



Mikel Udangarin

Zubia, what unites us

Argentinian writer **Jose Luis Borges** declared in an interview that a book is above all a form of happiness. And that happiness comes unexpectedly, and when it comes shouldn't be restricted. That's why good books are so easy to read, that's what Borges said. I believe that something similar could be said about **Mikel Urdangarin** and his songs. It seems that **Mikel** writes his songs spontaneously, without restricting the music he carries inside. And his songs are really easy to listen to, even if the composition work was complicated.

With this spontaneity he published his first two works, "*Haitzetan*" and "*Badira hiru aste*". They include songs that even now people still continue humming, many times without knowing that they were written by **Mikel Urdangarin**, as if they were popular songs, some of the old ones. That's the best thing that could happen for a song. With '*Espilue*' he jumped to the general public, an album full of strength. I still remember when I went to the record launch that took place at the Arriaga theatre in Bilbao. I left the concert full of energy, feeling that the Basque musical scene had started a new phase, a new way of doing things. "*Bar Puerto*" was a risky bet after the good reception of "*Espilue*", a really innovative album, which proved that **Mikel** doesn't like following the easy ways, nor repeating himself. "*Heldu artean*" is a urban proposal, night and warm, with a pinch of lively fugue music and close to pop songs, for example "*Oihana*" o "*Negua*".

In 2003 I travelled to New York with **Rafa Rueda**, **Bingen Mendizábal** and **Mikel Valverde**, and the result was the CD Book "*Zaharregia, txikiegia agian*", which included songs and recited poems. When we were recording the album, I remember **Mikel** told me that he wanted the people to listen to the whole record again and again, without noticing that it included poems and songs, to listen to is as a whole. His intention was for the public to listen to the poems naturally, without being afraid. That was a way of bringing poetry closer to a wider public sector. Producer **Arkaitz Basterra** presented a documentary based in this project's beauty at 2006 San Sebastian Film Festival.

After all these experiences "*Dana*" finally came up, the last album until now, a work searching for new sounds and the creation of a more open atmosphere.

Mikel's look is that of a good friend. And with that friendly look he tells us stories in his penultimate "*Anek idatzia zutaz dit*": the story of Sebastian the milkman, about how his cows were running out of milk, or the story of the tambourine man, capable of covering several kilometres just to show his new tambourine to his friends. He spoke to us about the little fairs in a small neighbourhood called Mekoleta, as small as the frogs that started croaking at dawn.

"*Zubia*", his latest album, follows a similar line to the previous one but is, at the same time, very different. Rather than stories, it is a record of sensations, feelings, and moods. "*Zubia*" is the bridge that we never dare cross; and the bridge that, once crossed, will change us forever. The bridge that we encounter when, already old, we go back to the landscapes of our childhood.

The bridge is quite a fragile thing; it is the first thing that is demolished in wars. But it is also what unites us, the vital link. As is **Mikel's** voice. A voice that seems fragile, but necessary at the same time, because it reconciles us with the world.

Kirmen Uribe

Mikel Urdangarin members are:

Rafa Rueda – electric guitar

Bingen Mendizabal - violin

Nika Bitchiasvili - violin

Saihela - drums

Koldo Uriarte - teclados y voice

Mikel Urdangarin – voice, guitar