

INDRA

Since our interview in the last edition of Sequences magazine no32, which is in part, included in this updated version. Indra from Romania has certainly been productive with 9 of the planned 12 CD set 'Tantric Celebration' now completed. Several live concerts, including two on the Ricochet Gatherings in Croatia & Romania and with the unusual setting in the spectacular salt mines of Tudra, an event filmed for his first DVD release. We so grateful to Indra for letting us preview all of the 9 Tantric Celebration CD's on our podcast, which show over the years a maturity in his compositions, still with that rhythmic quality ever present in the music.



Let's start with your younger days. Did music play a major part in you upbringing at home in your youth?

It was one of my major preoccupations. Being a child I was listening over and over again the classic rhapsodies and concerts on the vinyl and also the pop-rock stars of those times. I used to improvise little 'concerts' with some of my school friends in the woodhut from my yard, with 'instruments' like sticks, metals, glasses and gongs. It was funny ?

Stockhausen would have been happy! Some of my colleagues had a sort of pipe instrument with a little keyboard attached, so that all the long day I asked them forgiving it to me, to play it. Soon I realised that my friends did not feel

very well the rhythm and more over they did not understand what were my musical ideas, what I was asking them in this direction. So I decided to take the way for myself, doing a course of drums and percussion. I also learned playing the guitar, especially for the opportunity of making some strange sounds using the effect pedals.

Ed. What influences in the music world gave you the desire to switch from guitar to synthesizer technology?

The main influence in this direction, I can frankly say, was that from Klaus Schulze's music. The combination between a very deep trance-like state of mind (in some of his tracks) and the overwhelming effect types made me conclude: 'Guys, I'm gonna make some music by myself! I think it's time for a proper orientation!' and so I entered the complex world of EM.

Ed. Did you find it difficult/ expensive to purchased hardware in your native country when you started building your first studio set-up?

Indeed, there were some problems in this respect. My first keyboard was a YAMAHA PSR-390; it was rather new for those times but I had already exhausted its possibilities in a couple of days. Fortunately, some good friends of mine from Denmark trusted in my musical ideas and beliefs and helped me buy my first home studio. The notorious KORG Wavestation, my love, and the computer and so on. Then followed the Fairlight and other instruments; there were times of rapid and accommodation with the higher and higher technology, especially with the sampler one. I used to explore to the maximum almost every synthesizer I had at my disposal; the NEW SOUND was a kind of my principle.

Ed. In those early years when you played guitar in various bands were you aware there was an electronic music scene outside of Romania?

Ha-ha, of course I was very aware of that! I had already known by heart the albums of Pink Floyd, I had listen a lot to Beatles, Uriah Heep and even to Deep Purple, although not everything of their musical creations I liked.

There was also Gary Glitter and Janis Joplin and the exciting Mike Oldfield with his extraordinary Tubular Bells. And many others, including the disco-pop musicians and bands.

Around '75-'76 I came to listen to J.M.-Jarre and Vangelis albums; it was a major turn in my conception, mainly because I began to understand that the electronic music seemed

to reveal very much of what I was intending to do in music. Still, the influence of Pink Floyd was huge and lasted so to the '80s.

My solos on the guitar were somewhat 'slow-hand', long sustained, with deep vibration and echo, dominant and rather melodic. I often tried different strange effects using the effect pedals and glissandos



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Ed. Has it been a struggle to keep pace with music technology as it progressed into a computer age?

On the contrary, I was very glad to follow that path because it suited me very much. I'm for the pure sound, but sometimes this is not enough. One can say: 'You don't need all this complicated stuff. You can make the same thing with a violin'. Wrong, even supposing you could do it, you wouldn't have too much room for your imagination. The highest technology which is now available in recording music gives one a very large field for expressing oneself. But one must know how to use it. In a way, this is a work of searching and discovering, which implies interest and enthusiasm.

ED. Like Chris Franke & Schulze you began with percussion, did this give you a greater freedom and platform for the rhythmic sequencing that's so evident on recent album releases?

Definitely, this is something very important. It gives more power to the music, much rhythm and as I said many times before, the rhythm is essential for it is the core of life. 'Understanding' rhythm means knowing at least in a certain proportions the mysteries of the universe. We struggle everyday to 'pulse' the rhythm of our life and sometimes we succeed to emulate this into the sound; hence the idea that through music and rhythm we can influence in a beneficial way our perception, our psychic states, our moods and of course our health.

