



## **Following the train of Alejandro**

*Alonso Arreola*

Alejandro Sanz (Madrid, 1968) wisely unites modernity and tradition, but adding his very particular requirements, since the spirit of flamenco acts like a thermometer reading his states of mind, and helping him manipulate whimsically –a smile always in the way- the very roots of his solid and prolific musical career. These impressions are reflected in a convincing discography affirming Alejandro's peculiar attitude on the stage, where his voice breaks to meet the sentimental expectations of those who listen to him. In his extensive catalogue nothing looks half-finished. You can find tears and dancing, cigarettes' smoke and absence. The same way, his pictorial and photographic productions are only another vehicle to make the mind of the observers explode. Because Sanz is a fireworks artist, and he is able to laugh in the face of that sorrow he sings about, since he is inviting us to a party.

In his records you can listen to the sound of cities, of objects, of his own family. Alejandro's parents, Jesús Sánchez Madero and María Pizarro Medina, born in Algeciras and Alcalá de los Gazules (Cádiz-Spain), opened for him the gate of sound, as their life was coming and going (Jesús was member of two bands). From Andalucía and its endless fiesta to Madrilenian districts like Pueblo Nuevo and Moratalaz, Alejandro's childhood was rooted in straightforward flamenco, in an atmosphere of bulerías, farrucas and martinetes; but he also lived the playful side of this genre, sevillanas, rumbas, tanguillos and alegrías. All of this forged his musical spirit, a spirit that has definitely infected the best international pop music, fortunately for us.

## **Viviendo deprisa (1991)**

Hoy yo te diré hasta mañana, no sé cuánto tiempo estaré perdido en tu mirada / I will tell you "See you tomorrow" and I don't know how long I will be lost in your eyes.- "Los dos cogidos de la mano". This was the first hit in Alejandro Sanz's career. An album whose content seems to run dizzily, marked by Alejandro's very necessity of growing up in the artistic scene, something he would achieve very soon with his following recordings. From this point on, he would never stop. The single "Pisando fuerte" helped him enter Latin American markets, whose audience understood that special touch, typical of the slums, that Alejandro added to the humble, direct pop of the album. In Spain, *Viviendo deprisa* reached ten platinum recordings (1.000.000 copies sold).

### **Si tú me miras (1993)**

Palabras de un lenguaje nuevo que he construido para nosotros, para el amante perseguido que tiene que esconder su voz / These words belong to a new language I have invented for us, for the chased lover, who have to hide his voice.- "Si tú me miras". Produced by Miguel Ángel Arenas, Si tú me miras is a step forward in the composer's process of artistic maturity. In order to complement his own musical background, Sanz contacts musicians such as guitarist Paco de Lucía, among others, who contribute their talents to give shape to this album enhancing the singer's abilities.

### **Básico (1994)**

Veloz caballo de acero, tu gasolina mi sangre y su cuerpo se mezclaron en el suelo. - Fast iron horse, your gasoline, my blood and her body were mixed on the ground. "Se le apagó la luz". Most artists have to wait long until they make a live recording. But Sanz was different. His successful repertoire was solid enough to present his audience with Básico, a collection of songs which made evident Alejandro's high level on stage. It was an encounter with Alejandro, in a natural atmosphere, before a growing and eager audience.

### **Alejandro Sanz 3 (1995)**

Vuelve pronto, te esperamos mi soledad y yo/ Come back soon, my solitude and me are waiting.- "Mi soledad y yo". This year Sanz starts a series of collaborative efforts with musician and producer Emanuele Ruffinengo, who co-produces the album with Miguel Ángel Arenas. With Alejandro Sanz 3 the Spanish singer became international. And he has the pleasure of singing in Italian and Portuguese. Recorded in the city of Venice, by the lagoon, the singer's third release consolidates the favour of popular audiences: he starts to listen to the clamour of the spectators, those who pack arenas and big venues in order to feel the touch of the Madrilenian artist.

### **Más (1997)**

Llévame si quieres a perder, sin ningún destino, sin ningún forqué. Lead me to loss if you want, without a destiny, without a reason- "Corazón partío". After having perfected his knowledge of piano playing, Alejandro composes nearly 30 songs out of which he chooses 10 to shape "Más". And Sanz achieves superstar status. Curiously enough, this doesn't reduce his acute poetic sensitivity nor the refined instrumentation designed together with Miguel Ángel Arenas and Emanuele Ruffinengo. This year he received one Amigo Award (best national male artist), the Ondas Award (best national artist), and he is granted several Spanish Music Awards, as Best National Artist, Best Composer, Best Album for Más, and Best Single and Best Video for "Corazón Partío". One year after the release of "Más", Alejandro Sanz was granted another Amigo Award in the category of Special Tribute, and received a new Ondas Award to the Best Song for "Corazón Partío". Furthermore, in 1999 he is named Best Selling Spanish Artist in the World Music Awards, he is awarded a Gold Recording and a Platinum Recording in USA and launches a DVD selling more than 500.000 copies in Spain. "Corazón partío", the third single taken from this album, became an international hit, topping the charts in 18 countries. For 67 weeks, it was the best selling album in Spain, where Alejandro gave 56 concerts (four of them at Madrid's Las Ventas Bullring). He also starts a tour through Latin America and receives in Brussels his second Platinum Europe Award, presented by former President of the European Community Romano Prodi, after having sold 2 million copies of Más in Europe (the album has sold more than 5 million copies worldwide to date).

