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Professional Photographer

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PHOTOGRAPHY PORTFOLIO

SELECTED WORKS / 1999 - 2009
A Selection of works by Jean-Luc Benazet



About Me

Hi. I am Jean-Luc Benazet,

Originally from a small village, 50 miles East of Toulouse in the South of France, I was a massive music fan but could only dream of small time fame. From 1992, during my Uni years in Toulouse. I played keyboards in a band, was a big fan of Depeche mode, Simple Minds (that I had seen live twice), INXS, a new band called Radiohead... and some French artists. I was going through life aimlessly, until a fateful weekend of 1995. A friend had attended a workshop in picture taking and film processing, there was a “dark room”, a “red light” and some “chemicals” involved. He insisted I go to the next one. I did! And that was it, I was hooked. The teacher said I took the two best pictures of that workshop, that I should get an SLR camera, my dad bought me a Minolta x-300s that following Christmas. And the rest, as they say is history.

I moved to England in September 1998. I was sent to America for a contracting job, and bought myself my first autofocus camera there, a Nikon D90s (negative film one). I documented the streets of Miami with it, and nearly got mugged in the process. I bought myself a few lenses and started taking more and more pictures. When I got back to England, I tried to get back to my first love: music. And managed to convince a local magazine to let me shoot music for them. The amount of gigs I ended up shooting became so important, I got recruited by a London agency, and I was sending them all my music photography. They then started asking me to cover film premieres at Film Festivals in London and Cambridge, I went to the Cannes Film Festival in 2002 (a crazy place), I even did a bit of football photography (but it's way too competitive). In 2007, I went to Cuba on a photography holiday and got hooked on street photography and portraits. And in 2009, I organised my very own travel photography workshop in Tuscany.



