

# After Jugo

Sarajevo, the life of a generation

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a multimedia project by Marco Pavan

[www.marcopavan.com](http://www.marcopavan.com)

## Velahavle

R: I am Rizvan and this is Sake. The name of our band is Velahavle, from Sarajevo.

There are also some few more member: we have a drummer and a guitar player.

S: And some additional musicians on our live acts.

R: Like a percussionist, some additional vocals, we have an mc. Maybe eight people all together.

*When did you start playing together?*

R: we started to record our first album maybe on 2001

S: 2001, it was a long process

R: it took us four long years to get it properly done.

S: because we were searching for a producer.

R: When we started to record it, we were heading in one direction and then I guess we changed in the middle of the process, so it took four years to finish it. The producer was Kemal Okan from the UK.

S: He is a well known producer and we had good luck with him, he influenced our sound very much

R: He is a great guy. When you listen to the album, you can hear his signature.

*Now you are doing a new album. How do you see your future?*

R: We are becoming softer, I guess. The tunes are a bit slower, maybe more trip-hop. The first album sounded very harsh, maybe fast and groovy.

S: But this album is going to be much slower, maybe darker in a way.

R: Downtown tempo, trip-hop, maybe few songs faster, break beat or something like that.

S: We are just hoping that it won't take so long as with the first album.

R: For now playing it is just a serious hobby for us because we all have some additional jobs.

S: Music it is maybe the biggest part of our lives. But not something we can still earn so much to live from it but we are making our way and with the next few albums I think...we will have 70 years! The best thing is that we are playing mostly outside Bosnia, we are making money in good countries and spending here in a cheap country.

R: There are only four millions people here in Bosnia and Herzegovina. So if you have just one album, you cannot play it five times a year, you can just have one concert and it is pretty much done. In Bosnia we have Sarajevo and maybe a few other towns that are interesting and there is not much else.

*How is Sarajevo music scene?*

R: Nowadays is pretty easy everywhere in the world to record something. You can record a tune in your house with your computer with a minimum amount of cash and equipment. So you don't need

a great producing house to back you up because everything is available today and with electronics is very easy. If you have a good idea you can record. It is very easy to release a song, you can do it in your house. You don't have to print massive amount of cds.

I think we are also a bit lazy so we record only sometimes. There is a period of time when we do practically nothing and we are just kind of collecting, collecting, collecting and then just enter the studio and record one song. This is how our album has been done.

There are a lot of young people here in Bosnia, producers or djs, who are making their own music that has great dance, doing some serious job and publishing for labels.

S: Generally it is much better than it was few years ago. Some great bands started to play and you really enjoy that

R: And some individuals. Our producer for the second album now is Belein, a guy from Sarajevo who is younger than us and he is doing wonderful stuff. You have to hear that, he is really great.

S: He is also a drum'n'bass producer. Really young and really talented.

R: So now a computer is enough, for starters at least. So if you have talent someone will notice you. You will sell some records, sign some contracts and you can buy a lot of stuff. Maybe 10 years ago things weren't like that.

In Sarajevo there is always, as usual, some sort of rock music, underground kind of stuff, indie music, alternative rock, there are always been in the city, traditionally. They play that stuff and they are quite good. And there are new guys that play electronic music. Drum'n'bass is pretty popular, house music is pretty popular in different groups of people.

S: I think the underground scene is not so much supported by medias, it's not bad but not as much as we would like. It has just a small part of television time.

R: Also there are many radio stations but there isn't much diversity. But there are maybe two or three radio station that are real cool, and they are all from Sarajevo.

S: But things are getting much better than the few past years. For example this is the first year that the government supported the underground scene, not so much but it is something big, because the last few years there wasn't any support at all. Things are moving forward. Slowly but forward.

R: It is kind of similar to movie industry, you can not obviously record blockbusters in Bosnia. So obviously government has to support Bosnian cinematography because you need a great amount of money to record a movie that doesn't have to potential to retain the investment in such a small country. So it's pretty much like that in music. I don't believe there are enough people in Bosnia so we can have a base of listeners for ten electronic bands, and to do some festivals. In a bigger city, if you organize a festival and advertise it in all medias, five thousands people maximum will come for the most popular bands, maybe like Dubioza Kolektiv.

