

Interview with Sienná (Electronic Trio)

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Sienná is a Japanese-Norwegian electronic trio who released their album, *Japonesque*, last month (September 2013) and are preparing and rehearsing for their upcoming UK shows...

Thanks for taking the time to do this interview Sienná. Tell us a bit about yourself, your name, age, where you're from and an interesting fact if you like...
Thank you for taking your time to do this interview!

MUSIC

Is there a story behind your name Sienná?

Yes. My grandfather traveled from Japan to Europe by boat (?) in the 1940s. He was so impressed by Siena, a beautiful town in Italy. He wanted to give the town-name to the next girl born in his family. That was me. Although he found out that it was not allowed to give a child a European first name in Japan then. So, it became my unofficial middle name, and also my artist name. When I perform live, we are a live-electronics trio Sienná. 'Á' (instead of 'a') is to be separated from many other Siennás.

How long have you been a band?

Since 2008. I started to perform live after my second release called 'A Pure Land'. I thought it's simply boring to be alone on stage. I have always had two very talented musicians from Norway. They improvise and create interesting twists every time we perform. Our line-up varies according to their availability, but the bassist Hallvar Gaardios has been my "family member" for a long time.

What first got you interested in forming a band?

I asked myself a question "what should I do to make it exciting?" It was obvious that nothing is fun standing alone and pushing a playback-button. I needed to enjoy what I do on the stage. So, my first natural choice was improvisations. In this way, our performances are different every time we perform. Accordingly, I needed somebody who enjoys improvising freely with my music.

What/who inspires your music?

Anything actually. Places, people, colors, particular events etc. I noticed that my home town Kyoto and the local culture has been playing an important part in my music. I don't see myself as a typical Japanese or a traditional Kyoto-born person, but I see clearly that my roots have a lot to say when I compose something. Musically, I find Ryuichi Sakamoto/The Yellow Magic Orchestra and Björk especially inspirational.

Do you see being in a band as a career, or as a hobby?

Absolutely a career to me. One must get better, build up, and learn from one another. It depends what your goal is, but demands tremendous energy and time if you would do something musically serious. I don't think I could survive the process if it was a simple hobby.

What are you trying to do with your music? Do you want to help your community? Are you trying to get rich? What is your goal for your music?

It's important for me that I am happy with what I do. Music has always been my dream since a child. It's like a therapy and my life's value. I would like to see how far I can reach. I and my boys in the band are constantly trying to improve our performances and develop a better concept. So I would definitely like to see how far we can reach together as well. I notice that more and more people tell me/us that they liked my music and our shows. It sends me right up to heaven.

Have you ever performed live? How did it feel?

We have mainly performed in Europe since 2008 - in the UK, Germany, Poland, Norway and Italy. It's truly an honor to be able to travel with my music, to meet people I would not meet otherwise, to see many different places and to experience various cultures. I feel so blessed! We will soon to be back in the UK, will be performing in London, Brighton and in Andover 24-26. October. We cannot wait, especially when we think about how amazing it was on the last UK tour - 9 shows in 6 cities - in May-June earlier this year.

Do you have any kind of management, publishing or distribution team behind you? If so what are their responsibilities?

Most works are handled by Abón Records & Studio, Norway. A devoting, hardworking dream-team I have full-trust in. Currently I work with booking agents in the UK and in Italy.

What are some accomplishments that you have achieved, and are most proud of?

Since I had been dreaming to perform in London and to tour in the UK for many years, I was so glad to achieve one of the main goals in life. It was a highlight to be able to perform at the legendary venue, The Dublin Castle. Another accomplishment I am proud of should be the music I licensed for Phillips Electronics. They preloaded one of my songs "Frame the Moments" in their mp3 players/audio devices which have been distributed worldwide. It was a huge fun to receive a lot of feedback about the song from many different countries, from people who bought the products.

Have you ever made any contact with major artists or other high positioned people in the music industry and do you keep in contact with them?

I had an amazing opportunity working with a psychedelic trumpeter and composer Nils Petter Molvaer. He is a pioneer of Norwegian avant-garde jazz and is one of my musical role models that I look up to. He is a very popular busy artist, but he is still in touch with me. I remember that the chance he gave me has always been a huge encouragement to keep pushing myself further and further. Another major artist I have worked for was Mick Karn - a British multi-instrumentalist musician and composer. Unfortunately, he passed away in 2011, but left many inspirational works that I am appreciated so much.

What one tip would you give to other aspiring independent artists?

"Get used to a massive NO-answers"

What do you see in the future for the music industry? How do you think it will evolve/change? (+ INTERNET Do you feel like the internet is helping you as an independent artist?)

I think that it will probably be more challenging for professional artists/musicians to get fairly paid. I think the internet revolution has opened up the door for a thousands of independent artists/musicians/bands, but created "more competition lower prices"-situation for most of them. If it keeps remaining unregulated, I am afraid the tendency will be just more escalated. On the other hand, it's wonderful to see that so much variety of music are displayed right in front of us. You are basically free to choose what you would like to hear. I like it, I'm one of the independent artists who could not survive without the internet.

How do you think social networks such as Facebook and Twitter have affected the music industry?

I feel that social networks (or the mass media generally) function more like recommendation/suggestion providers today. TV is a kind of one-way broadcasting, isn't it? Social networks let you choose and personalize your news source, and let you also become a newscaster. You may leave as many comments as you want, and show what you like or not. It's an interesting two-way communication process which makes it possible to be in closely touch in the wider audience. I see great potential in it.

Where can we hear your music online?

I think you may listen to my music on a lot of websites, but I personally recommend Spotify <https://playspotify.com/album/5znRU8knMXrbmqpFuHZQOD> or Bandcamp <http://sienna.bandcamp.com>. You may also want to check out my newest anime-based video on <http://youtu.be/yidQFRmqQNU>.

IN CLOSING

What projects are you working on at the moment?

I released the new album (called "Japonesque") this September. I'm currently promoting it. It takes time! Also, some preparations and rehearsals before the UK performances on 24-26 October. I'm also planning more performances in Europe. I will probably start writing new music soon, when things start to be more relaxing.

Where do you see yourself in 5-10 years time?

Whatever life brings, wherever I am or whatever I do, I would like to be happy with what I have done. I know that nobody can do everything perfect, but I will definitely keep living up to my motto "No regrets". I really hope that I still write music - much better music - and can note some more solid accomplishments in 5-10 years time.

Do you have any shoutouts you want to give?

If you like something electronic, jazzy and avant-garde, and/or if you like something different and unique, I hope you can give my music a shot. If you are around London, Essex or Hampshire in end of October, come to our shows, dance and celebrate with us. Otherwise, it would be nice if you find me on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/siennamusik> or on my official website www.sienna-web.com. I love to hear from anyone. Please write me and say hi!

Thanks again Sienná for doing this interview.

Thank you so much for your time!



Tags: a pure land, abón records, electronic, electronic trio, hallvar gaardios, japan, japonesque, mick karn, nils petter molvaer, norway, sienná

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