

Sienna – Interview



Sienna's "east meets west in dreamy crossover electronica" to celebrate 10 year anniversary.

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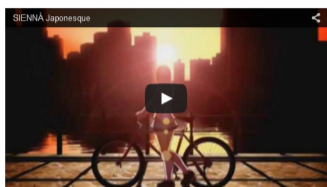
What is your name? My name is Sienna.

Where are you from? I am originally from Kyoto, Japan. But I have been based in Oslo, Norway, since 1995.

How long have you been making music? Since I was a little girl. Though I started to make music more seriously around 2004 when I got Emagic's Logic program installed on my PC for the first time. Logic freed my mind and soul. I am still a faithful slave of Logic today, on a Mac.

How many songs/albums have you released to date? I have released 1 single, 1 EP and 3 albums since 2005.

Can you tell us about your latest release and the background and inspirations behind it? I released the last album named "Japonesque" in September 2013. I came up with the idea of mixing Japanese traditional music, Norwegian jazz, electronica and house music already in 2006, but I knew that I could do this in more self-assured way on this album. The concept is based on my memories from the hometown Kyoto where my heart always belongs to. It may also reflect my diverse personality type that really is not totally and typically Japanese. Japonesque means something characteristically Japanese, but with influence of on something European. I believe the album became exactly "it".



How have you ended up in the music industry? My former producer Abón helped me out to kickstart the music career in 2004. He gave me an instruction on how to effectively use Logic, and released my CDs from his label. When I finally had the chance to make my childhood dream a reality, I just had to go for it. After my debut in 2005, I started to orientate myself towards the music industry mostly outside of Scandinavia, due to market potential of my type of music. The music industry is under constant change. You may always need to "read and translate" it, and may also need to be lucky. Though, it is truly challenging and exciting for sure.

What do you think of the music industry in 2014? Well, I have become a witness of "Nothing personal it's just business" many times. To me, it looks basically like a fight for survival. Maybe even more chaotic as technology has developed and re-defined the flow (such as promotion and approach to the mass) in an information landscape. But I like the fact that it opened up the new doors both for artists and listeners. I think it depends on how you see it, though I am very lucky to be able to maintain good space for myself as an indie artist, to take a reasonable distance from what I think can be a bit disturbing.

Who do you think the most influential artist? I can name several influential artists that mean a lot for me, and must admit that no never artists have taken over older artists' positions (yet). I am a huge fan of The Beatles. I still love and admire Frédéric Chopin. But among all, I can say that Ryuichi Sakamoto has always been my musical hero because of his own unique expression, consistency, openness for any type of musical genres, and his magical skills to integrate anything into his music.

Who have you collaborated with so far in your career? I was very lucky to be able to work with two amazing gentlemen: a Norwegian psychedelic jazz trumpeter, composer and a pioneer of future jazz, Nils Petter Molvaer and a British multi-instrumentalist and one of the coolest bassists I know, Mick Karn. It was not a musical collaboration, but I was once a "opening voice" for Norwegian industrial rock band Zeromancer when they were on tour with the album "Clone Your Lover". I have also remixed for several artists/bands earlier when I had time..

Dead or alive, who would be your dream collaboration? I would like to form a dream band. Arthur Brown definitely fronts on vocal, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan duets occasionally with Arthur, Steve Vai on guitar, Haruomi Hosono on bass, Ray Manzarek on keyboard, Marilyn Mazur on percussions, Yehudi Menuhin on violin, Michael Winslow on human beatbox and effects, and the Japanese Gagaku musicians from the Imperial Household Agency (from the Imperial Court in Tokyo). So where am I? In my dream world I will collaborate as a composer with this band. I will be sitting in front of them with a glass of Italian wine in my hand, listening/watching to their performance, crying of happiness.

What was the first album you bought? I spared my pocket money and bought Rolling Stone's "Rewind" when I was a child. Though it is still a mystery why I did it. I neither could understand English nor listened to the UK music then. I just remember I went directly to this album without thinking anything, took it out of the shelf and bought it. Even though I had no clue what Mick Jagger was singing about, I really loved the music.

What's your favourite song at the moment? It is too hard to choose one. However, I can say that I listen often to Moondog lately. I am rather drawn to his world, not necessarily some particular songs.

If you had to sell your music collection tomorrow, what album would you leave in your draw? I would definitely like to save my own top 10 albums of all time, for instance, Yellow Magic Orchestra "Service", Janis Joplin "Pearl", Björk "Debut", Ryuichi Sakamoto "Beauty", The Doors "The Doors" etc. But if I had to be more selective, I will protect the two perfect gems on the earth: The Beatles "The White Album" and Arthur Brown's Kingdom Come "Galactic Zoo Dossier".

How do you think you differ from other artists? You may believe it or not, nobody has ever told me that my music is normal, which I take it as a compliment. Whether they like it or not, is a totally different story. I experienced that people tend to love it or hate it. I think it is ok. Everyone has their own taste. There are several artists/bands doing "east meets west" things. Though, as far as I know, I am the first one who mixed house and Japanese traditional music. I will keep letting Miley Cyrus do her good work, and I will keep letting myself do my weird abrakadabra.

What other hobbies or interests do you have? I am originally an educated cultural historian. When I am on tour, I like to walk around without having any goals or purposes during free time, and find out historical and cultural facts about the places I coincidentally came across after the visit. I like the field of astronomy as well, but I try not to understand it so much, because my brain is not created in that way. And I like photographing, and wine-tasting.

Do you have any tattoos or piercings? I have normal girly piercings on my earlobes. You probably know that the view of tattoos in Japan is generally a bit different from yours? Either way, I really do not believe I look better with more piercings or tattoos. I would rather enjoy seeing all the others who look cool with them.

What's your favourite saying? I have 2 favorite sayings from Japan that I respect: "Nanakorobi yaoki" which mean "stumbling seven times but getting up eight times". And this is also Japanese, "Koketsu ni irazunba koji wo ezu" which mean "can't do anything without risking something"

Tell us more about your upcoming project or this new project? 2014 was a busy year for me and for my band. We traveled quite a lot together, experienced something new all the time. I am embracing all the impressions that I have received from the experiences now. I have started to "paint" them on my musical canvas and would like to see what kind of pictures I get. I enjoy touring, though I really need to have a creative timeout to balance myself as well. I also started to produce my own stuff last year, and would definitely love to learn more of the sound engineering and producing skills. So, my latest upcoming project is my first self-produced album.

What's in the pipeline after this project? I have actually a couple of exciting projects on hold. I am looking forward to let the plans begin to take clearer shape. I and my band will also start travelling again within a reasonable time frame. And, what I can announce is that it will be my 10th anniversary as an artist in May this year, surprisingly. I do not know how to celebrate this yet, but will probably come up with something nice for everyone for sure.

SIENNA

I Know Why

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Thank you for your time and may you carry on making dope, fresh music.

My pleasure, and thank you for your precious time as well. May the force be with you!

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