

Mexican musician, writer Armando Vega Gil commits suicide after #MeToo allegation

By David Walsh
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Mexican musician, poet and writer Armando Vega Gil, 64, committed suicide April 1 at his home in Mexico City after being accused of harassing a teenage girl. Apparently, he hanged himself.

Vega Gil, born in Mexico City, was a bassist and a co-founder of Botellita de Jerez, one of the more influential Mexican rock 'n' roll bands, formed in the early 1980s.

The anonymous accuser, on the #MeTooMusicosMexicanos Twitter account, asserted that Vega Gil had befriended her when he was 50 and she was 13. She did not accuse the musician of physical abuse, but claimed he made unwanted verbal advances, including telling her he wanted to teach her how to kiss. Vega Gil, in a lengthy suicide note he posted on his social media accounts, “categorically” denied the accusation.

According to press reports, the band’s representative Paola Hernandez spoke with Vega Gil at about two in the morning, a few hours before his death. “He was really sad and pissed off, he didn’t know how to clear his name,” Hernandez said. “He said he wasn’t guilty ... [but] he was worried about how his son would take all this.” (*The Independent*)

The official Botellita de Jerez band page confirmed Vega Gil’s death in a tweet that read, “With immense sadness, we share that our partner @ArmandoVegaGil passed away today. We are processing this news and doing the corresponding procedures. Rest in peace, little brother.”

Vega Gil was the author of dozens of books, including novels, poetry, short stories and stories for children. He was also the recipient of numerous awards for his musical and literary efforts.

In his suicide note, the musician and author, after acknowledging that the accusation was “very, very

serious,” commented, “I will say this categorically, this accusation is false.”

He went on: “I’m a public figure and I’m constantly with people, a lot of them minors, in my house for interviews, workshops, or simply talks with some of these girls and guys who follow my career, and I maintain communication with them. One of my most important jobs is writing and singing for kids. I’m also a father. I have always striven to defend universal children’s rights, I’m against their exploitation and abuse, physical and psychological, and I try to make their lives happier with my music and writing. I work with humanitarian associations in disaster relief and to obtain funding for children without resources for their treatment.”

Vega Gil observed that it was good “for women to raise their voice to make our fucked-up world change. It’s an inalienable right, especially for the women of this country and the whole world. Femicides, kidnappings, porn, they are a disease that advances in a spectacular way and nothing seems to stop it.”

But, he added, “In short, it’s a fact that I will lose jobs, since they’re built on my public credibility. My life has stopped, there’s no way out. I know I can’t defend myself on social media, anything I say can be used against me.”

The musician went on, “I must clarify that my death is not a confession of guilt. On the contrary, it is a radical declaration of innocence. I only want to clear the way that my son will travel in the future. His orphaning is a violent thing to do, but it’s better to have a terrible end than a terror without end. I want to apologize to the women I made uncomfortable with my words and attitudes, the women I hurt with my sexist ways. ... Don’t blame anyone for my death, this suicide is a conscious, voluntary, free and personal decision.

See you soon.”

Vega Gil’s death by his own hand generated criticism of Mexico’s #MeToo movement. The national educational publishing agency commented, according to AFP, “Let this help us remember that the justifiable complaints about harassment, machismo and violence against women should not become an irresponsible persecution.”

Mexico’s #MeToo campaign responded to the suicide with predictable brutality and vindictiveness: “To any of the accused and unpunished criminals who want to use this painful event to discredit the international #MeToo movement, we want to inform you that, however much you attack us, we will not be silent.” Referring to the suicide, the #MeToo advocates wrote, “It was done to defame the movement ... he knew he was guilty. It was media blackmail.”

Gil Vega’s suicide is not the first such desperate act since the #MeToo sexual witch-hunt was launched in October 2017.

Film producer Jill Messick committed suicide in February 2018 after having come under immense pressure from Rose McGowan and the #MeToo zealots. Messick had failed to confirm McGowan’s claim that producer Harvey Weinstein sexually assaulted her. Messick indicated instead that McGowan told her at the time the encounter with Weinstein was regrettable but consensual.

Following Messick’s death, in a strongly worded statement, her family charged that “Jill was victimized by our new culture of unlimited information sharing and a willingness to accept statement as fact ... She became collateral damage in an already horrific story.”

The family statement took note of the numerous women who had come forward with allegations against Weinstein, “including Rose McGowan, who has repeatedly spoken with the press, striking out against not only her alleged attacker, but a great many others. One of them was Jill, who chose to remain silent in the face of Rose’s slanderous statements against her for fear of undermining the many individuals who came forward in truth. She opted not to add to the feeding frenzy, allowing her name and her reputation to be sullied despite having done nothing wrong.”

In March 2018, prominent Swedish theater director and administrator Benny Fredriksson took his own life after being accused of bullying and sexual misconduct.

His widow, the famed opera singer Anne Sofie von Otter, insisted he had been the victim of “character assassination” that had driven him into deep depression.

As was the case with the deaths of Messick and Fredriksson, the American media, acting out of guilt and bad faith, has quickly dropped the story of Vega Gil’s suicide.

He was further “collateral damage” in the selfish, upper middle class #MeToo drive for position and privilege. His death should neither be dismissed nor forgotten.

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