Jean-Luc Benazet
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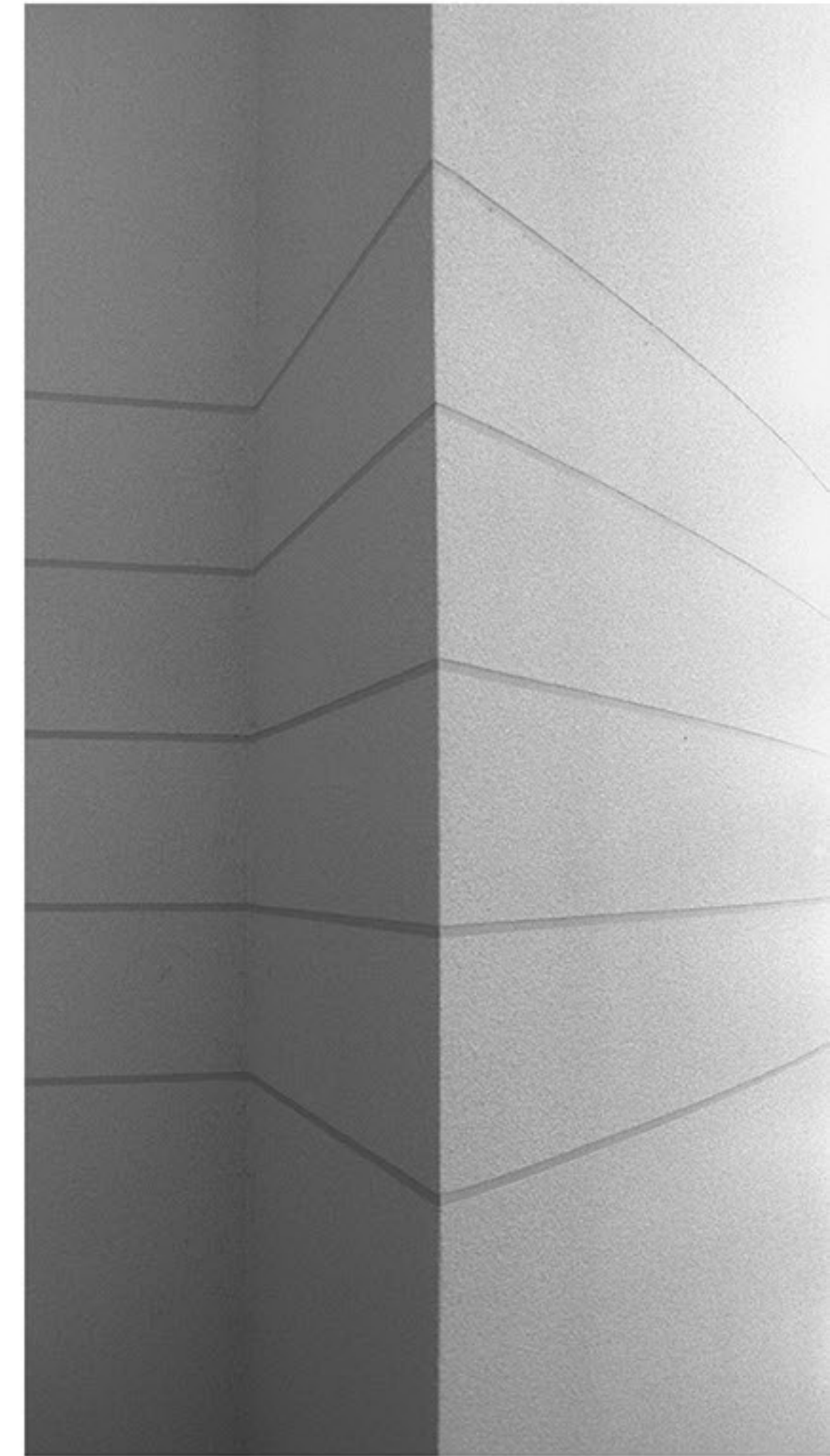
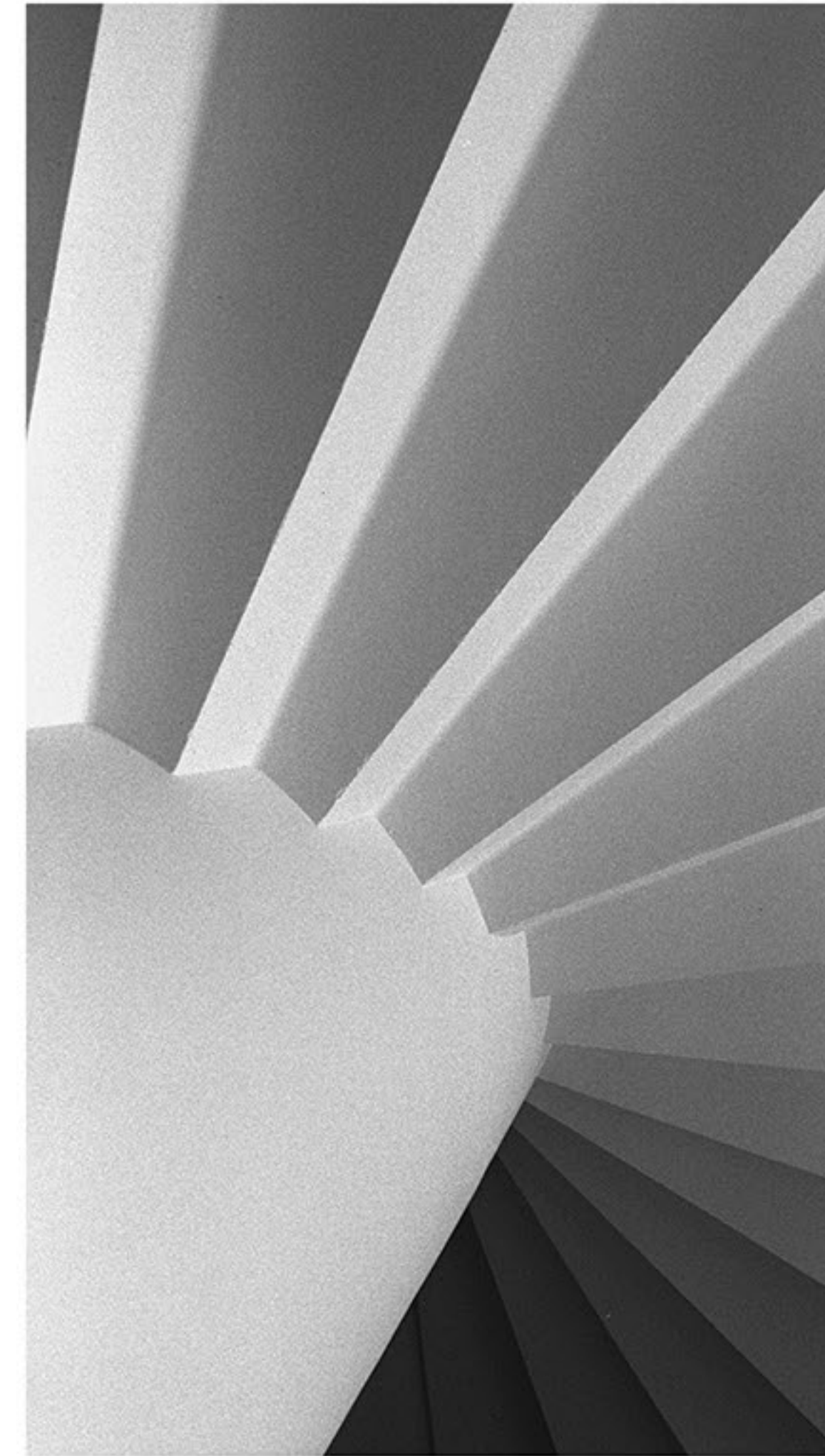
EARLY PHOTOGRAPHY

