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Interview: Flamingo Tours

sunday, january 02, 2022



"Fourteen songs have come out in a very crazy way as if they had a life of their own"

By: Javier González

What a stroll through the south of the **United States** we have stuck enjoying the new work of **Flamingo Tours**, "Wild Beasts from the South", there is a lot of rock and roll, open and heterodox, watered with mystery, voodoo with aromas of swamp and stories with flavor criminal, songs sung and played with a totally raw fiery vehemence that turns the band into a real hurricane.

Excited by such a powerful and striking imagery, we got in touch with **Myriam Swanson**, the head of the show, to immerse us in the murky waters that give life to this entire wild universe that has been showered with bourbon and violently addictive chords.

How has everything been during these difficult months for the musical world?

Myriam: It has been a difficult time for everyone. The musical and artistic theme has not been alien to the situation. There has not been much support at the public level in the programming of theaters or of stable cycles that were already precarious and have finished crushing. There have been very few concerts and very little work, really.

Flamingo Tours returns to the fray with their third work, "Wild Beasts from the South", where from the same title you announce what one is going to find is a journey through the wildest American South from North Carolina to New Orleans, passing for Texas. Is there a better site to geographically locate a job as intense as this?

Myriam: I think not, really. It is important to say that we are talking about the version that we have from Barcelona of these territories. It is what comes through film and music that have influenced us throughout our lives. Interest in the topic of "true crime" is important, I think it has been rising after the pandemic. We recorded the album before it but we already noticed the interest it aroused. These themes arose spontaneously, but they have very deep roots. In the end fourteen songs came out in a very crazy way as if they had a life of their own.

There is voodoo, mysterious creatures, and death. To what extent can we establish an analogy with our current reality?

Myriam: Here we have a more controlled environment, I mean in Spain compared to the United States where there is more savagery. We have a stronger public health than there, where there must be thousands and thousands of people left out of the hand of God at this moment, who knows. This can be super strong, I don't know what art, movies and music will be like in a few years, I think there will be a before and after after the pandemic that will greatly influence creators, it will be a very beastly thing.

From "Right on Time" until now, it seems that the Flamingo Tours proposal has gone "savage", now you sound like swamp blues and the texture of the songs is pure fat. Do you have that same feeling?

Myriam: Yes, totally. Notice that the first album was a more eclectic and cheerful proposal. The bassist who was there at that time was Lere, he spent ten years on tour with Muchachito Bombo Inferno, he was a person with whom I composed many songs. In that work there were songs like "Love Massacre" which was very swampy, but if you compare it with any song from now, you will see that everything is much more beast on the new album. This reflects my essence since I come from blues and punk-rock, for me it defines me perfectly. It is not a set of songs in which there are many lyrical melodies or voice, it is very instrumental. There are riffs and reed, but I have focused on mantras, sensations and rock and roll, not on building melodies. In "Lucha Libre", our previous installment, I think there were many more arrangements and everything was more worked out.

It is something that happens and is also perceived in your way of interpreting the songs, more rabid, almost spitting out the phrases.

Myriam: Yes Yes Yes. It is so. The previous album had eight or nine songs and here we go to fourteen, when I had no intention of recording a full length. In 2019 we made a break only interrupted by a tribute concert to The Clash, where we got into a very strong move, making new arrangements to their songs. I wanted to spend some time relaxing, maybe just doing a concert, and all of a sudden this came pouring out. Creatively we were at full throttle. It was a meeting with the band's guitarist, Santos Puertas, and the saxophonist, who had cool riffs and interesting ideas. Then we gather the rest. The album emerged during the month of December 2019. There is a lot of expression in the texts, there are many murderers in series told as stories and some fiction. There is also humor in the lyrics, it sounds satirical and black. It is the basis of our way of thinking. There is a lot of anger, it is my essence of rock and punk, but brought to a rock band from 2021.

Does the title "Texas Killing Fields" go back to the Texas Chainsaw Massacre or is it just our imagination?

Myriam: Let me explain it to you since it is something freaky. It speaks of an interstate highway that crosses all of Texas, where oil fields used to be, now they have been abandoned and it is a place where they have found many remains of bodies. There is a 2011 movie called "Texas Killing Fields", I saw it at the time but making the album came to me this image of driving there, I thought that if something happened to me there, no one would save me.

I was amused to see two titles like "The Bad Seed" and "Lonely Hearts Club", beyond what the titles say, they sound like Nick Cave and The Beatles, although I imagine they will have nothing to do with it. Is there a connection?

Myriam: Nick Cave is dark and I love Bad Seeds. This song talks about what has to happen to a little boy in order for him to end up being a serial killer. I wonder where that boy's community is, who sets his thoughts and why in America many of these murderers are treated like rock stars, what happens to that and why it fascinates them. "Lonely Hearts Club" is the other extreme. It tells of a couple of murderers.



