



Hi.

You will most likely write about us and this very moment I am writing you, beautiful stranger. I thought it were only polite and wise to have this written relationship betwixt us. I will first of give you some straight, no-nonsense information about who we are as a band and as people. A certain touch of intimacy is a luxury nowadays, I hope you embrace it with both arms. I'll continue with a description of what we sound like (because I know and respect references simply are convenient for critics) and briefly go over the vital stats of the record, after which I'll move onto how press and public received our lengthy EP in the benelux (you are holding the french reissue) to finally end with a summary of who we've played with live.

**Guernica**, that is the name of our music project. This collective of musicians consists of four twenty-somethings from Brussels. We had our first rehearsal with the four of us in february of 2006 and only a month later we arrived at the point of no return. We had a show to play. Before our first encounters Nilo and Wixel were in the post-rock band A December Lake. Stino and myself used to play in a punk rock band which quickly became post-hardcore and changed its name with every show. Those were the days, hah! I think the beauty and atmospheric quality of post-rock combined with the urgency, pace and heart of punk rock makes for our melodic and arpeggiated indie rock. Add to that the fact that we grew up with awful 90's eurodance (Sash, anyone? Snap? Robert Miles? Etc etc) and you've got the trance element in Guernica. Therefore we are sometimes considered to be indie trance or avant rock. Hey, if you just write "pop music" or "really obscure under-underground shit", that's fine, too!



#### **So who does what?**

You have Wixel on guitar, he is a philosopher currently working in an excellent record store. You might know him from his other and longer-running indietronica project also named Wixel. He runs a successful concept record label Slaapwel Records (loosely translated as Bonne Nuit Records, its mission: to put people to sleep) and owns a small record store himself called Twinkelding, where he sells records of our friends all over the world and which is the size of a cupboard. Well, in fact it *is* a cupboard.

Stino plays bass and after dropping out of college went on to be a taxidermist. Sometimes we call him Stan the Unreachable Man, the name says it all. We suspect he's secretly a superhero. He is the shy guy and the secret freak of the band.

Nilo takes places behind the drums with a Spartan sense of discipline. His mohawk only adds to the image of a warrior in total control of himself. I suppose his African descent gave him a fabulous sense of rhythm. Was that politically incorrect? Sorry. Well, at least he looks all cute and cuddly with sticks in his hands. BOOSH! Just kidding. He earns his living as a freelance translator. Nilo speaks seven languages fluently (and then some) as a result of travelling all around the world, which means we'll never have communicational issues on tour.

I'm the songwriter. I play guitar, sing and write the words. I'm in my last year of philosophy (I have a thorough knowledge of French postmodernism, I might add!). I always have and always will live my life in a Nietzschean way, *Amor Fati*. I used to make some extra money being a deejay and do some modelling next to my studies. Due to heavy drinking, however, that good life has gone away. Since then I've been involved in pornography distribution and worked as a hooker. For the moment I'm procrastinating professionally (focus on adulthood) and enjoying Mensa membership. Also, I still deejay at certain parties and I throw soirées in Brussels called Oscillations. I will most likely spend the summer doubting what to do in the fall. Either take the doctorate study offer or take up American Studies. Or move to Brooklyn.

### **So what do we sound like?**

I once stated we sound like middle class indie nerds trying to be coherently eclectic and I stick by it. However, a certain member of the press wrote this, in our opinion hilarious, comparison: "Red Hot Chili Peppers meets loopnerds meets Glam rock meets Nirvana". We rather think of ourselves as blending in with the 90's indie rock scene. You know... Unwound, Pavement, Blonde Redhead, Sonic Youth (of Washing Machine and A Thousand Leaves), Fugazi (of Red Medicine and End Hits), Trail of Dead, Modest Mouse and the like. Other people have heard tons of things in our music. Which is good because if they would always use the same band to compare us to, I'd be worried. Some of those bands include all of the bands I mentioned above, Interpol, Mogwai, Explosions In The Sky, Battles, The Feelies, Yo La Tengo, Bach (no joke and I can understand why she said that), OMD and others that made sense and no sense at all.