The “girl on the bike” and the “hazy figure in the escalator” were voted the two best photographs taken at my very first photography workshop back in 1995. I have for a long time wondered who was that girl on the bike... The local paper even printed an article about her, but I never found her again. Before I came to England, I was seemingly attracted to angles and interesting architecture. And I captured a lot of it.

Photographer
Jean-Luc Benazet

Camera
Minolta x-300s

Photo Location
South-West France



MUSIC PHOTOGRAPHY

I captured Music photography between 2001 and 2013 (I stopped just before my son was born). My first gig as a photographer was Fun Lovin Criminals, closely followed by Muse at the Cambridge Corn Exchange. I covered many bands over the years, sometimes shooting 5 gigs a week. You can find some of them at livemusicphotography.net

Photographer

Jean-Luc Benazet

Bands

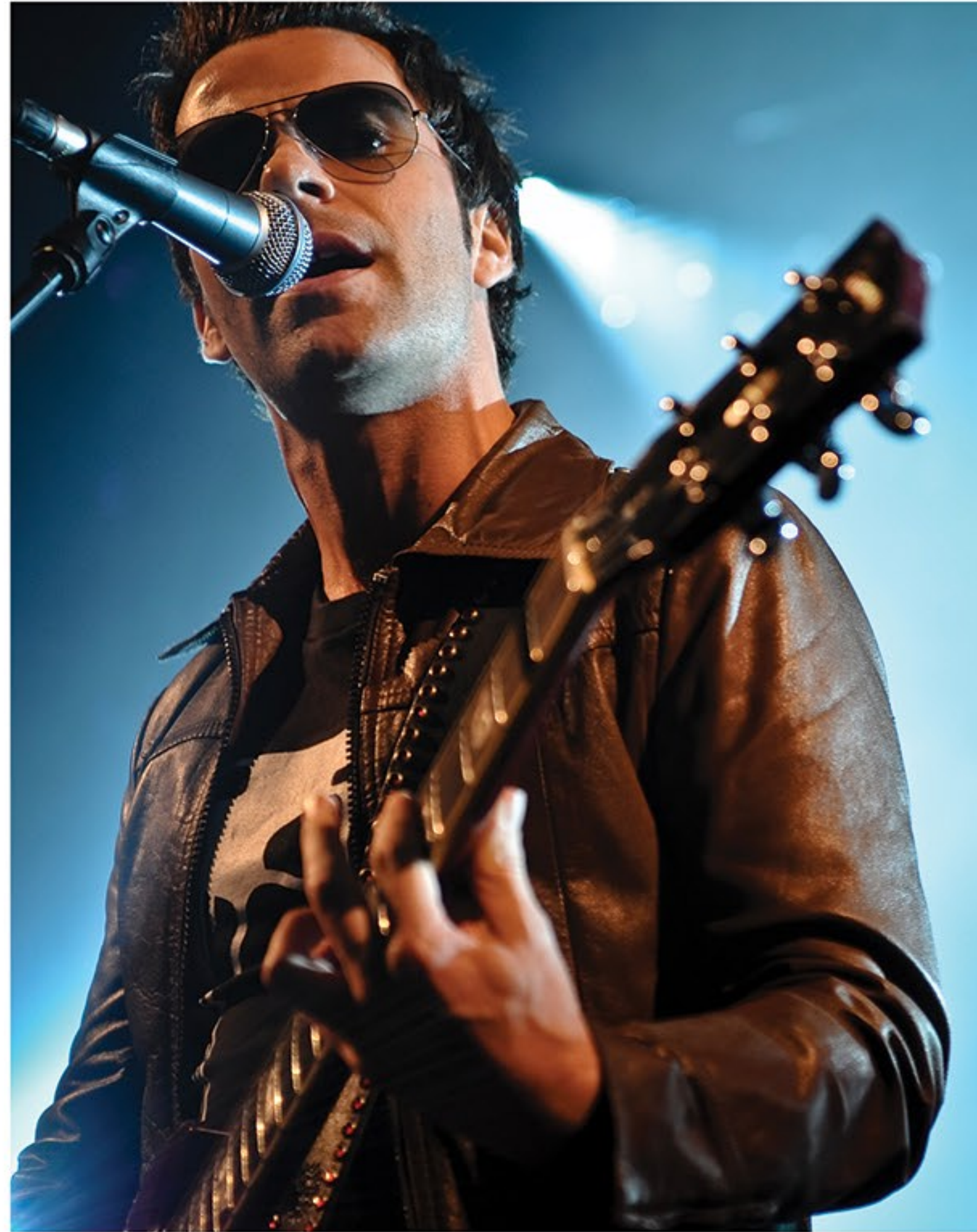
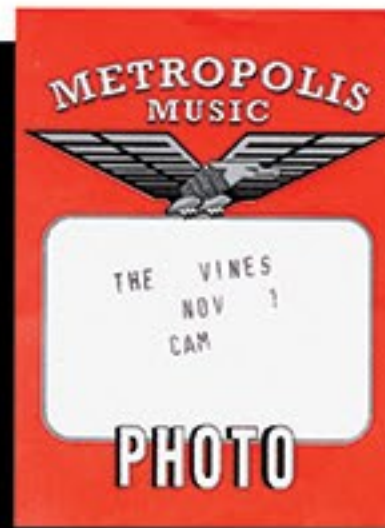
Stereophonics
Muse
Placebo
Amy Winehouse

