

Anyone who uses the slogan "The most fanatical band in the world" has some explaining to do. However, Vagina Dentata Organ (VDO) don't offer explanations. They simply offer us our society as they see it. VDO's records have been the focus of heated discussion over the years. "We sell blood, sex, life and death – at a price" is another much-cited quote. VDO's records do indeed sell for extreme prices, but their content is equally extreme and uncompromising. The more conservative press has been keen to use moral statements such as "shocking" and "disgusting" for VDO – the very same words used to describe The Rolling Stones in the early 60s.

VDO is a one-man concept, but certainly not a one-trick pony, centered around Barcelona born Jordi Valls. Moving from Spain to the UK in the late 70s, Valls caught the London punk movement in its prime and, like so many, became enthralled by the ruthless rawness and anarchy of the first generation punk bands. In 1978 he bumped into Throbbing Gristle's Genesis P-Orridge in the street, resulting in Valls organising several TG gigs in London.

With a keen interest and talent in communication, Valls' name soon started appearing in articles about TG, Come Organization and Whitehouse in magazines, gig flyers and on radio programmes. The Whitehouse connection, with Valls managing them in the early 80s, led to Valls' appearance on their hugely collectable 1982 *Psychopathia Sexualis* album, where he introduces each track in his native language, Catalan. That year, he inspired Boyd Rice (aka NON) to record the track *Fatal Dentro De Un Auto*, based on a car accident Valls experienced in the early 80s. The track was released on NON's 12" single *Rise* (Mute 015, £15). In 1983, Valls voiced Catalan, a track on Psychic TV's *Dreams Less Sweet*. This, in turn, led to a collaboration with cineaste Derek Jarman on the short movie *Catalan*, the cinematic reconstruction of Valls' car accident, using the actual car Valls had the accident in. It was found at a scrapyard – with dry blood still inside it.

Enjoying these experiences, Valls

VDO NASTY?

VAGINA DENTATA ORGAN

provoke outrage.