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...to the other ending, it was a couple of musicians who meet through a newspaper column that is called that. There is a very crazy independent movie from the year 70, "The Honeymoon Killers", it is about a nurse and a playboy who contact and dedicate themselves to robbing and murdering old women. I wondered what this woman's life would be like before I met him, I would contact uncles through the column and I would murder them for nonsense.



I love that theme, I have always believed that national rock owes a song to Jarabo.

Myriam: There are people who don't like those topics. Jarabo, I know who it is. How strong. I have to go back to see the chapter that was dedicated to him in "La Huella del Crimen". On my Radio show, "La Pistolera", I talk about all these shits of mine, we play everything from crimes to rock and roll anecdotes.

Perhaps it is the fact of singing in Spanish, but songs like "Llevaba tiempo Muerto" and "Cicatrices", "La Pistolera", have an air of corridos, tex-mex and rock from here.

Myriam: Yes, it is the intention. It sounds like Spanish to us because we are not used to doing rock and roll without it sounding like Burning. Currently the Flamingo Tours mix of rock has been created spontaneously and I really like it. There's surfing, garage, punk, rockabilly, soul, folklore and tex mex... that's what Flamingo Tours sounds like. I don't know what it will be like in the future, but it is like this now. Doing it in Spanish gives me a more folkloric or humorous vibe as in "Llevaba tiempo Muerto".

"The Nitte Tripper" is a change of register, perhaps from a more soulera and even funk aspect. Did you feel like playing other registers on a fairly thematic album?

Myriam: It's a tribute to Dr. John, they called him that, it was one of his nicknames. I wanted to get to New Orleans with the roll of explaining the trip, reaching the pure vuru. I wanted to do a New Orleans groove with that power of funk. Say that if you have a problem in New Orleans, call Dr. John, he will solve it for you. The night traveler was the serial killer, a musician who was out concerts all night and would be home tomorrow. It is another matter. The style is not intentional, but the city and the reference to Dr. John.

You have allowed yourself the luxury of having the production of Jim Diamons, collaborator of The Sonics and White Stripes.

Myriam: It has been a very cool carom of life. In Flamingo there have been many like that. From the beginning of a group with a musician like Mario Cobo who is brutal and later in "Lucha Libre" having Jordi Mena and Jorge Rebenaque, two musicians who are with Bunbury who are also brutal. And now Jim Diamons, he has a studio in Montpellier so he came to Europe frequently, but with the bad luck that when I contacted him he no longer came. It was impossible to travel on budget for an independent band where he resides. He told me he had a pending trip to Europe, so we would finally make it match. I didn't just want him to mix, I wanted to record with him, do the whole process. We wrote the album in December and he came to Barcelona in January. Quite a dream.

You have cited some of the biggest names in the Barcelona rockabilly scene. What do you have there that makes such good rock with primal aromas?

Myriam: My group from Barcelona were Mambo Jambo. We all come from the same mother, let's say. Then there is the stylistic issue. We go independent. We don't want to be one gender. Neither rockabilly nor blues nor rhythm and blues. I feel closer to Guadalupe Plata than to rockabilly bands. There is a powerful scene, but there is precariousness and amateurism. It is not a complaint, it is verifying reality. It costs a professional musician an egg to live from music a lot. So it is difficult for good things to come out, there are, but when they come out it is because they have nothing to lose, or because they are very poor or because they can afford it financially. In between there is almost nothing.

"The festivals have monothematic offers and friends"

And with this situation things will not improve, we are running out of musical middle class.

Myriam: The middle class is an ambition that is difficult to reach, there are no circuits. You go on tour and meet people who have been playing for thirty years. You see James Hunter in a room and kids who have been playing for two months. It is very beast. Everybody is in the same place. There is a lot of competition. The funnel has been noticed a lot. Things are backward and the crisis of 2008 returns. Taking advantage of the crisis, caches are lowered, it is all very shabby and there is no solution. Spain must be at the cultural level of the rest of the countries of Europe, which should be already. Here is Alfredo Landa roll. The festivals have monothematic offers and friends.

I fear that if we do not unite within the musical estates, we will get nowhere.

Myriam: Sure. It is so. We have to generate more democracy and for this we need more public sector, the private sector is profitable, as is logical. Not if the move does not pay off, it is not done. You have to push. In Spain there are currently some big groups that you shit.

We must continue fighting so that the distribution of streaming is much fairer.

Myriam: It's a totally interested copyright and music opening. Musicians are temporary workers and slaves, we are the raw material, like the one who grows coca in Colombia. Then there are exceptions, yes, but most are upper and lower class, nothing in between. Elvis's long-distance career no longer exists. It costs you a fortune to make a record that you don't get back. We continue because music is necessary for us. Throwing in the towel is implantable before a vocation. You can not do it. You have to keep playing, there is no more.

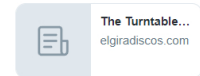


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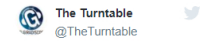
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Little is said but it is very nice that in our panorama there are groups capable of making songs as beautiful as those of @TachenkoGrupo know how to touch our little pop heart. On Friday they play @ SalaEISol and it will be something very cool for sure.

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