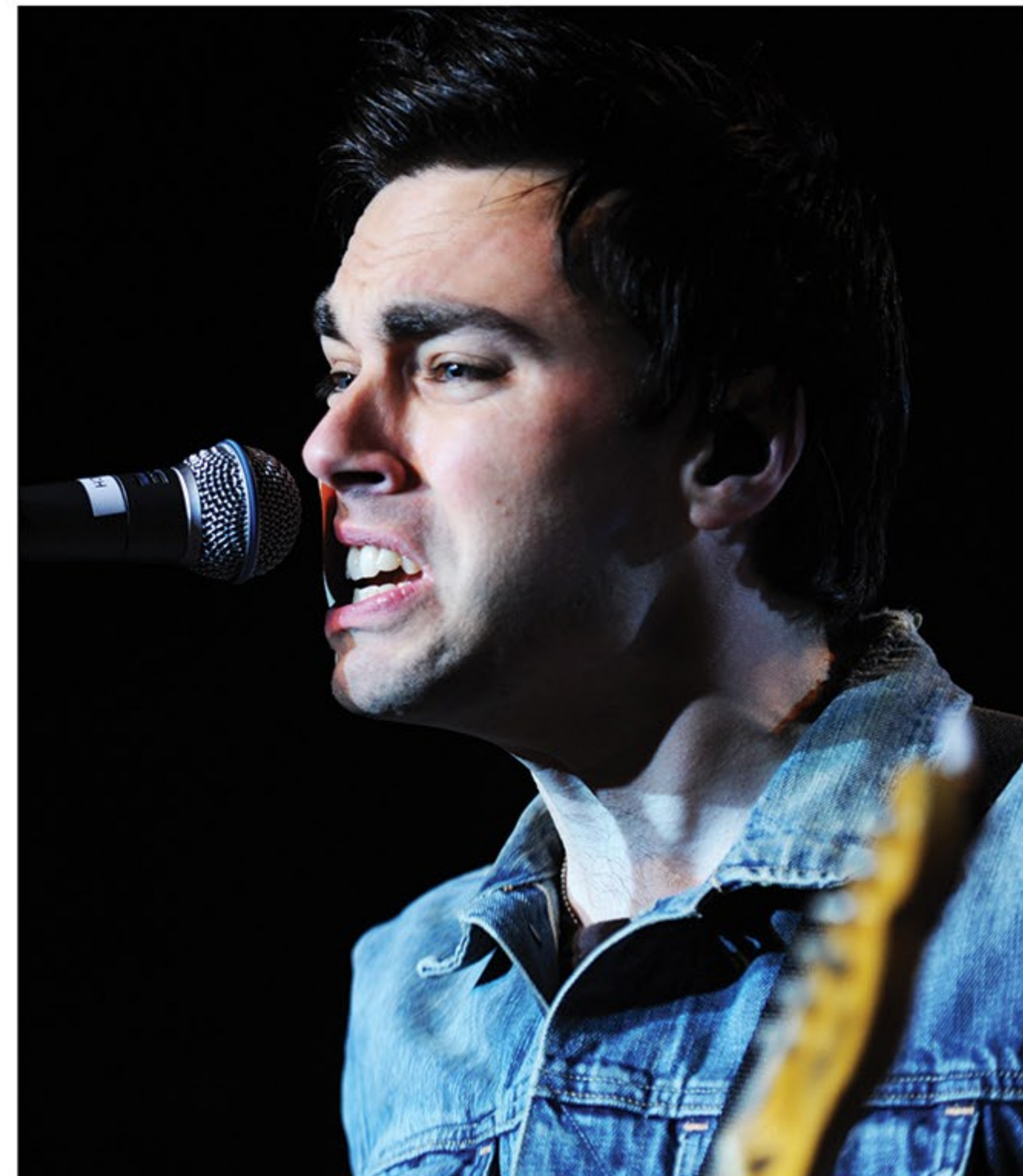
Cameras

Nikon D200 & D2x

Photo Location

Cambridge Corn Exchange, V2001 (Placebo) & Munich Zenith (Muse)





MUSIC PHOTOGRAPHY (cont.)

As a fan, I often used to arrive many hours before the gig, just to be at the front. I loved that as a photographer, I could arrive at the last minute, and still be in front of everybody else, in the pit!

Photographer

Jean-Luc Benazet

Artists

Corinne Bailey Rae, Thom Yorke, Katie Melua, Hard-Fi & Pete Doherty

Photo Locations

Cambridge Corn Exchange & Junction





STREET PHOTOGRAPHY

At the end of 2007, I decided to take a photography trip to Cuba with Light & Land. Flying to Havana, where we spent three days, then bus to Vinales, then bus to Cienfuegos via The Bay of Pigs, and then final bus trip to Trinidad. Never has a trip had such an impact on me. It took my photography up a notch, and it helped me tremendously capture candid portraits in a way I had only dreamt of in the past. The street photography combined with trying to photograph people without being seen was quite something.