Ed. Your music has strong Berlin School influences especially with the sequencing, one of your favourite styles?

The vein of my style is Berlin School style. Even I use many times the groove sound or the atmospheric-ambient harmonies, nevertheless I always come back to the 'old love'. However, I do not take it as it is; something has to be renewed here. There is a lack of imagination in the classic Berlin School and too much repetition. The ostinato is good, but it has to be used in an optimum mode. I think I succeeded in bringing this dimension of 'making things happen' in the Berlin School style, adding also a hint of melodic line, which has the role to connect the listener to his heart. It's an improvement, because thus the music has more coherence and is actually interactive with the listener.

In our last interview we never mentioned your work as a yoga Instructor, this must not only give spiritual enlightenment, but an inner calmness in the way your music is produced.

INDRA: Intensive yoga practice for the last 27 years has brought, in addition to many other benefits, the ability to resonate consciously with the music I compose. This implies some knowledge, the acquisition of inner and outer states of purity, calm and balance, capacity to focus and, in particular the ability of being aware when music is dissonant or when it is not valuable. Everyone creates according to the level at which they are at, and this is not at all a problem, because it's just like the proverb:

You make the bed you lie in. Problems start to appear from the moment when the artist creates and then imagines that his work is brilliant, underestimating its potential. You cannot create a work of artistic value as long as the ego is dominant, i.e. the false nature in you. For music to have a real impact and force, for it to speak to the true depths of the soul of the listener, it is necessary that you yourself resonate with your pure and true inner nature, which does not change and never dies. It is not about survival, nor family maintenance, nor fame, nor wealth. Here we are talking about the ability to penetrate the mystery of your own being. The more often and more deeply you succeed in this, the more elevated your music will be.

Too much ego and too much superficiality exists in the world today regarding electronic music. That is why there is an accentuated decline, which comes mainly from the lack of inspiration, and therefore of really valuable works. On the other hand, it is true that there are not too many people who are able to recognize a piece of musical genius, because they are simply just not on the same wave length with it. If you are a radio that can only receive stations on long wave (LW) and medium wave (MW), how do you think you will hear and receive a station that transmits music on FM? Most probably you will not take into account this music, or will say that it is rubbish.

Therefore, there seems to be a necessity for the adjustment of the world we live in, which both artists (composer), and spectators (listeners) should be correlated and elevated to achieve an increase on the whole artistic act and the capacity of the perception of them.



INDRA's RECORDING STUDIO EQUIPMENT

Acoustic Treatment ASC AttackWall **Monitoring:** Blue Sky ProDesk 2.1 Sennheiser HD600 audio-ophile headphones Sennheiser HD280 (2x)

Mixer: Mackie Onyx 1620 with FireWire option **Audio Interface:** RME Fireface 800

MIDI Interface: M-Audio MidiSport 8x8 **Headphone Amp:** Samson S-Phone

Computer: Apple Mac Pro Quad 3.0 with Apple Cinema Display 23" Apple MacBook Pro 17" (for live performances)

Sequencer: Cubase 5 Cubase Studio 4 **Additional Hardware:** TC Electronic PowerCore FireWire

Hardware Synthesizers: Access Virus TI . Access Virus Classic coupled with Schrittmacher step-sequencer. Roland V-Synth. Korg Radias. Clavia Nord Modular G2. Quasimidi Polymorph Quasimidi Rave-o-Lution. Waldorf Blofeld and of course a lot of plugins (software).

Since our interview with you in 2007 for Sequences Magazine you have now released the 9th Special Edition CD Matangi in a series of 12. Main structures in the music are still there with highly rhythmic sequencing but more diverse polished compositions. Is this due partly to the use of new equipment and your professional learning curve as the years go by?

INDRA: Without doubt, there is a constant upgrade both from a technological point of view as well as for musical ideas, the orchestration, sophistication of the interpretation. Time is a good advisor and especially a good teacher.

What remains constant is the reason why I make music. It's not commercial, but addresses a special kind of being, to which only a few people in modern society, stressed and agitated, have access. Here, the spiritual dimension, which gives direction and coherence to existence, is fundamental. I am trying to give through electronic music a part of uncontainable from what is spirit. This creative activity is naturally contained on an ascending spiral, because it represents a conscious effort that is orientated towards the essence of the being, i.e. toward the interior, and not the exterior. Unfortunately, in my opinion most musicians do not show a certain superior emotion or inner knowledge in expressing their creativity.

