



Vibrant Global Sounds



BaBa ZuLa - XXX

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"Since 1996 they've won global cultish acclaim for their channeling of Can, early Floyd, Mad Professor and (guitarist and compatriot) Erkin Koray via Turkish traditional folk...groovily rebellious." -- UNCUT

Three decades into their extraordinary journey, the legendary Istanbul-based collective BaBa ZuLa return with XXX – a hypnotic, uncompromising and undeniably vital statement of artistic freedom. Weaving together shapeshifting rhythms, hypnotic saz-driven atmospherics, and deep sonic rituals, the new album celebrates a band that has spent the past thirty years continuously redefining the possibilities of Turkish psychedelic music.

There are few groups in contemporary music whose work becomes more unpredictable with time. Fewer still who, after thirty years of existence, sound more adventurous, stranger and more radical than ever before. BaBa ZuLa belong to that rare category.

"Each of our albums is different. We don't like to repeat ourselves. Many bands record subsequent albums very similar to the first. For us, each album tells a new story. Perhaps that's why we've been around for thirty years" – says **Levent Akman**.

Often mentioned alongside other internationally acclaimed voices of the Turkish psychedelic resurgence, such as Gaye Su Akyol, Altın Gün and Derya Yıldırım & Grup Şimşek, BaBa ZuLa have always ventured furthest into experimentation, improvisation and unconventional song forms. Their music long ago transcended the boundaries of psychedelic rock, evolving into a singular sonic universe where Anatolian traditions collide with dub, electronics, performance art, avant-garde aesthetics and ritualistic trance. It is no coincidence that over the years they have collaborated with visionary artists such as Mad Professor, Jaki Liebezzeit of Can, members of Faust and Einstürzende Neubauten and Warren Ellis of Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds. Each encounter left its trace, yet none altered the essence of the band. BaBa ZuLa have

remained committed to their own path — restless, exploratory and defiantly resistant to fashions and definitions.

“We still feel fresh. Honesty is very important to us. We have never been interested in following trends or taking the easier path to greater popularity. Music should be something personal - an attempt to express your own feelings and your own view of the world, not repeating other people's stories. We live in Istanbul and we create music that grows from this place. We don't live in Berlin or London, so we don't try to create the music of these cities. Our work is related to the culture, geography and everyday life of Istanbul. This is what gives it authenticity” – adds **Murat Ertel**.

XXX is the latest chapter in that story. The album moves through dreamlike narratives, social commentary and contemporary mythologies. Pulsating rhythms, transformed saz textures, analogue electronics and hypnotic grooves create a space where reality and imagination dissolve into one another. True to form, *XXX* balances instrumental excursions and exploratory taksims with a series of original texts that are unmistakably BaBa ZuLa's own. By turns playful, visionary and fiercely political, they draw connections between folklore, urban life, ecology, memory and resistance, grounding the album's sonic adventures in a deeply human narrative.

“This time we focused on Mother Nature. If you look at our discography, each album talks about a different aspect of Türkiye and our part of the world. Now we give voice to nature. We see forests and lands being taken from local communities. We see nature under constant pressure. We want to stand on the side of those who defend it” – **Esma Ertel** summarizes.

On “The White-Socked Cat on the Balcony” [Balkondaki Beyaz Çoraplı Kedi], an everyday encounter between two cats becomes a surreal miniature about desire, attention and fleeting moments. “The Sacred Olive Tree Halay Dance” [Kutsal Zeytin Halayı] unfolds as a poetic hymn to the olive tree - a symbol of memory, light and continuity across Mediterranean cultures. Meanwhile, “Otel Kaliforniya” reimagines a familiar title as a sharp satire on privatization, tourism-driven development and the commodification of public life. One of the album's most powerful moments arrives with “Right Does Not Run Out, Power Does” [Hak Bitmez Güç Bitee], an impassioned piece inspired by local struggles against environmental destruction and extractive industries. The song features the voice of Hatice Kocalar, a 75-year-old villager from Türkiye's Aegean region, whose protest against government policies affecting local communities and the natural environment has become emblematic of wider grassroots resistance movements. Voices of resistance, ecological justice and future generations resonate throughout the song, reminding us that BaBa ZuLa's music has always been as deeply rooted in social reality as it is in psychedelic imagination.

“We like to call ourselves ‘sound warriors.’ We want to give people energy and hope, even when the opponent seems stronger. Despite the serious topics, humor is always present in our music” – says **Murat Ertel**

Clocking in at 30 minutes and 30 seconds, *XXX* distills BaBa ZuLa's expansive imagination into one of their most focused statements to date. The album also features contributions from guest musicians İklim Tamkan (synthesizer, organ) and Eylül Güntekin (double bass), whose performances subtly expand the group's sonic palette while remaining fully immersed in the band's unmistakable musical language. *XXX* is the sound of a band still in motion - a band that continues to challenge its own methods,

explore new forms of expression. Musicians don't accept the comfort of repetition. BaBa ZuLa helped shape the contemporary language of Turkish psychedelia.

"We believe that music can still make a difference. That's why we keep creating. Music won't solve all the world's problems, but it can raise awareness, give strength and remind people that they are not alone. And that's a lot" – adds **Levent Akman**.

Today they remain one of its most visionary, uncompromising and unpredictable voices. Thirty years on, their music remains untamed. And that is precisely why it feels more necessary than ever.



BaBa ZuLa are:

Levent Akman: spoons, percussion, machines, toys

Murat Ertel: electric saz, other stringed instruments, vocals, theremin, drums

Ümit Adakale: darbuka, percussion

Esma Ertel: vocals