

Vercher, a top tenor sax player and multi-instrumentalist Jazz musician, moved to Valencia with his family, from his native Madrid, when he was only 6 years old. Very soon he would begin music with a father as wise as he was demanding: musician, composer and professor at different Conservatories. A "domestic" learning that continued later at the "Joaquín Rodrigo Conservatory" in Valencia.

In this dense and precocious musical environment, Javier became interested in Jazz after finishing his classical clarinet studies, and oriented his learning in that direction. It is worth highlighting his first seminars with teachers of the stature Kurt Rosenwinkel, Perico Sambeat, Jorge Pardo and Chris Cheek organized by Sedajazz in the mid-90s.

The next step was key in his career: at just 18 years old, Javier obtained a scholarship to study at the "Berklee College of Music" in Boston, where he studied a degree in Performance between 1997 and 2000.

Javier Vercher's early interest in the interaction between rhythm and harmony, and in the art of improvisation, developed there in contact with saxophone masters such as Frank Tiberi (director of the Woody Herman Big Band) and the magnificent George Garzone. A story - not even summarized - of his stages of learning and growth as a musician would be too extensive and superfluous here.

Avoiding an impertinent curricular approach, it would be better to accompany Javier on his journey as an explorer and creator of Jazz, from then until now; highlighting only decisive events: those *crossroad* moments where the luck and destiny of an artistic personality is at stake. As he himself has stated, his meeting in Boston and his friendship with the great composer and drummer Rakalam Bob Moses constitutes one of those milestones along the way. A complicity and collaboration with Maestro Moses will then be strengthened, which could explain the substantive presence that percussion and the continent of rhythm have had since then, and until today, in Javier Vercher's recording work.

See, as an example, his two excellent recordings as co-leader, a duet with drummer Ferenc Nemeth -"**Wheel of Time**" (2006), and "**Imaginary Realm**" (2011)-; with the respective contributions of great musicians such as Lionel Loueke and David Kikoski. His *debut* album from 2004, "**Introducing the Javier Vercher Trio**", announced that Javier would be something to talk about in the motley world of New York Jazz. Already then he created an enveloping, intense sound, oscillating between silence and shouting, clear and spiritually very whole - of integrity -, which continue to be features of his style with the tenor sax. But in 2002, and before that record, Javier had moved from Boston to New York, where he immersed himself in the genuine school of Jazz: the careful exploration of the clubs, and the collaboration with such important musicians as Lionel Loueke, Robert Glasper , Brannen Temple, Francisco Mela, Larry Grenadier, Sam Yahel, Ferenc Nemeth -his partner on the aforementioned albums-; and the master of improvisation on sax Chris Cheek.

His third album, a transitional work as co-leader of a quartet, was the one he recorded with the renowned Valencian alto sax player Perico Sambeat: "**Infinita**" (2007) with Eric McPherson and Edward Perez in New York.

His prestige began to transcend the Spanish and American scenes, being recognized with the "**Tete Montoliu Prize for the revelation musician in Jazz**" , in 2006, awarded by SGAE. During this period -2003 to 2006-, Javier Vercher performed numerous concerts and tours throughout the USA, Great Britain and the Netherlands; playing with different groups and artists, among others, with the singer-songwriter Chip Taylor (Wild Thing) and with the guitarist Bill Frisell, several albums record this (Let's Leave this town – Trainwreck records, Seven Angels on a Bicycle – EMI ).

In 2007, an unexpected turning point occurred in Vercher's path: his incorporation - at the proposal of the Valencian musician and arranger Carlos Martín, who was already part of it - to the musical *troupe* of the legendary artist Alejandro Sanz.

Apart from the opportunity that this provided to get to know other pop music records up close, perhaps the most important thing was Javier's contact with prominent American *Rhythm & Blues* musicians such as Mike Ciro (Madonna), Steve Rodriguez (Alicia Keys), Nathan Townsley (Joe Zawinul Syndicate), among others.

The result of this time was the extensive tour that Alejandro Sanz's group carried out throughout Latin America and the United States. An opportunity that, surely, Javier knew how to take advantage of to learn up close and assimilate elements of other musical traditions. Also Mexico, Los Angeles, Buenos Aires, Panama, Lima, Santiago de Chile and New York, in addition to Madrid, were some of the stops in this period of intense transhumance: *On the road again*.

But Javier seems to feel the call to return, a return that is brewing intermittently, but firmly. After one of his best albums as a leader: "**Wish You Were Here**" (2008), recorded in NY with a team of musicians of immense level - see if not Francisco Mela on drums, Lionel Loueke on guitar and Larry Grenadier on bass , with Sam Yahel on piano-, temporarily moves to Barcelona. There he plays with what will be one of his closest friends and collaborators: the multi-instrumentalist Jorge Rossy, master of drums, piano, vibraphone and marimba; an exceptional musician, who has worked with Charlie Haden, Wayne Shorter, Carla Bley and Brad Mehldau, among many others.

With Rossy he will perform memorable concerts and a superb album recorded in Barcelona, a pure and simple duet: "**Filantropía**" (2014); in which both, accomplices and friends, display their polymorphous quality as musicians, playing a series of instruments that almost make up an orchestra. Recent examples of these concerts include the one in 2017 at the Palau de la Música in València, with maestro Billy Hart on drums, Masa Kamaguchi on double bass and Kevin Hays on piano. Or the Barcelona concert, in 2018, with the previous lineup, replacing Hays with Marco Mezquida.

The pieces of this path towards Agricultural Wisdom are being drawn and put together... We are approaching the decisive moment of this journey through stops and crossroads: the gestation of the project that here settles into a foundational and superb album: **"Agricultural Wisdom"** (2021) .

A moment that is preceded by two very interesting records: the first, **"As We See It"** (2018), exquisite hand in hand with the imposing double bass of Masa Kamaguchi; where Vercher deploys his panoply of favorite instruments, with mastery and perfect assembly: tenor and soprano saxophones, flute and bass clarinet; the same set of winds that the great Eric Dolphy strung together. The second appears shortly before recording the album we are presenting: **"First Takes!"** (2019); the work of a quintet co-led by Javier with Maikel Vistel, and again with the drums of Billy Hart - a recent and almost regular collaborator of Javier at his glorious 78 years -.

At this point in the game you can see how his personal assimilation of the "old" masters Ben Webster, Dexter Gordon or Pharoah Sanders merges or alternates with the exuberant styles of Wayne Shorter, Ornette Coleman or Albert Ayler; passing through the Monkian subtlety of Steve Lacy. Although this is a slippery slope, and it would be better to let his music speak and move away from taxidermist practices, to which critics are so fond.

Finally, we must highlight Javier's activity as a producer, with the recent albums by drummer Miquel Asensio "Senda nova" (2015), and by double bassist Ales Cesarini "Niabinghy" (2016). The excellent contributions he has made as a composer to the world of documentary film: ***The Architect of New York [Guastavino]*** (2016, RTVE), and ***Josep Renau, Art in danger*** (2018, RTVE), ***Chicote, the bartender to the stars*** (2019, RTVE), ***Bosch I Morata*** (2019, A PUNT), ***Women without censorship*** (2022, RTVE) and ***Javier Goerlich, The architect who dreamed of his city*** (A PUNT, 2023).

Also worth highlighting is his work as a saxophone and ensemble teacher at the Berklee College of Music – Valencia Campus since the beginning of 2016.