

## INTERVIEW TO ECSTASPHERE

Today we talk with **Ophelia The Suffering**, one of the most interesting musicians of the last couple of years within the IDM and Rhythmic Noise landscapes, that in a very short time released two particular and, in a certain sense, innovative albums: **Carnival of catharsis** as **Ecstasphere** and **Breathe** as **Aphexia**, both of them released by **Dirk Geiger's Raumklang Music**. What makes artist's music so particular, an artist who step by step is gaining good feedbacks in Germany (and that we hope to see soon in Italy too) is the merging between heavy rhythmic and classical music's elements: piano and violin talk with distorted (and more influenced by IDM) rhythmic. We talk directly with Ophelia about her approach to music and about her new albums.

- 1) Hi Ophelia, you've just released two new albums and you're making an increasing number of live performances. Talk to our readers about your two musical emanations, Ecstasphere and Aphexia. What do you want to express with your music?

Good evening, Alessandro! Well, my music is my way of revealing myself to the outside world, call it the objective reality if you believe in that sort of thing, it is the direct manifestation of my substance, my thoughts, my emotions, my mental processes. What I do with my music is actually pretty desquaming myself. It's not only a fun activity for me, I rely on it to exist. I do believe that being able to express myself in this particular way has saved my life many times, so it is a gift I am extremely grateful for.

- 2) Let's start talking about Carnival of catharsis, a very much particular and innovative album in the rhythmic noise / IDM scene. It seems to us that this is the first example of perfect meeting between the rhythmic elements that belong to the genre and elements of classical music. What's beautiful about the album is the way in which two so different genres not only meet themselves but speak the same language in a perfect way. Have you composed the "classical" melodies?

Thank you for your kind words. Yes, every structure, melody, rhythm and word you hear on my releases is generally written and developed exclusively by myself, because in a musical context (and only in that, I am hoping) I am a fucking egomaniac who always has to have her way. I am pretty obsessed with conceptualizing everything I create to the last detail. On "Carnival of Catharsis" also every melody has been composed by me, as well as the other musical elements. There is one exception though: the original idea for the track "Army of Puppets", which I immediately fell in love with, was actually born inside of another artist's mind. It started off as a short collection of musical textures in a Cubase file created by my longstanding friend **Lene Gadewoll**, who kindly allowed me to develop a whole track from that idea, because aesthetically it blended in so well with the rest of the album.

- 3) It seemed to us that in a year (but already Klangporträts showed the change) you have made giant steps as far as songwriting is concerned: **Feed your head** has been a very good work, but at the same time maybe influenced a lot by the classics of the genre, while in Carnival of catharsis a more personal formula is evident, an "Ecstasphere sound" that makes the

listener immediately recognize you. Have you found your ideal dimension or is your sound in constant mutation and could we listen tomorrow to something different?

“Feed Your Head” was a very important first step for Ecstasphere, and I still enjoy looking back at this particular manifestation of my development. But of course, today I am at an entirely different point, music-wise and otherwise. I just turned twenty-two and I am still learning so many new things about music everyday, so of course my sound is bound to change quickly and a lot. I do not think that “Carnival of Catharsis” represents a sound aesthetic that will shape my future releases too much, I would rather call it another step towards the direction I am heading. I am not striving to find one sound for all the project’s releases and perfecting it, I want to develop and change. But still I think that “Carnival of Catharsis” as well as all other Ecstasphere releases carry a certain thumbprint which I suppose you will always be able to recognize from my work.

- 4) What are – if so – the linkages between what you do with Aphexia and what you do with Ecstasphere? Does one project influence the other in some way?

I will put this vaguely and shortly, if I may: with Ecstasphere I process and confront myself, with Aphexia I cherish and worship myself.

- 5) Does the Carnival of catharsis’s metaphor have something in common with an inner exploration, with the meeting with the I and with the fear to make errors choosing choices that could reveal themselves as errors? In the album’s description you say that doing errors would cost you a lot, but isn’t making errors a way to learn too?