We create our music with a varying intensity to keep things interesting and a *hidden* complexity (because I also want and like a certain flow) which keeps us relatively accessible. We are not too soft for people who like their music loud and heavy and we are not too loud for those who like it softer. We are for both the Madonna and the Minor Threat fan.



**Without** any promotional backing, expectation or aspiration, the national press picked us up. The alternative radio station played us daily in the winter. It's something other bands here in Belgium dream of, to us it just sort of happened. The first time I heard it was with Stino in the car, on our way to rehearsal. I thought to myself, "I fucking know these opening notes! Someone totally stole our song! Ass! Tits!" and then slowly realized it was us. That was cool. Some of the more classical stations dared playing us now and then, too. Which is nice. The papers also wrote pieces on us and selected a song as Download of the Week or branded us Band To Watch. Reviews were generally raving and concluded often with the notion of looking forward to our coming releases. I liked it when the critics asked their readers why they would turn their attention only to the US or UK when there was such blossoming talent in their nation's capital.

Despite eager downloading (and our encouragement to do so!) the ep has almost sold out in a few months. This may be called a small miracle in our Digital Age. It certainly pleased our label for the benelux Vlas Vegas, who are the home of some of the more established Belgian underground acts such as Hitch, Amen Ra and Vandal X. We are actually the first band they asked that a) wasn't a friend of theirs b) an established band. We're their youngins and proud of it! Even more pride I personally take in the fact that a complete stranger thought we were worth writing to and even ask us if we were possibly interested in a French release of the ep, even though ep's are difficult to sell (literally and figuratively) these days. That stranger was Michel from Greed recordings and we love him for having written us.

### **Who have we played with, you ask?**

A variety of bands and artists, ranging from the softer side of the musical spectrum with the legendary The Microphones/Mount Eerie via indie rock hype Tapes'n Tapes to nintendotrashcore of Cutting Pink With Knives. A few times bands would handpick us to support them, amongst others David Pajo, Amusement Parks on Fire and Evangelicals seem to be fans. Other cool bands that spring to mind are Land of Talk (that's Bon Iver's lady's band), Woelv, P:ano. Coincedentally all Canadian bands... anyway, there's also Kap Bambino, Knifehandchop, Papier Tigre, Infants and we acted as Thanksgiving's live band. Ofcourse countless of our peers in Belgium like The Sedan Vault, Steamer Cry Wolf, Penguins Know Why, Hitch, Amen Ra, Vandal X, White Circle Crime Club and so on and so forth. All that performing live has brought us to many places, including a trainstation, a library, in-stores, squats, proper venues (big and small), dirty clubs, dirty pubs, summer festivals, a birthday party, youth clubs, a socialist stronghold, universities and colleges, a high school party, a few basements, an attic, a couple of living rooms, the radio, an abandoned factory and all this all over Belgium (mostly Flanders), quite a few times in the Netherlands and twice in France. Bear in mind that the past two years have been plagued by a thesis, months and months worth of globetrotting, stolen equipment and, unfortunately, terrible recording experiences with a drug addict.

Maybe it's also worth mentioning we have scored the soundtrack for an educational documentary (on how to communicate with foreign kids who don't speak the native language) and we did a radio session for Studio Brussel. Future collaborations with filmmakers (two experimental video clips and a shortfilm) and possibly a fashion designer are in the works.

There, I hope I succeeded in making your reading of this biography somewhat pleasurable, but mainly practical. For more aesthetic writing, you'll have to read the lyrics or visit our home in the blogosphere. Take good care and we sincerely do hope you like it. Bye!

the michael  
xo

June 2008



Guernica's debut mini LP « Who are your songs for ? » is released in France on the 10th of September 2008  
(Greed Recordings / COD&S distribution)

**GUERNICA : [www.myspace.com/theguernica](http://www.myspace.com/theguernica) - [theguernica@gmail.com](mailto:theguernica@gmail.com)**



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