

Extracts from: TranergyTV Interview Peter Ries

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Miles: Welcome to tranergy.tv. Today we're once again on location in Wiesbaden and one can really enjoy the beautiful view here. Though we're in the studio today. Now we're going quite far back...you started your career in the early 80s as a singer. Do you still know the name Gilbert?

Peter: No!..yeah..this is the sin of my youth, but it's not really a sin, because I think it's all a development and I started like that at that time. It was on a private party, when I was 16. There I "played" DJ and I sang to the records and a friend of my friends was a producer and he said "You can sing well...wouldn't you like to come into the studio?" and I said "Hmm...sinning...did you like it?" and he said "well, yes...this it's upgradeable!"

I was quite curious at that time and I was already into music, since I started playing the piano with the age of 12. Then I studied music at the conservatory, church organ, harmonies and classical piano. So there has always been a connection. And when this producer asked if I wanted to try to sing I said yes and it became a little career with a record deal.

Miles: What were your early musical inspirations?

Peter: Well I didn't run free with my inspirations with my own projects and I even wasn't allowed to but I loved to listen to Fleetwood Mac, Pink Floyd...this kind of music, these were my heroes. The Beatles. I adore John Lennon. So these are my...well I wouldn't say idols but music I still love and listen today.

Miles: I browsed the net and didn't find as much as I wanted to find but I found out a few interesting things. You have had an alias "Steve Hall" and you've had a hit with "Heartbeat" and please tell as how did you manage to get into the studio of Frank Farian?

Peter: This had to do with my career as a singer at that time. It was when I was about 17. The music was played in by a studio band. In those days there were no computers but studio bands in the studios, consisting of a bass player, guitarist, drummer and keyboarder. By the way the keyboarder was Michael Cretu and my actual partner Reinhard Besser the bass player of this studio band. And we only just booked Frank Farian's studio and recorded by two singles, played by this studio band and that's the way I got in touch with these people and my partner for years.

Miles: We'll come to Sandra later, but a thing which is quite interesting is, when heard "Heartbeat" for the first time I had a feeling of "I know this track" because it was on Sandra's debut album "The long play". And I loved this track, I think it was just a studio track and not a hit but in fact it was your song. Seems like Sandra liked it too, didn't she?



Peter: That a nice story. When I was in Sandra's TV-Band I still did music by myself and also this project called "Steve Hall" and a thing I was quite proud of was that this song I composed and wrote by myself was released in Canada and became a little dance hit there. And then Michael Cretu heard it, because he recognized of course, what I did besides Sandra. And then he said "Peter I like it, we're gonna record "Heartbeat" for the Sandra album" It made me really proud when heard it sung by Sandra and later there was the platinum award of Sandra's record on my wall for the song I composed and was still in the beginning of my career at that time. It was an amazing experience and I am grateful for the way it all developed.



Miles: In 1985 a release called "Operator" and it was still before the first Sandra release. Was this a kind of trial recording for Sandra?

Peter: No, this was the B-Side of "Heartbeat".

Miles: Michael Cretu began quite early to believe in you. Have you already played in his band for "Samurai"?

Peter: No, I met him as a keyboarder in Frank Farian's studio. And it's really funny..you must imagine: a song I composed when I was 15 became a B-Side of my single and the keyboards were played by Michael. Michael couldn't remember this and when I came to Sandra's Band I asked him "Michael, do you know, that we already met before?" and he said "No, where?" and when I told him this story. So when I was 16 and recorded this single, he played the keyboards...because I wasn't as good as I am by now in playing keyboards.

Miles: You already mentioned you were part of Sandra's TV Band. In 1985 came the first releases, and they became worldwide hits like "Maria Magdalena" and "In the heat of the night". Would you please describe what it was like with all this fame Sandra had? What was it like to be on tour with her?

Peter: Well it was a wonderful, wonderful time and I am so grateful that I had the chance to make this experience. Because of this time, because of these 5 years with Sandra I met a lot of people in the background, which helped me on my further way. Well and the feeling...at that time I normally was only about one or two days per week in Wiesbaden and otherwise I traveled with Sandra. There were every week destinations like Paris, Italy, Sweden so all over Europe because she was in the Top 10 Charts everywhere. I loved this experience, but only in your memories you realize what this time was like. At the moment you make these experiences it's fine, you are enthusiastic and happy but it appears more in your memories how beautiful this time was.

