

## VareseNews

### Belize, “From their bedroom to X Factor. It all began in Varese”

**Pubblicato:** Mercoledì 15 Novembre 2017



With their sound, they were immediately “placed” among the most interesting bands in the Italian indie scene of the moment. **Their performance on X Factor** was their springboard for getting out of the province, getting straight onto the Spotify playlists. Contrary to what their name might suggest, **Belize** have nothing to do with tropical temperatures.

Their latest EP, ‘**Replica**’, which was released on 3 November (Ghost Records), appears to be inspired rather by the underground culture of the great metropolis; tracks influenced by rap, electronic music and trip hop, with melodies that draw on Italian singer-songwriters. And yet, it all started in a small, provincial bedroom, “**where we played music, GTA V on the play station, and watched Breaking Bad,**” said Riccardo Montanari, the band’s frontman, who went on to say that, for the band’s name, they had taken inspiration from the TV series. Now they have two important live dates, **the first, on 11 November, at the Cantine Coopuf (Varese) (it is already sold out)**, and the second, on 24 November, at the Circolo Magnolia, in Milan (with Amari, a band from Udine).

**Can we say you are one of the bands created by the Web?**

“Actually the bands created on the Web get many more hits than we did when we released our first video. But that’s where it all started. It was 2014, and with our first song, we caught the attention of the music scene in Varese, and not only. A lot of people were curious about our project.”

### **How do Belize songs come about?**

“They come about in two ways. In the first, Mattia prepares the foundation, and we build the rest on it. In the second, I write things at the piano or the guitar; I start with the vocal and instrumental line and then I add the rhythm. The latest EP was created primarily in this way, let’s say it has ‘more normal’ songs (*he smiles, ed.*). This latest work is certainly the one we feel most at ease with, it’s a sincere, impulsive work that we consider more mature and more ‘ours’, compared to previous works.”

### **Considering the Italian music scene, what genre do you feel closest to?**

“To nothing, at the moment. We’re in the Italian Indie Pop playlist of Spotify, but there’s almost nothing I like. On the first album, we tried to go in the direction of what worked in the music scene at the time, but for this latest work, we did our own thing, producing only what we liked. For example, we know that in ‘Iride’, there’s an irregular bridge, which will prevent the song from being played on the radio, but that’s how we liked it. Anyway, we listen to a lot of Italian music, like Alex Germanò, Colapesce, Lorenzo Senni, Luca Galizia from Busto Arsizio, and the latest song by Cesare Cremonini ...”

### **How “HypFi” do you feel? Do you write sad songs for happy people?**

“Let’s say that we and our listeners are basically happy people, but with great sadness. If you talk with the listener about happy things, you put him in a ‘comfort zone’, and if the songs are sad, it’s as if you were embracing him and saying ‘I’m in the same situation as you’. The thing is positive in both cases; of course, we’re a generation with few prospects for the future and few fixed points, we’re a bit lost ...”

### **Are you like your ‘Superman’, resigned, with little interest in saving the world?**

“Also. Today, I think we all make an enormous effort, trying to become something more important than what we really are. Also because of the social networks. But to be happy, we should be satisfied with being what you are. After all, the ‘Superman’ in the song is a man who would like nothing more than to love his woman, to be with his aunt and to live his life, but his superpowers don’t let him. It’s frustrating; and all the more so for us humans who don’t have any powers ...”

### **Who is your favourite superhero?**

“Spiderman, because he’s the most human and he doesn’t kill anybody.”

### **What has the X Factor experience left you? And what were you thinking when you were on that stage?**

“Our great fear was to be taken, rather than to be excluded. We felt a bit lost and we understood that it wasn’t our world. From a human point of view, it was a wonderful experience, we’re still in contact with many people. From a professional point of view, we learnt to relate to a world like that, and to have had the opportunity to go up against Manuel Agnelli, who we’re still in touch with. It’s an experience that gave us a lot of visibility, also among people who are closer to our genre.”

### **Varese has always been a stronghold of hip hop; were you somehow influenced by that wave of the mid ‘90s?**

“Personally not a lot. I became interested in hip hop late, but Mattia was, and I think this influenced him. He has always had a more in-depth approach to the genre, it was natural for him. I think that, for those who attend the music scene in Varese, it’s somehow normal to ‘breathe’ that influence, something remains inside.”

### **You’re going to play on two important stages, one in your home town, and the other is the more**

**sought-after “indie” stage in Milan, that of Magnolia. Which stage excites you more?**

“I’m very happy to go back and play at the ‘Cantine Coopuf’, it was one of the most important places in my life. I still remember when they opened Twiggy, and on the posters, there were the live performances of all my favourite bands. If there hadn’t been that place, I probably wouldn’t have done what I have, and I’m happy it exists and keeps going. On the Magnolia, it’ll be my first time on a big stage and I’m a bit nervous, it’s a great responsibility.”

**What are pros and cons of playing music in a provincial town for anyone that wants to make it?**

“I can compare with Milan. The province is free of fashion, and lets you be less influenced and develop a personal taste; you can be yourself. The disadvantage is that it’s more difficult to make it. We’re lucky, because we’ve got an organisation like Ghost Records.”

di Translated by Cordone, Crespi & Elia (Reviewed by Prof. Rolf Cook)