

Unmarked & Alter-Ego Official Biography



Alter-Ego logo designed by Laurent O'Brien, 1988

Stephane Fania and Robert Kourie met each other in 1986 at CEGEP (College) St. Laurent in Montreal, Canada. Bob played guitar, Steph played keyboards. In the next year and a half they played in two bands together, one was a progressive metal band, the other an alternative rock female-fronted band. It was in the summer of 1987 that Steph starting playing bass and it is with this idea that they posted an add in The Gazette newspaper, looking for a drummer and signer. Stephane Bolduc (known as Steve Bolduc) came in on drums very quickly. After playing a small party show as a three piece that summer, they recruited Joseph Tufenkdjian on vocals and guitar. They called themselves Unmarked. Song writing was very productive and multiple songs were written every month, as Bob and Joe were song-writing machines. In the early September of 1987, Steph put an ad at local music store Kitts Music, looking for a keyboard player. In came Italo Falcone and the band was complete.



Unmarked
circa
September
1987.
Robert
Kourie's
arm and
Stephane
Fania on
the
right.



Unmarked circa
September 1987.
Robert Kourie on
left, Joseph
Tufenkdjian's head
and Stephane Fania
on the right.



Unmarked circa

September 1987. L
to R: Stephane
Fania, Steve
Bolduc, Robert
Kourie (bottom),
Joseph Tufenkdjian,
Italo Falcone.

On January 30th 1988, Unmarked played their first show at L'Intro on Jean-Talon Street in Montreal. The venue was quickly becoming a staple for local alternative, new wave and even metal bands. Unmarked played for an hour and a half, which included covers of Chuck Berry's "Johnny B. Goode", the Beatles' "Twist and Shout" and U2's "I Will Follow", nine originals (two of which were never recorded, "Freeze Where You Are" and "So Many Tears") and finishing off with a five-song encore by fan demand. The show was filmed on VHS and taped from the soundboard by Peter Molloy, who worked at L'Intro.

In February 1988 they found out about another band named Unmarked in the United States and changed their name to Alter-Ego, a name Joe came up with. In March, through Steph's family connections, they recorded their first four song demo at Luba's private home studio. Even though Steve played drums live, he decided to use a drum machine on the recordings to be tighter. "Demo 1" was dubbed on roughly 100 copies and distributed to fans and friends of the band. The band logo was designed by Laurent O'Brien, who was friends with Joe. The layout for the tape was designed by Steph who was able to use an Apple computer at Joe's work, as he worked at a licensed Apple store (before Apple Stores existed).

They were writing so many songs that by June of 1988 they were ready to record a second demo. This time they recorded in their rehearsal room, Bob's basement. Steve chose once again to track his drums with a drum machine. The seven songs were dubbed as "Demo 2" on approximately 100 more tapes. Alter-Ego played their second show (their first under the new band name), on July 2nd 1988, also at L'Intro. This time the band

played all eleven original songs from both recorded demos, covers of U2's "I Will Follow", Billy Idol's "Mony Mony", INXS's "Devil Inside" and finished with a two song encore. The show was again filmed on VHS and taped from the soundboard by Peter Molloy, who still worked at L'Intro. The show was notable as having two of the band member's girlfriends joining them on stage to provide backup vocals.



Unmarked posing in Bob's backyard in September 1987. L to R: Steph Fania, Bob Kourie, Steve Bolduc (top), Joe Tufenkdjian, Italo Falcone.



Unmarked posing in Bob's

backyard in
September 1987.
L to R: Steph
Fania, Bob
Kourie, Steve
Bolduc (top),
Joe Tufenkdjian,
Italo Falcone.



Unmarked's
rehearsal space,
Bob's basement,
circa September
1987. Guitar
amp.



Unmarked's
rehearsal space,
Bob's basement,
circa September
1987. Bass amp.



Unmarked's rehearsal space, Bob's basement, circa September 1987. Keyboards.



Unmarked's rehearsal space, Bob's basement, circa September 1987. PA system.



Unmarked's rehearsal space, Bob's basement, circa September 1987. Drum kit.

Sometime in July 1988, Steve left the band for reasons still undiscovered. Steph went back to Kitts with a new ad, looking for a drummer. Joey Picolo came in just in time to shoot a

music video for their first single. The video for "It's Good to be Free" was filmed in August 1988 by a friend of the band, under the east end portion of the Metropolitaine Highway (Autoroute 40), in Saint-Leonard. The video featured segments of the band playing live under the overpass, walking around signing the song with instruments in their hands, and also a short storyline of the band playing a gang of hoodlums stealing parts off a parked jeep, waking up a surprised owner of the vehicle who was sleeping in the car (played by their friend Gabbie Lacone).

Even with a video in their resume, the band would hit tensions. Joe and Bob would conflict in style and heated arguments would plague the rehearsals. During one of these confrontation, Steph announced he was quitting and started packing up his gear. All the other members followed his lead and Alter-Ego ended that September of 1988. Steph and Bob would reunite a month later and recruited a new vocalist for their second female-fronted band, Leading Edge, which changed name to Strike Anywhere, and stayed active until March of 1989. They followed with Boize from April 1989 to June 1993, Emissary from June 1993 to February 1996 and finally Breaking Violet from February 1996 to early 1999. Bob now plays in a cover band, Escale, while Steph runs U-Iliot Records. Steve also went on to play in many bands, including Route 66 Montreal. He also released an instrumental album under his own name in 2010. Little is known of the activities of the other ex-members. Joe continued his military career in the Canadian Air Force and apparently continued playing guitar in other bands. Joey and Italo may or may not have played in other bands (if anyone knows otherwise, please do tell!). Italo unfortunately passed away in 2004, and to him this post is dedicated. Additional thanks go to Steph and Bob for allowing this post to happen with their memories and boxes of saved tapes. The demos have not been digitalized yet, but let's hope

that they get released some day!