



Cantintero

## **Q & A**

### **Why a musician?**

I was not that successful at school (due in part to dyslexia, undiagnosed at the time). I sat in on a guitar lesson when I was 14, which led me to borrow a guitar from a French teacher. No sooner had I learnt 3 chords I wrote my first song. It seemed very natural to me, something I could be good at. Very quickly it became all I wanted to do.

## **Why America?**

I had failed to realize the dream, and was living in a state of ennui in Birmingham, UK. The guitar player in my band, who was desperate to escape his surroundings, flew to New York City to stay with a friend. Whilst there, he managed to book the band some shows, including one at CBGBs. We were very well received, and that, coupled with the excitement of being in NYC, completely dissolved any misgivings I had had before boarding the plane to the US in April 1993. When a door opens, you walk through it.

## **Why Cantinero?**

I bartended in NYC for several years after the band ran its course. An Ecuadorian workmate nicknamed me Cantinero, which is Spanish for bartender. When I re-entered the fray as a musician, I thought it would be a great name to hide behind.

## **What makes your music worth listening to?**

I believe that life is in the editing, that not every thought or idea is a good one. I apply this principle to my work. I treat each song I write and record as if it were its own movie, chipping away for sometimes months until the song and sound is fully realized. If it doesn't stand up, then I throw it away. It's all about the song.

## **Describe your music for us.**

Lovingly crafted Alt Pop. Incisive and hummable pop songs set to live instrumentation with subtle electronic and organic textures.

## **Why did you leave New York City and move to the Catskills?**

I had been staying with a friend in upstate New York, and found it to be a good environment for writing. This prompted a move to a secluded log cabin where over a 6-month period I wrote and demoed 20 songs. The solitude acted like a sweat lodge, enabling a focus I had never experienced before, and the music poured right out of me. I then spent a whole year recording, locked away with an engineer and a host of musicians. When it came time to go back to the city, I realized I didn't want to go. So we stayed.

## **Why Better For The Metaphor?**

It was a placeholder lyric in the song "Selfish." When I first sing a song, I usually have very few lines written, so when I demo, I rely on my stream of consciousness. This can often lead to some interesting phrases that I end up keeping because I like the way they sound. Better For The Metaphor was one of those phrases. What does it mean? It means different things at different times.

## **Musical Influences**

The Beatles, Stevie Wonder, Talking Heads, The Smiths, Boards of Canada, Granddaddy, The High Llamas.

## **Who do people say you sound like?**

Rufus Wainwright, Andrew Bird, The Beatles, The Shins, The Kinks, Crowded House, Squeeze, XTC, Massive Attack and Elvis Costello...it's a very long list.

## **What are you listening to at the moment?**

Gonzaels - Solo piano, Emily Haines, Ungdomskulen, Cesaria Avora, The Bird and the Bee.

## **Likes and Dislikes.**

*Likes:* People, food, football, politics, Mad Men, country air.

*Dislikes:* People, ignorance, narcissism, working and not working.

## **What's next?**

I don't know. Do we ever?