

Review of "Susurro", Gerald Van Waes, host of *Psyche Van Het Folk*, Radio Centraal, Antwerp, Belgium

This is an extremely modest, calm and unpretentious exploration of an Indian/Spanish music blend, with overall sophistication and delicate playing. I needed to wait for a perfect moment for an attentive listen, before really being able to hear what is behind the very logical sound of the tracks, with it's not so obvious underlying content. First track, "Sol Y Luna" is a song from the famous poet Federico Garcia Lorca, translated into Hindi. It is incredible how seemingly-obvious Sacha Silva makes the music that at some listens one hardly wonders how perfect Spanish music and Indian song be melt into combination.

"Gujarati Harvest Song" is an Indian traditional rearranged with a simple and logical joyful moody acoustic arrangement interpretation by all three artists, including a guitar arrangement. "Susurro" is a mixture of calm and moody flamenco guitar and Indian singing in different parts. Here the Indian singer interprets in an Indian way flamenco, calmer, warmer and without the usual harsh kind of passion of flamenco singers. The second part has some cello improvisation by Andrew Morgan. Last part has some murmuring tabla, and more emotionally interacting cello. "Sun Below the Horizon" is a moody improvisation on guitar and cello, while when the mood is still calm, two other persons are preparing dinner and have a Spanish kitchen chat in the background. The improvisation builds up nicely with some additional handclap-rhythmic percussion, which changes colour all the time. When the guitar repeats and fastens a rather Middle Eastern harmonic pattern, the cello starts to improvise on top of that, with a growing glowing energy, and then calmly fades out in the next track, "Epilogue" a clever moody guitar picking track, which seems to be derived from a traditional called "vasishnava janto".

A great album that is especially rewarding when all attention can be given to the music. But even then, I'm sure some people will use it for regular use as background music without noticing what is really behind it all.

Review of “Anatomy of a Coup”, Gerald Van Waes, host of *Psyche Van Het Folk*, Radio Centraal, Antwerp, Belgium

While Sacha Silva’s band’s previous release showed their own musical vision of an Indian/flamenco blend, with this new release they didn’t focus too directly on this style reference, but took the entity and awareness of it into a next step of a mobilizing experience, directing it as a more global trans/all-world style, while also being aware of social and political changes in the world being contradictory to creative solutions with different parties. The subject of a starting point for this CD, while keeping the same musical fundament and work it out even further with new creative elements, is a concept inspired by events leading to the 2006 military coup in Fiji, -an island group near New Zealand-, which occurred just after Sacha had left the island after a seven-month residence.

The flamenco/Indian music combinations became a more independent contemporary expression, which interacted as a creative idea against the background of awareness of change and social struggle with ideas and freedom, musically expressed by using illustrating flashes of audio fragments referring to the Fiji coup on the news, a speech by Nobel price winner and Cuban political activist and dissident Osvaldo Paya Sardinas (Varela Project), and Castro reading Che Chavarra’s farewell letter.

It was at first not completely clear to me how the musical reference point took position here. But first of all, flamenco with Indian roots might have had already its inner goal for independent freedom from the start, a reason why long ago the first large group of people (musicians) were forced to leave Persia (while originating from India, and because they refused the commission of extra labour, but that's another story), and formed their routes Westwards, leading to what would become the gypsies.

At the same time the group realizes new tendencies that give more fundamentalist power to governments or religion, where freedom is losing its strength, importance and cultural, psychological and creative significance once more. On the other hand they found a way to structuralize the globalizing tendency in music for the World Music genre, which could be a benefit to other tendencies within the World Music focuses and definitions, saving it from dying out by bringing new life to it.

In Sacha’s manifesto he wrote: “We have reached a moment when world music must engage with reality; where it must focus on the world and make music merely a vehicle. For too long, world music has been polarized. On one side, the world fusion product for the mass market which cuts-and-pastes non-Western melodies and rhythms into an easy-to-clap, easy-to-dance, easy-to-hum listening 'experience', stripped of any sort of serious context. On the other side, a small but dedicated group of serious Indian, African, Asian and American artists who preserve and renew their own traditions; each rooted in his or her own time and place yet all

lumped together on the "world music" shelf. This is the world music market of today: on one side, an empty blend; on the other, complete separation. What is missing is the genuine encounter: music which speaks to a new global, cross-cultural reality." Of course, something of a solution to this is a new blend or "new kind of music that defies easy categorization and side-steps the polarized world music market." I must say that there still are enough musicians who for this kind of contribution deserve Nobel prizes for music, because they make music that works in blending creative sources and make it work, rather than entertain, while it is also these groups who still don't get the platforms, podiums or the attention they deserve.

This new album has grown with strength since the previous album thanks to so many elements and also great contributions of guests (Benjamin Salmon & Rohin Khemani with percussion on 2, Saleta Suarez Ogando with flute on 3,6 and Adrian Greene's recitation on 6). And while most of the core remains a perfect blend of mostly Indian singing (in Hindi and Bengali) and styles with flamenco guitar and rhythms, there are also more experimental, emotional and even kind of heavier rock arrangements (on percussion, dramatic phone voice,..), besides a few rhythmic sound experiments with guitar, or experimenting rhythms, and there's even a cello/chamber arrangement.

The lyrics are also worthy of mention. "Nostalgia", which sounds more like an Indian cry, -"my past is a river whose waters none can forbid me to drink : he who does not drink will always remain thirsty". Two tracks were inspired by traditional flamenco poetry, and one more track is based upon Garcia Lorca.