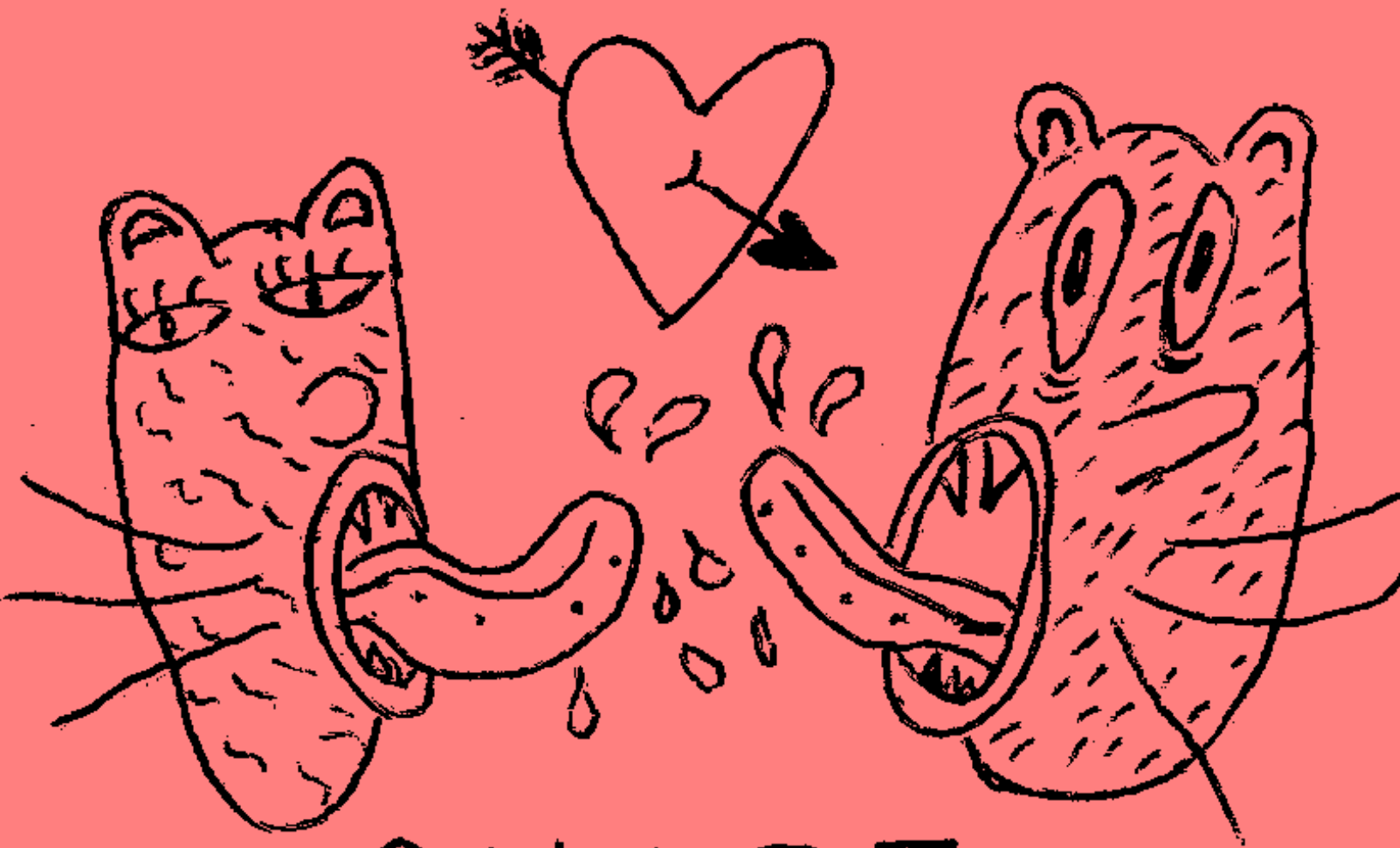


Los junk dealers

04: CHAPE RECORDS



CHAPE
RECORDS

JD: *It is a pleasure to finally be able to interview you, tell me, before Chape Records started, how did you meet?*

