025 at a gig at Helldorado. We already had the album completely recorded, including "Nothing Lasts Forever", with Miguel's vocals and Loza's backing vocals. We were chatting before playing and she dropped, almost as a wish, that it would be great if we collaborated on something. A light bulb went on for Javi Vacas instantly and we decided to grab an extra studio day to re-record the vocals and set up that back-and-forth between Miguel and Koko. It's turned out fucking great. Now the problem will be playing it without her, because after hearing what Koko does it's hard to imagine the song without her voice. We've got ourselves into a right mess, but we'll find a way to sort it out. And as soon as we're on the same bill, we'll do it together, that's for sure. Oh, and I'll pass on the congratulations to Loza, of course.

The onslaught continues with the adrenaline-fuelled, fuzz-laden "Warm & Cozy", thought up by you and set to music by Marta and yourself. I think it's a perfect example of perpetuating the legacy of the "sex museum" and, at the risk of being a bit of a know-it-all, maybe songs like that come to you without trying, I mean, out of pure intuition. What did you have in mind when you wrote it? I firmly believe it'll gain quite a few decibels live. Have you already got the setlist for the launch tour, or will you carry on with the fortieth anniversary celebrations including material from the album?

The idea and the instrumental development are Marta's; I took care of writing the lyrics and the vocal melody, always under her supervision to fit exactly what she had in her head. Marta has the "James Hetfield gift", but in keyboard form: the guy shits out riffs on guitar, and she spits them out on the Hammond. Those heavy riffs that make the earth shake are fifty per cent of our identity; it's characteristic of her style and totally recognisable in the band. The lyrics are a kick in the teeth to a contemporary morality that I find very conservative, set on making us live in a big beehive where everything is stable, predictable and comfortable. No rough edges, no deep smells, no noise. A dystopia where masculinity ends up being expendable and men are reduced to the role of mere drones. Against that, the song is a wild hymn to carnal passion and emotional detachment. I don't think anyone's going to remember us for long after we're dead, or that there's another life waiting for us where we'll be rewarded for having behaved ourselves. So, let's fuck, life's short. The song celebrates intense, fleeting encounters, the ones you live to the limit, even though you know they're not going to last. They don't need to have any future to be worth living. And in this fable the grasshopper survives the winter and the drones end up getting it on with the queen bee.

After the near-atomic storm of the first three songs, a bit of calm arrives with "Red Alert" (the second single), with an intro that brings back fond memories of that now legendary "Enjoy Forbidden". A pure and simple Marta composition, with Pandora's help, it's one of the album's highlights for me, with the makings of a sonic totem. It makes me wonder whether, when you're writing all these songs, you have the idea of their lasting in mind, I mean, whether your intention is to create classics.

When we start working together, everything is less elaborate than it may seem. You're focused on what you're playing, on what the others are doing and on how the ideas fit together. You keep unravelling the ball of yarn until the song starts to stand up on its own. Until it "works", as we say. The complexity you notice at the end comes from that workshop process, of trying things and adjusting on the fly, rather than polishing every detail like a piece of jewellery. As for whether we have the idea of lasting in mind, I think that's pretty personal. I imagine each of us sees it in our own way.

I can speak with more knowledge about Marta and me. I always push forward. When I finish something and leave it behind, I feel it no longer belongs to me. I abandon it. I don't even keep an emotional connection with my songs. There comes a point where I'm not sure if I wrote them and I have to check the album credits. It's funny, because I remember certain situations down to the most trivial detail, but I couldn't tell you the title of three quarters of what I've written. If someone assures me we wrote a song together, or that it's actually theirs, I believe them.

Marta works differently. She writes incredible songs and is very clear about how they should sound, from the structure to the last arrangement. I think she does think about them possibly becoming classics. When she brings a song, the rest of us get to work to take it where she's imagined it. She demands that we get there, she doesn't settle for something close. And we're happy to do it because the result is worth it. In "Red Alert" you can hear that combination of a very constructed song and the force we give it by playing it together. That's where the vocation you mention comes from.

As happened with "Musseexum", the songwriting is practically evenly shared, with more or less two songs per member. Is that now house rules?

Yes, it's a rule we've all accepted. Quite a while ago we decided to open things up so anyone in the band could write. Taking that step cost us a very intense internal debate, but over the years we've seen it was the best decision we could have made. We have different tastes and each of us suggests things the rest of us might not have thought of. Then we play them together and Sex Museum appears. However different the songs are, when we play them together you always recognise the band. We like that combination: we can recognise what we are without always having to repeat the same formula. And after forty years we keep coming across ideas that take us out of our comfort zone.

I'd already been able to hear "Sugar & Hypocrisy" at the gig in January this year at El Sol, and a year ago at Gruta 77, and I have to say I was surprised by how it's been brought into the studio, giving it more musical heft. Is it the first song you wrote or the first one you decided to present on stage?

> ***Marta has the "James Hetfield gift", but on keyboards: the guy "shits riffs" on guitar, and she spits them out on the Hammond. Those heavy, earth-shaking riffs are fifty percent of our identity; it's a defining part of her style and totally recognisable in the band.***

You hit the nail on the head on both counts. It was the first song we wrote and the first one we decided to road-test live. "Sugar & Hypocrisy" served as a testing ground to understand how we were going to sound on the new album. When you start a project from scratch, you always need a first song to test the waters: see what kind of arrangements each of us brings, how they fit with the rest of the instruments, define the overall colour of the sound, adjust the tempos we feel most comfortable with or find the exact vocal pitch that Miguel will make the most of. It's not that we're looking to reinvent ourselves at this point, but rather to adapt to the reality of what we are at that precise moment. The aim is for everything to flow as naturally as possible and to smooth out any rough edges that make us sound clumsy or forced. Sometimes the gears mesh quickly and really easily, and other times, as you know, it's a huge struggle for us.

It's become almost a habit to include a song in Spanish on your latest albums (it happened with "Judee Sill" on "Big City Lies" and "Microdosis" on "Musseexum"), is that another rule of the Sex Museum machine? This time, I think Javi wanted to make it a song to sing live with your fist in the air, chanting the chorus at full volume (¡¡¡Sin miedo a morir!!!), am I wrong? The nod to "Strychnine" via the Fuzztones, is it a tribute? (By the way, another Vacas song comes to mind with its wink to "Paranoid" in "Riots" on "Musseexum").

Yes, I'd have liked there to be more lyrics in Spanish, getting closer to fifty per cent. And the fist in the air chanting the chorus, well, fucking great, although personally I don't really enjoy it when the audience starts singing the songs. A quirk of mine, nothing more. As for "Strychnine", sometimes it's what you say, but it also happens that from listening to a song a lot, part of it stays inside you and ends up coming out when you write. You've absorbed

it into your way of making music and you don't even think about where it comes from anymore. I think it usually happens without you being aware of it.

Here comes the most complex, epic song of the lot, with echoes of the shock I got the first time I heard the revolutionary "Sonic". Another wonder from the F. Pardo/M. Ruiz partnership, with a dazzling melting pot of sounds, how many is that now? But I'm going to go further: I think the six minutes of "Invisible Rhythm" sum up your whole musical career since that distant 1985 when you got together to rehearse. It's been a long and tortuous road since then, hasn't it?

Damn, that's great! I think it's fucking great to see it that way, and even more so coming from you, who knows us inside out and from the very start. The road is long precisely because it doesn't lead anywhere; there's no final destination. That's where its real charm lies. But let nobody be mistaken, it's not a tortuous journey. Quite the opposite. There's a widespread idea that a musician's life is a life of suffering and, from my experience, I don't agree at all. I like this kind of life, even with its difficulties. The fucked-up thing would be if one day I stopped liking it and carried on out of sheer inertia. What would really scare me would be losing the enthusiasm. Starting to think we've done enough, that the volume bothers people and it's time to sell the Gibson and the Marshall to buy an acoustic, justifying it afterwards with the story that I've matured and that, deep down, we all want the same thing. Well, no, of course not, damn it. We're not the same, we haven't lived the same things and not everything is the same. I don't want to end up turned into an art bureaucrat who poses with politicians, dressed in the grown-up musician uniform they sell at Zara, and who talks to you about the latest Bad Bunny concert.

In Spain we suffer from a pathological tendency towards civil-servant thinking, an almost genetic need to measure existence by the yardstick of what's safe, docile and comfortable. That civil-servant inertia infects every area, including the music ecosystem. Since this is a wild trade that forces you to ride uncertainty and live with the void every day, a lack of guts breeds monsters: you end up running into a sinister bunch of cynics, sad, burnt-out guys who hate their job. I want to stay a thousand kilometres away from them. They're contagious. I've still got too much urgency in my body. I'm still hungry for noise. We're another kind of musician, bar-room fodder, big talkers, over-the-top and noisy. For us there's nothing better than a changing life, always on the move, that doesn't let you get comfortable and that you can live your own way. Your own fucking way, without anyone setting the pace for you. Phew, the tortuous thing really got me going (Laughs).

There's little left to say about the crushing "We Are Not Dead" (another of Loza's creations) that hasn't been said in the media since it came out. In my opinion, it's a pure fucking anthem, a punch right in the face to everyone who'd written you off years ago. What can you tell me about it? Is it a warning to those who don't believe, or haven't believed, in you?

It would be very tempting to sell that song as poetic revenge or a settling of scores with anyone who writes us off, but the reality of Sex Museum is a lot colder and more self-centred. It matters little whether they believe in us or not. I see faith as a religious matter, not a musical one. If the band had needed validation or applause to justify itself, we'd have packed it in thirty years ago. "We Are Not Dead" isn't a warning or a cry of protest; it's simply a statement of our persistence. The key to our longevity lies precisely in that indifference to other people's opinions, in the fact that we make our own decisions and keep our character intact. We don't play to come back to life in anyone's eyes; we play because we like it and because it's our trade. As prosaic as that.

Getting dangerously close to the end of the journey, along comes another devastating statement of commitment from Javi Vacas, "My Own Way", echoing that thrilling "Lucky Man". What more can I add: another classic, right? Another smack right in the face?

Totally. Javi writes with the gig in mind, he has a very brilliant mind for that. He doesn't sit down to write waiting for inspiration to come down from the heavens; he writes thinking about how people are going to react and what the band needs on stage. He looks at the repertoire we have, analyses what we are, what works best for us and, if he sees some kind of song missing from the setlist, he writes one to fill that gap. It's an almost made-to-order process. It doesn't come so much from a need for abstract artistic expression or an intimate impulse, but from a brutal sense of functionality: he creates what's needed so the gigs are a steamroller. And the best thing is that it works like hell, honestly. He hits you with a song like "My Own Way" and you realise it's been designed down to the millimetre for that.

The album closes with "Orión", created by Marta and Loza. By the way, before I forget, where do the dialogues come from? How did it come about?

The song was born from an idea of Loza's, something between a riff and a melody that Marta finished developing. Then we added the greetings in fifty-five languages from the Voyager probes' Golden Record, sent into space in 1977. Carl Sagan and co. prepared that introduction of humanity with the best of intentions. A kind of cosmic diplomacy that basically says we're peaceful, kind people, eager to meet our neighbours in the universe. Beautiful. We send them a message of interstellar brotherhood and, if they dare to come and visit us, we'll wipe them out.

So there you go, an instrumental with the soul of a jam session, maybe ideal for opening your gigs and taking over from the by-now customary "Dopamina".

Well, we haven't thought about starting gigs with "Orión" yet. We'll see how we work the new songs in, whether we do it all at once or little by little.

Speaking of the end of the album, you haven't included any cover, something that's also been a habit on almost all your records. Planned or a unanimous decision? I was hoping you'd include Neil Young's "Rockin' in the Free World".

It's hard to get covers onto our albums, harder than it seems. For years I've put a lot of energy into suggesting other people's songs, and the resistance to recording them has been even greater. It still happens and it's exhausting; I no longer see the point in insisting. I'd be recording all the time: covers, trying out other styles, ideas that would let us play around with music without always having to think about the next album. But not all of us share that curiosity in the same way, and the hard core is pretty conservative. Over time I've stopped pushing in that direction and have focused on mediating, resolving disagreements and getting things moving. It's a strange role within your own band: sometimes I seem more like an outside consultant than one of the musicians.

Do you think "The Long Slow Way" is your definitive album?

Phew, that's a tough question. Honestly, I hope not; I'd like to think we're still capable of outdoing ourselves. It would be very sad to feel we've already hit the ceiling. The day you walk into the rehearsal room thinking your best album is already done, you run out of reasons to work. We've been at it for forty years, we drag our generational baggage around and we're difficult; every step costs us an exhausting negotiation. But Marta keeps coming up with huge riffs and the rest of us still feel like getting stuck into them, arguing about them and seeing how far we can take them. As long as that happens, there's road left. "The Long Slow Way" captures the band as it is now, it's the exact, honest snapshot of where we are right now. And looking at the landscape, I can assure you the journey is still worth it.

Well, it's been a real pleasure talking to you about this huge collection of songs, melodies that will surely travel with me for a long time. Always grateful to Sex Museum, one of the bands of my life.

The pleasure's been mine; it's great talking to someone who knows us so well and listens to the songs so closely. You saying that after so many years of listening to us means a lot. A huge hug and let's see each other soon with the amps roaring full blast.

JL Crespo "ZepiSoul"

Rock Bottom Magazine presenta_

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SHE GOT THE TV EYE...