### **El alma al aire (2000)**

A veces te cuento por qué este silencio, y es que a veces soy tuyo y a veces... del viento Sometimes I tell you why I am silent, sometimes I am yours and sometimes the wind's.- "Cuando nadie me ve". Sanz confesses: "I am so sure of being happy that I indulge in it". This is the prologue giving life to El alma al aire. His entering the Criteria Studios (The Hit Factory of Florida)

in Miami endowed his music with intense arrangements and an extraordinary string section. In this release, Alejandro presents us with interpretations coming from the soul, melodies where the voice seems to break. It is, simply put, one of his most suggestive and emotional albums. This release broke all the selling records in Spanish recording market, selling one million copies on the first week. It was nominated in the category of "Best Latin Pop Album" in the 43rd edition of the Grammy Awards; and it was the absolute winner in the 2nd edition of the Latin Grammy Awards, being granted four awards: Recording of the Year, Song of the Year, Best Male Pop Vocal Album and Album of the Year.

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In June Alejandro Sanz started touring Spain, playing in the main Spanish capitals. Sanz achieved an unprecedented attendance to his shows: more than 400.000 people pressed together in football stadiums. One of his most popular concerts was held at Madrid's Vicente Calderón Stadium, where, some days before the show, the 60.000 tickets for the concert were sold out.

### **MTV Unplugged (2001)**

In 2001, the New York Daily affirms: "The smooth rhythms and profound passion of Sanz's Unplugged account for his being the most important Spanish pop star". Re-visiting his hits with acoustic instrumentation, Alejandro was the first Spanish artist to record an Unplugged album for MTV, turning to Humberto Gatica's talents as producer and arranger. The album includes a previously unreleased song entitled "Y Sólo Se Me Ocurre Amarte", and the artists records a flamenco track for the first time, Manuel Molina's "Todo es de Color". Later on, in 2002, Alejandro is granted the Oye Award to Best Male Pop Artist at Ciudad de Mexico's Auditorio Nacional. With MTV Unplugged he gathered 3 Latin Grammy Awards (Album of the Year, Recording of the Year and Song of the Year for *Y Sólo Se Me Ocurre Amarte*).

After having sold more than 250.000 copies of his MTV Unplugged in USA and after having the Nº 1 in the "Top Latin Albums" Billboard chart, Alejandro Sanz came back to stage with four shows in USA in June 2002. For the second time in one year, he gave a concert at the Radio City Music Hall in New York, gaining critical applause and audience praise. The rest of the concerts were given in Los Angeles (Greek Theatre), Miami (James L. Knight Center), San Diego (SDSU Open Air Theatre) and were completely sold out.

Alejandro Sanz was also awarded 3 Spanish Music Awards (Best Song for *Y Sólo Se Me Ocurre Amarte*, Best Album for MTV Unplugged and Best Video for *El Alma Al Aire*), the Luna Award

(México) to Best International Ballad and the Gardel Award (Argentina) to the Best Male Artist and the Album of the Year for MTV Unplugged.

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### **Grandes éxitos 91\_2004 (2004)**

FIRST BEST OF COLLECTION RELEASED IN CD AND DVD.

Sanz presents a well known picture, in order to clear his canvas for the paintings to follow. It is not surprising that, sometime in 2004, he declared, simply: "I want to continue surprising people and surprising myself". That's why he released a Best Of album, in order to prepare himself for the music to come. He sold more than 200.000 copies of Grandes éxitos 91\_2004, a compilation that includes two previously unreleased songs: "Tú no tienes alma" and "Cuando sea espacio." He was awarded with 2 Latin Grammy Awards: "Recording of the Year" and "Song of the Year" for Tu no tienes Alma for this production.

### **El Tren de los Momentos (2006)**

In 2005 Alejandro Sanz continued searching for materials for his next album. While waiting for music to come, he collaborated with Shakira in the mega hit "La Tortura", absolute number 1 in all international charts, a wild duet in an encounter never to be forgotten. New York presented them in the Saturday Night Live, where they performed the duet live.

Alejandro took part as well in the tribute to Serrat, singing in Catalan "Paraules d'amor", one of the most surprising contributions to this homage to Catalan artist. In December he presented his photo exhibition Fotos de ida y vuelta, together with renowned art director Jaume de Laiguana. The exhibition included more than 50 pictures taken by Alejandro when he was touring to promotion his album No Es Lo Mismo. The funds raised by this exhibition were destined to Spanish NGO Infancia sin Fronteras, which is currently working in Albania, El Salvador, Honduras and Sri Lanka, among other countries.