Miles: Sandra is always very sympathetic in her interviews. What's your impression of her as a human being, as a singer at that time?

Peter: Sandra really is a great person. What I always liked about her is that she's there with all her heart. So she is no headed person but a hearted person and this appears in the way she acts. I always perceived her as a pleasant person. Now I didn't meet her for a long time, but I really enjoyed the time with her.

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Miles: The background vocals on the Sandra tracks were Michael Cretu?

Peter: There were Michael Cretu, Hubert Kah and I did also from time to time, for example on "Everlasting Love"..the high voices in the background like on "Heartbeat" were sung by me.

Miles: What was it like to be on stage, doing the background vocals even it was not your voice?

Peter: I didn't care about it. I mean I also played bass though I am a keyboarder. To me it was just entertainment...a show...people wanted to be entertained and as a part of a band I saw myself as a supplier of entertainment.



Miles: People who aren't really familiar with it might not know that Hubert Kemmler, known as Hubert Kah also worked on these tracks. What kind of producer was he from your point of view...you were still quite young and so was he...but he was a quite talented producer.

Peter: Well Hubert Kah is one of these people who have a genius in themselves and are crazy at the same time. Genius and insanity are sometimes quite close. In my point of view Hubert is really a genius but I must say that Michael Cretu was actually the man who shaped the sound of Sandra. In the Sandra project Michael is the No. 1 concerning the music and how it sounds.

Miles: Do you have a favorite Sandra track?

Peter: Yes, I love "Secret Land". Of course I have another connection to this music because it's almost like my own but "Secret Land" is such a beautiful track.

Miles: In the 80s I had a problem because I grew up in America, because I am half German half American.

Peter: Did you have Sandra there as well?

Miles: This is what I'm coming to...you can read my mind. When Americans asked me what Germany was famous for I said "We have the best soccer players" because we were quite good in 82 and 86. And in America Madonna was the most famous singer but no one knew Sandra. I heard Sandra's music in Germany but in America no one knew her and this made me kind of sad because I really liked her music. Why was Sandra not successful in the states?

Peter: I don't know if she was even promoted there. I can remember that on one of my first visits in the states I took a taxi and they played Sandra on the radio. And when I browse the internet, for example on facebook I often get link-request by Sandra fans and a thing I recognized is that there are still a lot of Sandra fan pages existing and by clicking the single members and looking where they come from I think it spread out all over the world. But I think the main reason is that at that time Sandra was only released in Europe and the American record label "Virgin" just didn't release it and it came only partly to the states as imports. Well when I think of success in the 90s within the Eurodance wave like Nena, Falco.. well Sandra could have made it as well.

Miles: In the 90s you began to produce more dance music. What did you still do with Sandra then? I think you produced a few tracks for her later, didn't you? How was the Sandra project finished?

Peter: When the most successful time was over (5 years) there were still occasional TV appearances and we stayed in touch. There was a time when I was quite often together with the drummer of Sandra's Band – Wolfgang Filz- on vacation on Ibiza. Then of course we met from time to time. There was always a spaghetti dinner at Sandra's and Michael's house. But concerning TV appearances and gigs it decreased. Just the way it happens to bands, just like it decreased with "No angels". There's a very successful time and then there comes something new. Everything has it's time and Sandra has had a long time and for a lot of people she is still present and she is still doing music.

Miles: Peter, you have a new project coming up together with your girlfriend called SAINT OF SIN. You started working on this project in the beginning of this year and you are quite busy. There are a lot of tracks. Would you please describe this project and your aims a little?