By the end of the stay, I had swapped my 70-200mm zoom lens for a typical photojournalist lens, the 50mm f1.4. Rather than shoot from across the street, I was going straight into the action to photograph my subjects as close as possible. They could choose to ignore me, pretend I was not there. But at least there was always a tacit understanding that I was there capturing them, with their knowledge. It helped my wedding and portrait photography development from then on.

Photographer
Jean-Luc Benazet

Photo Location
Havana, Cuba
Cienfuegos, Cuba
Trinidad, Cuba



PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY

I have always been attracted to the human face and how best to represent it in pictures. When I arrived in Cambridge, it was not easy to find models and I would, every now and then, ask people in the streets or bars I was visiting if they would fancy having their picture taken, I know in this day and age, it may sound weird. But I did not get too many refusals. Szilvia was my German teacher, I ended up shooting Ruth's wedding, and I follow Manuela on FB.

Photographer

Jean-Luc Benazet

Models

Szilvia, Justina, Manuela & Ruth

Camera

x-300s, D90s, D100 & D200

Photo Location

Cambridge, UK





CAMBRIDGE PHOTOGRAPHY

Having lived in Cambridge for over 20 years, I got to know and discover the city and its landmarks year after year, some of these images were the fruit of total luck, some others were crafted by careful planning.

The floods of October 2001 resulted from a particularly heavy rainfall over a few weeks, the Cam burst its banks and Jesus Green was under water as well as many colleges greens like St John's (far right). The following weekend was sunny with a blue sky. I spent the weekend shooting roll after roll of Fuji Velvia!