An inspired musical piece must always have something beneficial, elevated, which should be communicated to the listener. It is a process of resonance which appears between the music of the artist and the listener. What impact does this music have in us? What does it awaken in the soul? How profound are the ideas and feelings that are induced? All these should be benchmarks which show us the level at which we have arrived in the process of musical creation.

As long as we live and create superficially, our works will be ordinary, mediocre and sometimes even strange due to the tendencies that some artists feel and manifest in their creative act without being conscious of it. A sort of "garbage music" or "routine music". What good is an artist with a famous name in the past creating in the present less than mediocre music? The being ages, becomes worn out and if we add to all this ignorance and the uninspiring way in which life is lived (bad food, erroneous ways of thinking and acting etc.) we understand that the resources of the being have been depleted and that artist no longer "functions" other than based on the "recognition" of his name, which he acquired some time in the past, but the chapter of his artistic value is at present almost invalid.

In my opinion it is not enough for music to just "sound good"; it should always sound as close as possible to perfection, to be brilliant. This may come out of artistic creation, from the capacity of an artist to resonate with elevated and superior energetic influences. It is not enough to produce one or two brilliant songs in a few years, because one swallow does not make a summer. The value of an artist can be seen when the creative activity has no fluctuations, but they are consistently on an upwards trend.

With your live events, you've appeared at two of the Richochet Gatherings, The Pyramid concert in Denmark, various other venues in your own country etc., but the most interesting was the Turda Salt Mine concert. The logistics must have been, shall we say, difficult? Not the most welcoming venue, but intriguing all the same. Would you say this is probably your most satisfying concert to date, in terms of ambience and performance?

INDRA: I dare to say that the Turda Salt Mine concert represented an exceptional realisation. I mean, how many musicians hurry to descend 50 metres below ground to hold a concert there? It was first of all a challenge, which the technical team assumed and managing, in my opinion, to do a very good job. Through this concert we wanted to firstly experience the phenomenon of resonance in special conditions. Everything was special there: the environment, the substance, the location, the people, the temperature, the sound. It was also very difficult, but in an almost magical way it produced a wonderful show.

The effort was remarkable... the satisfaction was also as great. Ultimately, it was a new experience and it was good that I held the concert then, because after that the place was reorganised from a truistic point of view and the concert would have been postponed a few years.

With the same idea of resonance I would like to hold a concert on top of the mountain, at the Sphinx in the Bucegi Mountains (2220 metres altitude) and also a concert in the architectural arrangement of Stonehenge (UK). Maybe this will be possible in the near future, if the production elements can be resolved. After the concert in the Salt Mine it seems I developed a taste for unusual locations, as in the following year I gave a concert in a great pyramid on the West Bank of the Baltic Sea, in Denmark (The Pyramid Concert). It was also a wonderful experience, which allowed me to realise some inspired and valuable pieces.

However, I would rather work in the studio instead of the activities of elegant concerts. The agitation and the various problems which may arise put their imprint on the quality of the music that you play in a concert. You start to ask yourself why are you making all this effort, if you cannot offer the message that you want to send through music. That is why I prefer to give concerts rarely, and when I do for them to be well prepared

To date, in the year 2013 you are credited with over 35 albums, a mammoth volume of work. The musical experiences you had over those years must keep you in good stead for future projects?

INDRA: This year (2013) will probably be a surprising year for my fans. It will be the year with an explosion of music, because my projects are ambitious: I have proposed to finish the series of albums Special Edition - Tantric Celebration, to publish the album of the live concert Thunderbolt - Live at the Black Sea (2008) and to also release another series of albums, which I have called Archives, that will contain 25 albums. It is a huge volume of music, it is studio music (with very few exceptions, which comes from some concerts) which I composed over a period of time, but never published until now. In this new series I have also included those parts or fragments of pieces from old albums that could not be re-edited in their entirety, because of insurmountable problems regarding the quality of the material. I thought that it would be a regret to not publish this music however, because I surprisingly discovered that many of the pieces are extraordinary, even if they have not been included on albums. In addition, it is like a journey through my artistic creations and also a chronology of the ideas and trends in my electronic music.