The errors I am talking about in this matter are acts of self-doubt and self-destruction. The metaphor underlying the “Carnival of Catharsis” album is the quintessence of an inner exploration, but we are talking about an exploration of the “darkest” realms of my mind, places I have been to a thousand times before and that do not require further DECODING but simple unclaspings. Which is why the concept of actually ENCODING them into a metaphor made it so promising as a way of releasing these destructive patterns.

- 6) It seems to me that, instead, Breathe is linked to a urge to go out of the social cages (but even to go out from the musical cages), and it seems to me that, at least musically, you reach the goal. What do you want to express with this album?

“Breathe” is basically about the relativity of things. About the blurry boundaries between identity and environment. It addresses the concept of freedom on many different levels.

- 7) Ophelia is even a character of **Shakespeare’s Hamlet**. What links you with her character? Thinking about Carnival of catharsis and reading the album’s description, it seems to me that the environment that you create is linked in some way with the language of the theatrical representation.

Shakespeare’s Ophelia, a character that I have been studying for a very long time, is the inspiration for my own name. To me, the essence of this character has always been her struggle to free herself from the countless repressive structures surrounding her and, ironically, her will to survive,

although she actually drowns herself in a river throughout the story of Hamlet. I believe she is the only character in that play who finds her way of freedom. Shakespeare's Ophelia finds freedom in madness, I find freedom in art. Surprisingly, although I do see your point concerning a shared atmosphere of these works, "Carnival of Catharsis" is the first piece I developed without a certain direct or indirect link to "Hamlet", the Ophelia character or Shakespeare's work in general.

- 8) Let's think about Katharsis, the concert and dj sets's series that you're organizing in Hamburg: you've already hosted SaturnZlide, Mono No Aware, and now you'll host Swarm Intelligence. How much are these experiences ripening you and how much have they influenced the development of your music?

Organizing Katharsis with the rest of this amazing team has been an incredibly moving and enriching experience for me, but I do like to keep this venture separated from my own musical projects. This amazing party that we are organizing in Hamburg has nothing to do with Ecstasphere, Aphexia or any of the other projects I am working on, and I like it that way.

- 9) When i've casually discovered this kind of music during a Synapscape's live, i noticed that it's not so easy to find on the web articles of any kind regarding this music, although it's a kind of music that often proposes interesting works that represent an evolution of electronic music far from the mainstream area. As it's an innovative music, it should be talked and written a lot (maybe in Germany the situation is better, but in Italy there's very few interest), but this doesn't happen. What's your opinion about this thing? Maybe for its status of particularly underground music?

The whole Industrial sound aesthetic has always been an extremely underground kind of approach towards music. It is not particularly prototypical of music as the average consumer may experience it. The use of unconventional sounds and musical structures, innovation and progression of the concept of music is not something that many people are looking for in music. So it does not surprise me that this sort of music is still unable to reach a larger audience. Still, it does worry me and make me wonder about human nature quite regularly.

- 10) Even not having ever seen your live performance, it seemed to me that you link words and sentences to your music (in the visuals). Do you explain us this linkage? Do you think that it could be possible to play in Italy?

I use my live visuals as a way of spreading messages to my audience. The political and philosophical undertone of my art is manifested in those messages. These visuals are still very basic and I do plan on making them more complex and emphatic in the future. And I can't wait to get to that. I am always looking for possibilities to play in different places in front of different audiences, so of course, it would be splendid to have a gig in Italy too. I'd love to.

- 11) We thank you for the time you've dedicated us and we wish you the best! Invite the readers to buy your new albums!

Thank you for your genuine interest in my work and this possibility to reveal myself a little more. Your questions have been very interesting, as I had expected, and I really enjoyed answering them. To any intrigued reader I want to send an invitation to check out my new releases on Raumklang Music, "Carnival of Catharsis" by Ecstasphere and "Breathe" by Aphexia. You can find them on bandcamp via this link: <https://raumklangmusic.bandcamp.com/> or simply order them from various mailorders including **Ant-Zen** and Raumklang Music. And to anyone interested in the merging of these projects I can still recommend my release from February, "Klangporträts I+II", which you can download here: <http://ecstasphere.bandcamp.com/releases>

Sincerest thanks and good night!

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