

MACEDO

Issue #5 (April-May 2017)

grumpymagazine.com



Words by Jasmine Perrier

Michelle and Melissa are the twin sisters at the head of MACEDO, a musical duo defined by its uniqueness and emotional depth. Combine their voices that naturally blend well together with a piano and a lyric and heavy sound; and you have the authenticity of MACEDO mixing classical and contemporary technique. Through their music they aspire to create bonds between people. "If the song speaks to one person or helps one person, it's worth it" they say.

Michelle and Melissa were raised in Pasadena, California, that is also an area known for attracting people seeking to impose their art. From jazz to bossa nova, their family would constantly be playing different genres of music. As they grew they both started singing and writing songs together. "Music has been a huge part of our lives. Being singers and musicians was just something that happened naturally. Our earliest musical memory is sitting at the piano with our dad. It was this amazing antique piano that our mom inherited. We still write on that piano sometimes! Music has helped us through some extremely difficult times, it can be incredibly cathartic. Music is a comfort and a motivator."

Michelle dedicated herself to poetry from 9. When Melissa and her began writing together, they would just do it for fun. As they developed more as songwriters it came naturally. They would play each other ideas and send each other songs for feedback. After college they knew they both wanted to pursue

this path. "Being an artist can be so invigorating, you're always meeting new people and exposing yourself to more inspiration and creativity. We like to say songwriting is like alchemy, you can turn pain into something beautiful that can help people, that's our favorite thing to do! Our first gig was in high school at this tiny coffee shop near downtown LA called Tribal Cafe. There were always artists playing there and it had such an intimate feel to it."

Let's imagine Regina Spektor meeting Leslie Feist and Lianne La Havas with a classic vibe.: that is what MACEDO's style looks like. Michelle and Melissa suggest that the lyricism and the lyrics of their sounds play a significant role in the process that is creative production.

"What makes us unique is our harmonies and songwriting style. We play with a full band including an amazing cellist and violinist at all of our live shows. We really hope our music connects with people and encourages them to empower themselves, especially if they are feeling isolated or disconnected. The message of the music is to accept imperfections and that humans are incredibly resilient and beautiful as they are."

“ Our relationship is integral to our art

The sibling relationship shared by Michelle and Melissa is integral to their art. As sisters and as musicians, they are so deeply connected that one of them will supply what the other one needs. When they discovered how to turn poetry into music it was like a light bulb went off. "Writing is everything to us. We grew up writing. In some ways, writing is the most intimate and rewarding part of the process. Michelle grew

up writing poetry and was inspired by the great poets like Sylvia Plath, E.E. Cummings and Pablo Neruda. We are inspired by situations the other one is in. It's very therapeutic and cathartic."

On the road to make an album portraying the singularity of their world, Michelle and Melissa released last month the single *Ghost Town*, setting the tone of what they will have in store for us in the future. "*Ghost Town* emerged from a really difficult time. It's a reflection and exploration of the ghosts that we all have and the ways in which we are haunted by our past. This album is a reflection of memories that became a part of our identity. In essence, how we're each being haunted, in good and bad ways. It was a very raw experience to write, there was no holding back."

Both sisters are also attracted by acting. As trained actors they have been pursuing this path for as long as they have with music. Before wrapping a film produced by James Franco they took part in the new original Netflix series *Girlboss* whose environment relates ideally to the values they believe in. "We play a band on the show which was a lot of fun! We love the entire message behind the show and were instantly attracted to the characters and the series. It's all about female empowerment and portraying women as human beings who are messy and flawed as opposed to an impossible ideal women have to live up to. It was an incredible experience working on *Girlboss*. There were so many powerful women who were kind and creative."

In spite of their lightning development Michelle and Melissa feel that being a woman can be a challenge in the entertainment industry toward the pressure and expectations placed upon women they have to endure. That is why they consider it's important to be unapologetic. "It's a blessing to have each other. We really support each other and move each other forward. That is what gets us through the ups and downs. As long we are true to ourselves and compassionate, kind people we're able to keep things in perspective."

Through their art Michelle and Melissa are determined to empower people who feel

marginalized and silenced. They used to co-create a show called *Dirty Talk* with their theatre company World Kin Ensemble. It was a project they did with all their heart. "We are very proud of all of our work but especially our theatre show. We interviewed hundreds of women and men. *Dirty Talk* is about the spectrum of violence against women, ranging from catcalling to rape. We acted in and toured college campuses around the U.S. with that show. We also performed it as part of USC's *Visions and Voices*. We feel strongly about any organization that supports and empowers women. It's exactly what we try to create in our art."

The duo who seems on track to shine insists on the wish to create art as much as possible and the twins hope to continue doing what they love, in both music and acting. Going on a world tour is also on their bucketlist, just like working alongside strong women with unique voices such as Lorde or the Haim sister. "The songwriting of Joni Mitchell, Tori Amos, Fiona Apple, Regina Spektor, Claude Debussy, Otis Redding, Billie Holiday and Radiohead were huge influences. We really appreciate amazing songwriting and we feel like all of those artists tell a story in the most impactful way. They are real and honest and can structure a song to make it so effective. The first time we heard *Tidal* by Fiona Apple we were completely blown away. It was like she was singing our lives and feelings. We knew that's what we wanted to do, to be so honest with ourselves that we had no choice but to feel connected."

The final say

"We hope that our music and art inspires people to find power in their voices and to be their best selves."