S: That's because we are a small country. A small country with problems.

R: And a small base of listeners.

S: some guy told me that Sarajevo is the smallest town with the biggest name. We really have big names.

R: Well, maybe it's also a sort of tradition, because if you hear you neighbour playing and practising guitar at 12 in the night you have to take the piano and do some backings from the floor above!

S: But not just with the music, Sarajevo is also known for starting WWI and then for the unfortunate events of 15 years ago. So we have big name and small city.

*Were you playing together during the war in Sarajevo?*

S: Yeah.

R: Yes.

S: We were too young but we started to learn to play music.

R: I played guitar, now I play keyboards. So it's just like, during the war you have so much time and nothing to do. The people were reading books, incredible amount of books. During the war you didn't have the electricity, so we were playing. What can you do? You play or you read a book.

*What are your songs about?*

R: The lyrics are about... nothing. We have a song that goes just: "first, second, speed. First, second, speed". It's like totally trash lyrics. And people often say: "what the hell did you mean in that song?!" Because just doesn't mean anything. They are not politically involved, we are trying to avoid that because it's too much to cope with, you can hear it on the radio.

S: It is a well known subject.

R: We just don't feel comfortable thinking of it.

S: But on our second album we concentrate on the lyrics much more than on the first. We talk about universal stuff.

R: Or life subjects, like going to work everyday.

S: But we are much more concentrates on the lyrics of our songs now.

R: I think we put more accent on the music on the first album. The lyrics just went in the background. We are trying for this second album to push it, not in front but at least on the same level as music. But I think that the music itself should be powerful enough to evoke some emotions.

S: It is hard to convey emotions when you are singing on a foreign language like we do especially on the second album. All the lyrics are in English so it is a bit hard to express ourselves. But we are satisfied now, with everything.

*Can you tell me something about your daily life in Bosnia?*

R: It is good as it can be. It's good as you can make it for yourself, like everywhere else. It depends on your ambitions, if you are an ambitious kind of person then you will probably find something that will satisfy you. It is possible. There are obstacles like everywhere else in the world. If you want to start a company you have administration to cope with. To be an artist you have to work a lot. You cannot be a painter after one month of practising. You have to love the thing you do.

S: Like everywhere

R: It is maybe easier to achieve something somewhere else, maybe western Europe, but there are also few places worst than Bosnia. Not few, many. In many places is even harder to live, but people still manage to work it out, somehow. So it's ok here.

Bosnians are pretty lazy, it is something that has been well documented. I am not sure why it's that. But if you are a young person, if all you can see around yourself are young people that are normally drinking coffee in cafés all day, it's some kind of natural for you to just blend in. So, it's a weak point of the young people in Sarajevo but in time that will change also. Maybe the youngsters just have to see that the people that put some effort have a better life and they can achieve what they wanted in the first place. Maybe material but I mean also on a deeper level. Then they will also have motivation to try to do something, to read more, to travel more. It is better to travel than to drink coffee in the same café everyday. You don't need to have that much money to travel, you don't have to travel to States, you can travel to other towns in Bosnia to meet some new people. People are pretty lethargic, I guess that maybe it's a consequence of war in some part. Because many people are unemployed, because when you are unemployed it's a huge problem but you can always find few KM to get a coffee.

The four of us, we come from Muslim families. But it's kind of normal for us. We don't pay much of attention, I think people that have prejudices are mostly from rural areas not from the city.

S: I think people with prejudices can come from big towns or small towns.

R: But not in our case. Our friends are of all kinds.

S: We don't pay attention, we don't really pay attention to that.

R: I think that we are a minority unfortunately, in Bosnia. But here in Sarajevo most people, I guess, are not paying so much attention. You can see a reflection of that in our political scene, it would be different if everybody think like we think. Unfortunately it is obvious in all parts of social life, when you open a newspaper, when you look at the television, then you can see that the people are still divided.

S: A lot of indoctrinated stuff.

R: It is easy to manipulate people that are not well educated. We actually thought that it would change much sooner with time but many years have passed, 15 years after the war.

S: It is going slow, we thought change would happen much sooner.

R: It goes really slow. But it isn't that bad, you don't have to think about it all the time.