"Lanterns"



What a surprise this DC "Lanterns" is. It proves that in 2026 you can still make interesting, entertaining superhero series or films without treating the audience like idiots or as if the target audience was made up solely of five-year-olds (nothing against five-year-old boys or girls). Characters with some psychological depth, a minimum of charisma, well-crafted scripts, competent actors… is it really that hard? After the endless pile of garbage that both Marvel (the amount of garbage this company has put out in film and TV deserves a study of its own) and DC have treated us to, like I said, "Lanterns" is a real breath of fresh air.

I'm not a big Green Lantern expert, I'll admit it. My knowledge of his history is limited, so it's been like working on a blank canvas. I also don't know what James Gunn and Peter Safran have in mind for the future of the new DC Universe, but "Lanterns", yes; "Superman", no. And I'm not saying "Superman" or "Supergirl" weren't entertaining, but they seem to be made for an audience that's happy with music blaring non-stop (as if it were one music video after another), characters sugar-coated to the point of making you throw up (I mean, going from Henry Cavill to David Corenswet… come on, give me a break), ridiculous characters like the one played by Nathan Fillion with a haircut as ridiculous as the character himself… with plots that dissolve like a sugar cube (have I already said everything is way too sugar-coated?). I don't even want to imagine what kind of Batman could fit in there. So, like I said, coming across this series has been a happy discovery.

For starters, the characters in "Lanterns" are really well developed. The pairing of Kyle Chandler (spectacular as a washed-up Green Lantern) and Aaron Pierre (the rookie) works more than well, no doubt about it. Pierre's physique, muscly and with the expressiveness of an ashtray, fits perfectly with a Chandler who's let loose, absolutely glorious, that kind of outdated superhero/antihero who's also deeply human, who knows more by what he keeps quiet than by what he says, and that's despite the fact that he never stops talking. Who would have told us back in the late 90s, when we watched him in that cheesy (and endearing) series "Edición anterior", that we'd see him in a role like this, as a disillusioned, cynical, burnt-out hero, and that's why he works so well with that stone-faced Pierre. The series, which has writers as reliable as Chris Mundy ("Ozark") or Damon Lindelof ("Lost", "The Leftovers", "Watchmen"), inevitably looks more like "True Detective" than any Thor or She-Hulk film. They don't have to take on dozens of aliens or blow up huge menacing spaceships; instead they have to solve a series of murders almost in film noir style, murders which, mind you, involve forces from beyond our planet. However, all the action takes place in a small town in Nebraska, where the sheriff is played by Kelly Macdonald (Diane Coulston in "Trainspotting"), which makes the plot even more down-to-earth. In fact, Chris Mundy said that "action just for the sake of action would have been a distraction and an incident instead of emotion."

And, since it's impossible to say much without spoiling the plot, I'll just say that I hope HBO lets us see a lot more of Kyle Chandler's Green Lantern, because it's, by far, one of the most interesting things of the year.

Javistone

"Carrie"

Mike Flanagan won many of us over with his streaming debut, "La maldición de Hill House" (2018), one of the most elaborate and intelligent horror products I've ever seen. Although his experience in horror films went way back, it was with this series that he caught the attention of the general public and, especially, mine, as I'm not really into horror films.



In 2021 he'd surprise me again with "Misa de Medianoche", another great series. In between, he'd adapted Stephen King again (he'd already done it in 2017 with "El juego de

Gerald") by shooting "Doctor Sleep" in 2019, the novel that's a sequel to "The Shining", which left a good taste in my mouth, although it never came close, not even remotely, to Stanley Kubrick's adaptation, his version of "The Shining", something the master King possibly wouldn't agree with, as he wasn't at all happy with what Kubrick did with his novel. Flanagan came back with "The Fall of the House of Usher" (2023), loosely (very loosely) based on Edgar Allan Poe's famous story, although it was really a hodgepodge of Poe's imagery with no rhyme or reason, in what looked like a sign that, if Flanagan had a formula for making great series, it was running out. And the truth is that the only thing this "Carrie" proves is that Flanagan has completely lost his mojo.

I was never a fan of the book, nor of the original film, but Brian De Palma's "Carrie" (1976) certainly had a lot more muscle and personality of its own than this Flanagan version. If with "La caída de la casa Usher" he regurgitated the Poe universe without bringing much to it, the new "Carrie" doesn't know how to add much to the original story either. Obviously, it moves the setting from the mid-70s to the 2020s, that is: smartphones and the internet have taken over young people's minds and can be a hellish tool for fuelling bullying. Beyond that detail… what's new? Not much: an ending, maybe, that seems more suited to the finale of any of those embarrassing series Marvel has treated us to lately; throwing in the idea that some people have "The Shining", something that has nothing to do with the original text, even though King loves connecting his stories (it just doesn't fit here, Mike)… And even though Eleven's character ("Stranger Things") was created under Carrie's influence (that's not me saying it, it's the Duffer brothers), here it looks like it's Carrie who's been influenced by Eleven. Other than that, this modern version of "Carrie" brings absolutely nothing. It isn't even scary. I remember Sissy Spacek's look and it really did give me goosebumps; you see this Eleven 2.0 and all you want to do is hug her, even covered in blood (how is that adorable girl supposed to be scary?).

Anything worth saving? Without a doubt, the performances of Canadian Summer H. Howell in the lead role and Samantha Sloyan as Carrie's mother. Sloyan is a Flanagan regular and it makes sense, she's a terrific actress, by far the best thing in the series.

All in all, a series that adds nothing to what we've already seen and read, that isn't scary and that barely updates the school bullying of the 70s to the present day. Completely dispensable and easily **forgettable.**

The Perfect Drug





Possibly one of the most sinister characters ever to appear on screen. Hans Beckert, played by an extraordinary Peter Lorre, has left everyone who's dared to watch "M, el vampiro de Düsseldorf" with their heart in their mouth for almost a century now.

A strange decision in Spain, by the way, to add to the original title, "M", the nickname of German serial killer Peter Kürten ("M, The Düsseldorf Vampire"), who was the real guy known as the Vampire of Düsseldorf. It was in 1931, no less, when Fritz Lang directed this disturbing tale about a guy who kidnapped little girls while whistling the melody of "En la gruta del rey de la montaña", by composer Edvard Grieg. In an interwar Germany where the Third Reich was already brewing at the hands of the future Führer, Fritz Lang presents a despicable character based on three little angels of the time: Fritz Haarmann (1879-1925), "the Butcher of Hanover"; Carl Grossmann (1863-1922), who was suspected of selling sausages made of human flesh in times of hunger; and the cannibal Karl Denke (1860-1924). Hans Beckert, as I was saying, abducts little girls, but we don't know exactly what he does to them, beyond the fact that they turn up dead. Lang doesn't show us what happens, he leaves it to our imagination, and we imagine the worst of atrocities. Curiously, Lorre's character barely appears in the film, but you sense him, you see him out of the corner of your eye: chubby, bulging eyes, apparently nothing special… but when he starts whistling clumsily (they say it was actually Lang himself whistling, as Lorre couldn't) you understand that the compulsion has been switched on inside him and the horror is imminent.

Curiously, it's not the police who manage to catch him, but the local underworld, which, in a case of supreme hypocrisy, does everything it can to hunt him down, not to protect those poor kids, but because so many police on the streets is bad for business. On top of that, the "trial" at the hands of a bunch of criminals of the worst kind isn't looking for justice or revenge, just to make the problem go away. But it's right at that moment when Peter Lorre makes time stand still with a monologue about madness, about uncontrollable urges… that chills your blood. Hans Beckert, a child killer, begs the court of gangsters for mercy, saying he can't control himself, that, unlike them, who kill and steal for money, he kills to silence the voice in his head. It's a compulsion he doesn't know how to handle. His "defence lawyer" claims that "someone who acts under compulsion isn't responsible" and that "a sick man should be handed over to a doctor, not to an executioner." Is Beckert really telling the truth? There are reasons to doubt it. The guy is cornered, he goes into total panic: he'd have said anything to get out of that mess. Besides, he was capable of sending a letter to a newspaper mocking the police, and that's not typical of someone who's a victim of uncontrollable urges. And yet, it's hard to believe that torment is faked: Beckert is self-aware enough to know he's a monster. In those terrifying eyes there's rage, desperation and fear: the monster cornered by bloodthirsty hyenas.

In the end, although it's not shown, Beckert is rescued from execution at the hands of the underworld, and in a final sequence we see the mothers crying and lamenting that no execution will bring their daughters back, an abrupt ending that leaves you not knowing what finally happened to good old Hans. Personally, at the very least, I'd hope he rotted in the deepest pit of hell.

Javistone

“La bola negra”



Back in May, I remember hearing that title for the first time: “La bola negra”. I remember hearing it mentioned among the three Spanish films competing for the Palme d’Or. After that, the critical odyssey it went through began: best director at Cannes, a winner in Toronto and one of the best-rated films in the history of the San Sebastián Festival. Such a reception caught my attention because, silly me, I’d never checked out the work of its directors, Javier Ambrossi and Javier Calvo, known to many, me included, for their stint as teachers on “Operación Triunfo”. So I decided to take a look at their work. That’s how I found out they were the creators of “Paquita Salas”, one of the best Spanish comedy series; “La Veneno”, a hugely important series with an incredible message; and “La Mesías”, which was their best project to date. However, “La bola negra” is something different, completely new, without a doubt their crowning achievement and, in the future, part of the history of Spanish cinema.

These last few days, with this film’s boom, lots of people were saying that Spanish cinema was finally doing something good. That’s why I’d encourage people not to discredit what came before us: we’re from the country of old talent like Buñuel, of Almodóvar the genius, or of great more recent artists like Alauda Ruiz de Azúa or Rodrigo Sorogoyen. However, “La bola negra” has something special, and that’s Lorca. The artistic legacy of one of the best poets in history combines with the directors’ ambition and the best thing that could happen happens: the film honours and magnifies the figure of Lorca, something that deserves a lot of credit given how complex the task is, and that improves the quality of the film enormously.



What the Madrid filmmakers have put together is a masterpiece in every respect. A great production team puts together a wonderful edit, makes it a key part of understanding the film and, along with its music, lays the perfect foundations for the story to bear fruit. This music we’re talking about is very special. Two of its songs come from artists who appear in the film: Guitarricadelafuente and Judeline. The singer from Barbate has a small cameo, but Guitarrica is practically a lead. This idea of bringing musical artists to the big screen is something the directors take to the max thanks to their incredible direction of actors and their great eye for performative potential, as they did with Guitarrica. Together with Milo Quifes and Carlos González, Guitarrica is part of the main cast, each in his own timeline. Within these personal stories, we find countless hugely talented artists. Some of the most outstanding would be the immense Lola Dueñas or the already legendary Glenn Close, both playing small roles that are key to the leads’ development, and leaving us

spectacular scenes. Scenes that, without Gris Jordana, wouldn't have been the same. The flawless cinematographer is the mind behind some of the most memorable images we've had in Spanish cinema, with beautiful composition and an outrageous level of attention to detail.

Los Javis, together with Alberto Conejero, build three stories in different timelines that connect and come to an absolutely well-rounded conclusion. Carlos, Sebastián and Alberto are gay men living in these three storylines, which take place in 1932, 1937 and 2017. They all follow these leads, who are lost and, throughout the film, try to find themselves. To do this, we dig into their lives, which build the puzzle that makes up this story slowly, but piece by piece. Some of those pieces are some of the most fascinating musical numbers I've ever seen, starring the people responsible for the two best performances in the film: Milo Quifes and a brief but overwhelming Penélope Cruz. At the same time, we find lots of very simple fragments, but brilliantly directed, shot by shot, taken care of down to the last detail. We also see lots of very intimate scenes as well as lots of maximalist ones, which, all alike, manage to move you, whether because of their technical excellence or their emotional weight. And that's really the magic of "La bola negra": it wins you over with its silences and its music, its tenderness and its brutality, its tragedy, but above all its vitality. It encourages us to live, to live being who we are and not hide it, to live so that those who live can do so with dignity, to live so we don't repeat what we already lost, and to live to be the owners of our hours, minutes and seconds.

This film has been one of my best experiences in a cinema. It joins that coveted group of films that have made me levitate out of my seat. For most of the film I had goosebumps, completely shaken by the emotional magnitude of what I was watching. Its ending is one of the most beautiful pieces of audiovisual work I've been lucky enough to see in my life: the tears took over and drew an ear-to-ear smile on my face. I left that cinema full of hope, of life, of love, and valuing my life much more than I had two and a half hours earlier. That drive, that vitality, has taken root in my soul, along with a hunger to know, to know those who came before us and those we're here because of. To know who fought so that we could be free, so that they're never forgotten. Thanks to all of them, fewer and fewer black balls are being cast, fewer and fewer people hide who they are and, hopefully, in the future no one will have to worry about it and we'll all be able to live being ourselves.

Francisco La Rubia





Dale Cooper arrived in Twin Peaks with his immaculate suit, his tape recorder in hand and an almost childlike enthusiasm for Douglas firs, cherry pie and coffee. He seemed like the guy everything works out for: intuitive, polite, brilliant, capable of steering an investigation by throwing rocks at a bottle and following whatever his dreams might tell him, someone eccentric but lovable, no doubt. You only have to see how well he gets along with the whole town to realise we're not dealing with your typical uptight FBI agent. However, being a lovable guy doesn't stop him from getting screwed every which way.