Mateo: I always tell the same story because that's how it was. We met through a mutual friend we had. The three of us decided to go on a trip. I didn't - I mean, I knew Joaco and we had met and we had seen each other a few times, but I was in the middle of-

Joaquín: *It was through this mutual friend, we were not that close.*

M: Exactly, the thing is that, on this trip, our friend had jet lag. When he was sleeping, we were awake and vice versa. And that's where our friendship was formed and right there, on that trip we made to Maldonado, I invited Joaco to make a band or play, if I remember correctly, and that's where our friendship arose, back in 2017... summer of 2017, I think.

J: Beginning of 2018. It was very funny because, the three of us went on a trip, with this common friend and obviously we were going to get to know each other much more with Tute and in the end this friend, in addition to that he said, that he had jet lag, he ended up getting sick and a few days later, he left, he had to leave.

M: It's true... he left and we were left alone...

J: And we were alone and we were kind of connecting a lot with music. I remember that we brought our guitars and we connected a lot, we spent I think practically the whole week we were there playing.

M: And playing *Guitar Hero*.

J: And playing *Guitar Hero*, yes, yes, yes, yes, on *Playstation*.

M: Yes, yes, yes.

JD: *And for 2019, Chape Records is formed, right?*

M: Uh, I think so.

J: 2019, yes.

JD: *With what intention do you form the label?*

M: Initially it was Joaco's idea. He came up with the whole idea and the drawing, the same one that is on the stickers and on the internet. It was the initial drawing and the final one. But it was Joaco's idea, he came to me with that idea before releasing and editing cassettes. Maybe he can tell you more about it.

J: Actually the idea of the label materialized more or less in 2019. The first release was an EP of Tute's solo project, at that time, *La Zapatilla del Filósofo Tristeza* which was our first release. It's actually a label that releases CD-R and cassettes in very limited units. We don't do much more than ten tapes or a few CDs; 15, 20, no more than that.

And actually the idea was something that came a little bit from the musical influences that were around at that time, 2017 or 2018. I was listening to a lot of American bands that came from *diy* backgrounds. They were always releasing their own music on physical formats, recording with whatever they had on hand. It was always very lo-fi, it didn't have a lot of quality, but they didn't care. It was like they wanted to show what they were doing the way they could do it.

That on one hand. Also my approach to physical media started around 2015 when I started to look at the cassettes that my father had, the kind that your father has from when he was younger and he has it buried and you go to through his stuff and you find there - I found his cassettes too and said "look how cool this is".

I started to get more into it, I found an old piece of equipment lying around, which is the equipment I still have today, which is a FISHER that I use to record almost all the releases that are made by the label.

At the same time when I met Tute, by 2018, he was playing in an *extreme metal* band called *Pandemonium*, which had been released by a label here on the coast of my neighborhood Shangrilá, I'm from Shangrilá, Tute is from a neighborhood of El Bosque which is a few kilometers from here nearby, I came with the idea of releasing physical music and it turns out that every time we got together Tute gave me a cassette release of this label called *Extreme Resurrection Records*, a label near my house and I got to meet the crazy people who did it, they were some metalheads here in the neighborhood who were very active and did everything and issued other bands.

And well, those were the things. A little bit of having the idea from seeing the influences, and seeing this materialize here in my neighborhood, near my house and the idea that I had to do it too. I thought about the name and I said let's make a label and release our music, because we were already active with our projects, in fact JP had already started if I'm not mistaken...

M: Yes, JP was already playing.

J: Our solo projects too, I think, because the first release was yours, soon after *Alfalfa 1* came out and that's when everything started.

JD: As someone who is not very familiar with the Uruguayan scene, but can assume a thing or two about it from Mexico, how would you describe the state of this scene?

