

ESPLENDOR GEOMÉTRICO – INTERVIEW

Esplendor Geométrico is a duo who has been capable of influencing, with its particular sound based on the use of gaunts and recursive distorted rhythms, all those post-industrial musicians who, from **Dirk Ivens** to **Winterkälte** (and, in general, rhythmic noise music) have embraced the idea of a cacophonous sound based upon distorted techno-derived rhythms. Considered the forerunners of rhythmic noise, the spanish duo, since 1982 until now, have changed their style always staying loyal to an industrial formula which recalls the **Marinetti's Futurism**, and paying a tribute to that Avantgarde but also to **Luigi Russolo** and to his *Intonarumori*, generally considered the very beginning of noise music. Let's talk with **Arturo** and **Saverio** to make them talk better to us about their music.

1) Hi Saverio, hi Arturo! I'm very happy to have the chance to talk with you, in particular after having discovered that you're funny and handy persons. First of all, I invite you to illustrate to who doesn't know you who **Esplendor Geométrico** are and what creative urge has taught you to start the project.

How much time could we have to reply? This year we celebrate the 35 years of **Esplendor Geométrico** and, therefore, i think you will have to correct the date (1982) that is present in the beginning and bring it two years behind. A lot of time would be necessary in order to tell our long story... We'll try to make a synthesis. **Esplendor** starts in the heart of the Madrid's *Movida* as a dissonant note: while all were thinking about making pop music, three guys, **Arturo Lanz**, **Gabriel Riaza** and **Juan Carlos Sastre**, after having ended a previous tecno-pop experience in the **Aviador Dro** group, composed using noises, distorted sounds and synthetic hisses. You can imagine which reaction the first shows could have been perceived from a public whose goal was only to have fun all night long.

After a short time, Juan Carlos Sastre left the band (but would have been collaborating with the graphic design of several EG's cover artworks). For some years, Arturo (still in Madrid) and Gabriel (that in the meanwhile moved to Melilla, spanish enclave in Morocco, as an employee of the spanish's Foreign Ministry) kept on releasing album as a duo. In 1986 they were invited by their italian / spanish friend **Saverio Evangelista** to hold a concert into the Auditorium of Rome's University "La Sapienza" (where Saverio was a student of the math faculty). After this, a collaboration between Saverio and **Esplendor** began, that would have been officialized in 1990. After few years also Gabriel left **Esplendor**, and from that moment on, **Esplendor** stayed stable and promise not to change for several years yet.

The creative urge that has brought to the creation of EG has to be found, for me, in a trip that Arturo has made in Switzerland when he was just seventeen years old, where in a small record shop he casually met (serendipity?) the first **TG** and **Cabaret Voltaire's** albums...

And that's our story recapitulated in a few rows.

2) This project has been created in Spain, a country generally considered "hot", instead of

your music, that evokes the sounds of the factories and that of the post-industrial world, that, in a certain sense, pass me the word, “devitalizes” the rhythm. What kind of relation exists between music and landscape?

Well, i don't know... we don't see this coldness in our music... In it we feel Africa, the dancing... the tribal singing! Think that in our last album, **Ultraphoon**, we have also used, for our songs, titles whose belong to african languages!

There's no doubt that EG have started like an industrial band, but according to us, from our second album on, it has taken a personal and original way that we love to define as “electronic tribalism”.

3) Your performance during the last **MUK.E** some time ago was one of the most interesting and, in particular, particular, that i've ever seen. I talk about the particular mix between rhythms, sometimes colder sometimes “more human”, and about the particularly strong vocals. Where the interest in destructured rhythm, that influenced loads of musicians who followed your formula editing it in new ways, was born? What's the goal of your music?

What's the goal of our music is a question that people often asks us and to which we don't know what to respond, or better, to which we can only respond: no one! Our music is visceral, not cerebral and without hidden messages. There isn't a project, a programming, a will to say something in particular. The choice to give the african titles to our songs, which i was talking about before, is also connected to this: whatever title can always be thought as an intellectual exercise (intellectual ?) that doesn't belong to us.

4) Besides the Futurist quote of your name “lo splendore geometrico e meccanico e la sensibilità numerica”, it seems to me that the vocal lines, so much particular and sometimes not understandable, are an interpretation of the Futurist's concept of “parolibere”. Have you been influenced by this concept or is it a mere interpretation?

Sincerely we haven't thought about that. I feel like we'll disappoint more than someone saying that we've been influenced by Futurism only for the name of the group: one of us, Arturo, has felt in love for the title of a poem written by Marinetti. That's all.

5) In which way do you think that, no matter if he was conscious or not of this, Luigi Russolo, with his **Intonarumori**, has opened a Pandora's box from which then the early cacophonous sound was born, the same principle that you use? Do you feel influenced from what he's made and do you think that his name should be written along with that of **Kraftwerk** in electronic music history, to name an example of a pioneering act?

The fact that we weren't influenced by Futurism (at least consciously!) doesn't matter that we don't recognize the importance of a Movement that has been fundamental in the Art History. We love Kraftwerk and we recognize them their influence upon the whole electronic music of a certain kind and we think that Luigi Russolo has the same importance

for his work as the forerunner of an entire genre.

- 6) Recently you've played two times with Winterkälte, considered one of the leading acts of the so called rhythmic noise genre. In the past, i've read that you played with Dirk Ivens too (**Dive**), who probably has been influenced by your music even in his **Sonar** project. How do you live the fact of having given inputs that, afterwards, have taken personal directions giving life to standalone music genres?

Well, we are surely pleased to know that our work could have positively influenced someone, even if we aren't definitely sure that this has really happened...

- 7) Assuming that, during your long career, you have explored several musical stylistic solutions, do you feel like belonging to a sort of musical category or you don't fit well with strict classifications? I would simply define you as electronic and industrial musicians, but is it possible today to talk about industrial music?

Categories, as well as labels, are made by persons and probably they are useful and maybe essential for someone (we think about the few record shops that need to find a place for an album that they have to sell or about the musical newspapers that review an album). In a certain sense, we aren't displeased to be "labeled" as an industrial band, but, at the same time, this has brought us to have less chances than those that we could have had, but I believe that this period is going to finish: recently, we were invited to techno as well as to industrial festivals.

- 8) How do you live the live performance? What can you express in a live gig that you can't express in the studio works?

For us, the live dimension is very important and i think that this could be confirmed by those who have seen us live. A live transforms itself in a sort of shamanistic rite that, when functions, succeeds in engaging also people that don't usually listen to the genre, and it's more difficult to obtain this "simply" listening to a recorded song.

- 9) Do we have to expect a new album or any side project in the near future?

Not only one but five! A box containing four vinyls with a selection of the songs released only on the CD albums of the '90s (when vinyl wasn't made anymore, the opposite of now: back to the future!) has just been released. In addition, a vinyl (and a CD) containing the recording of the live made in Tokyo along with the historic noise band **Hijokaidan** has been released. It seems to me enough, isn't it?

- 10) I thank you for your time and i greet you. Greet our readers and invite them to buy your albums!

Thank you! And what to say: with the infinite discography that we have... you're definitely

spoiled for choice!

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