## **Paraíso Express (2009)**

We now meet a optimistic Alejandro Sanz, one who has reached full maturity and, as always, bursting with talent. He has that unique style when it comes to writing poignant songs, those songs that touch you deep inside, in your profound self, those who captivate you little by little and are able to immerse us completely in their stories.

The album was produced by young Puerto Rican producer Tommy Torres and mixed by Bob Clearmountain, the world famous engineer, who made some of the best albums by Rolling Stones, Bruce Springsteen or Paul McCartney, among others.

This new work represents his return to the greatest songs of his career, much in the way of his unforgettable album "Más." Once again, Sanz displays the brilliant energy of that moment; he went back to his roots but did not forget everything he learned on the way. Lyrics are pleasantly positive: "First I composed the tune and then I wrote the lyrics. In my last recording, it was the other way around as I improvised lyrics over melody. This time I wrote some lyrics to fit the tune, and then I started moving words up and down following the sense of nonsense."

His big ballads, "Desde cuando" and "Tú no tienes la culpa," still echo those of great Italian composers, together with some tracks like "Peter Punk" or "Lola Soledad", that have a pop rock touch, but still reflect his strong personality. It seems like Alejandro found his true composer's paradise in this record with his most rounded and compact songs in the latest years. Once again he shows why he is still the most important Spanish musician in decades.

### **Alejandro Sanz: the figures**

11 Albums released  
6 DVD's  
21 million copies sold  
200 platinum recordings  
15 Latin Grammy Awards  
2 Grammy Award

### **Main Awards and Nominations:**

#### **1997**

\*AMIGO AWARD (Spain)  
-Best Spanish Male Artist  
\*ONDAS AWARD (Spain)  
-Best National Artist  
\*SPANISH MUSIC AWARDS (Spain):  
-Best National Artist  
-Best Composer  
-Best Album for MÁS  
-Best Single for "Corazón Partío"  
-Best Video "Corazón Partío"

#### **1998**

\*AMIGO AWARD (Spain)  
-Special Tribute  
\*ONDAS AWARD (Spain)  
-Best Song for "Corazón Partío"

## **1999**

- \*WORLD MUSIC AWARDS (Monaco)
- Best Selling Spanish Artist

## **2000**

- \*IFPI PLATINUM AWARDS For MÁS (Belgium)
- \*ONDAS AWARD
- Best Spanish Artist

## **2001**

- \*2nd LATIN GRAMMY AWARDS (USA):
- Album of the Year for EL ALMA AL AIRE
- Recording of the Year EL ALMA AL AIRE
- Song of the Year for EL ALMA AL AIRE
- Best Male Pop Album for EL ALMA AL AIRE
- \*GARDEL AWARD (Argentina):
- Best Male Artist
- Album of the Year for EL ALMA AL AIRE
  
- \*IFPI PLATINUM AWARDS for EL ALMA AL AIRE
- \*Viña del Mar Song Festival (Chili):
- GAVIOTA DE ORO AWARD
- GAVIOTA DE PLATA AWARD
- \*MTV VIDEO MUSIC AWARDS (USA)
- Winner "Video de la Gente" Award for EL ALMA AL AIRE

## **2002**

- \*SPANISH MUSIC AWARDS (Spain):
- Best Song for "Y Solo Se Me Ocurre Amarte"
- Best Album for MTV UNPLUGGED
- Best Video for "El Alma Al Aire"
- \*3rd LATIN GRAMMY AWARDS:
- Album of the Year MTV UNPLUGGED
- Song of the Year for "Y Solo Se Me Ocurre Amarte"
- Song of the Year for "Y Solo Se Me Ocurre Amarte"
- \*GARDEL AWARD (Argentina):
- Best Male Artist
- Album of the Year MTV UNPLUGGED
- \*OYE AWARD (Mexico)
- Best Male Pop Artist
- \*LUNA AWARD (Mexico)
- International Ballad

## **2004**

- \*46th ANNUAL GRAMMY AWARDS (USA)
- Best Latin Pop Album NO ES LO MISMO
  
- \*TU MUSICA AWARDS (Puerto Rico)
  
- \*5th LATIN GRAMMY AWARDS (USA)
- Recording of the Year for NO ES LO MISMO
- Album of the Year NO ES LO MISMO
- Song of the Year NO ES LO MISMO

-Best Male Pop Vocal Album for NO ES LO MISMO

\*LUNA AWARDS (Mexico)

-Best Spanish Pop Artist

### **2005**

\*6th LATIN GRAMMY AWARDS (USA)

-Recordings of the Year TU NO TIENES ALMA

-Song of the Year TU NO TIENES ALMA

### **2007**

\*OYE AWARD (Mexico):

-Best Song for TE LO AGRADEZCO,PERO NO

### **2008**

\*50th ANNUAL GRAMMY AWARDS

-Best Latin Pop Album of the year, EL TREN DE LOS MOMENTOS