M: There is quite a lot going on lately, there are a lot of bands here. There's a band called *Nearwave* that is making it big, a girl who makes music called *Sofacha*... I don't know, literally nowadays the Uru-

guayan *indie rock* scene and those sub-genres are full of stuff. I mean, every weekend there are gigs in a bar where you can play for free, called *Andromeda*, which is the former *Tundra Bar*. The *Tundra* is quite mythical in terms of small bands, but nowadays, may Joaco correct me, but in terms of *indie rock* and its genre, it's full of bands.

J: Yes, like Tute says. Right now we are at a time when there is a lot of activity, especially in the capital of the country, in Montevideo, in downtown Montevideo. We are from the metropolitan area. About 30 kilometers away from where everything happens.

M: Yes, 20 to 22 kilometers.

J: And we see that but we are a bit distant. We don't feel so much a part of it. Like there is a division or at least I see it that way.

M: Yes, because there is no music here. I mean, here there is only *cumbia* gigs and those things that are played normally.

J: But having said that, yes, we are in a moment in which new proposals are emerging that I feel are in line with the music that we make, that have this kind of vibe that goes beyond mediocrity, right? Because also what happens here in Uruguay is that there are a lot of mediocre bands, that are the bands that end up finding success, that you see, like I don't know, "rock" bands, in quotation marks.

What is called *Uruguayan rock*, the typical ones that if you look for it you will find. Bands like, I don't know, *La Vela Puerca*, *No Te Va a Gustar*, *Cuarteto de Nos*... these bands that started in the 90's and that maybe started being a little more faithful to their sound, but then, uh, nothing, they sell out to make a more commercial style, which is the one that ends up being popular and the one that, well, everybody knows.

But yes, interesting proposals that are more *underground*, that have better influences, that take from different things, there have always been a few, but right now we are in a moment in which they are growing, playing in international festivals. In this region, there is a festival that is being made that comes from Argentina, eh, I can't get the name right now, and they are bringing a lot of *underground* bands from there. As for bands which are also good and are doing something interesting, let's say, that are more popular here in the *underground scene*, as Tute mentions, *Nimwave*, *Flor Sakeo* is another good one, the frontman is a woman and they do a kind of *psychedelic fuzz* thing that is good. And I don't know, there are other *indie* bands around that are also interesting, some more noisy or something like with a *noise-rock* vibe, which are good. But yes, there are people who do *ambient* and stuff like that, which is also quite crowded.

JD: *Something that I find very curious, personally, is being a Mexican who found out about an Uruguayan project from an Australian guy [thanks to spacegrass, sending you a hug!] and I think this speaks a lot about the current state of music communities, where more than being united by locality, we are already more united by niches, right? How has this influenced you and what advantages, disadvantages or challenges do you see in this panorama?*

J: Yes, what you mention is part of the era we live in, isn't it? The era of globalization and the era of having access to the Internet at hand and that we can- that we are precisely now talking thanks to that. In other words, we are getting to know you, we know you through social media and it is all thanks to that. That also obviously influences everything we listen to, because if we hadn't had that, the internet, we probably wouldn't have listened to most of the bands that influenced us to do what we do today.

For me this is something that just happened to us

and that we have to be grateful for and I doubt that if it had happened in the 80's and we could only send each other letters and recorded cassettes, we probably would have met bands too, but it would have been much more difficult to form that connection, right?

M: Yes, slower too.

J: And well, that also has its advantages, like what we mentioned, but it also has its disadvantages in that everything is instantaneous and all that entails; everything is quickly accessible and people don't give anything much thought either.

Nowadays to release- to think about releasing an album is a bit of a waste of time. People focus more on the fast things, on the single, on the social media, on the *Instagram* story snippet, on *Spotify*, I don't know, all those things are paid a little less attention, because we are also conditioned by that, by the fast access.

