

# LABEL OF LOVE

ALTERCAT RECORDS

**Q&A**

Label boss: **Sergi Roig**  
Interview: **Paul Bowler**



**Where are you based, what do you do, and why?**

Altercat is based in Berlin, releasing music in several directions but with a common denominator: my own relationship to music and different cultures over the years. I originally started the label with that intention, promoting new artists but also highlighting artists from past decades whom I feel deserve more attention.

**Why the name?**

It hints at the kaleidoscopic approach to music, deliberately staying away from a name that would tie the label to a specific style or genre. Altercat is the Catalan word for "altercation", so at the same time it's a link to my roots and another hint at non-compliance.

**When did you launch the label and how have things changed since?**

2016. It started slowly, naturally, with more activity in the last three years or so. The focus has shifted a bit from contemporary artists to rediscoveries of albums through well curated reissues. We put a lot of attention into detail and I think it shows. Stylistically it feels as if Altercat had dropped a bit the guitar sounds of some previous releases (The Bogeymen or Rag I Ryggen, for example) in favour of multi-flavoured jazz and more organic sounds. And there are two trends in the last few albums we've put out: the lush jazz scene in 70s Argentina and Brazilian music recorded outside Brazil.

**What were your influences?**

Possibly Sundazed and Guerssen. The former was one of the first labels I followed and it fed my interest in 60s garage and psychedelia when I was a teenager. I've known Guerssen since the beginning; we've been friends forever and I've seen them grow from a small, home-made, one-man enterprise to what they are today.

**Who are your competitors?**

Mr Bongo or Far Out obviously spring to mind, but I'd rather see most of us as a team. We all make this possible. There's other labels doing similar work, and Altercat wasn't the first in the game. But even in bigger labels targeting the same audience there's a component of love – they are into the music and love what they do. I have more than once lost a project I was excited about to another label, but I'm actually happy someone



**Hepcat: Sergi Roig in his home office/label HQ, Berlin, 2023**

has brought that music back to life, even if it hasn't been Altercat.

**Any advice for someone who wants to start their own label?**

Know the music, be nice to the artists!

**What's been your highest high?**

I think the re-release of Werther's album. Not only because it's been very well received, but because of the effect it had on a personal level for several of the people who made the music possible back then. Most of all Werther, who started making music again. Stay tuned for Werther's new album coming soon!

**... And your lowest low?**

Possibly the beginning of the pandemic and the uncertainty that went along with the whole situation. When the world shut down we had just released *Under The Sun*, the second album by Afrodysey Orchestra, a contemporary afro-jazz band from Greece. Bad timing... we had to cancel two tours and every single gig planned to promote it. A big blow for band and label.

**What album, from any period, do you wish you could have released – and why?**

Ray Barretto's *Acid* (Fania, 1968), 'cause it brings so much together and you can really hear that something's boiling there. You can tell they were having a blast while recording it.

**Who would be your dream reissue?**

A crazy deluxe Jorge Ben box set covering all his albums until 1979, with a photo booklet, an interview with the man himself, and detailed liner notes

for each album. The world needs it and dreaming doesn't cost anything!

**How do you plan what to reissue?**

Sometimes I've had a project in the back of my mind for several years before I can finally make it happen. Sometimes it just happens; Altercat's first release happened after I saw Afrodysey Orchestra playing live in Berlin. They were incredible, so I just asked them if they had an album already. A few months later we were releasing it! Other projects become evident as they come along, such as our reissue series of Argentinian jazz giant Jorge López Ruiz. We started with his 1976 *Viejas Raíces* project, but the rest of his output is so good yet unknown to the greater public that it would be a crime to leave it collecting dust. He needs to be heard!

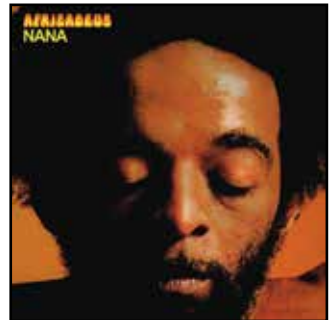
**Where would a newcomer start with your label?**

In no particular order: Werther's album, *Viejas Raíces De las colonias del río de la plata*, Afrodysey Orchestra's *Under The Sun*, *Naná – Nelson Angelo – Novelli* and Baligh Hamdi & Magid Khan's *Indo-Arabic Variations*. I think that is a colourful starter pack that would be fun to listen to. Add Costa Blanca's *Viaje a Prantia* for a little touch of twisted obscurity.

**And what can long-time fans look forward to?**

Egyptian delights by Baligh Hamdi, insane Greek 70s psychedelic rock and dancy Argentinean funk. Oh, without forgetting the usual dose of Brazilian vibes, of course!

[www.alter.cat](http://www.alter.cat)



**ALTERCAT RECORDS HIGHLIGHTS**

9/19	ALT 007	WERTHER	<i>Werther</i> (LP, 8pp booklet; CD)
12/19	ALT 010	AFRODYSEY ORCHESTRA	<i>Under The Sun</i> (LP, ltd splatter LP)
4/22	ALT 015	MARIA DE FÁTIMA	<i>Bahia Com 'H'</i> (LP, 12pp booklet; ltd purple LP)
5/22	ALT 016	BALIGH HAMDÍ & MAGID KHAN	<i>Indo-Arabic Variations</i> (LP, ltd red LP)
6/22	ALT 017	LUIS VECCHIO	<i>Contactos</i> (LP, ltd red/black LP; CD)
11/22	ALT 019	JORGE LÓPEZ RUIZ	<i>Bronca Buenos Aires</i> (LP, insert; ltd yellow LP)
5/23	ALT 024	NANÁ VASCONCELOS	<i>Africadeus</i> (LP, ltd red LP)
5/24	ALT 027	JORGE LÓPEZ RUIZ	<i>Coraje Buenos Aires</i> (LP, ltd orange LP)