For starters, before setting foot in town, he'd fallen in love with Caroline, the wife of his partner Windom Earle, whom he was also supposed to protect. The result: she's murdered, he's stabbed and the husband turns into a psychopath out for revenge. Then Audrey Horne, the most desired girl on early-90s TV, a top-notch pin-up, gets into his bed and Cooper, who's a gentleman and an exemplary public servant, says no, that she's in high school and part of the case. Very proper, sure, but what bad luck, he could at least have said "I'll wait for you a couple of years." But no. Audrey, who's less fussy, gives her first time to a pretty boy (of legal age) shortly after. Cooper ends the first season with three point-blank shots at his hotel room door. He was wearing a bulletproof vest, but he'd pulled it up to look for a tick. While he's bleeding out on the carpet, a bastard of an old waiter brings him a glass of warm milk, makes him sign the bill and leaves giving him a thumbs-up, without telling anyone.

In the second season he solves Laura Palmer's murder, yes, but Laura's cousin dies too; Leland dies in his arms; he gets suspended from the FBI; they set him up to pin a drug thing on him; and Windom Earle comes back to play a game of chess with him (Cooper doesn't have a clue about chess) in which every piece taken is a corpse. Then along comes Annie Blackburn, a gorgeous Heather Graham, a girlfriend at last. It lasts him no time at all: Earle kidnaps her the night she's crowned Miss Twin Peaks and takes her to the Black Lodge. To save her, Cooper offers up his soul. A sweet deal: Annie gets out alive, they send her to hospital and the series forgets about her forever. He's left in the Lodge for twenty-five years listening to people talking backwards, while his evil double roams the country robbing and killing. When he manages to get out of that nightmare through a power socket ("thanks" for giving us that image, David Lynch), he does it with his brain reset, taking the place of a certain Dougie Jones, a pretty untrustworthy insurance agent from Las Vegas. Even so, practically a vegetable, things go fucking great for him until, once again, a power socket brings back his true consciousness and he goes back to Twin Peaks to finish off Bob. In the end he decides to go back to the past (?) to save Laura, but no, there's no way, and he ends up in Texas, standing at night in front of a house where nobody knows the Palmers, asking what year it is. A scream, fade to black and goodbye forever. Seriously, David. Seriously.

Javistone

“Teenage Sex and Death at Camp Miasma”



I’d been keeping tabs on Hannah Einbinder for months. I first came across her through her well-known rebelliousness in her Hollywood speeches, the way Bardem was already doing, standing up against Zionism as a Jewish woman. Those messages and that courage caught my attention, although I’d never been lucky enough to see her in action until now. And here we see her raising her voice again, this time artistically. Because “Teenage Sex and Death at Camp Miasma” has a lot to say, it’s a film that really stands up for something, just like Einbinder herself, who pitches her performance meticulously and steals the screen. So, by taking the story onto her own turf, she manages to get the message across spectacularly, bringing the film close to excellence.

It all starts with Jane Schoenbrun (New York, 1987) in the director’s chair, who I first came across through their previous work, “I Saw the TV Glow”. I wasn’t that film’s biggest fan, although its artistic potential and, above all, its staging got me pretty excited to see whatever they brought us next. Schoenbrun stands out for their huge commitment to the LGBTIQ+ community, with their art carrying big protests in support of the community, some of them in line with their non-binary gender identity. In this case, Jane uses lesbianism as a vector to tell the story the way they want to. In it, a director looking to make a reboot of a famous 90s slasher goes in search of the actress who starred in the original film.

Jane also works on the film as a screenwriter, and it turns out their writing is fantastic. At first I had trouble getting its symbolism, but once you understand what Schoenbrun is going for, you realise how brilliant the idea is. I had those difficulties because I’m not a big fan of the genre, which is kind of funny, since the difficulties I have with films like this make up a big part of its subject matter. The protest we were talking about earlier is nothing other than a big complaint against many of the things that have been the foundations of the slasher. Without mincing her words at all, Einbinder’s character tells us in a piece of dialogue: historically these films tended to be openly transphobic and followed a disgustingly sexist pattern, using terms like the “final girl”, which consisted of the role of a pretty girl who would always manage to survive. And this, ladies and gentlemen, is where the script makes a flawless connection with the other big theme it raises: sexual identity. Schoenbrun manages to weave that oppression of women to their advantage in order to treat the personal encounter with one’s sex life with a huge amount of care and affection. The way they do it is wonderful and ends up condensing into something super entertaining to watch, with loads of layers that melt together as if it were a Michelin-starred dish.

Part of what draws you into this complex plot is the visual treat it offers us. Carrying on the aesthetic personality of Jane’s previous projects, “Teenage Sex and Death at Camp Miasma” looks like a Hollywood blockbuster and a beautiful indie film at the same time; it’s a visual combination that seems fictional, but also very real, as real as the story is trying to be. On top of that, the camera strategies it uses fit that aesthetic and are incredibly creative. That creativity is also something that really stands out in this story. In fact, it’s one of its strong points, since it shines in every area, and it’s something I look for in a film. And in this cinematic poem I’ve still got to mention its main figures, because, as well as the incredible Hannah, there’s a wonderful Gillian Anderson, who’s stellar on screen, with an overwhelming presence and excellent delivery.

“Teenage Sex and Death at Camp Miasma” won’t be in the Oscar predictions, just as “I Saw the TV Glow” wasn’t either. Jane Schoenbrun’s cinema isn’t made for everyone, but for their core audience and for film lovers, their movies leave a really big mark, especially on those who are still searching for themselves and manage to find themselves in these features. The satisfaction of identifying with something and seeing you’re not alone in being who you are is something much bigger than the commercial side of cinema. That’s why Jane’s work is far more social than economic, and that’s a great achievement and, probably, what they were looking for as a filmmaker. I can’t wait to see the next great experience they bring us.

Francisco La Rubia



The other day, on a friend’s recommendation, I played a game that seemed pretty entertaining. It was simple, but there was something hidden behind that simplicity that was a lot more complex than that stupid Pokémon game. The next day, my mind completely froze when I found out it had been made with AI. Since then, an uncomfortable question had been going round in my head: how much of what I watch, read or play still has a person behind it. Today, cinema has given me the answer. That’s why, as soon as I got home from the cinema, I rushed eagerly to write what you’re reading right now. With immense happiness and a huge amount of hope, I’ve once again witnessed how cinema is one of the great powers that still fly the flag of human purity. Right now, in the middle of this generative AI boom, one of our greatest warriors in the fight against anti-art is the immense Travis Knight, head of the Laika studio, who comes armed with his infallible weapon against the artificial, which goes by the name of “Wildwood”.

I first heard about how immense it was months ago, and in these last few weeks the warm critical reception it’s had has been confirmed, with some calling it the best stop-motion film of all time. So, today, pressed for time, I went to the cinema where it was showing at four in the afternoon. With my stomach still digesting lunch and feeling sleepy, I dived into an experience that had me levitating around the cinema for two hours. “Wildwood” is reminiscent of what “El señor de los anillos” was; it’s a fantasy story, a journey, and the truth is it’s also a story on its level of epicness. A girl ventures into a forbidden forest to look for her little brother, who’s been taken by some crows. From that point on, we set off on a dense story that, while simple, is completely well-rounded.

Thinking that this film was made in stop-motion makes no sense. The artists’ hands are like a magic wand creating perfect action scenes with a frantic pace that are among the best animation I’ve ever seen. All that animation work shows in every pixel on the screen, achieving a level of detail with pinpoint precision, adding a huge amount of fluidity and making you feel much more drawn into the story. A story that overflows with fantasy everywhere, which is one of the main things it wants to talk to us about. “Wildwood” believes in magic; its universe of talking animals, dark magic and living forests is a “statement” about seeing the magic in every little detail of life, but it’s also a huge odyssey that makes every second of what you see feel so pure and so mystical that you don’t hesitate for a second to believe in the magic they’re telling you about. With that fantasy foundation, Knight directs a spectacular script adapted from the book of the same name as the film. In it, Chris Butler understands the genre perfectly and doesn’t fall into clichés, adapting the main characters with abysmal depth, making them completely organic and imperfect, in other words, as human as possible. That bomb of magic and human naturalness results in a narrative explosion that goes beyond plot excellence.

Its main character, Prue McKeel, is a sceptical girl who works as the perfect cog for this fictional world. Her practicality and determination make her the lead and leader of the story. Her overflowing charisma is a luxury to watch and her development is beautiful. Enjoying her process of self-discovery and growth into maturity is essential to the film. Just as well-rounded as her character are Kurtis and Alexandra: two fundamental pieces for the film to work, who could follow the conventional pattern of a film like this and who, on the contrary, take absolutely brilliant paths. The three of them are big pieces on a political board where the pieces move to the rhythm of a war and a fantasy story, as “Game of Thrones” already did. Despite being an animated film, the studio takes risks that raise it to the level of those great epic stories we all have in mind. By showing so many explicitly bloody scenes without any qualms, it gets a PG-13 rating, proving that animation is much more than cinema for kids.

The importance of this film right now is gigantic. The amount of money and time invested in such a purely artistic project is surprising, especially considering the impatience and commercialism that define today’s cinema. “Wildwood” is a huge piece of work that’s been built over fifteen years of production. It’s made with so much love and empathy that it moves you with every corner of its forests, with every sword brandished, with every drop of blood or tears shed. Let’s hope all this doesn’t end up as a flop at the box office and at the awards, although, at this point, its cultural and artistic weight has completely sunk any drama. “Wildwood” will be film history, an unprecedented milestone for the animation industry and the compass that will guide this format in the years to come.

Francisco La Rubia

Mike Scott: The Restless Spirit Behind The Waterboys



Few songwriters have blurred the boundaries between rock, folk, Celtic tradition, Americana and poetic storytelling quite like Mike Scott. For more than four decades, the Scottish musician has led The Waterboys through one of the most adventurous and unpredictable careers in modern music, building a catalogue of songs that have become timeless classics while stubbornly refusing to stand still. At 67, Scott remains anything but a heritage-rock passenger. If anything, the further he travels into his career, the more restless he seems to become.

That was abundantly clear when The Waterboys arrived at Valencia's Roig Arena on 3 September 2026, playing their only Spanish date of the year as part of The Fisherman's Blues Revue. More than 4,000 people packed the venue for a sprawling celebration of one of the most important chapters in the band's history, with Scott leading an expanded eight-piece line-up that included legendary Waterboys fiddler Steve Wickham and American songwriting giant Steve Earle.

The show was ostensibly a celebration of Fisherman's Blues, the 1988 album that transformed The Waterboys by throwing open the doors to Irish folk, traditional music, country, blues and Celtic mythology. But calling it nostalgia would be missing the point entirely. Scott has never been particularly interested in putting his music behind glass. The Roig Arena performance moved from the swaggering opening of "Don't Bang The Drum" and "A Girl Called Johnny" through "The Whole of the Moon", "We Will Not Be Lovers", "The Pan Within" and "How Long Will I Love You", before plunging deep into the Fisherman's Blues universe.

With Wickham's fiddle cutting through the music and Steve Earle eventually joining the party, the evening became something considerably bigger than a conventional rock concert. Country, folk, Irish traditional music, blues and rock collided in a sprawling musical pub fight where nobody appeared particularly interested in leaving quietly. Earle brought his own catalogue into the mix, performing songs including "Copperhead Road", "Guitar Town" and "My Old Friend The Blues", before reconnecting with Scott for a series of Waterboys numbers. The two musicians were an inspired pairing, with Earle's American roots sitting naturally alongside Scott's Celtic imagination.

And then there is Fisherman's Blues itself.

The album remains one of those rare records that managed to change a band's direction without destroying what came before. Scott and The Waterboys didn't abandon rock; they simply discovered there was an entire universe beyond the electric guitar. The result was music that could sound ancient and completely contemporary at the same time, filled with landscapes, mythology, love, wanderlust, spirituality and the kind of songs that seem to have been floating around somewhere long before anybody thought to record them. That creative period has also opened another door in 2026 with the release of Atlantic Rain: The Lost Fisherman's Blues Recordings, a triple album of previously unheard material and alternative recordings from the original sessions. Released on 17 July through Chrysalis Records, the collection contains 24 recordings, including long-lost Waterboys material and covers of artists ranging from Bob Dylan and Hank Williams to Woody Guthrie, Prince and Willie Nelson.

For Scott, the archive isn't simply an exercise in excavating the past. He has described the original sessions as producing hundreds of recordings and says he is still discovering music from that extraordinary period. That sense of curiosity perhaps explains why The Waterboys have survived when so many of their contemporaries have become museum pieces. The result is a career that refuses to sit comfortably in one genre. There is the grandeur of "The Whole of the Moon", the wild Celtic energy of Fisherman's Blues, the poetic influence of Yeats, the country storytelling, the blues, the rock'n'roll, the spiritual searching and the occasional left turn into territory that only makes sense once Mike Scott has decided to take you there. And despite the size of the catalogue, the songs have never really been the whole story.

The Waterboys have always been a reflection of Scott's restless personality. Since forming the band in 1983, he has worked with an extraordinary revolving cast of musicians, effectively treating The Waterboys as a living musical organism rather than a fixed rock band. More than four decades later, that philosophy remains intact.

