

KENTIN JIVEK

1. **Hi Kentin, how are you? It is a real pleasure to be chatting to you today. Thank you for your time! I was wondering if we could start off by rewinding the clocks. What are some of your earliest musical memories and what first pushed you towards pursuing this passion of yours?**

Hi, and thanks to you for proposing this interview, really happy to take part.

It all started in Ireland 20 years ago, I lived there and work. Often, I stayed alone in the house during free time. One day, I was hanging around in a market and I saw a guitar for sale. When I saw this instrument, I felt that it would allow me to express myself and to translate my feelings in another way.

I had one goal in mind, that is to play and produce songs that correspond to a certain vision of things. In fact, music started to be part of my life and even influenced it.

Since that time, I have always made sure that the albums have a link between them and correspond to one of the periods of my life. But the interest was not to describe me or my life, but I was rather to guide myself by an inspiration that came from elsewhere.

Music is an integral part of my person since.

2. **I love your style of music. It is different and unique, and that is what we really need in this age of musical mundanity. There is so much going on in there. How would you describe it, who are some of your biggest influences, and what is 'doom folk'?**

"**Doom folk**" because I constantly use the acoustic guitar with guitar fx and synths, and being inspired by **Doom** while performing (sort of psychedelic and dirty-sounding elements). The instrumental register is generally quite serious in order to give an impression of heaviness and create a heavy atmosphere, and the use of the minor mode is essential.

On « **Blue Zaxon** », we can get closer sometimes to the traditional Indian music too; and so I used a lot of modular synthesizers for it. With this type of devices, it is quite complicated to be able to play several chords at the same time without going through a sequencer, and therefore sequences, and therefore... loops.

I have always refused to play with loops in the past, I used more pads with synth samples parts that I modify in real time. Improvisation is really present during live acts.

The word « **Zaxon** » comes from a video game that came out in the 80s, and the blue color has an important symbolism in various ancestral traditions. I spent two years studying the orthodoxy tradition and the **Sefer Yetzirah**, and so during this period, I slept 4 hours a night, having a mountain of books and started to work on a new score by creating musical sheets in a more precise way. I used schemes using elements like the **Sator Square** and the **Pythagorean reduction table**. Making a lot of analogy between the musical notes, the planets, the bpm, vibrations speed and frequencies... I tried to gather all these informations to obtain a clear view of what could be done.

One of the biggest influences during these days were and are still the **David Shire's Apocalypse Now soundtrack "The Unused Score"**, and krautrock bands like "**Kosmischer Läufer**", "**Popol Vuh**".

During this period of pandemic autarky, I worked with scales which corresponded to the Mesopotamian traditional music. There is a song which is called "**The Hurrian Hymn to Nikkal**" from

12th century BCE Ugarit in Syria, it's currently the oldest piece of annotated music known in history being well over 3,200 years old. It dates from between 1400 and 1200 BCE. This musical piece was written on a cuneiform tablet.

I've realized that the modular synthesizers due to their monochord aspect, could be close to this composing process. The textures and the harmonics are rich, we can detect other notes than the original root note. With filter frequency variations, you can create variations without changing too fast the pitch, and finally with an instrument like the guitar you can build a real melody with few notes but well placed.

3. Blue Zaxon was my introduction to your music. It certainly has left an impression! It has a fascinating back story too. Can you tell me about the Mesopotamian tradition?

In the early 1950s, archaeologists discovered in the ancient Syrian city of Ugarit several clay tablets dating from the fourteenth century BC. On them were cuneiform inscriptions in the Hurrian language which turned out to be the most Ancient Piece of Music Never Discovered. Harmony was non-existent, or even impossible. This discovery therefore revolutionized ideas about the origin of Western music. Some texts have preserved songs and hymns, sometimes with indications on how to sing or rhythm them.

But the main difficulty was the understanding of the ancient musical system...what I found quiet fascinating is that this musical tradition allowed to enter into communication with the gods and the ghosts, a repetitive song which used low tones. Music remains the reflection of cosmic harmony...

4. How did you weave this into your record? What are your memories from writing and recording the album, and how do you reflect on it as a whole? Would you change anything?

In general, I'm writing everything on an excel file, it's a habit I've taken since February 2020. Writing the tools that I use with analogy diagrams. Often, the BPM is calculated in relation to the title of the song, I replace the letters with numbers.

The guitar will take up space as an instrument which proceeds to the variations, and for this album modular synthesizers are the basis for the atmosphere. In general, I have on one side the titles, and on the other, various pieces of sentences that I wrote on sheets of paper or on my phone.

Really, if I had to change something, I might add a few percussions more even if there are already one track with really percussive elements on the album (**Les Centres Du Cercle**).

5. I have been digging a little deeper on your music via the wonderful Bandcamp site! I stumbled upon an album called Kigo. I have a deep respect for indigenous people and their devotion to their heritage. You explored the Cree tribe on this record. Could you tell me a bit more about it?

This album was born from a fairly simple idea: I wanted to compose an album that correspond to the seasons for these tribes that are located in the north of Canada. They have a very precise schedule compared to our classic calendar.

I did some researches with regard to the sonorities to see how to approach the sounds of their traditional songs, season after season. This album must see a second part, everything is written, but I have not released it yet.

For them, the **Cree Tribes**, there are quiet specific rituals regarding the seasons including the moon and the sun...I've included some Japanese scales with the guitar, because it's really close to the Cree harmonics. I have a whole file regarding the ways of life of these tribes, and it took me a lot of research to understand how they sang the seasons, how they honored nature and how they managed to survive.

It is one of the rare tribes which are protected and which does encounter ethnic problems like the native American Indians for instance. Musically, I only used the **Korg Minilogue synthesizer**, an old oil can delay guitar pedal and one guitar for that.

Too much instruments would have been a bad thing, because it needed clarity in the execution.

My wish is really to work on old music that have an intense background; it can be seen as simplistic or even minimalist but in fact that's the basis of every music made.

On the "**Senmurw**" album, the Mongolian music is present on three tracks, the technique of singing with the throat is really interesting too.

6. I imagine you are a man with endless idea. I love how your projects often follow a theme or concept. I am curious to know is there any theme that you have pursued that wouldn't fit into a musical context. If so, why not? What challenges did you face?

There is an album called "**A Week With Maria Thun Al-Sudd**" a full length 12 tracks album. It's an album that I wrote entirely but I didn't manage to record it... Texts are coming from the old writing of the Middle Ages and for the entire concept I think I approached something a little too strong and I couldn't find the strength to record it. I really think that I got closer to a very dark force. **Maria Thun** is not of this world anymore, and for the context I was really into **African Voodoo**. When I was in the process of composing this album, I truly felt that there was a very particular energy that came out of it. To say, in my apartment, I had suspended plants and when I worked on this album they were turning on themselves...

Perhaps the place where I spent all the lockdown was saturated in terms of energy. **African black magic** combined with old texts from the Middle Age have created a kind of diabolical vibe. Very disturbing results...

There is however a single that I released with the same name, that's the only track from the album that I've released from these sessions. You can find it on all platforms.

Concerning the next releases, I don't publish them on all on streaming platforms anymore. Only on Bandcamp with CD format and digital.

QUICKFIRE ROUND

1. Favourite artist? Popol Vuh

2. **Favourite album?** Fumio Miyashita "Live on the Boffomundo show"
 3. **First gig as audience member?** Sepultura
 4. **Style icon?** Perry Farrell
 5. **Favourite film?** Apocalypse Now
 6. **Favourite up and coming artist?** Poppy
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