Photographer
Jean-Luc Benazet

Photo Location
Cambridge, UK



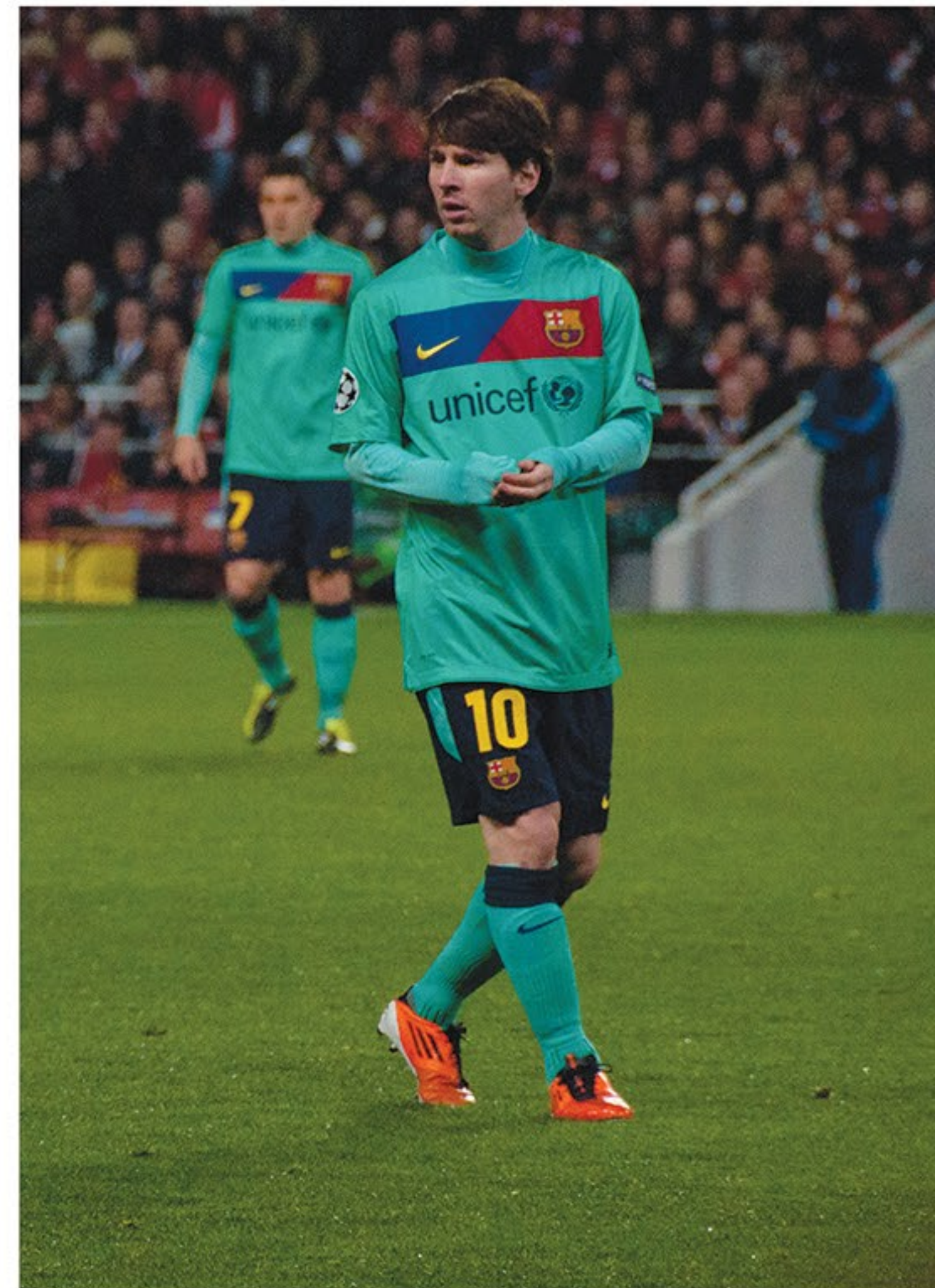


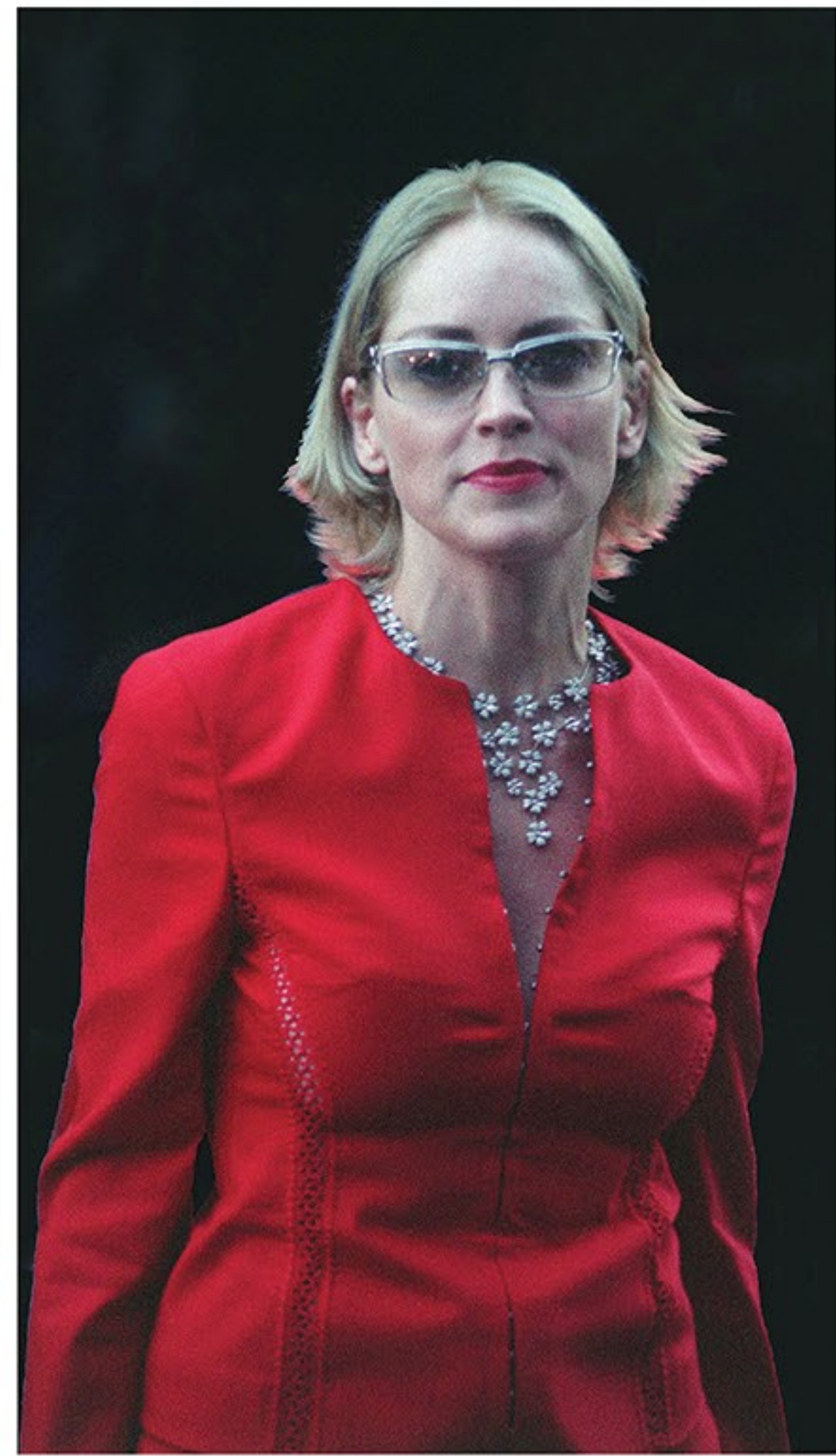
FOOTBALL PHOTOGRAPHY

I had a few goes at football photography, and being an avid Arsenal fan helped massively. But despite being given my chance by a football photography agency earlier on, it never really took off. The main issue being that the equipment was upwards of £10K and this photography field is so glamorous, some people are ready to do it for free!

Photographer
Jean-Luc Benazet

Photo Location
Wembley Stadium
Emirates Stadium





CELEBRITIES PHOTOGRAPHY

Just like football photography, celebrities photography is just as glamorous, and many people would do it for free. Mind you, even if you were doing it for money, there's not much to be had in the profession as you often need to work for an agency to hope sell anything, and they take a cut (often 50%). I still take celebrities portraits but mainly during Cambridge Film Festival.

Photographer

Jean-Luc Benazet

Photo Location

London Leicester Square & Cannes Festival



LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

Ever since I have been interested in photography, I have been attracted by the rolling hills of Tuscany. More specifically the Val d'Orcia region, South of Pienza, the area is full of amazing places to photograph.

Wake up at 5am to capture sunset and the mist around the cypresses and hills, spend the day by the pool with a good book, or wine tasting in Montalcino, and capture the golden hour in the wheat fields and the vines. Then photograph sunset, and go back to your villa where a somptuous feast awaits. Magical.

I have visited on several occasion and I even organised a pilot trip with a group of friends back in May 2009. I would like to make those a highlight of my photography year. Who's with me?

Photographer

Jean-Luc Benazet

Photo Location

Torrenieri, Tuscany
The Belvedere, Tuscany
La Foce, Tuscany





TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY

The conundrum as a photographer is to still be able to go on holiday or to travel away from home and take pictures of your surroundings without it feeling like a chore or work.

I love taking pictures so it never feels like it is an obligation, and for me travel photography is a way to visit new places and make other people discover them through my eyes.

Sometimes I never want to share those photos as I do not find them attractive enough, some other time I can wait to be back to show them off to everybody.

Here is a small selection of some of my favourite travel photographs from the last decade. I shall see you in the next portfolio if I have not already lost you on route.

Photographer

Jean-Luc Benazet

Photo Location

Isles of Scilly
France
Italy
Florida