But their highly collectable records are serious comments on modern society

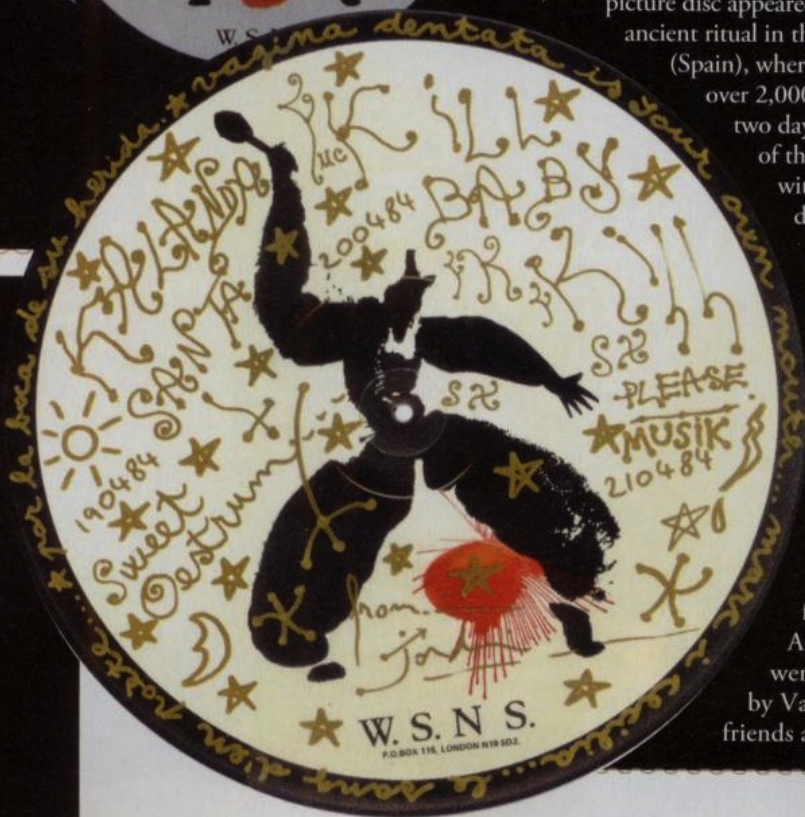
Freek Kinkelaar reports

thought up the concept of Vagina Dentata Organ; a project as unpredictable as Valls himself. Combining the 20s surrealism of André Breton, Salvador Dalí and Luis Buñuel with some added grotesquery and some Hieronymus Bosch thrown in, Valls' first release, the album *Music For The Hashishins*, consisted solely of the sounds of growling made by dogs trained to kill. The album, released on Valls' label WSNS (World Satanic Network System), caused quite a stir in 1983. The Hashishins were a fearless and violent Persian order, dating from around 1200, from whose name the modern word "assassin" has been derived. Despite a reissue of the album on Psychic TV's Temple label, originals are still very much in demand. The record is an uncompromising statement; a boot in the bollocks of accepted standards in ethics and aesthetics. However, VDO's next album would put it in the shade.

The Last Supper caused a storm of outrage in 1984. With a picture disc featuring photographs of People's Temple cult leader Jim Jones and the victims of the November 1978 mass suicide in French Guyana, and the sound itself featuring actual and unedited recordings made on the night of the suicide, "reality or nothing" seemed to be Valls' motto. Each picture disc was numbered for a victim; 912 in total. Much like SPK's urge to "expose the cathedral of death", VDO too left no stone, no truth unturned. On the wave of notoriety, the LP sold out quickly and is extremely collectable today. Some copies included a transcript of Jim Jones' words, persuading his followers to "take the poison" and urging them to "go to sleep". It's a shocking document of religious blindness.

That same year, the second VDO picture disc appeared; a live recording of an ancient ritual in the village of Calanda (Spain), where every year at Easter over 2,000 drums are beaten for two days non-stop. The skins of the drums are stained with the blood of the drummers' hands.

Some of the discs featured Valls' own blood encapsulated on the disc. There are, however, also copies with fake blood, identifiable by their off-brown color, which, although slightly more common, still fetch well over £150. Around 12 copies were hand-decorated by Valls and given to friends and family. 1984 also



Jordi Valls aka Vagina Dentata Organ with one of his blood paintings



saw VDO's debut live performance on the legendary Spanish TV programme *La Eldad De Oro*. Valls performed *Music For The Hashishins* on an emulator with 16 live dogs tied to the stage. During the performance, he destroyed several paintings by the Catalan painter Casademont, using two scimitars. Bags of blood were hidden behind the canvases, so when the paintings were slashed, blood dripped from them. The performance led to a national debate and was discussed in the Spanish Parliament and, as a result, *La Eldad De Oro* was closed down.

Two years later, Valls released a third picture disc, dedicated to the two greatest sex symbols ever: Elvis Presley and Marilyn Monroe. However, the picture disc featured images of both of them on their deathbeds; the record was called *Cold Meat*. Here too, Valls created a special sub-edition featuring hand-painted messages. The disc itself featured the sounds of couples making love, representing love and death as Eros and Thanatos – twins in the world of Greek mythology. Copies sold out in a matter of days, despite, or perhaps fuelled by, the

and perhaps most ambitious release. Wanting to create music that would be so beautiful it made you cry, *Music For The Blind* contains five versions of Enrico Toselli's (1883-1926) *Serenata* played by Bernarda Jones for solo violin. The first traditional "music" album by Valls might appeal to collectors of classical music, but they would probably hesitate to ask for the Vagina Dentata Organ section in any store.

Apart from these four CD releases, Valls worked on his "blood paintings"; canvases created in the early 90s with his own blood. Recent years have seen more frequent performances by Valls. More events than gigs, often in collaboration with his brother Marc, these continue to create havoc. Their exhibition on religious taboos in Barcelona, planned for 2008, was cancelled because of censorship – no doubt to Valls' pleasure. 2011 saw the surprise release of Valls' first book: *The London Punk Tapes*, featuring exclusive interviews with and photos of punk bands such as Sex Pistols, Damned, Slits and The Clash, based on recordings Valls made in 1976. He also used the

“WE SELL BLOOD, SEX, LIFE AND DEATH – AT A PRICE”


inevitable controversy. It became clear that the works of VDO were impossible to predict – as was the silence that followed *Cold Meat*. For the next eight years Valls did not create a single record. “I had nothing to say,” was his straightforward explanation.