JD: *Sure, and that slightly damages the relationship that music could form with the listener and the ability to make this something sustainable, right?*

J: Yeah, I don't see it as a problem so much, I think that the way we operate, let's say, is very *underground*, isn't it? At least the mentality I have is not thinking "I want to be super well known, I want to get more hits on this song, I want everyone to know my music". I do it for me, I do it to satisfy the desire I have to make music and release it and only to satisfy my personal desire. As for the people who approach me and are interested, it's great, but it's not the primary purpose.

M: That's why the label also has a lot of our stuff. Most of the projects we have are our things. There are only two projects that are not ours, which are those of *Niño Rico* and *Aramis Rivero*, who is a friend of ours, I mean *Niño Rico* too, but also the idea of the label was born as if to bring out our own friends' projects as well.

JD: *Is there a record label, either Uruguayan or international that you like or that inspired you for Chape Records?*

J: Yeah, as Joaco mentioned, *Extreme Resurrection Records*, we can say that we are lucky today, not only to be friends with Federico, who manages *ERR*, but that nowadays we are also playing in Federico's band, which has been playing for fifteen years and is a band that is quite, for me, for many people maybe not, but quite consecrated within the Uruguayan *underground metal* scene, and to be able to play with him and be friends with him and, I don't know, to fool around or tell ourselves dumb things is really cool. It's, like, a tremendous opportunity that— I already knew them for a while and I never imagined being in his band and being so close to him today. I mean, we are not so intimate, intimate but being this close.

JD: *That must be a very rare experience, to go from being someone's audience to actively interacting with them.*

M: Yeah. I remember listening to *Pheretrum*, that's the name of the band, *Pheretrum*. I don't know, like in 2016, I think. I followed them and now we're both playing in the band, these are things you don't think about but they just happen.

J: And thanks to the gigs, right? Because they were very good *underground metal* performances. It's a band that moves a lot of people and you could tell that when you went to the shows and there was this tremendous amount of energy made from the music they were creating, right? And as Tute says, Federico is great, and as I said a while ago about the beginnings of the label, I knew him by sight and from going to the gigs, Tute also played with his band and after that I contacted him to buy material and we ended up becoming great friends. Today we are still friends and we are playing with him.

Besides he released our band too because *JP and Los Marcianos Galácticos* has a branch of *extreme*

metal called *JPI Vio-Lens Kommand* and that band was released by *Extreme Resurrection Records* on cassette.

M: Yes, there is the Uruguayan edition and an edition that I don't know if it is already out, Joaco, the European edition, the Spanish edition.

J: Yes, the Spanish one, also on cassette and now we are about to receive the Japanese edition that was released on CD, in a thousand copies. Thanks to Federico, who brought us in and moved the name, those doors also began to open, which were tremendous. And I think the future of that will also be very good. We will continue to be active with that.

But complementing a little bit the label question, I think that on a more personal level of inspiration and approach was *Extreme Resurrection Records*, but also here in Uruguay, a very famous *Orfeo* label existed that was like Uruguay's label, basically the only one that existed, that is to say, the only commercial label that released good bands in the 80s.



They edited, I don't know, all the *post-punk* bands here that are good, *Zero, Los Estómagos...*

M: In the 70's also, he edited Eduardo Mateo, *Kinto*, all those bands.

J: Yes, in the 70's too, I think it goes up to the 90's, 2000's. That label too inspired me, because with my father's collection, when I started with that, that's when I also started to get closer to old Uruguayan bands, right? And I got to know more music from here, because I was very much outside Uruguay. I did know some things, some classics, but I had never dived in as much and that label was like something important in getting to know things from here that at the time had its recognition and it still has it for having released great bands from Uruguay.

JD: *Going back to the music, and I'm going to focus a little bit more on your last three releases [by this time the last one was Yellow Envelopes], these came after a hiatus of about two years. What happened in that time span?*

M: A lot of things happened.

