

Ermanno Panta: "¿El fracaso?, da igual, es algo terrenal, no espiritual"
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Ermanno Panta

The Sicilian musician will attend the Cerezales del Condado Jazz Festival this Saturday with his current formation, Banda Zeitun, to offer a repertoire of Mediterranean influence.

The meaning of zeitun in Arabic is olive and for Ermanno Panta this green fruit symbolically participates in the unification of the Mediterranean land, which is why he has named his new musical project, Banda Zeitun, a step forward in a very long career, flooded with references and vocationally devoted to the embrace between cultures and musical languages. «Banda Zeitun is a bridge between various shores of the Mediterranean, mainly between southern Italy, Andalusia, the Balearic Islands and North Africa. It is a musical commitment to reinvent and rediscover ancient connections between these parts of the western Mediterranean», says the Sicilian musician, currently based in Formentera ., about this artistic commitment, inspired by the sum of a wide variety of sounds. «The cultural always goes hand in hand with the musical and this project is born, on the one hand, from musical inspirations that occur to me in my travels around the world and, on the other hand, from the content of notebooks that I am writing and where I leave deposited impressions, poetry... All this ends up being translated into what we do».

Composer, flutist, saxophonist, singer, jazz percussionist and word music... Ermanno Panta has been the protagonist of a long-distance career since he made music the main axis of his life. Sicily leads you to the color of his childhood. From there, he has been jumping from here to there and there is no corner of the world that does not know about him. He has participated in numerous creative companies (together with the Italian guitarist Matteo Crugnola , with whom he developed Kalibé, along with musicians and groups such as Felipe Coelho, Simone lo Porto, Trío Ponteio, Ballena Gurumbé or Gabacho Maroconnection, to name a few) and the one he leads now, Ermanno Panta & Banda Zeitun, serves him to delve into a philosophy that above all claims, through musical fusion and the richness that this provides, understanding between peoples and towns. The band visits Cerezales del Condado this Saturday on the occasion of the Fundación Cerezales Antonino y Cinia jazz festival (10:00 p.m. and free admission; FCAYC outdoor stage) and throughout the performance they will show off a mestizo and unapologetic music that , live, requires the full involvement of the public. «We

want you to play with us, to feel part of a ritual and an almost familiar experience. The participation of the public, with their eyes, dancing or simply clapping, is part of a unique collective creation”.

Mediterranean jazz. Even being aware of the diversity of sources that his music contains and of the interference to which etiquette and corset always lead, Ermanno Panta opts for this definition to offer a name to the group's proposal. «Jazz because it reflects, on a musical level, the commitment to creative and free music where improvisation plays an important role. Mediterranean, because on a cultural and musical level, it drinks from many sources there. There is a tendency to classify and label everything that is known, and yet, culture is a process that has no borders. We talk precisely about all of this: the migratory process, the demonstration that music is the result of many contaminations... It is clear that we drink from many sources, we even get drunk from them. That's the idea”, says the Italian. «The challenge is to discover the bridges between musical cultures and reinterpret them. The Mediterranean is, without a doubt, the proposal, it is the basic inspiration so that we can talk about immigration, freedom of movement and thought, musical notes... Also, our music is inspired by everyday life». There is no doubt that the music that springs from Ermanno's artistic outburst transcends all sorts of barriers and frontiers and settles in front of an audience that lacks a definitive label. “The group just ignores those boundaries. When it comes to composing and creating, I don't put any labels or limits on myself and I don't repress my desire to dream either. Composing is not an effort for me. The creativity is there. You just have to recognize it and give it space.

Panta serves as the band's musical director. His are the compositions and "mine is also the last word." However, the project ends up being the sum of the contributions of all the musicians, thus endorsing the collective spirit of the project. «A theme is proposed that, from that moment on, is given several turns to go arranging it and giving it shape. The contributions of the musicians are always very important and rich. I am delighted and grateful to the musicians with whom I collaborate ». His participation in the Cerezales Jazz Festival will include the participation of guitarist Mario Alonso , drummer Cote Calmet and bassist Thomas Moore. «I do not like the word boss and less in times where the authoritarian is coming back with force. He would define me as a coordinator, as a guide on this trip through the Mediterranean, because of the commitment I have to this search ».

'Isla Musa' is the title of the band's first album. Appearing recently, it sums up the integrating spirit of the band, encouraging a proposal of eclectic content and supported by the contributions of numerous collaborators from all over the world. The tarantella, flamenco, root music, the poetry of Abu Al Arab... are some of the components that make up a recording that also saves space for the social cry and is rocked by different sound textures. The album includes a song, 'Refugio', provided with lyrics by Ermanno himself and Carmen Azahara, which addresses the entrenched and perennially current problem of migrants and refugees. «I want to move freely / From Tangier to Gibraltar / Tunisia and Sicily are first cousins / They won't let me pass! / I sing to the walker / Live look of the present / Ea! Let's go! Amuninni da! / May the voice of hope / cross metal fences / Fly and the feeling enters / Untangle the spiral, let's go there». His lyrics express intensity and emotion towards a phenomenon that continues to shock Ermanno. «On an intimate level I feel sorry and angry. It is a very big block emotionally and experientially. Who can leave people who only fight for their hope without water and food in the Mediterranean?

"We are destined to live in the present and seek our lives so that what comes next is not hard." Ermanno Panta cherishes the future with confidence. "It doesn't scare me at all. You have to have a very strong and focused attitude in the face of the difficulties with which we are measuring ourselves, in the face of the enemy of an open society that right now is holding a debate on certain issues. Keeping this look firm and having the objective clear, the thing moves forward ». And the failure? “It is something earthly, not spiritual. Does not matter”.