Even Life, Death and Dennis Hopper, the

band's 2025 album, demonstrated that Scott isn't content simply to revisit the records that made his name. It was another ambitious piece of work from a songwriter still fascinated by characters, ideas, spirituality, cinema, literature and the strange business of being alive. At the Roig Arena, "Fisherman's Blues" eventually arrived as the great communal release of the night, while "And a Bang on the Ear" pushed the audience into full-blown celebration. More than 4,000 people found themselves singing, dancing and shouting their way through a performance that lasted close to three hours. He may have written some of the most recognisable songs of his generation, but he has never behaved like a man particularly interested in resting on them. The past is there, certainly, but it is raw material rather than a retirement plan. The Waterboys can still sound like a rock band, a folk band, an Irish session, a country outfit, a bunch of travelling troubadours or several of those things simultaneously. Sometimes within the same song. And Scott remains at the centre of it all: songwriter, singer, poet, provocateur, musical archaeologist and eternal wanderer.

We recently caught up with Mike for a chat and asked him a few questions that the fans here in Valencia had emailed in to us. Here is what he had to say:

Valencia audiences have clearly embraced The Waterboys. After selling out previous Roig Arena dates, you're returning for your only Spanish show of 2026. What has made the connection between the band and Valencia so special?
It's always been so and I don't know why! The Valencia audience has always struck me as being very wild and emotionally liberated. Something in our music has resonated with that and we are very grateful for it. We have always loved to play in Valenica, from our very first shows in 1989. It's always a show we look forward to when we are on tour. We might play 30 shows in the UK – some will be great, some not so great. Then we come to Valencia and everything is wild!

We are very happy to have the only Spanish Waterboys gig in 2026 here in Valencia - why Valenica and not Madrid, Barcelona or somewhere else in Spain?
We would have been very happy to play Madrid and Barcelona, but we had a very limited amount of time where we could get everyone together. It's not getting The Waterboys together – Steve Wickham is coming back to play fiddle, Steve Earle is joining us, and this really was the only date in a limited window of time.

For the Fisherman's Blues Revue you'll be joined by Steve Wickham and Steve Earle. What do those musicians bring to the songs, and how different can fans expect this show to be from a standard Waterboys concert?
Steve Wickham was The Waterboys amazing fiddler for any years, and he played on the original Fisherman's Blues album. So, he will be bringing that sound and spirit – the sound of his fiddle and the spirit of his musical partnership with me. Steve Earle brings his own artistry and songs, and he brings the sense of being a brother troubadour and that will add another element to the show.

The upcoming Roig Arena show is centred around The Fisherman's Blues, an album that has become almost mythical in the Waterboys catalogue. Why do you think that record continues to resonate so deeply nearly four decades after its release?
It's an album where freedom was the core characteristic. It was a record made with complete freedom. We didn't care what was popular in the world, we didn't care what people where listening to, we didn't care what the record company thought. We didn't care what the fans thought, all we cared was that the record was good they could enjoy it. We didn't care if they had expectations of what our music should be like, we were going to do what we wanted. So it was just a wonderful freedom and that freedom extended to the way we wrote and recorded the music. It's an album full of that free spirit.

You've spent decades travelling, writing and performing around the world. Is there a particular song in the Waterboys catalogue that means something completely different to you today than when you first wrote it?
"This Is The Sea" probably. I still appreciate the central meaning of the song – it's about someone who has found themselves at a crossroads in their life and realises a different set of solutions are required if they are to move forward. The song still has that meaning, but I have updated it in the last six or seven years, the tune is quite different, and I have updated a lot of the lyrics so it now addressing current social issues in the world. I now enjoy playing it more than I ever did before.

The Waterboys have evolved through so many musical incarnations over the years. Looking back, what do you think has remained the constant thread running through everything you've created?
Well obviously, me and my songwriting but it's also to do with the way I have relationships with the musicians and the understanding I have with them. The musicians who stick around, who last more than one album – especially the ones who last for five, six or more and are with me for many years. These are musicians who I have an unspoken understanding with; there is like a telepathy between us. I prefer not to give musicians a lot of instructions as to what they should do, I like them to come up with their own parts and to play from their own personality. A lot of what I do as a bandleader, is to allow that to happen without controlling it. That is a constant dynamic in The Waterboys.

Many younger artists cite The Waterboys as an influence. When you listen to modern folk, rock and Americana artists, do you hear traces of your own musical DNA in what they're doing today?
I only hear it occasionally. Yeah, do hear it sometimes and I find it very flattering that The Waterboys have had an impact on people and they have been inspired.

If you could sit down with the Mike Scott who formed The Waterboys in 1983, what's the one thing you'd tell him about the journey that lies ahead?
Well, my younger self needed a big piece of advice which was "Trust yourself – all the answers you need will be inside you; you will feel them in your belly. If something is wrong you will get a wrong feeling in your belly, if something is right you will get a right feeling in your belly. Obay those feelings.

When fans walk out of Roig Arena after The Fisherman's Blues Revue, what do you hope they're feeling? What is the experience you want people to take home from that night in Valencia?
Well, I hope before the gig they feel a lot of anticipation and excitement. We are not going to come out and play The Fisherman's Blues from track one to the end. That would be too boring for The Waterboys. We will be playing songs from the album and that era, we will be playing Steve Earles songs as well and lots of other classic Waterboys songs, but with that kind of spirit. It's going to be a really fantastic show!

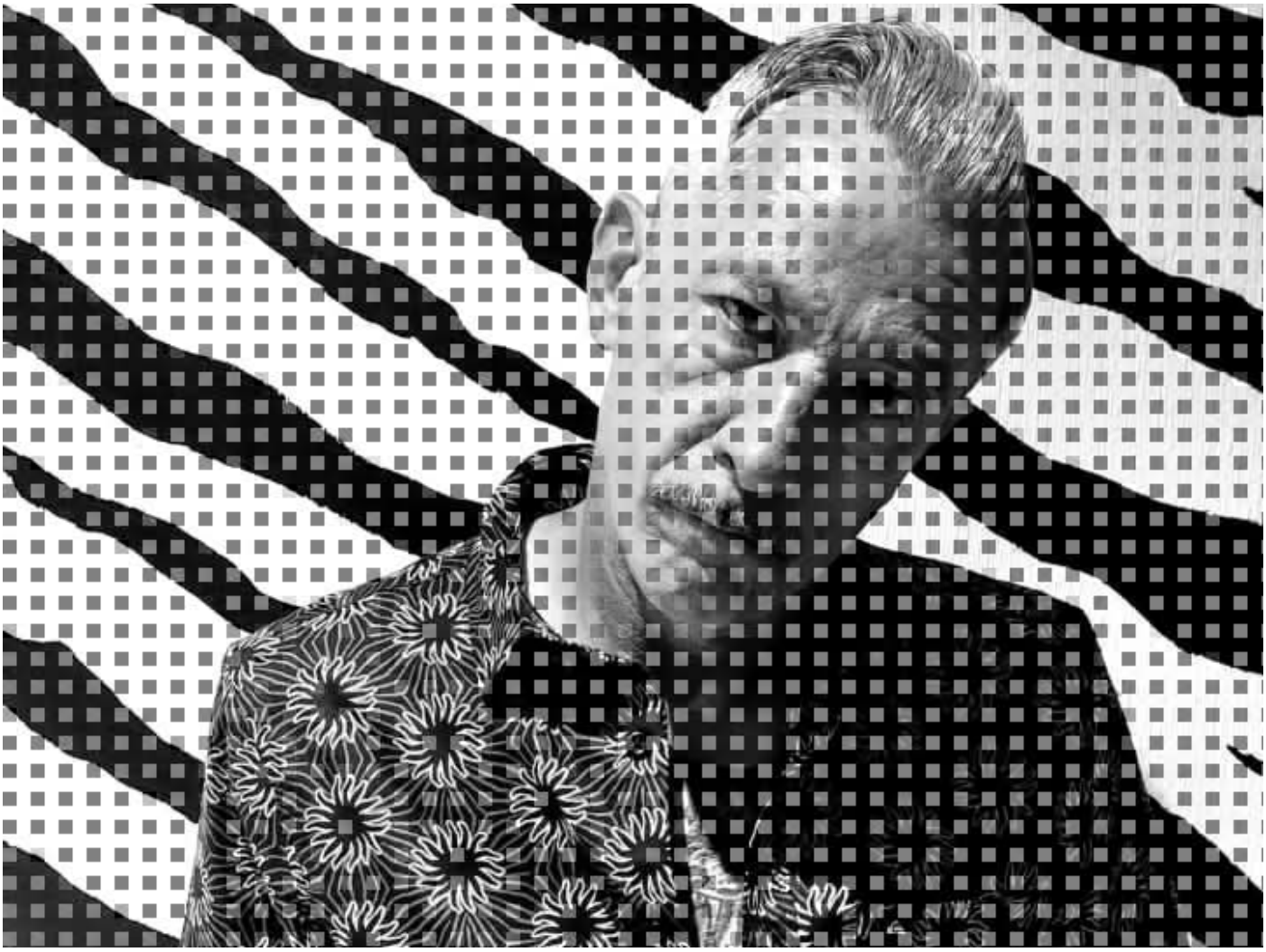
You are 40 years deep into The Waterboys and still going strong, looking and sounding incredible on stage. Where do you see yourself in ten years' time?
Dunno!! I guess in ten years' time a lot of the artists from the previous generation will have stopped and the people my age (I will be 77) will still be playing and we will become the elder statesmen. It's going to be a really interesting time. I didn't think I many ambitions left, but then this morning I was thinking how much I would like to record in one of those classic Los Angelese studios where they made all the great records from the 1960's. So I researched it and I found "Ocean Wave Studios" it still exists (now called east West Studios) and also "Sound City Studios". I have made a decision this morning that the next Waterboys album is going to recorded in LA in one of those studios.

If you could perform with anyone – Dead or Alive – who would it be?
Most of the artists I wished I could play onstage with are musicians who have passed on, like Nicky Hopkins the piano player. I would have loved to play with Nicky Hopkins. He was around for the first twenty years or so of The Waterboys career, but in those days, I never really thought of playing with guys from the previous generation even though I loved the records they made. Nicky Hopkins played on "Jealous Guy", which is one of my favourite tracks – it's absolutely off the scale beautiful. But at the time I probably wouldn't have considered myself worthy of him playing with us. If he was still around, I would hire him in a heartbeat! I would like to play with Bob Dylan. Actually, I have played with Bob Dylan! I played with him in 1985 in a recording studio and that was good fun! But I would like to play with him on stage, that would be really cool.

And finally, a quick message for the fans.
We love the fans in Valencia and we are really grateful to you all for sticking with us all these years and giving us so many amazing nights. We are proud to coming back and we will see you all in September!

Words and photos: Rhyan Paul

Claudio Corazón
"A life among songs, bands and fire"



Lyricist, songwriter, vocalist, guitarist and harmonica player. Claudio Corazón has spent decades leaving his mark on different musical projects, always with an identity of his own and a very particular way of understanding songs. Leaving aside his at least ten previous bands, his career runs through Los Flamin Guays, Las Membranas, Gallo Claudio, Hermano Fuego, Gas Mostaza and, currently, Verano Muerto. For yours truly, his body of work is impossible to take in: too many songs, too many stories and too many corners to discover. I got to know him through Los Flamin Guays, who became a fetish band for me, and since then I've followed his steps through each new musical adventure. Now, as we do this interview, Verano Muerto, his latest project, is playing.

We sat down with Claudio Corazón to talk about music, memory, songwriting, stages and that drive that, so many years later, still pushes him to create.

You've been through loads of musical projects to get to Verano Muerto today. What does it mean to you to look back and take in that whole journey?

Hey there, Néstor! How's it going? First of all, I want to thank you for this space and, of course, for that recognition; thanks to people like you I can feel proud when I look back. I like looking at the past, it fills me with lovely memories and keeps people who've been important in my life present. Looking back gives me that pride, those emotions and, of course, a bit of nostalgia, especially when I listen to everything I've created, musically speaking. Music takes you back to those moments, that's the magic it has. Also, I'm currently writing my autobiography and looking back is something I have to do over and over again; it's a good exercise for the memory. If it's all right with you, next time I'll come and talk about my book.

Each band seems to have its own universe, although punk rock, garage and black music are, from my point of view, the most obvious reference points in your music. What were you looking for in each project and what do you think each one brought to your way of understanding music?

To tell the truth, I feel more like a music lover than an artist; I've loved music for as long as I can remember and I listen to all the good stuff my soul can recognise. Hence the influences I've had in each band, in each project. I identify with everything I listen to. It's inevitable to absorb each genre, which one way or another is reflected in my songs, always with the

help of some good musicians. In the end, music is music and I've always been very open to listening to everything about it that catches my attention and moves me. I'm not a fundamentalist about any musical genre: I like rock'n'roll, basically, and everything that comes with it, before and after. I'm not looking to do this today or that tomorrow, I just take the opportunity and let myself be carried along by life's circumstances at that moment. When someone suggests doing something aimed at a particular style, I get down to it and, if it fulfils me, well, I go for it full throttle.

You're a lyricist, songwriter, vocalist, guitarist and harmonica player. Which side of you do you feel most comfortable with, and how do all those forms of expression relate to each other?