J: We were still active, but what happened was that we got away from social media for almost two years. We closed our Instagram account and we were kind of looking inward, but we were still active. In fact, in that year we released and recorded things that were later announced and our whole metal stage started too. We also recorded the second album by *JP* and *Los Marcianos Galácticos* and we also recorded *hardcore punk*. We were still as active, but we just moved away from social networks a little bit.

JD: *I think that taking your time was a virtue in this case because in both JP and Keep, I don't know if I'm right, but the content feels more thought out and planned. When I saw the cover of Yellow Envelopes it gave me that impression too, because it was out of the usual cover format of your other releases,*

as if you wanted to highlight it out of the others, is that correct?

M: I don't know if it was premeditated. I feel that it was thought out and recorded in the same way. Well... recorded maybe not, because it's the only *JP* album so far that was recorded in good quality. It was recorded with a *Shure SM57*, which for us is the best microphone range you can have and I think that makes a big difference also to the sound, to the album itself.

Also the subject of the album cover, which was something that Joaco also wanted to change, the subject of letting us use our faces or our images and make a collage to use an external artist to make the cover for us. And it was a great idea because that also gives another image to the album, besides the sound. You are right, the sound is, of what we have recorded, the best, but I don't think it was much more thought out. It was that we wanted to record it and we recorded it.

J: Yes, I mean, just to compliment because I think he said it very well, it was not thought in a different way than the rest of the albums. I think we still have the same work ethic in terms of making music. Ideas come up, we record them and that's it, let's move on.



We don't look back too much, we always try to move forward and do stuff and do stuff and do stuff.

It's true that we wanted to raise the bar a little bit from what we had been doing in terms of quality, that we were really into recording with what we had at hand and recording it just like that. We didn't even know what we were doing, we didn't even look at the volumes on the console and we just recorded, in a *rock power* manner with all volume peaking in red and we did that however it came out.

JD: And one of your first albums was recorded with only karaoke microphones, too.

J: Yes, that was *Uruguayan Psychotropics*, which were two plastic microphones that I had bought, which is what we had because at that time none of us were working and we didn't have any, and what we got was that and that's what we recorded it with.

But of course, with this it was different, it was like giving it another approach within the same work ethic and way of working, with a new focus, becoming more and more professional to the extent of what we can do, of what we always have at hand but of what we are gaining in knowledge, of how to record, how to mix... and well, the idea of the cover was a bit like that, it was like changing it a bit, because above all I was already bored of making the covers and sometimes I recycle my ideas a lot.

I had contacted Santiago, who is a very cool digital artist from here in Uruguay, who was very interested in everything, in the label and in all the projects and we were talking and he seemed to me to be the most suitable. And I told him and he came out with a very, very nice cover. I think we will continue working together, most probably, in other upcoming releases of the label.

JD: Do you remember what inspirations you had for that album? It always sounded like the *Osees* to me.

M: Yes, at that time Joaco passed me a pile of garage rock bands that I didn't know, like *The Goriest and...* I don't remember the name of that band. It was John Dwyer with another crazy guy, that was a duo....

J: *Pink & Brown?*

M: That's right. And even though this was like the first stage *JP*, going for a more *garage rock* sound, we had influences from everywhere, I don't know, *King Gizzard, Neu!, krautrock*. Joaco loves *Can*, and many other bands. Now thinking about it, you can think of a thousand. Well, we listened to *Ariel Pink* a lot, nothing to do with that, but we listened to *Ariel Pink* at that time.

J: Eduardo Mateo, here from Uruguay.

M: *Príncipe*.

J: *Buenos Muchachos*.

M: I don't know. A lot of bands that influenced us and we kind of took that work from different artists and came up with that. Joaco usually comes up with all the ideas on guitar and I follow him. He tells me to play this... and sometimes I can do something else. In other words, we are quite free, so to speak.

