

## Pedro Soler & Gaspar Claus “Barlande”

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### Pedro Soler & Gaspar Claus – Barlande

by ALEX on 9 AUGUST, 2011

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Whilst Barlande may be difficult to classify in genre it has been described as having its roots in Flamenco and some ramifications of Contemporary Classical music. But any attempt to pigeon-hole this album should be ignored beyond deciding what shelf or floor to place it on in a record store. Barlande is about creativity and discovery and its story is both fascinating and inspiring a father, Pedro Soler, and his son, Gaspar Claus have created something entirely unique.

The opening track *Insomnio Mineral* is a gentle beginning with sparsely plucked cello before being joined by a gently sweeping flamenco guitar. What takes place from there on in is difficult to describe in words. The language between the cello and guitar become unlike anything I have heard before. The cello comes alive, a voice at times, leaping and striding in near freeform before coming back to join in mutual step and melodic interplay with guitar.

As your ears adjust and find new comfort you are led deeper still. Barlande is a complete sensory experience. The transition between melody & interplay balance well against the deeper meanderings where there is a very raw musical depth where silences become as equally important as that of the vibrating strings. The finale, *Encuentro En Brooklyn*, is the improvised finale on which they are joined by Bryce Dessner on guitar and Sufjan Stevens on harmonium.

How these two came to play is quite some story. Pedro, who was born in 1938, was a key player in the 'Golden Age' of Flamenco. In some ways the musical pathways of father and son bear similarity. Pedro came under the tutelage of Pepe de Badajoz (Antonio Chacón's accompanist). He places emphasis on intensive playing, relying on the senses and experience.

I quickly realised that my vocation was not to move alongside those who followed in his footsteps [Pepe de Badajoz] but rather to retrace those of his predecessors.

He has established himself as a primary flag-bearer of an "archaic" style of Flamenco, with the accent on dynamics and sonority rather than on "voluble and shiny" virtuosity.

For me, to express oneself within this heritage that has been passed on from generation to generation is not to yield to a reductive dogma but rather to use the rules as a guide to precision and accuracy.

Despite a strong attachment to his roots, Spain and Andalusia, Pedro is an explorer and innovator. He is one of the most celebrated flamenco guitarists in the world today.

Pepe's son, Gaspar, was also placed in the limelight from a young age with an expectation of a highly successful career as a cellist. The academic form of training he was now very use to did not follow his heart. He opted instead to reject this and to explore the beauty, texture and range of sounds the cello had to offer. So he immersed himself in a radical, unconventional new curriculum, one based on travelling, meeting people and discovery. He learned to use silence in music: maintaining it and disrupting it. His relationship with his instrument began almost to smoulder as he stroked, thumped or caressed it. He became involved with a wide variety of musical scenes, such as the avant-garde and improvised scenes in Japan (Sashiko M, Yoshihide Otomo, Keiji Haino, etc.), France (Catherine Jauniaux, Benat Achiary, Nosfell, etc.) and New York (Bryce Dessner, Suffjan Stevens, etc.) but also in electronic music (Joakim, Rone), traditional music (Mongolia, Mali, Japan...) and a host of other genres.

the great expanse that symbolises possibility has never narrowed before my eyes and my only certainty is that I do not know where I am headed...

Several years ago, they met again, having gone through his own transformation with Cello, Gaspar and Pedro found a new level at which to interact. Pedro was hearing something entirely new.



When he first entered into my music, not unlike a child at play, I almost immediately felt a musical kinship as if he were, albeit by different means, gaining access to the same musical landscape. This is where we found a common ground between my desire for archaic purity and Gaspar's raw, uninhibited and fundamental approach

This powerful musical re-union was captured on film by Vincent Moon of La Blogothèque. The decision was made soon after to release an album outside the flamenco sphere. A decision was made to make the album in Brooklyn, New York and to handover production to family friend Bryce Dessner (guitarist for The National and creator of Clogs). Joined by Bryce Dessner on guitar and Sufjan Stevens on harmonium, one of the improvisation sessions proved to be the ideal closing track for the album: the terribly Jarmushian "Encuentro en Brooklyn".



Flamenco is, in its essence, a melting pot of influences: from its prehistory in India, taking root in Andalusia and subsequent forays into the rest of the world. I belong to a generation that has seen distances rapidly shrink, and different cultures merge to form a new musical landscape. I do not feel that I belong exclusively to any specific tradition, rather I am proud to think that I may be participating in blurring the lines between musical genres. *Gaspar*

Barlande will be released in late August in Europe.

## Tracks

### Insomnio Mineral

 Pedro Soler and Gaspar Claus - Insomnio Mineral by Folk Radio UK 148 plays 5.59

### Rostro Descolorido

 Pedro Soler and Gaspar Claus - Rostro Descolorido by Folk Radio UK 72 plays 3.45

## Buy Link

Amazon UK: [Barlande](#)

## Artist Links

[www.myspace.com/gasparclaus](http://www.myspace.com/gasparclaus)

[www.myspace.com/pedrosolerflamenco](http://www.myspace.com/pedrosolerflamenco)