I'm a singer and I love writing, I already did it as a kid at school. I wrote poems to the girls I liked in my class, anonymous poems, because I was a very shy kid and didn't want them to know it was me writing them. In fact, I wrote a book of poems that I self-published in 1997: "Poemas encarnados". I don't feel like a virtuoso musician on any one instrument; I can get by a bit on everything you've mentioned, but just to accompany myself. When I'm alone, I need to make music to sing, it's a kind of rescue: I play the basic guitar chords so I can have fun singing or writing songs. The instrument I feel most comfortable on is the piano, but I play it on my own, because when people are watching me I get really nervous and can't hit the right key.

Your lyrics have a very strong personality. Where does your way of writing come from? What role do personal experiences, imagination and observing what's around you play?

Most of the time, not always, when I'm going to write a song, I don't really know what it's going to be about. Unless I've decided to write about something or someone in particular, but, as I say, I almost always use this system. I look for an opening line and, from that line, other phrases start linking together. When I finish the verses, I move on to the choruses, which, I don't know why, are always the hardest to write, and when everything's finished, I read what I've written and give it a title. That's when I discover what the song is about. I think that, this way, everything you really have inside you comes out: your mood, your pent-up rage, your emotions, everything raw, because it all happens almost without thinking in less than an hour. I don't usually rack my brains over a song. It's true that, when it comes to putting it into practice with the band, if there's something that doesn't fit well, I change it. But that's the formula: talking about what happens to you, what you see, what you live, what you feel. Another thing I also do when writing a song is put myself in someone else's shoes, write about the life that person might lead, whether they're real or imaginary.

Do you remember the first song you wrote, or the moment you felt that songwriting could become a way of life, even if it didn't put food on the table?

Hell, no! (Laughs)… Just kidding. The first song I wrote was during my military service. Right after finishing that imprisonment (because that's how I experienced it), I started my first band. We played punk and we were called Los Nerviosos. So much pent-up rage made me write lots of anti-military and anti-establishment songs. The first one was called "Desobediencia civil". But I have to say that one of the first songs of mine I heard on the radio was a jingle I made for Diario Pop on Radio 3. It was at the start of the show for about five months. It's something that fills you with emotion, even if it was in an advertising kind of way; at the end of the day, it's a song of yours. At no point did I feel I could make a living from this, I've never felt that. I don't want it to be a job, something compulsory to survive. I make music because I need it, it's my emotional nourishment. I like getting up on a stage and having a fucking great time. By that I don't mean we shouldn't get paid when we play: we have expenses and they have to be covered. You shouldn't play for free either, mind you; you shouldn't lose money, at least break even… My goal has never been for music to turn into a working life. It's not that I like working, for God's sake, it's man's worst invention. Working takes away a lot of life time I could devote to art, but if all this were moved into day-to-day life, as something compulsory, I think it would lose its charm. Writing songs, poems, stories is a way of letting off steam for me, it helps me escape, it puts me inside an imaginary bubble and gives me free rein to develop a new adventure, whether real or fictional. I've discovered that, by starting to write about my life, I've developed my memory, I've remembered forgotten things, I take myself back to moments I've already lived, using music as support to get to those moments too. It's incredible how your mind opens up with all these things: the more you read yourself, the more you remember, it can be infinite. I recommend it as personal therapy, it's a fucking great exercise, it's a way of keeping the past present, a past you sometimes forget but which, even if you don't know it, is part of you, because what you've lived is what you are right now.

You've gone through different styles, line-ups and eras. What has changed in your way of making music, and what remains intact since those first projects?

I'm not going to call it evolution. It's true that the years give you experience and learning in what you do, you develop your way of doing things, you try to correct mistakes and improve. I've always given my all to every project I've had, I go all in, especially these last few years. I don't like wasting time; if I do something, it has to be something worthwhile, at least for me. There may have been other times when I didn't really care much about anything: having a band to have fun, pull and live rock'n'roll from its wildest side, but right now I'm not at that point. I'm at a certain age now and I see it differently. The excitement is what's remained intact from the beginning. My way of thinking is what's been changing and, of course, the colour of my hair (Laughs).

The harmonica is one of your trademarks. What led you to this instrument and what possibilities do you find in it that others don't offer you?

I learnt to play the harmonica during my military service (I owe the motherland so much). Lots of free time and lots of loneliness. The harmonica is an instrument you can carry in your pocket anywhere, you can play it alone or with others. I'm crazy about the blues, it's the basis of everything we listen to, it's the root. Like everything I play, I'm no virtuoso, far from it; I get by. But I have to say that right now I'm not using it, unless I occasionally pick it up to play along to some blues record I put on. It depends on what I'm doing musically. The band I used it with most was my much-missed Flamin Guays. With them I had every key, because each song we did was in a different key. I still have a good collection of them, but, as I say, right now I'm not practising, and my wife gives me grief about it every day. She loves hearing me play. My cat Neko doesn't, she hates the sound (Laughs).

In such a long career, there must be songs, gigs or moments that have stayed with you in a special way. Is there one you remember with particular fondness? And one you'd like to forget?

Yeah, let's start with the one I'd like to forget. I remember a gig with Los Flamin Guays. Before we started I was really nervous; I was having one of those days when your energy plays tricks on you. I felt uncomfortable and insecure and the place was packed to the rafters. When we got on stage, my mouth was so dry I couldn't play the harmonica, there was no way it would glide across my lips. Damn, I had a terrible time, and on top of that we had nothing to drink on stage. I kept looking at the setlist desperately for it to finish soon, I almost ran off (Laughs), but I didn't, I stayed until the last song… Now for a nice memory. We were playing in Donosti, Los Flamin Guays, opening for Lord Rochester. We had dinner with them in the dressing room. They were

really nice, the whole family together at one table, because they had their little kids with them on that tour. After our set, they invited me up to play harmonica with them. Damn, I was so proud. We played just one song: I did the solo on a song I didn't know, but if you understand R&B, you understand everything. It came out great, or so I hope; at least they thanked me as if it had, and I thanked them. A lovely experience.

How have you experienced the relationship between music and the passing of time? Do you think songs age, change or take on new meanings?

I don't think music gets old, we're the ones who get older. A lot of the time, in the evenings, after a hard day's work, my wife, María, and I sit on the sofa with a little glass of wine and listen to jazz to relax and tell each other how our day went. I'm telling you this because we agree that what we're listening to doesn't go beyond the 50s, and it sounds like it was recorded right at that moment. It's something that doesn't age, it's always intact, it doesn't matter in what era you listen to it, it lasts: its sound, its energy, that velvety touch that can't wither. As time goes by I keep researching music more, and the good thing about it is that it's infinite: it doesn't matter what style you choose, one thing leads to another and you can end up at the other end. You widen the range, which in my case gets wider and wider. It's true that I've had a lot of jazzy moments for quite a few years now, at least at home; in the van I listen more to blues and folk, although some Dead Moon might also kick in at any moment at full blast, and I have a punk rock band, so there you go, everything in its own time. What I mean by this is that it doesn't matter whether music was made in one era or another, it's there, permanent, for you to use when you need it, one way or another. I listen to the records I've made with other bands every now and then, I like remembering. It's true that I notice a different energy from what I'm doing now, but that's normal, it was another time, other experiences, other musicians, other styles. It all depends, it keeps changing just like life does, but what's already done stays immortalised forever at that exact point.

Last year you released six digital singles (twelve songs) on Bandcamp under the name Claudio Corazón & ARIM, with songs by Hermano Fuego, the odd cover and adaptation of, for example, The Clash, Joe Strummer & The Mescaleros, etc., but in a more acoustic, intimate and more protest-driven way, on the label "This machine kills fascists records" (like Woody Guthrie's guitar). With Gallo Claudio you'd already done two Eskorbuto covers in Dylanesque acoustic style. Is this a statement of intent for the times we're living in?

Hermano Fuego was a band that brought a really cool moment into my musical life. We put out a fucking great first full-length album. We were an incredibly tight unit when it came to playing live and, what's more, it led me to meet the woman I'm married to: María Corazón. But I was left with a painful thorn in my side after the band split up. We had a second album ready, with the songs written and rehearsed to go straight into the studio. The album was going to be produced by Mike Mariconda, we'd already talked to him about it and, when everything was ready, for personal reasons within the band, it all went down the drain. Those songs we'd written for a second album couldn't be left in limbo. Dr. Jau, the guitarist, and I decided to rescue them along with others from the first LP and the odd cover, and put together a series of digital releases so that we'd at least have a memento and people could hear some of the songs that were going to be on that second instalment, which, I'll say it up front, would have been a fucking great album. Modesty aside… When I recorded "Eskorbuteando", I recorded it at home with no goal at all, just for my own emotional nourishment, but when Paco Rufus heard it, he was stunned and wanted to put out a single, and he did. Thanks to him it was released. I wasn't expecting it; in fact, it all seemed really crazy to me, he was convinced it was going to be amazing. Five hundred copies sold and today it's completely out of print… If it hadn't been for him, those songs would be in my drawer of memories, dead. Thanks, Paco!

Snap!! Records recently put out a Las Membranas compilation. Do you plan to do anything else with already released material from any previous project?

Yes, and I'm very happy about it. Thanks to Ángel Snap, who'd been chasing this for two years, and we finally managed it. A deluxe Las Membranas compilation with songs that had already been released and others we had recorded but that never saw the light of day. This is really a tribute to our dear Paco Rufus and a gift for all of us. We can't let the songs get lost; it's shitty enough losing the people you love, but that's life. You have to hold on to these lovely memories… Right now they're cooking up a compilation of garage bands from the 90s and 2000s. In 2003, I had a garage folk band called The Tombstone Boys. We recorded a three-song demo. Well, one of those songs is going to be on that compilation, which will come out on the Wild Cave Records label. We're waiting for it.

You're now immersed in Verano Muerto and you already have a self-titled album, released and co-released with Prohibido Bailar Records and Snap!! Records. How's the album doing?

Yeeees, Verano Muerto!, the band that makes me feel younger. I'm really happy with the result. The more birthdays I have, the more speed I want (Laughs)… We've just put out our first album, as you say. We did a launch not long ago in our city and the truth is people are liking it so far. We have a good stage presence and lots of energy. We like punk rock and that's something we try to get across. We're going into the studio soon to record the second instalment. They're fast records, at 45 rpm, with eight songs per record, without overthinking it, all full steam ahead.

What's different about this project compared to the previous ones?

There's not much difference: I still feel like myself, with other mates and playing in other musical fields, but which, at the end of the day, come together on the same path. Making music to have fun and trying to make our audience have fun, that's the real goal.

How important are friendship, chemistry and teamwork within a band? What do you need to find in the people you share a stage with?

The most important thing for me when you start a musical project is, mainly, knowing what style you want to play. Everything has to be in the same chord, energy-wise. For a band to work well, everyone has to be chasing the same goal. The musical style you want to put across is very important, and so is every band member understanding that technique, and I don't just mean in a practical way, but above all being a good listener. I think that's when you get the right unit to go up on stage, with everyone knowing what they have to do. Influences are very important, but if you don't have them inside your soul, they don't work. Then comes friendship.

After so many projects, songs and stages, what still pushes you to write lyrics for a song and start a new band? What would you still like to do?

I've been on the verge of retiring once or twice, but that feeling hasn't lasted long; having a project I identify with is part of my life. I've liked music for as long as I can remember, I've been in it since I was very young and it's something I can't tear out of me, nor do I want to. In the end it becomes a way of life… "Nací así, qué puedo hacer, nena… quiero ser un chico formal", I'll be here as long as I can; the energy, the moments and life will take me wherever my path is marked, a journey I understand as a life that goes as far as it can possibly reach, existentially speaking. Live fast, die old and screw your good-looking corpse. (That'll be the title of my autobiography…) Thanks, Néstor!

Europe, La Cubierta de Leganés (10 October 2026)



The tour celebrating forty years of Europe's "The Final Countdown" was announced almost a year ago, a year that gives you time to think about how time flies and where we were in those wonderful 80s. Exactly ten years ago they made the same move at La Riviera, in Madrid: with the place packed, in an epic sold-out show, they celebrated the thirtieth anniversary. On that date they split the show in two: in the first part they played "War of Kings", the album they were promoting, in full, and in the second, the album being celebrated. This time they were promoting their new work, "Come This Madness", but they didn't play it in full: they performed three songs from it and, in the first part, mixed in big classics, both more modern ones and hits from the past.

But anyway, let's take it step by step. The concert was held at La Cubierta in Leganés, with a sold-out crowd just as massive as the one ten years ago. The venue has changed its sound system and made considerable improvements; it no longer sounds as disastrous as it used to. At least where I was, the sound was very good and powerful. The dome was open, since the autumn night invited it.

The night started with Canadian band The Damn Truth, a garage rock band with very powerful psychedelic touches, with a singer, Lee-la Baum, who's a whirlwind, and a solid rhythm section that makes songs bloom like roses, beautiful but with thorns. A great band worth keeping an eye on. Not a very long show, around thirty-five minutes of direct, very visceral punch.

