



GUANO PADANO

After two years of constructing, deconstructing, sanding and filing, **GUANO PADANO** is pleased to present their self-titled debut album on the American label **IMPORTANT RECORDS** (release date October 27th).

GUANO PADANO is:

ALESSANDRO "ASSO" STEFANA: electric and acoustic guitars, banjo, steel guitar, pedal steel guitar, raagini, omnichord, stylophone.

DANILO GALLO: double bass, vibraphone, piano, organ.

ZENO DE ROSSI: drums, slit drum, bull buster, glockenspiel.

Alessandro "Asso" Stefana and Zeno de Rossi started to collaborate years ago while playing in Vinicio Capossela's band. For this project they are joined by Danilo Gallo, a double bass player with a dark and gutsy style who has shared many musical adventures with Zeno, culminating in the El Gallo Rojo collective, one of the most interesting representatives of Italian underground and independent jazz.

Featuring valuable contributions from **ALESSANDRO ALESSANDRONI** (the renowned whistler of the immortal Ennio Morricone's soundtracks), **GARY LUCAS** (guitarist with Captain Beefheart and Jeff Buckley), **CHRIS SPEED** (Brooklyn based clarinetist with Tim Berne, Uri Caine and John Zorn) and the legendary **BOBBY SOLO**, masterfully singing Hank Williams' classic, "Rambolin Man".

Other contributions from **PIERO BITTOLO BON** saxophone, **ALFONSO SANTIMONE** organ, **RICCARDO PITTAU** trumpets, **ENRICO GABRIELLI** strings arrangements here played by **STEFANO ROVEDA**, **MARIA VICENTINI** e **DANIELA SAVOLDI**.

The album is recorded by **MARCO TAGLIOLA** and the art work is made by **SARA MENEGHINI**, photos by **ROBERTO CAVALLI**.

TRACK BY TRACK REVIEW

by Joey Burns

“Guano Padano” starts things off with a powerful surf guitar full of muscle and might but just when you think you have a handle on this song a very erratic clarinet solo comes piping thru like a great white shark terrorizing the waves taking it to another place musically.

After the fires are set there is a wonderful break in the dynamics on this track, “A Country Concept”. The lap steel guitar is covered in shimmering waves of a relentless heated echo and the upright bass begins to bow the bass in sparse movements. It almost as if the rambling characters in the previous song are waking in a god forsaken landscape and the music in all its dreamlike intonations gives foreshadowing to what lies around the next bend in the road. This intuitive playing between the core band is very engaging and never dull. Must be some good moonshine or motor oil running thru the pipes.

“El Divino” is one of those lush sounding songs that is destined to be used in a soundtrack. The song is wonderfully laid back with an excellent use of strings. The lead slide guitar melody comes in after a while setting up a momentous sense of tension with the drums. The ambience is divine. Maybe this is where the title came from?

“Epiphany” starts with organ and glockenspiel scoping out a night time scene all the while strange sounds gurgle and boil in the background making this another track destined for the soundtrack files of Hollywood’s up and coming movie scores. The attention to space and contrast is highly inventive and played on. So much so, that when the Peter Gunn bass line and tremolo electric guitar come blasting in, that you feel you are listening to a completely different album and band. At the end of the song, the band gets caught up in a dub delay web that feels more like a lasso is trying to slow down an iron horse out of control. Great liveliness and performances here.

“Ramblin’ Man”, nothing like a good cover to set the tone for an album and Guano Padano’s Asso Stefana delivers a heart felt rendition that balances well with the rhumba rhythm and octavia distorted warped guitar solo. Something is rumbling beneath this road and the third verse takes off into uncharted terrain. This open approach to improvising on the original song’s structure really defines the path of Guano Padano.

“Bull Buster” bubbles and cooks with banjo grease and strange electronic snippets. It’s these strange pairings in the arrangements of Guado Padano that make for a wonderful ride.

“Jack Frost” has all the comforts of home; fireplace, wood floor, banjo, whiskey soaked reverb electric guitar, drums and upright bass. Sounds like these boys have been locked for way too long and can’t wait to take it out on this recording session. Cabin Fever never sounded better.

“Del Rey” is built on a Hawaiian guitar motif followed by star spinning string arrangements that seem to race across a chromatic night sky. Reverb drenched lines, vibraphone tremolo and eastern influence chord changes makes this song stand out amongst the other tracks. The diminished melodies and transitions helps build a deep sense of tension throughout the song until the second half picks up with the rhythm section running down the country style romp. Again it is these wonderfully weird pairings stylistically and within the arrangements that makes this album a unique and bold outing.

With the abstract and desolate cover of “Danny Boy”, Guano Padano shows off their affection for traditional american music. However instead of churning out a blatant bluegrass or alternative country replica, they craft their own voice from these elements. The track is almost divided into two different songs. This jazz and contemporary approach makes me think of some of the more experimental instrumental visionaries

like Sandy Bull, John Fahey and the eclectic sounds from the Lomax and Amercian Anthology of Folk Music.

The final song is a sweet and humble finger picking guitar song called “Tromp Valley” reminiscent of a strange late night session ala Ry Cooder or a drunken Duane Eddy. This is the end of the album, so everyone in the band gets a chance to shine; the drummer does a Buddy Rich riff, the bass player takes the melody, before the banjo returns and the campfire seems to be complete.

If there ever was a soundtrack waiting to find it’s mate in the cinematic world, this album by Guano Padano will surely find good company with the likes of Fellini, Leone, Jar-musch and Sofia Coppola.

Joey Burns
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Calexico
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