

# DEPEDRO

"It was a really intense session – 10 hours a day – but the studio really became a place for magic, for creation, just the way you imagine it might be when you are starting. ...Imagination was not tied by any technical or human limitations."

– Jairo Zavala, on the DePedro recording session with Calexico



DePedro – a name chosen because it sounded “kind of Mediterranean, kind of Spanish” – is the musical project of singer and guitarist Jairo Zavala. His first solo project, DePedro, is the culmination of years of writing and playing songs for others, including Spanish star Amparanoia, Spanish instrumental surf phenoms Los Coronas and as the touring guitarist for Calexico, not to mention as frontman and founder of Vacazul and 3000 Hombres, both renowned bands in the respective Spanish rock and blues scenes. He will be touring this summer with Calexico as part of the band, as well as supporting them for their European shows. As DePedro, he has also appeared at SXSW, the WOMAD festival, at the nationally-broadcast Spanish Music Awards, and at various other festivals across the country.

Zavala grew up in Madrid listening to both the pre-WWII songs his grandparents used to play and the music his Peruvian father brought back from his travels to Latin America and Africa, as well the rock from the 70s and 80s that was popular in Spain. He credits these various influences for helping to shape his own style of guitar playing, one that pulled from blues, folk, flamenco, Afrobeat, Latin, and rock.

Though he enjoyed working with other artists, he was always writing his own music, as well. Some of the songs that ended up on his solo debut, titled *DePedro*, have their origins in the beginning of the decade. One of them, “Don’t Leave Me Now” – originally written for and performed by Amparanoia – was heard by the Arizona band Calexico. They added it to their live set list, and got in touch, asking Zavala to play it with them when they were touring Spain. In 2004 he joined them as a full-time touring guitarist, and when Jairo was getting ready to begin his new album, the band invited him to their studio in Tucson to record. In late 2007, Jairo left for Arizona with the melody and guitar parts for what would become DePedro in hand, purposefully leaving space for the other musicians to fill and shape.

This is Tex-Mex border music meets the Spanish sense of melody, and songs like “La Memoria,” which was inspired by a trip to Mexico and the poverty and injustice he saw there, and “Como El Viento,” a kind of love song, reflect both equally. On “Don’t Leave Me Now,” Jairo’s voice – warm and expressive, but edged with a scratchiness that makes it as much of a focal point as his guitar playing – draws out the same Spanish melancholy also heard in Amparanoia’s version. Yet there’s a slyness there, enhanced by Calexico’s Joey Burns’ upright bass, and it gives the song a sultry, dusty Western feel, the expanse of the land stretching out before them.

The result is a personable, vibrant album that celebrates Zavala’s many influences and inspirations while retaining a warmth and a center that engages and entertains. It’s the product of a lifetime spent listening and observing and playing, of living; it’s Jairo Zavala and everything he’s done, but most of all, it’s DePedro.

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