

BALAGO “Darder” (foehn061)

Balago is permanently at a crossroads: due to the specific character of their musical discourse, a claustrophobic, desolated and depressing Moonscape, half way between ambient and microelectronic music, the band from La Garriga headed up by David Crespo needs to search continuously a way out of the impasse. The impasse is expressive – a mathematical equation well defined based on the sum of analogical keyboards, invisible bass guitars, blurred rhythms and retro sounds -, but it is also conceptual: their obsession to stand on the dark side and go deep into the obscure paths of the soul don't make it easy for them every time they plan and formulate a comeback with a new recording. The project seems to be imprisoned in its own will to escape and isolate, generating this feeling of extreme expectation and suspense at every new release.

“**Darder**”, the fifth album of a long and consolidated career that started in 2001, had a tough job ahead: get some distance from its two predecessors: “**D'Aqui**” and “**Extractes d'un diari**” fully aware that both albums could summarize what the band had turned into over the past years: the first album because it reflected the ambient glide of long and solemn developments, from the solitary, life hurt creator's point of view; the second one because, with the spirit of the band recovered thanks to Guim Serradansanfern's return and the introduction of Roger - David's brother, it displayed the cards of a larger proposal of shorts and striking songs in which new elements inherited from the cosmic ambient or the soundtrack participate. And although it might sound a topic, “**Darder**” looks like a condensate of both aspects in search for a new musical formula: songs are neither short nor excessively long/extended?; it's an album that calls for absolute loneliness but from a vital shared pulse ; and crypticism doesn't mismatch with its ambition of accessibility clearly revealed by the explicite and unequivocal use of synthesizers and low intensity electronic rhythms.

The sound of Balago in 2013 is an emocional, dynamic and nocturnal cocktail of dark ambient, kraut-rock etéro, komische and melancholic and inclusive postdubstep that seem to have forgotten some of the identifiers with which we had always associated the band to bring in some fresh air to their recording studio and consider new and exciting challenges, both fully achieved: the first was to find the cross point between the vintage legat of Brian Eno, Vangelis, Popol Vuh o Laurie Spiegel and today's musical impulse marked by Burrial – these ambient interludes – Demdike Stare and other revivalists of library music or the Blackest Ever Black catalog. The second, to re-invent a musical formula without betraying nor deviate from what has always been the primary goal of the Balago project: to shake their audience with albums that despite the lack of light and hope burst into emotions and sensations. Their journey is the best possible ever: one you never know when, where or how it will end. **David Broc**

David Broc