A quick changeover to clear away the Canadians' gear, and the intro to Europe's new album starts playing, the one that comes before this great song they put out a couple of weeks ago called "Scandinavian Eyes", direct, no frills. Norum on the left, Levén on the right, Mic next to Levén, and Joey and Ian in the centre. With that balanced line-up, the show was like a steamroller. Several new songs, like the show opener I just mentioned, or the new "One to One" or "The Cult of Ignorance", from the just-released CD, blend perfectly with the newer classics like "Walk the Earth" (2017) or "War of Kings" (2015). But what made the place erupt in a roar in this first part of the show, made up of nine songs, was slipping in a "Superstitious" from that distant "Out of This World" of 1988, which brought the house down with the intro alone as the third song of the night, or a little later, when Joey took on the a cappella intro of "Prisoners in Paradise", from the 1991 album of the same name. The Swede's voice is incredible, well looked after and full of nuances that take the song to an incredible level. Norum's guitar work is superb, perfectly in sync with Mic's keyboards; they create just the right atmospheres and, when he lets loose, he's like a galloping horse. This first part ended with a song they've been opening their last few tours with, "On Broken Wings", an 80s classic they've toughened up and that sounds superb, with powerful guitars and a rock-solid rhythm section.

In the second part of the show we already knew what was coming. They didn't play the album like ten years ago, when they followed the same order; here they left the band's most famous song for last, the one that catapulted them to the top. The rest of the album was performed with a more up-to-date sound: Norum toughened the songs up, taking the spotlight away from the keyboards. When the opening of "Rock the Night" rang out, the place went crazy and we didn't stop singing and remembering those distant days until the end of the night. Highlights from this part: "Heart of Stone", "On the Loose" and, above all, the B-side of the famous hit single, "Love Chaser", a more hidden song from those days that, updated for today, is a real gem. In short, a great night, very well balanced and with tremendous sound; the performance by the five original musicians, incredible.

Room for improvement: the show's length, ninety minutes, a tad short for the sixty-five euros they charged us. Although it's nice that they skipped the typical solos, songs like "Girl from Lebanon" or some older song from the 80s would have been the icing on the birthday cake. The visual presentation was understated: a back screen split into five, onto which they projected images from the 80s or some projections for newer songs, but the side screens that had been set up weren't used, which was a shame.

Anyway, a great night of partying and 80s memories for lovers of classy hard rock.

Sob2026

Photo Rhyan Paul

NOVEDADES

“Alegría”, Anni B Sweet (Subterfuge)



Anni B Sweet is back with a new solo album after the now distant “Universo por estrenar” from 2019, after which she would give us one of the best albums released in this country in recent times, that “Burbuja cómoda y elefante inesperado” with Los Estanques, a union that made us think of a perfect communion that could keep giving us more and more wonderful music. However, something must have broken, because the joint project came to an end (they say there’s another album recorded that I doubt we’ll ever hear), Los Estanques kept releasing albums and we heard nothing from Anni. Until the first single arrived in May and we finally have her new record, “Alegría”, in which she seems to convey that the album has worked as therapy for her, as a catharsis after a dark period, something she admits in the interviews she has been giving. And the truth is that the process seems to have worked, because the Málaga-born artist gives us an album that, although, as I said, it hints at a difficult road, manages to light us up with the freshness of a sound so indebted to 60s pop and psychedelia (now with touches of Brazilian music). Produced by James Bagshaw (Temples), “Alegría” is an exercise in sonic fantasy without constraints or ties. Anni’s ability to build complex structures and melodies that sound so close and intimate in her voice is incredible. It’s impossible not to fall for songs like “No le encuentro la gracia”, I love it when Anni lets loose vocally, and where the lyrics don’t leave much room for the imagination; “Todo está bien” with none other than Santiago Auserón (whom she mentions in her last song, along with Miguel Ríos); “En mi olvido”, with Miren (Tulsa), one of the album’s high points (wonderful lyrics and a wonderful blend of voices); “Un buen trato” with that Jackson Five feel… and above all what I think is the best song on “Alegría”, that “Llévame al sur” where Anni reaches an absolutely colossal level as a songwriter and lyricist. What a song, what lyrics, what arrangements, it’s impossible to keep your feet still. And how Anni sings, my God… Have I mentioned yet that I love it when Anni lets loose vocally?
An outstanding album from an essential artist.

Javistone

Saturna, “Light and Shadow” (Spinda Records, 2026)



The sixth album from the Barcelona-based four-piece Saturna, on which they once again give a masterclass in classic hard rock, with touches of psychedelia and alternative rock. At the same time, they show a certain openness to new atmospheres, without losing one bit, mind you, of the classic sound the band has worked so hard to forge for more than a decade. Saturna reach artistic maturity by offering new textures and broadening their range of sounds, making an album that’s more open and organic than the previous ones. This was already starting to show on “The Reset”, their previous record from 2023, which earned them quite a reputation on the rock scene. For this “Light and Shadow” the band produced themselves, once again trusting Spinda Records and Discos Macarras with the release and distribution of the album in Spain, and Ripple Music for the US market.

The opening up of their sound we’re talking about can be heard right from the start of the album, with “Unheard”, whose very 80s intro breaks into a pounding riff that could come close to stoner, but with a melody that never forgets its connection to the most classic hard rock. Next comes “Falling Apart”, where Jaime Vieco, whose voice is closer than ever to Ozzy at his best, is spectacular, and where Lucas Herrera’s keyboards bring a huge freshness, not just to this song but to the whole album. On the title track, “Light and Shadow”, they bring out the whole spirit of the album, the coexistence of that duality and those extremes and contrasts we all carry inside us. It’s a song with a super catchy riff, full of energy, where the guitars and harmonies remind us of Saturna at their most 70s, and which takes us to one of the album’s high points. Next is “Absence”, released as a single and perhaps the most bluesy track, with very organic guitars and Enric Verdaguer bringing all his groove to some spectacular drumming. With “About You” and “So Long”, actually two songs in one, the band give us a breather and show their more sensitive and melodic side to close the first side of the album.

The second half begins with “Self-Told Lies”, which served as the first single and is one of the most solid songs by bassist and main songwriter Rod Tirado, followed by “No Questions”, a real 80s-flavoured gem where Max Eriksson leaves us in raptures with an impossible solo. Here we must give a special mention to the Swedish guitarist, who, whether with Saturna or with The Mothercrow, his other project, always shows a virtuosity that makes him one of the most brilliant and underrated guitarists on today’s hard rock scene. “Opus One”, a one minute and twenty second guitar interlude, serves as a pause before “Up For The Ride”, with another pounding riff that takes us straight back to the most 70s psychedelia. Then comes “Drifting”, considered the album’s ballad, which inevitably brings to mind bands like Whitesnake, highlighting the soulful side of Vieco’s voice and leading into a thrilling finale with “Words of Doom” and “A Strange Mix of Humans”, two more songs where the four-piece unleash their full potential with the sharpest and wildest riffs on the whole album.

All in all, this is a record that should establish the Barcelona band as one of the most interesting bands on the Spanish scene. We’ve really enjoyed it, and it’s made us even more eager to finally see the band live.

Marcos Sánchez

“El eco de Los Ángeles 1976–2026”, Various Artists (Díscolo Records)

Sixty years after signing their first contract with Hispavox and fifty years after the moving tribute paid to them at Granada’s bullring on 30 October 1976, the music of Los Ángeles is still with us, carried high by the bloodline of the band’s former drummer and singer, Alfonso “Poncho” González.

In the summer of 1976, Los Ángeles released the single “Nada va a cambiar el mundo”, whose lyrics turned out to be prophetic (“Nothing’s going to change the world, it’ll go on without you and without me”). On 26 September that year, while the Virgen de las Angustias, patron saint of the city of the Alhambra, was being carried in procession through the streets of Granada, an accident on the N-III near Motilla del Palancar, on the way to Madrid, took the lives of Poncho



and guitarist José Luis Avellaneda, who was driving the Seat 1430 they were travelling in. That song, still relevant five decades later and overflowing with pop and sensitivity, opens "El eco de Los Ángeles", a tribute led by two of Poncho's sons, Pablo G. and Popi González, fifty years after the fatal accident. Antonio Arias and Popi himself open the tribute, which features the usual suspects from the Granada scene (Lori Meyers, Jota, José Antonio García, Lapido, Lagartija Nick, the tireless Miguel Ríos…), plus guests such as Soleá Morente, Anni B. Sweet, Napoleón Solo, Pedro de Dios, etc., all under the baton of the González brothers, worthy heirs and ambassadors of the angelic legacy.

Respect and pride, emotion and dedication can be felt in the making of this tribute, which does justice to one of the most inspired bands of the wrongly named "prodigious decade". There are twenty-four tracks, and reviewing each one would make this review too long and too obvious, so I'll point out the ones that caught my attention most. Among them are "No estoy contento", a song written by Poncho González in 1967 that seems tailor-made for a Lori Meyers in the middle of a revival; "Mamá deja de llorar", where Jota becomes an angel; "Para Inés", brushing up against the Granada band at their most CSNY, performed by Pablo and Popi; and the classics "Mónica" (released a year after the Kinks' "Monica", with no connection between them), nicely handled by Napoleón Solo, and "Momentos", for me their best song and probably the best on the tribute, performed by Anni B. Sweet with the masterful backing of Pedro de Dios. It was the first single from the double LP.

"El eco de Los Ángeles", released on 21 October, is just the spearhead of a programme of events that peaked on the 24th on the stage of the Teatro CajaGranada. Most of the artists on the album came together there for a moving ode to pop and a fitting tribute to a band that left a sublime legacy. The programme resumes on Wednesday 18 November at 8 pm with a round table organised by SGAE at the Teatro Alhambra, featuring the thoughts of journalists José Ramón Pardo, Fernando Díaz de la Guardia and Eduardo Tébar, along with musicians José Ignacio Lapido and Popi González, and wrapping up with an acoustic showcase. In December, a documentary exhibition on the band's career will also open at the Sala de exposiciones Zaida of the Fundación Caja Rural Granada, with previously unseen photos and the band's own memorabilia.
All that's left for us is to be grateful and enjoy it.

Juan Carlos León

Medalla: "Arquitectura Del Caos Vol.1" (Estudio Mazmorra)



The truth is that this Catalan four-piece never stop for a second. Last year they put out one of the most acclaimed LPs of the year with "Música Máquina". As had happened with their previous album, "Duelo" (already their fourth by then), their post-punk with psychedelic, krautrock and even progressive touches was moving ever closer to territory almost bordering on metal. Now that they're about to turn ten, they've decided to release their first EP to date. It seems it'll be the first of several. These are songs recorded with SVPER during the "Música Máquina" sessions, with more experimental and progressive touches, and they come together with a fantastic audiovisual piece in the form of a short film or triple music video recreating the biblical myth of Cain and Abel. The cover by Tumulus Design is once again an absolute marvel. The record opens with a bombshell like 'Modo Diablo', closer to the metal sound of their previous LP. It's close to the more metal side of Lagartija Nick, even in the vocals, and it has a sinister chorus made for singing along to. 'Pesadilla I' has a melodic psych-prog opening with a beautiful voice and acoustic guitars. Then on 'Pesadilla II' they go electric, although those more progressive keyboards dominate over the metal side. Even so, there's a good clash between rich keyboards and melodic guitars in a fine instrumental nightmare. It feels far too short and we're looking forward to new chapters.

Txema Mañeru

"Museums and Women", Josh Rouse (New West Records)

There are albums that seem to have been written to stop time. "Museums and Women", Josh Rouse's new record, is one of them. These are songs that move along unhurriedly and bring back Rouse at his most romantic, nostalgic and luminous. The album's very title is a statement of intent. The Nebraska-born singer-songwriter borrows the name from "Museums and Women", the famous short story collection by John Updike, one of

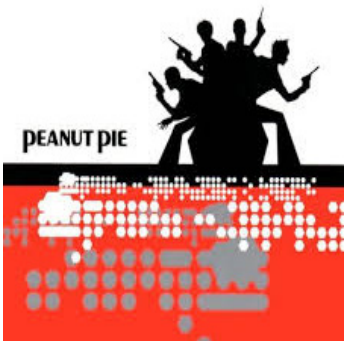


the authors he admires. As in those stories, human relationships, everyday encounters and distances take on an artistic dimension here, like little scenes that deserve to be observed and preserved. Josh Rouse, who won the Goya Award for Best Original Song for his song "Do You Really Want To Be In Love?", now moves through territory he knows well: elegant folk-rooted pop, with 70s echoes and songwriting that seems simple but is full of nuance. The songs talk about everyday life without any need for big flourishes, and that's exactly where much of their charm lies. The album's warmth also has an explanation. Many of these songs came out of sessions recorded almost by accident in Nashville, live and with Brad Jones, Rouse's regular producer. The result keeps that sense of spontaneity: instruments that breathe, arrangements that don't try to take over and production that leaves room for the songs to be the real stars. In short, "Museums and Women" doesn't try to reinvent anything. Its strength lies precisely in showing that it doesn't need to. It's a return to his most recognizable world and also a celebration of the beauty of small stories. Rouse will present the album in Spain in January next year. Specifically, on the 22nd at Sala Upload in Barcelona and on the 23rd at Sala Copérnico in Madrid.