J: I mean, it's like we come, as Tute says, from many different things. And the band also has and had its stages, right? You can see that, for example, if you listen to the band's first EP, which was when everything just started.

We came from a background where we had been jamming a lot in other bands we had, that basically what we did was to get together, smoke a joint, rent a rehearsal room and play, improvise a lot for an hour and a half and then many ideas came up, songs came up and spontaneous lyrics came out. We would record them and then listen to them.

We started from this dynamic of playing like that, improvising and improvising. And that's what Tute says, we came from everywhere. We could play a song with this super noise rock, this old garage type sound from 60's like bands like *The Sonics*, all the way to the sound of the first or second yankee garage wave, like *The Gories*, *Oblivians*...

M: *Hospitals*, tremendous band.

J: Yeah, *The Hospitals*. Noise rock like that from the early 2000s, from that little scene in San Francisco where John Dwyer was also there. *King Gizzard*, thanks to them we know the *Osees*. I don't know, everything, bossa nova, psychedelic rock, krautrock, Uruguayan music, folk music. A lot of things. We always listened to a lot of music and we didn't close ourselves in any particular style or artist, but we did a lot of things. And that's also the idea of the band, we don't limit ourselves to just one thing. It's like we are several bands at the same time.

JD: Now going to *Keep*, here you experimented with a genre with which you had already played a little bit, but here you go all out, slowcore. How was this new project born?

M: The anxiety was mostly mine. I had just come from *Zapatillas* and I wanted to give it an end and from there *Keep* was born at the end of 2022, when we had the first rehearsals. I had been listening a lot to *Codeine*, *Love, Claire*, *Eiafuawn*, which was the band that moved me the most, and I really wanted to do something like that, because I felt that there are not many bands here that play that genre. Surely there are and I don't know;

maybe some indie band comes close to that, but it's not *slowcore* as such.

Although *Keep* is *slowcore*, it doesn't stop there because some of the songs have *shoegaze* stuff in them. Because if we talk about *Codeine*, it's a band that has a very clean guitar and you don't see so many effects. [*Keep*] is a *slowcore* proposal that's a little different too, that doesn't limit itself to that, but I had the anxiety of wanting to do something like that.

Besides, I always wanted to play in a project with a band, because what *Zapatillas* had was that I recorded by myself. We played live once with Joaco on drums, me singing, but with a background guitar track. And then we played with *Zapatilla* acoustic, which was the closest thing to a band, but I never had the opportunity to rehearse, me playing guitar, with my band, rehearsing like that, you know what I mean? And I really wanted to sing and play.

JD: In addition to this, you had a compilation of unreleased material for both *Zapatillas* and *Alfalfa* come out. So are both projects finished?

J: With *Alfalfa* there's actually a release in the pipeline that will most likely come soon, which is something I've been working on, making music for a children's play. I did it in collaboration with my cousin. My cousin came up with the idea for the play and I contributed the music and stuff. I recorded things that were then used as a track in the presentations of the play and that's the record I'm going to release.

Then I plan to keep doing stuff, but it's kind of going to change a little bit on that release, but then at least if it plans to continue. It's not like it's finished.

JD: *I really think the most valuable thing about the label is this sense of intimacy and honesty that the releases convey, whether it's the format, the smallness of the label or the freedom to record whatever you want, what do you think about that?*

M: Yes, exactly, yes. The thing about having the freedom to record as we have— I say freedom because we don't usually go to a studio and record, we record at our homes. Before we recorded here at my house and now we are recording at Joaco's, so on that side we don't have to worry about time, because we don't pay anything and we can spend as many hours as we want recording there.

That's maybe why you can find that sense of intimacy, as you say, and also that freedom in recording because we are not in a hurry, we don't have anything and we are free to go and record when we feel like it. And I think it is something intimate because of the recording of our projects, Joaco with *Alfalfa*; me with *Zapatillas*, we want to pour our energy so to do something and to get that energy out, we go and create something. We shape something there and things start to come out.