By releasing some of your early works on CD for the first time, it must bring back, maybe, fond memories of those days? I know a lot of musicians we talk to, don't like to look back on previous albums, some almost embarrassed to talk about them. How do you feel on this subject?

As we come into a new year, can you put us in the picture regarding the musical visions you have planned for the future?

INDRA: I have already outlined in general my plans for the future in terms of musical production: finishing the series Special Edition, publication of the album of the live concert Thunderbolt - Live at the Black Sea (2008), publication of the series Archives (25 albums). I also have the further intention of an album about the fundamental cosmic energy Kundalini and also a double-album on the seven subtle force centres of the human being. An older project, which I hope to complete, is a set of six albums, grouped in two series, so as to lead to a trilogy: The Berlin School Trilogy. Regarding concert activity, the situation is

more delicate, on the one hand because of elitism of the musicians and producers in Germany, the UK and Netherlands, and on the other hand because of the distance between Romania and the main centres of cultural manifestation of electronic music. However, I remain faithful to the older ideas of making a concert on the top of the mountain, at the famous Sphinx in the Bucegi Mountains in Romania and a concert at Stonehenge (Great Britain).

INDRA: It is true that, technically, there is a big difference between the music at the beginning of my career in EM and the music that I compose now, but beyond all this the force sent by musical ideas of the '90s still remains, the impregnated energy in those themes is vivid even today, as well as many wonderful memories of the act of creation... About some of them I wrote briefly when I re-edited the older albums.

For me it is quite amazing how strong the energy of the beginning was when I started in 1993 for the first time to give free reign to my musical imagination and ideas. Things always arranged themselves and I have been supported in my efforts, but fundamentally it was the constant aspiration to create music beyond the ordinary experiences of the human, to which I can add the inner frenzy and extraordinary pleasure of creating a real musical universe in my being. I even relate many times to these moments of the beginning, because they are infused by a very special energy. I succeed to recreate them in me with ease and to develop sublime ideas and moods, that is, a very rich universe, a world always fresh and unaltered by the passage of time.



In the EM scene you have been somewhat ignored (as far as I know) by two of the most successful EM festivals, with top musicians appearing and good crowds, E-Live (Holland) & Electronic Circus, (Germany) which run regular events ever year. Have you ever been approached to play at any of these events?

INDRA: No, I have never been invited to these festivals of electronic music and to be honest I don't think that the organizers have ever heard of INDRA. Generally speaking, I'm not interested in playing at such "grandiose" festivals, as they usually do not provide enough time to develop on stage what you want. In addition, the public is somewhat agitated, musicians are diverse, heterogeneous approaches... it may be better from a particular point of view, but from another point of view it can be a handicap. In addition, I have always had the impression that they are in a hurry to go on stage with the synthesizers at the rear, and to leave quickly and on time, because the next act has to enter. Also, at my concerts I place a great emphasis on the visual impression and project different video clips. At festivals you talk about, I don't think the organizers are so interested in satisfying such requests. In any case, I would not leave from "pole position" for pre-tensions. Because of this I prefer to organize my own concerts, and even if they are not many, at least I have certainty that they offer me complete freedom of expression.

If the answer is no and you would be interested, a word or two in someone's ears could make it possible. When this podcast goes out I'm sure there is going to be a lot of interest from the listeners.

INDRA: Time will prove whether or not it is so. I remain detached, because my intention is to offer people music so that they can truly benefit from what is pure, devoid of desire for fame or riches. From this point of view, one of the musician that I appreciate in particular is David Parsons. How many people can really understand his extraordinarily profound musical creations? He is almost unknown in EM and yet very subtle in the approach he has, also with profound spiritual roots.

Besides purchasing your music from the on-line shop, are there any other outlets where you can obtain your albums?

INDRA: In the immediate future I hope I can launch the application that makes it possible the purchase my music by download on any smart-phone and directly from the official site. It's a project that people have been working for almost two years, but for various reasons it is not quite ready. However, it is now almost completed and very likely that in the month of February or March this method will be open to those willing to know and to have INDRA's music.



Because now music is instantly available as downloads and taking over from the physical media, do you have any future plans in this direction for your music to be purchased in this way?

INDRA: As you have seen, I anticipated your question and there are great chances that my music will be available by download soon. There are hundreds of songs, especially after the publication of the second large series of albums (Archives). The musical universe of INDRA will then be much more well known.