Ada Salas

Peanut Pie: "Peanut Pie" (Cosmos Records / Satélite K)

Despite the huge media attention, the band and their self-titled album got, it wasn't matched by sales. But it was a sensational record that has aged well and still sounds fantastic. Even more so in this carefully made vinyl reissue for its thirtieth anniversary. The band loved their 'L. Girl' and its tender melody. The public liked the damaging 'Damaged' even more, which opens side B and is freshened up by the sound of a sitar. But the brilliant start with 'What Is This' was also admirable and surprising for the time here. 'Precious' also still holds up thanks to its beautiful melody. Good proof of their (relative) eclecticism, even though they were in love with the Madchester sound at the time (The Stone Roses, Happy Mondays, Black Grape), is their great, sensual cover of Roxy Music's 'More Than This', but much more danceable and in line with the Madchester sound, which closes side A. The remixes of 'What Is This' by Vanguard Airbug and of 'Damaged', the



latter by The 303 (programming by Big Toxic and Nacho Canut, and remix by Fangoria), also put them right at the heart of the best electronic scene of the time. The same goes for Viva Jumo's remix of 'A Psychokiller In A Dream". This also linked them to their labelmate at the time, Madelman, also reissued on vinyl for the first time, and his "Idem Palais", which will still delight fans of IDM and instrumental electronic ambient today. A great presentation of both albums on carefully made vinyl!

Txema Mañeru

Yo Somos: "Día Grande" (El Volcán Música)



The second and best album, after "Somos" from a couple of years ago, also released through El Volcán Música, by the acoustic trio made up of Quique Gallo (Aullido Atómico) and Quique and Gallo, from the excellent Maderita. They've been in other bands such as Midnight Shots, Josh Rouse or Ciudadano. They sound like Mediterranean acoustic punk with clear influences such as Jonathan Richman, Violent Femmes or The Moldy Peaches, but also closer-to-home names such as Julio Bustamante or the aforementioned Ciudadano and Maderita. Muchachito Bombo Infierno guests on 'Para Siempre', and the ubiquitous Joe Crepúsculo is also around. Ferto Berrer appears on 'Hemos Vuelto', an upbeat track with fresh pop like Los Nikis, but with acoustic guitars, to close side A. Side B kicks off with dancing on 'Ponernos A Bailar', which is also made for singing along, with Latin flavours in the trumpet and percussion, and with a guest appearance from Stanley Brinks & Freschard. I love the bucolic flutes on 'Todo El Mundo', and they finish with a surprising, but worthwhile, cover of Eros Ramazzotti's 'Cosa Más Bella'. Everybody dance, because this is a "Día Grande"!

Txema Mañeru

Caballero Reynaldo: "64" (Caballero Reynaldo Producciones Psicotrópicas)



Luis González (Caballero Reynaldo) is a case worth studying. He's sixty-four years old and has recorded sixty-four albums in thirty years! As well as the ones released as Caballero Reynaldo, there are also Los Visionarios, Los Imbéciles, Los Caballeros del Amor Hermoso and Tiemersma, Reynaldo & Granota. Good thing he hasn't counted the ones he's made with Mar Otra Vez, Amor Sucio or alongside his dear and much-admired Malcolm Scarpa (who, by the way, is still putting out his great triple thirtieth-anniversary reissues of his albums)! Then there are several EPs and compilations, and I don't know whether his many tributes to Frank Zappa are included in this count. The new record opens with 'Sesentaycuatro', an electronic, anarchic version of the Beatles, and ends with instrumental Zappa on 'Aguasnegras', also electronic. In between come his own songs, and he even sets Quevedo's 'Poderoso Caballero es Don Dinero' to music in a techno and hip-hop style (Paco Ibáñez did it better before). There are country touches on 'El Pirata Escarlata' and its cool melody, but even more so in the funny story and catchy rhythm of 'Mirando Pa Cuenca', with Manu Vicente's guitar, which also stands out on the acid rock of 'Mamarracho'. Aníbal also helps him with some of his craziest lyrics. Let's see when he takes it all the way up to a hundred!

Txema Mañeru

Curvatura: "Océano Y Desierto" (Autoedición)

A pleasant discovery for yours truly, and one that'll extend to all fans of the most classic progressive rock. We're talking about a conceptual double CD by this powerful Madrid six-piece that runs for over a hundred minutes. On top of that, it comes beautifully presented in a triple digipack with illustrations by Steven Dai Pan and a twelve-page booklet that also includes the interesting lyrics of "Océano", the first and longest disc, since the second is entirely instrumental and somewhat more intimate and melodic. There are echoes of Van der Graaf Generator, Genesis (the Peter Gabriel era, in the more than ten minutes of 'Vorágine'), Bloque and even Mägo de Oz in the moments closest to folk, as on the traditional Scottish song 'Océano', where we also get a few glimmers of the Traffic of



"John Barleycorn Must Die". In the eleven minutes of 'Philía', which opens the second disc, "Desierto", the flute (also present on other tracks) played by Olga Arroyo brings Jethro Tull to mind as well. Another point in their favour is the combination of two very different voices, those of Antonio and Jesús, who nail melodies like the ones on 'Tempestades'. There are also echoes of Deep Purple in the keyboards and guitars, and even of "Jesucristo Superstar" on 'La Sombra', as well as a few forays into doom metal with almost guttural vocals. They're crying out for us to see them live!

Txema Mañeru

David Myhr: "Everything Is All About You" (Rock Indiana)

We first got to know this Swedish power-pop genius when he led the outstanding The Merrymakers. He went on to sell more than a hundred thousand copies in Japan in the 90s with "Bubblegum". In this millennium he has already made two other outstanding solo albums: "Soundshine" in 2012 and an even luckier "Lucky Day" in '18. So, he clearly takes his time. On this new record he's superbly backed by musicians who have played with greats such as Julian Lennon, Marshall Crenshaw, The Posies, Matthew Sweet, Jeff Lynne's ELO, Cheap Trick or The Zombies. It has a very Beatle opening with 'Say Yes' and that piano. 'Summer Summer Summer' is a logical, summery single, lighter, with touches ranging from the most carefree Beach Boys to the Lovin' Spoonful, but then come those careful orchestral arrangements and, as always, his warm vocal harmonies. More tender and romantic is the latest single, 'Take A Run At The Sun', with its great melodic chorus that wins you over on the first listen. Then come some good, simple keyboards that give way



to some very evocative, twilight guitar leads. The title track is the only one that runs over five minutes. It moves between the Beatles and Fountains Of Wayne, and at times it even comes close to the recently and rightly acclaimed The Lemon Twigs. 'Doodlebug' brings a country feel somewhere between Lennon and Nilsson. It closes with a tender acoustic ballad like 'Finally', now closer to McCartney than to Lennon, and also with nice strings and a carefully crafted chorus full of details. A pop marvel!

Txema Mañeru

Etta James: "At Last! - The Complete 1955-1962" (Frémeaux & Associés)

Eighty of her best tracks in another of those wonderful Frémeaux boxes, with three CDs and more than three and a half hours of almost all her best songs! Everything she did in her fantastic early years, when she was closer to rhythm and blues than to the soul she would later move towards, becoming the greatest in the genre alongside Aretha Franklin. By the way, the French label also has good Aretha albums in this style (with great informative booklets), as well as the outstanding "Jungle Nights In Harlem – 1927 – 1931" by the first big name in jazz, Duke Ellington. That's orchestral jazz in more than two hours and forty minutes of his early classics, many of them future standards. The first CD is pure, explosive rhythm and blues. The second opens with her first single, which was also the title of her first LP, 'At Last'. That album also featured the tearjerker 'All I Could Do Was

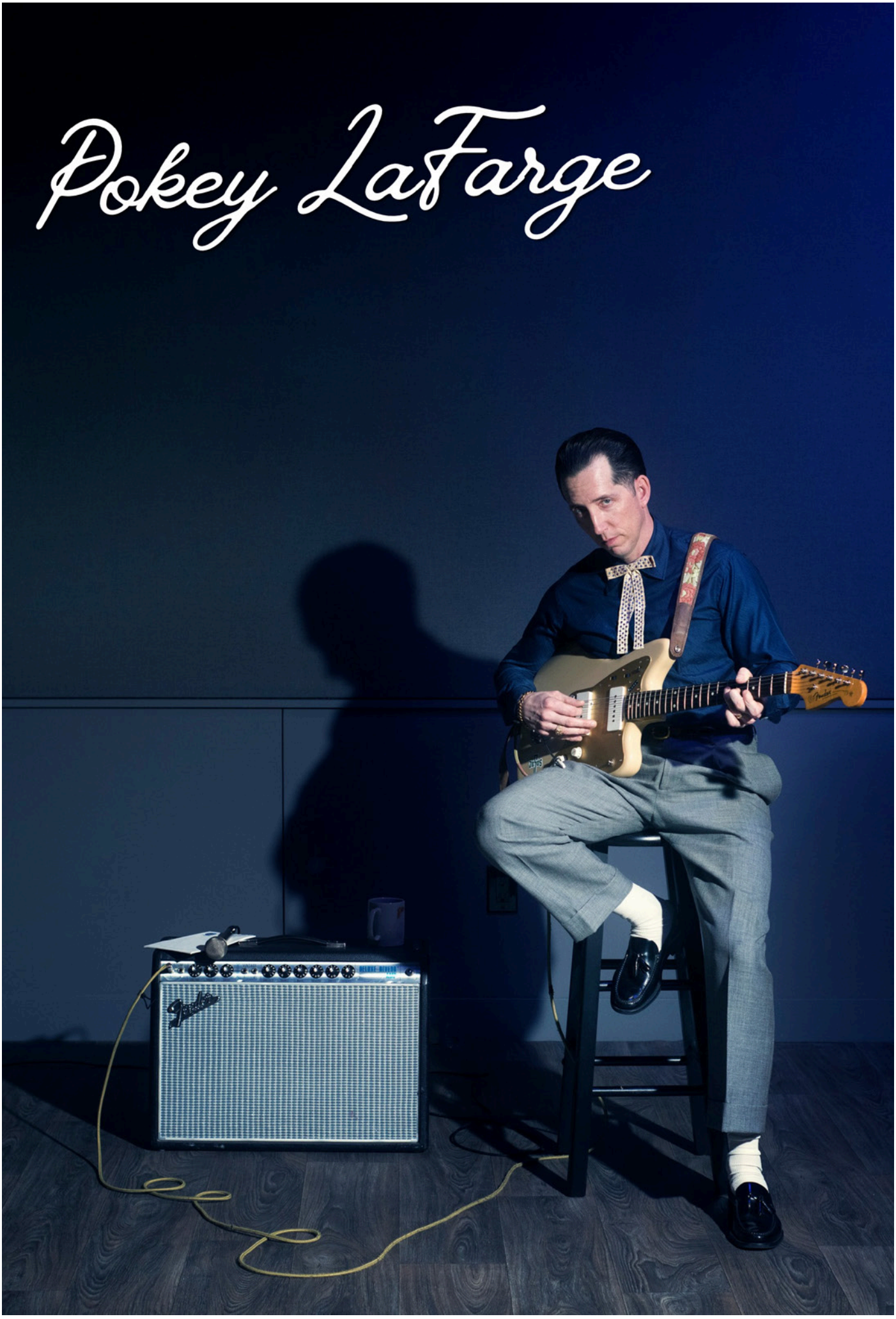


Cry' and that huge classic 'Stormy Weather'. More tears and slow soul numbers like 'Fool That I Am' or 'Don't Cry Baby'. Blues with Willie Dixon's 'Spoonful' and exceptional slow gospel with 'I'll Dry My Tears'. It also includes two good tracks with The Ecuadors. Incredibly comprehensive!

Txema Mañeru



Pokey LaFarge



"On this record I've focused more on what people seem to be struggling with in today's world."

Pokey LaFarge has always had one foot on the ground and the other in heaven, and on "Rent Money" that balance tips towards the ground beneath his feet. After the Caribbean party of "Rhumba Country", where rockabilly and country went hand in hand with samba and rumba, the musician goes back to a more classic approach within his own universe. He uses fewer ingredients, but better ones, and takes a hard look at inflation, rent, bills and taxes, without losing that groove that makes him unmistakable. It's also the first record he's released on his own label, Boxer Boy Records, which doesn't mean any big changes for him after twenty-five years of being his own boss. Elliot Bergman is back on production, and his wife, who he's been writing and playing with for years, adds girl group vocals to almost the whole album. We talked to him about "Work", "Big Boss Man" and "Can't Take It With You", about his Christian faith, about how fatherhood and marriage have changed the way he sees things, and about why he no longer believes you have to self-destruct to write a good song. Great musician, Pokey, great record, "Rent Money", and yet, for the second interview in a row, my beloved musician keeps his answers short. I never learn.

I've always thought that writing about your records is easy and tricky at the same time. You know you're going to find a musician with his own identity, someone who draws on the roots but who's also a restless artist. On every record you go back to those roots, although they're never exactly the same, or maybe it would be more accurate to say that you mix them in different ways. If on "Rhumba Country" rockabilly and country blended with samba and rumba, what have you thrown into the cocktail shaker this time, and what made you want to go in this new direction?
In this "cocktail shaker", as you put it, I felt it was necessary to use fewer ingredients. Like with good dishes, or with cocktails, it's not just that less is more, but that a few top-quality ingredients are all you need. The more ingredients you add, the more you can muddle the identity of the dish or the drink.

"Rhumba Country" was livelier and brighter, maybe more playful, with a clear influence from Caribbean rhythms. "Rent Money" seems to go back to a more classic approach within your universe, and its subject matter is definitely more down-to-earth, although it still keeps that groove that's so you. Behind your usual party vibe, there's now a much more concerned look at the reality around you. What differences do you see between the two records?
I'd say the place is still the same, somewhere between earth and Heaven, but on this record I've focused more on what people seem to be struggling with in today's world.