J: Totally and besides what you say, that we have our freedom in how to produce it, I also think that we are just two people that in our musical projects, both separately and together, we open up completely. It's like a look at each other's feelings and whatever is going on.

I think that's the grace of music, it's a sublimation, that is. It's the power to bring out what you have inside, whatever the emotion it is, because it is very complicated, being able to sublimate it, and to create something from that feeling. I believe that yes, without a doubt, all the releases we have made for the label, either our projects or other people's projects, have that, they have that brightness of something real, made by someone real, from a feeling of someone who interpreted it with a lot of passion and a lot of love for what they do.

JD: *And for all that, the decision to release all of this only on Bandcamp feels intentional.*

M: Yes, totally. It is very rare that a known band releases an album on Bandcamp and as you say, if you want to go to a place where the *underground* is, so to speak, I think Bandcamp is the platform for the *underground* bands, who are just starting and where they upload more things, because it also gives you the opportunity to sell the album, at the price you want, and that opportunity is cut off on streaming.

J: Bandcamp is really great. I mean, the platform is very good because of all the things you discover, as you say, you can discover great bands and you can contact great people. And the support they give to the artists is really good. We have received a lot of contributions that have helped us with the label's expenses and truthfully we are grateful for that.

JD: *Also, this project started... it was in 2019, do you remember what month?*

M: The first launch was that of *Zapatillas*. I don't remember when it was...

J: It was in July or June. I remember *Alfalfa* was in September, but *Alfalfa* was the second one.

JD: *Seeing as you've been working together for over five years now and it doesn't seem to be gratuitous, how would you say you complement each other's work?*

M: I think we complement each other very well because Joaco, as I always say, is the one who comes with many ideas and, for example, when we released *Aramis*, it was something that we both were already thinking about beforehand even before talking about it and we released it on the label and besides we are lucky that our friend *Aramis*, who is a tremendous musician, we get along very well. But I think we hit it off very well.

J: Yes, that's it, there's good communication between the two of us and the fact that we are, as he says, in the same line of what we want to do; in the same artistic vision, so to speak. That is important. Personally, I think I'm a person who sometimes is too stubborn, maybe. But I think it helps me sometimes to lower that. I think that in that sense we complement each other very well.

JD: Finally, what's next for Chape Records? What are your plans for the label going forward?

M: Some time ago we were about to put out a friend who released an album some time ago, but for reasons that happen we have not been able to, it's complicated, but new albums are coming now, I don't know how long, but there is one thing we are going to release.

Yes, as Tute says, we have several plans for this year to release already finished stuff. As he says, there are two albums coming soon of a new incarnation of *JP*, which is something I've been working on my own, which is a new change in style and it's going to be like another branch of that. It's like two records that were done at the same time, they were recorded at the same time, but they're two separate records. Then *Alfalfa*, which I told you about, which is also probably going to come out in the second half of 2024 [as of 2025 it's not out yet, but soon, I'm sure!] and we're probably going to work again with Santiago, who did the cover of *JP*, because he is very interested in working on it.

J: And well, as Tute mentions, we are going to edit *LaKuca*, that is also going to come out for sure, *LaKuca* is our friend's project. She is a woman from Ciudad de la Costa, which is like the region where we are.

JD: I remember seeing her in the credits of *Keep*'s recent album.

J: Yes, she recorded vocals on *Keep*.

M: And in *Zapatillas*, too. In *El Río Vacío*.

J: And she makes great music, it's like super weird experimental music, which is something you don't find here in Uruguay, not at all. That's it, we're pretty much on track for that. All that's left is just to work and finish all the layout and artwork for the album. That's going to be done, it's going to be released on CD and that's it.

I'm really looking forward to that because the material is worth it, it's really good and well, that's how we're going. We'll keep making music as we always do, with our same vision and we will keep doing things until we are paralyzed, die or don't feel like it.