Peter: Well SAINT OF SIN is actually my favorite baby. It's my own baby, because there I appear as artist and producer together with Jasmin as a singer. Actually it all started as passion-project..you can say by accident because Jasmin sung to a track I played in. She sung without a language and totally out of her heart a kind of "word-sound-art" and I said:" What are you singing? This sounds amazing" and she said "well it's intuitively, it's what's comes to my mind spontaneously". Then I said "Let's record it" and then she sung and I edited it and we looked to each other, put a little echo and delay on it and we both got goose bumps. And then we decided we have to do this. Then we put the first tracks in the net we got directly super positive feedback. Then we got messages from people out of the media business and they asked "what is this, it sounds really amazing". This gave us a kind of reassurance that though it has its result in leisure time this project has something that touches people. Actually it's a niche product, you can even say it is music for meditation. It is very slow chill out music. When we got these amazing feedbacks in the beginning, from all over the world by the way, we made several songs and released an EP on iTunes in February and we had real sales- also from all over the world- I don't know where all these people know the project from. And now it becomes more and more, there are more and more people who like this project SAINT OF SIN. End of summer the first album will be released. It's called "FREEDOM".

Miles: Also on CD?

Peter: We're still thinking about a physical release, probably yes. Digitally for sure. There will be two versions released. One is the SAINT SIDE MIXES- there you have the calm chill out mixes. The other one is the SIN SIDE MIXES- there you have crazy mixes a little bit like prodigy and dance style. I am really looking forward to this release and if I can get some real good DJs, who would like to do a remix..., you are welcome!



Miles: Before we heard "SONG OF FORGIVENESS" here in the studio and I really like the track. Will there be a single release for the charts? Is this the strongest song for you or are there even better ones?

Peter: There isn't a strongest song. Each song is a unity for itself. If you ask what's your favorite song it's really difficult for me to say and Jasmin as well couldn't say "this is my favorite song". All songs have so much soul, each song for itself. And the amazing thing about it is that for the fact that it doesn't contain a language or a message which is sent to your brain you can relax and imagine anything you like. SONG OF FORGIVENESS was chosen, because we had to choose one for a single release and we decided that this song is perfect because you can make wonderful dance mixes with it. Now I am looking for DJs, who like to contribute one or two remixes and then it'll become the first single for the album FREEDOM.

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Miles: Did you have Michael Cretu in mind as inspiration for this project, because it sounds somehow like ENIGMA?



Peter: Michael of course was an inspiration for me because with ENIGMA he created something he stands for 100% and I love this kind of music, these ethno styles, chill out styles and trance styles. It has always been a wish to make a project in this direction. SAINT OF SIN is independently. I never heard such music before. When I start something I believe in, I of course google the net and listen to a lot of things in order to find out if such a thing already exists and I couldn't find that what SAINT OF SIN does anywhere. I think there is a band in Finland, which also sings without language, there is Enya, so if you want to compare it to other projects then it might be Enya, Enigma, Lisa Gerard, Gladiator soundtrack "Now we are free", but exactly the way SAINT OF SIN is I don't know anything comparable and I think it's significantly Jasmin's voice. She has a sound in her voice which is so recognizable and this something quite important in my point of view. There are so many singers, who sing perfectly. They can sing every hit in a cover band quite good but the individuality is missing and this is something Jasmin has. As she sung on the first SAINT OF SIN tracks, on SONG OF DIVINE for example I suddenly heard there is something. There is something that totally moved me and if there's a thing I learned during the last 30 years, then it's to identify if there's magic in the room. And there was magic!

Miles: I really wish you that it'll become a success!

Peter: Thank you. Even if it won't, it'll be okay because it was such a joy to do this project, such a realization of my own creativity and Jasmin's creativity. It doesn't have to strike commercially. If it becomes successful commercially and a lot of people like it, we're the most grateful people in the world and we'd say "amazing, that there are also other people who love it" but even if it won't happen it's just nice to do this project.

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Miles: Peter, in the name of the tranergy.tv team we would like to thank you for your kind invitation. You have an amazing flat, a nice place to work. It was real fun to hear these great stories from you and we love your music. We wish you that your new project SAINT OF SIN will become a hit and maybe this interview will support a little bit the promotion.

Peter: I would like to say thanks as well to you and to you Miles for the great interview. You asked great questions, which is quite uncommon and I had a lot of fun.



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