On production you've worked again with Elliot Bergman, who we know as a saxophonist, composer, instrument builder, bronze sculptor… What's it like working with him? What does he bring to your vision and your sound? I like how the songs breathe.
Elliot has really good taste and knows what to add to a song and when, and what to take away. He's also a great mixer.

I understand this is the first record you've released on your own label, Boxer Boy Records. What made you take that step? Were you never completely happy with the work of the labels you've been on, or do you simply want to have control over everything? How are you finding being your own boss?
All of the above. Actually, I've been my own 'boss' for twenty-five years, so nothing new.

How did your wife and Bergman's sister end up singing backing vocals on "My Baby Loves Me"? It's one of the most addictive songs on the record.
They sang backing vocals on almost every song. My wife and I have been writing, recording and performing together for years. The idea was those girl group vocals in unison, like on Bo Diddley's records.

On this record you talk about inflation, rent, electricity bills and taxes… On "Work" you talk about having to work to pay your bills. What are you trying to say with it?
I'm saying it's essential to work, for those who can, but that we should try to focus on what we give, not on what we get.

I wouldn't say "Rent Money" is a political record, but there's definitely a pretty clear look at the social reality around you. To what extent does what's happening in the United States, and what you're going through yourself, end up seeping into your songs?
I wouldn't say that inflation, high rents and taxes, corruption, confusion, etc. are uniquely American problems.

Well, I take it you're talking about your own surroundings, which are the ones you must know best. Obviously it's a problem that could be considered global.
No idea. What I do know is that I live here and I felt I should take the opportunity to acknowledge what's going on. And who we are always seeps into our songs, almost always unconsciously.

By the way, I remember that in our conversation I told you how much we loved "Fuck Me Up", a song about needing someone to help you lose your composure. You gave us the feeling that that record was a kind of turning point, and you surprised us with a line that still echoes in our heads: "I've found that to write a good song I've done things that almost ruined my life." We were left wanting to ask you… What kind of things have you done to write a song? If you can talk about them, of course.
Since then I've realized you don't need to sabotage your own life to write a good song.

"Big Boss Man" takes on a more narrative and playful form, although behind the melody there's a much less friendly critique.
It could be about the president of the United States, or about anyone else who uses their power as a leader to subjugate others.

On "Can't Take It With You", the reflection on money takes on an openly religious tone.
I'd say this song sums it all up. We can spend our whole lives piling up things: wealth, success, pleasure, power, etc., all to serve ourselves. But, of course, as a Christian, I know how fleeting life is and how harmful our selfish mindset is, both for ourselves and for our neighbor. I have to keep reminding myself of that and learning it all over again.

Your life has changed a lot in the last few years. You've got married, become a father, put out quite a few records, traveled all over the world… What's left of the Pokey LaFarge we discovered with "La La Blues"?
The same roots, more abundant fruit.

To wrap up, I wanted to ask you something I've always wanted to know: where does your name come from? I think Pokey comes from your grandmother, but what about LaFarge? Does it have anything to do with Peter La Farge?
Just a street name from my early days traveling. My birth name is Andrew Micheal Heissler.

Mystery solved, then. That's a weight off my mind.

Javistone

Point-Blank

Javier Sanabria's Film Section



Hammer's Big Three: Terence Fisher, Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee



In the last rant of A Quemarropa we dissected Hammer's corpse like a mad scientist with a vacant stare, but we left the three people responsible for the English studio's glory for a second part. Today we pay well-deserved tribute to Terence Fisher, Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing, three of the people responsible for the most British nightmares you can remember. These three guys still had no idea what they had on their hands when they first met. With "The Curse of Frankenstein" (1957), Terence Fisher turned what James Whale had done for Universal twenty-six years earlier on its head and found a way to tell the same old story that's uncomfortable and nasty to accept.

Peter Cushing's Doctor Frankenstein starts out convinced (of course!) that he can beat death. Since he doesn't seem unhinged at first, you might think that ambition even has a little touch of nobility to it. The problem comes when science stops being a quest and turns into an obsession that justifies any atrocity. From then on, the baron starts skipping over his initial scruples with the same knack he has for stitching together other people's limbs. Let's not forget he's got talent, money and a social position that lets him do whatever he feels like. I mean, he's a baron.

Christopher Lee, meanwhile, does the dirty work. His creature is a far cry from the clumsy, lovable dummy we all associate with Boris Karloff's Frankenstein. There's no doubt he's unsettling, but, at the same time, some humanity peeks out between the spasms, the grimaces and the violence. Maybe that's the whole point: it's hard for us to look at him without feeling compassion, especially when his own creator watches him clicking his tongue, as if he were a faulty experiment he'd be better off getting rid of. The creature is scary, obviously, but what's truly nasty is a man who makes life and then washes his hands of it. Some parents don't show up to parent-teacher meetings; Frankenstein flat-out abandons his son as soon as he sees he's turned out a bit iffy. Fisher didn't need angry mobs with torches to finish the job either. The budget, which was pretty scant, didn't allow for that Arctic epilogue from Shelley's novel either. With well-used sets (hello, Roger Corman!), an unwholesome atmosphere and the steady hand of a director who knew where to put the camera (something pretty tricky in this horror movie business), he managed to make the intimate drama weigh more than the budget.

The film has aged kind of so-so in some of its effects, of course, but its darkness is still intact. And Cushing, with that unwholesome elegance, proves that few things are scarier than a gentleman convinced he's right. And that's the beauty of Hammer's move: taking a myth that cinema had already pawed over plenty, smearing it with red, really, really red blood and showing there was still a fair bit of nastiness left under the sheet. Because the monster may give you quite a fright, but Baron Frankenstein is one of those guys who make you distrust anyone with a library, a laboratory and a family with money.

Fisher managed to film such madness with an elegance many would envy, Cushing gave it that face of an extremely polite gentleman you'd never leave alone with your kids and Lee got stuck with playing a creature his own father would want to return to sender. Out of that meeting came a good chunk of what was

to follow: cleavage, guts and British gentlemen devoted to doing evil with enviable composure. But this was only the beginning. There were still plenty of corpses to raise and, luckily for us, Hammer had three specialists ready to put on the lab coat.

Terence Fisher: a craftsman finds his territory

Terence Fisher was fifty-two when he shot his big hit with Hammer. At that age, other people are thinking about retiring to Alicante, buying a camper or going on and on at the pub about how things were better back in the day. Fisher hit the best moment of his life. He'd spent years knocking around the British industry, had worked as an editor and had cut his teeth on films of all sorts of genres. Before all that, he'd even gone to sea in the merchant navy. Basically, by the time he got to the castle of horrors he already had quite a few stories in his backpack.

His career started out pretty far from fangs and guts. He joined the studios as an assistant, went through the editing room and started directing features in the late forties. For years he was one of those professionals who get a film made with whatever material is put in front of them, without demanding a VIP parking spot at the studio. Hammer found in him a reliable director, able to work with tight budgets and schedules that weren't exactly an invitation to lose yourself in artistic contemplation. And Fisher found something he may have been looking for for a while: a territory where his best qualities could really get to work. With his Frankenstein film and, shortly after, "Dracula" (1958), things started to take shape. Fisher understood that horror could be physical, sensual and pretty raunchy without losing that British composure. The blood looked very red, women had a lot more presence (read: cleavage) and respectable gentlemen hid urges that would make the village priest blush. All of it filmed with a precision that belied the modest means. Fisher knew where to put the camera, when to cut and how to make the most of a look or a half-open door. Things that seem simple until you start watching horror movies that confuse suspense with jump scares, as if turning up the volume were an artistic choice. He also had a special soft spot for characters who get themselves into moral messes they then can't get out of. His scientists, aristocrats and gentlemen tend to be convinced that they're right by divine right (our friend Terry had class consciousness and despised people who hunted foxes), which usually ends in total disaster. In his films, evil has charm, manners and, almost always, an exquisite upbringing. Which I find a lot more unsettling than any drooling monster. Fisher was never too interested in selling himself as a great auteur. He saw himself as a professional hired to make films; if only half of those tiresome directors who spend their lives telling us how brilliant they are would follow his example. Time, however, ended up putting things in their place. Hammer had plenty of competent directors; Fisher was one of those who gave it a recognizable personality. And for that you need something more than artificial fog and a guy with fangs. Or a demented doctor.

Peter Cushing: the exquisite upbringing of evil

Peter Cushing looked like the kind of gentleman who invites you over for tea, asks about your family and, while you're busy with the biscuits, takes the chance to reanimate a corpse in the basement. He was born in 1913, studied acting behind the back of a father who wasn't too keen on the idea of having an actor for a son, and scraped by for years between theaters, sets and supporting roles. He even went to Hollywood to try his luck, although that didn't quite work out, partly because of the outbreak of World War II. With the war going on, Cushing went back to England, although the injuries he was carrying kept him from fighting. He had to swap the rifle for the stage and entertain the troops. He never fired a shot, but that's where he met Helen Beck, his future wife, a key figure in his life. Glory, like so many other things, was going to come hand in hand with a few liters of artificial hemoglobin. Before becoming the Doctor Frankenstein par excellence, Cushing had already earned the respect of the profession. Laurence Olivier cast him in "Hamlet" (1948), and British television gave him one of his great roles with "1984" (1954), the Orwell adaptation. But it was Hammer that let him show off all his talent for playing men who seem perfectly respectable until you find out what they keep in the lab. In the Frankenstein film, his baron has the arrogance of an aristocrat convinced that rules are for other people. In the Dracula one, as Van Helsing, Cushing became the only guy in the film who seemed to have any sense while everyone else was busy nibbling necks and making a scene. One made monsters; the other drove stakes through them, always with that look of distaste. Off screen, Cushing had a reputation for being an extremely polite man, fond of painting, toy soldiers and cartoons. It's hard to picture him spending the afternoon with Bugs Bunny after spending the morning gutting someone in the name of science, but that's the kind of gentleman he was. Younger audiences (you too. Come on, admit it) would end up discovering him as Grand Moff Tarkin in "Star Wars" (1977), another gentleman with impeccable manners and mild genocidal tendencies. By then, Cushing had already shown you could be terrifying without raising your voice or messing up your hair. Some people need to shout to command respect; he'd send you to hell with a nod.

Christopher Lee: too tall to go unnoticed

Hammer's most recognizable figure is probably Christopher Lee. A guy almost two meters tall, with a voice that seemed to come out of a neo-Romanesque crypt and a bearing more than one Windsor would kill for. Going unnoticed was never an option. The problem is that for years British cinema seemed determined to use that presence to stick him in a Nazi uniform, give him a villain's face or any other accessory that let the hero show off while giving him what he had coming.

Born in London in 1922, Lee came from a well-off family, had Italian ancestors with noble titles and also went through World War II before turning to acting. His life story is a lot more eventful than that of someone who signs up for a drama class after seeing "Hamlet" in high school. His career, however, got going on the back of supporting roles and the kind of films you discover years later in a late-night double bill. Until Hammer came along and decided that big guy could be the monster in the Frankenstein film: for once, being too tall stopped being a problem. The following year the vampire arrived, and Christopher Lee became the Dracula we all know: elegant, seductive and with a set of teeth that became every dentist's erotic fantasy. His performance had an animal force that clashed with his gentlemanly manners, although the studio ended up milking the formula with sequels, not all of them enjoyable. Lee even complained that the scripts barely gave him any dialogue and that his character had turned into a caricature. Which is quite something: being the most famous Dracula of your generation and spending half your life trying to get people to ask you about something else. And boy, was there something else. He was Lord Summerisle in "The Wicker Man" (1973), maybe my favorite of his roles; the villain in "The Man with the Golden Gun" (1974); Saruman in "The Lord of the Rings" and Count Dooku in the galactic saga. At an age when other grandpas are learning how to use WhatsApp, Lee was still showing up in blockbusters and looking like taking over the world was a perfectly reasonable possibility. And just when you thought Christopher Lee had done it all, the guy goes and starts recording heavy metal at over eighty. He devoted two albums to Charlemagne (what!), got into symphonic metal and even pulled off some Christmas carols with electric guitars. In his eighties, Lee was busy invoking the emperor of the Franks: there are retirements, and then there are retirements.

Hammer gave him cinematic immortality, even though he aspired to something more than spending eternity biting necks. With that voice, that bearing and that kind of track record, it doesn't seem like he needed to prove anything to anyone either. But actors are like that: you give them a castle, a cape and a villain role, and then it turns out the guys want to play Shakespeare. Or sing about the exploits of the emperor of the Franks.

Fisher, Cushing and Lee left Hammer by different roads. Fisher left behind a way of filming that's still recognizable; Cushing kept playing the impeccable gentleman, even when he had to serve the Galactic Empire; Lee spent half his life trying to escape the vampire and ended up singing to Charlemagne with a bunch of Manowar lookalikes. Each of them had his own career, his quirks and his unfinished business, but those films still bring them together in the same castle, in the same laboratory. And that's quite an achievement for a studio that worked with modest budgets and sometimes seemed to have more fake blood than money in the till. Hammer found its place, and these three helped make sure it didn't look like anyone else's. You don't need a Hollywood paycheck to make film history either: sometimes all it takes is talent, craft and someone who knows where to stash the corpse.

PAXARETO LOS ROMEOS ÓSCAR AVENDAÑO & REPOSADOS STEVEWYNN HOWLING JAWS SEX MUSEUM DEPEDRO POKEY LAFARGE

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

ROCK BOTTOM MAGAZINE



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Still hungry for noise

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