

# Khruangbin takes a dub journey on ‘Hasta El Cielo’

By **Chris Triunfo** Globe Correspondent, July 10, 2019, 5:21 p.m.



The Houston-based trio Khruangbin is making some of the best instrumental music around. And its attention to detail is clear on its new album, “Hasta El Cielo.”

Anyone who knows the band will recognize the opener, “With All the World.” In fact, the whole album will sound strikingly familiar. That’s because Khruangbin is trying something new, reimagining its 2018 project “Con Todo El Mundo” through a different musical lens: dub. The same dub that started as an offshoot of reggae in the ’60s, [pioneered](#) by the likes of Osbourne “King Tubby” Ruddock, and that has influenced countless musicians since.

Characterized by electronic blips, heavy basslines, and spacey echoes, often in wild remixes, the genre opens up new vistas for the band in “Hasta El Cielo.”

Khruangbin’s music can serve as the perfect soundtrack to passive activity, like taking a walk. But by reimagining an album this way, listeners take that same walk in a new place, triggering a sense of discovery.

Khruangbin isn’t jumping into dub completely blind. The band’s bassist, Laura Lee, has [said](#) she learned how to play the instrument by listening to the genre, calling dub

reggae her “ABCs of music.” One of the albums that always stood out to her is the 1982 album “Scientist Wins the World Cup” by Hopeton Brown (professionally known as dub producer Scientist). Khruangbin even enlisted Brown to remix two new tracks on the album, “Rules” and “Cómo Te Quiero.”

For years, Khruangbin have been considered to be dub-adjacent, hailed for their ability to make songs that might be considered repetitive sound enthralling. Some songs, like “A La Sala” (a remake of “Evan Finds the Third Room”), had very little done to them because they were already so similar to dub.

That’s not all this album is, though. Khruangbin’s original songs on “Con Todo El Mundo” drew on traditions as wide-ranging as Thai funk, southern jazz, Latin American folk, and psychedelic rock. And in rethinking them together, this just might be the band’s most unified piece of work. The ability to harness such rich diversity in sound is what makes this band stand out.

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