Since the 80s Valls no longer releases his works on vinyl, but on CD only. Even though the value of CDs in general has shown a steady decline, VDO CDs remain very collectable. So far, Valls has released four, each as unique and unpredictable as the one preceeding.

Un Chien Catalan (1994, and referring to Buñuel's film *Un Chien Andalou*) was a complete surprise to everyone. Comprising nothing but the sound of a Harley-Davidson engine, Valls dedicated the album to a close friend, who drove the bike himself for the recording – just before his suicide. The CD, described as a meeting in hell between Jimi Hendrix, Philip Glass, and Karlheinz Stockhausen, gained favourable reviews worldwide and sold well. Follow-up, *The Perpignan Killings*, can perhaps best be described as a VDO mega mix, featuring bits and pieces of all his previous records mixed in one fierce blast of fury. Best consumed, of course, with a glass of absinthe in hand.

The Great Masturbator (2004), dedicated to Salvador Dali, consisted of one hour of bells tolling in Dali's memory. It's a strangely compelling but fitting homage to the greatest surrealist artist who ever lived. *Music For The Blind*, released in 2007, is Valls' most recent

material in VDO live performances.

Valls' works can best be described as a ready-made collection of human emotions laid bare for consumption, without prejudice or moral preconception. They may be hard to digest for some but, to others, they're vital audio and visual documents of our imperfect society – in all its beauty and ugliness. 



VAGINA DENTATA ORGAN
PRESENTS
MUSIC FOR THE

HASHISHINS

IN MEMORIAM
OF

HASAN SABBAH



VDO collectables, including limited edition of *Cold Meat* with hand drawn decoration (top). Only 12 of these exist

VDO WORLDWIDE DISCOGRAPHY

83	WSNS 01	VAGINA DENTATA ORGAN PRESENTS: MUSIC FOR THE HASHISHINS, IN MEMORIAM OF HASSAN-I-SABBAH (LP)	£50
84	WSNS 002	THE LAST SUPPER, THE REVEREND JIM JONES IN PERSON (picture disc LP, 912 numbered copies, some with transcript)	£90/£80
84	WSNS 003	VAGINA DENTATA ORGAN WITH THE PAGAN DRUMS OF CALANDA: THE TRIUMPH OF THE FLESH (picture disc LP, four known variations: around 12 copies with hand drawings, personal dedications and real blood; around 30 without drawings/ dedications but with real blood; unknown number with fake blood; around 900 copies without blood)	£400/£250/£150/£70
86	WSNS 004	COLD MEAT/EROS & THANATOS (picture disc LP, three known variations: four copies with one black side where the Elvis image is missing; around 12 with hand drawings and personal dedications; around 1,000 without drawings and dedications, some of these have a silver J or cross penned in on Elvis side)	£150/£400/£70
94	WSNS 001 CD	UN CHIEN CATALAN	£20
02	WSNS 002 CD	THE PERPIGNAN KILLINGS	£20
04	WSNS 003 CD	THE GREAT MASTURBATOR	£20
07	WSNS 004 CD	MUSIC FOR THE BLIND	£20

REISSUES

87	Temple TOPY 012	MUSIC FOR THE HASHASHINS (LP)	£25
87	Temple TOPY 013	THE LAST SUPPER (LP)	£25

COMPILATIONS

85	Dom V77-01	OHRENSCHRAUBEN (LP features one VDO track, Kill Baby Kill; also cassette Dom 77-22, 1986)	£40/£20
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Note: the VDO tracks featured on the NKVD compilation (Audiofile tapes AT77 1989) are in fact by Glenn Michael Wallis of The Konstruktivists

COLLABORATIONS

82	Come Organization WDC 881027	WHITEHOUSE: PSYCHOPATHIA SEXUALIS (LP, 400 copies on clear vinyl with paste-on sleeve, beware counterfeits with printed sleeve; also cassette WDC 883027)	£200/£75
83	CBS 25737	PSYCHIC TV – DREAMS LESS SWEET LP/12", also cassette CBS 40-25737	£30/15