

Press Interview

Chicago Music Guide Interview An Interview with Anouschka

by Dennis M. Kelly, April 2006

So, where were you born?

In Stockholm, Sweden. My mother is Swedish. With my American father, a doctor in the US Army, we moved around extensively in Europe, Asia and America during my childhood.

Do you recall what your first guitar was? And do you still own/play it?

I was 12, when my Swedish grandmother brought me a beat up acoustic she'd bought at a flea market for 20 dollars. I named the guitar Tinkerbelle, because she had a very treble sound. The strings were hard and my fingers bled. I bought a beginners book, taught myself simplified chords and started writing songs. Throughout my childhood Tinkerbelle was my solace from always being the new kid on the block. Later my grandfather gave me my first love guitar, an Ovation, (Tinkerbelle II). The first Tinker got lost in a move. Years later Tinkerbelle II was stolen from my car when I was attending Berklee College of Music in Boston. It had been with me everywhere in my world travels and I was devastated. That guitar was the last tangible remnant of my childhood. It took me a year to find the Takamine I have been performing with since! Last year I went electric though and got a custom Halkan for my birthday!

What parts of Europe and Asia did you live in and for how long?

I consider Thailand my first proper home since we lived in the same house and I attended Bangkok International School for four years. I learned Thai, Thai dancing, and studied Buddhism. I learned about Judaism from my father's side and about the Swedish Lutheran tradition from my mother's side, so I had a very diverse intellectual spiritual and multi-cultural exposure (which I am extremely grateful for) at an early age.

Did you perform in each of those countries as well?

I performed in every country I traveled to. In the Kenya Bush I taught some chords to a Masai warrior. He fell in love with me and wanted us to marry. See what havoc a chord can wreak!

What made you decide to move back to Sweden?

I love LA, but I was very lonely. Some very bizarre things happened to me there! But I'll keep those juicy stories for another interview... or another album! I thought Sweden would welcome me like a long lost childhood dream. I was wrong. Insane things happen here too. I now believe you build your home within yourself like a tortoise. I am portable now. I travel well.

With your new album "My Kind of Heartbreak", are there any personal stories that you wrote about?

Every song is inspired by a personal story but I take great artistic liberties to best serve the song. So, yes and no. There are so many types of heartbreak- the heartbreak from lovers, family, shattered dreams, a continual sense of loss, and of never quite belonging and coming into one's own. Heartbreak is where we either grow the most or lose ourselves the most. I've done both. This album has been percolating in me for a long time. I just needed the opportunity. I had a culminating heartbreak moment last year that topped everything off. I hit a downward spiral. After years of trying to play by the rules I realized I wasn't even interested in the game anymore. We can always change our perception even if we can't change our circumstance. "Good Girl Gone Wild" is my freedom song. "Man Like You" and "When RU Coming Round" are about a man I was madly convinced was my soul mate. (He never came round) "Venice Beach" is about my love-hate relationship with LA, I love the anything-goes but hate the sleaze. "House of My Father" is about my broken relationship with my father and the fear I felt trying to be the dutiful good girl growing up. At the end of the day, every song is about some kind of heartbreak ergo the title "My Kind of Heartbreak". I hope that there is a little bit of everything for everyone. That was my communication goal with the album, to strike a common chord on a positive note.

Are there any tracks in particular that you are most fond of?

I usually love a song when I'm working on it and then get sick of it. Right now I like "Venice Beach", "Lets See This Through", "House of My Father". Lets See This Through because it's got a happy ending, and because I truly believe that "heroes can be ordinary men"; we can all help "save" one another in small unassuming ways from small random acts of kindness, to grandiose acts of loving someone and mirroring them in their best light. I like "Venice Beach" cause it's a little edgier in the vocals, and "House of My Father" because I find my arrangement very effective, emotive and the lyrics poetic.

Management/Booking/TV/Kommunikation:

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Where do you find your greatest satisfaction? Writing or performing?

They are different types of thrills. The first is the moment I bring my charts to a great group of musicians and feel the songs flesh out and breathe life from all the different energies and capacities in the room. After hours and months of working alone it is so gratifying. Inside my head can be a very lonely space to be for such a long time. Then there's the undeniable high of a performance where the magic happens - The songs just play themselves and we are in complete synchronization with each other and the audience... I guess I love every step of the process in a different way. It's the only time I feel at peace.

Tell me about your lineup, how did you come across such talented musicians?

Once I started putting myself out there, I got hooked up pretty quickly. But it has been hard to get paying gigs where I can afford to pay a full lineup. I am hoping this album will change that.

I met James at a Tuesday jam. They were impressed when I was the only guitarist who could read a jazz chart, so they told me to sit in whenever I wanted to. Then I met Chuck at the Saturday Blues Jam. Jocke I knew from Berklee in Boston. He'd played a lot with Chuck so they were tight and Chuck played a lot with James. It's a small world.

Do you perform with some of them at all or were they only assisting you with the recording of your album?

I have performed with all of them at various times. If I get a tour/gigs and can hire the full line up, we're there. But we all freelance so I am open to working with others if they have prior commitments.

When will you perform in Chicago?

As soon as I'm invited!

Well, come on over! :-) Why did it take you six years to record another CD?

Money.

What are you future plans both musically and personally?

I hope to get a solid label on board to assist with marketing, to tour, to place songs in TV and film, to spread a good vibe and make enough money to consider myself legally employed! I want to continue growing, to become a better soloist and record many more albums. I would also love to write for others and produce. My personal goals are to meet my soul mate, fall and stay in love, have children - both my own and adopted - keep healthy, and do volunteer work with environment, orphans and wildlife.

Thank you for answering these questions!

Thank you for interest in my music and me!