

ZOÉ – Sonidos de Karmática Resonancia BIO

When iconic Mexican rock band Zoé finished touring behind the Grammy winning album *Aztlán* in 2019, lead singer León Larregui felt a sudden urge to return to the recording studio right away.

“I told the guys that instead of taking a break from the band and making a solo record, I preferred taking advantage of the momentum we had built together and work on Zoé’s seventh album,” Larregui says in his trademark soft-spoken tone. “The idea was to cut the new tracks fairly quickly. We got to work and soon enough we had finished demos for eight songs. Then the pandemic hit, and the world turned upside down.”

The crisis hit the band members hard, putting their plans on hold. But there was a silver lining. Now complete after a turbulent creative process that lasted well over a year, the aptly titled *Sonidos de Karmática Resonancia* (Sounds of Karma Resonance) may very well be Zoé’s most artful, mature and fully realized work to date.

“It was only a couple of weeks ago that [guitarist and co-founder] Sergio Acosta sequenced the songs and I got to hear the entire album as a whole,” Larregui explains. “For the first time, I got a clear vision of what we had achieved in these difficult times. I think it’s one of our best albums. You can definitely hear a more mature Zoé coming through.”

From the melancholy synth-pop of “SKR” and the melodramatic atmospherics of “Fiebre” to the anthemic chorus of “Velur,” *Sonidos de Karmática Resonancia* boasts the trademark elements that turned Zoé into million-selling rock stars throughout the Americas: angular melodies, propulsive beats and the kind of addictive hooks that inspire you to dance, or daydream - or both at the same time.

This time, however, the wide encompassing mixture of styles – neo-psychedelia, hints of vintage space-rock, bittersweet touches of new wave delight – blend more cohesively than ever before. Zoé’s knack for generating cinematic moods is anchored on a collection of breathtakingly beautiful melodies.

“You can hear in these new songs the grand total of my influences,” Acosta explains. “From the albums by Pink Floyd and The Cure that I treasured at 16, to the Turkish music and contemporary rock bands that I’ve been listening to during quarantine. There are also snippets of some trusted classics: Nina Simone, Donovan, Johnny Cash.”

“My songwriting process changed deeply in the past few years,” adds Larregui. “I used to rely heavily on the guitar. I would come up with a melody, and use the strings as a means of landing the tune, turning it into something concrete. These days, I’ll be walking or eating at a restaurant and listen to a bit of an existing song. It can be anything – even a reggaetón jam playing on the radio. But it stays in my mind, and unconsciously begins to distort, transforming into something entirely different. It’s my form of processing the outside sounds and mutating them inside my spiritual world. I have a collection of recordings based on these kind of aural ideas that pop up in my mind.”

Not only Zoé’s songwriting evolved, but also its creative methodology. *Sonidos* is the first Zoé album in decades recorded without the guidance of producer Phil Vinall.

“Phil was a pillar for many years,” reflects Acosta. “He appeared out of nowhere, eager to work with a young band that had been dropped by its record label. He was our teacher and guided us on the important road that we walked together. That said, I felt it was time to explore new paths – to favor a simpler, more organic process, learn to play together as a band in a brand new way. Had Phil remained onboard, we could have never taken that step forward.”

The split between Zoé and its longtime producer was amicable. The band chose to collaborate with London-based American producer Craig Silvey – known for his work with Arcade Fire, The National and Arctic Monkeys – who had already produced a few tracks on Aztlán.

“Phil had become an unofficial member of the band and we never stopped learning from him,” admits Larregui. “We thought we were ready for the adventure of working with someone new. Craig brought a different attitude to the table – a new kind of vision. He opened up new doors. We responded by feeling secure, enjoying a new sense of freedom.”

Previous Zoé sessions also involved a multitude of guest musicians. Something that both Larregui and Acosta wanted to address on the new album was the concept of the band as a self-sustained unity – recording backing tracks together in the same room for the first time.

“It was part of the new plan,” enthuses Larregui. “Just the five of us. A simpler setup, less noise. A more cohesive identity.”

When the band reconvened to finish the initial demos, new rules were established in search of a more disciplined work ethic.

“In the past we had the tendency to confuse the music with the partying,” says Larregui with a self-deprecating laugh. “We are a rock’n’roll band, after all. You’d have people drinking, smoking and dancing at the studio. Now we became cleaner, a bit stoic. We couldn’t relax, because the space that was previously occupied by Phil needed to be filled by us. The new sessions required a lot of concentration on our part, but I think the process was liberating for all.”

Now that the pandemic is slowly coming to an end, Zoé is planning a return to the stages of the world, boosted by the anticipation of presenting the new songs in a concert setting – the band in its purest element, surrounded by their devoted fans.

“I spent years dreaming of recording an album like this one,” says Acosta. “And you know what makes it so special? The beauty that it’s still the five of us – playing together after so many years.”