

Dissidenten

are instinctive travelers in the post-Theodor Fontane mold. That German man-of-letters – and traveler – once wrote that more than the wisdom of all the wise ones, what matters is travelling, travelling, travelling. Only by travelling and imbibing and inhaling another place’s culture can we really get under its skin. Dissidenten – self-proclaimed enemies of the state of confusion – took Fontane’s maxim to heart and took his principle to the max. With music.

How exactly? Well, by spending extended periods living in, for example, Madhya Pradesh in India, Morocco, Portugal and Spain, within local communities, and putting down roots there. And, of course, Dissidenten then went on to astound audiences around the world by bringing back tidings of great joy to audiences around the globe through stacks of singles –



massive hit ones, too– and albums, and at major festivals such as Barcelona’s Festa de la Mercè, England’s Glastonbury Festival (two years running!), Amsterdam’s World Roots Festival and Central Europe’s prestigious Tanz&FolkFest Rudolstadt. Not to forget the Bombay and Calcutta Jazzfest or the Mawazine Festival in Morocco.

For, after all, if something is worth doing it is worth doing well. And in Dissidenten’s case, over and over and over again that has meant steeping themselves in, and registering a place’s popular culture – to use a coinage first laid at

the feet of the late Ray Browne. Dissidenten’s music is the diametric opposite of world music’s candy store mix’n’match mentality where strangers set up, share a few local snacks, and jam on a wing and a prayer before having the gall to peddle their musical confectionery as fusion.

Sorry, with Dissidenten, it doesn’t work like that...

The Dissidenten approach is the right approach. Everything takes time.

But in times like this nobody who is sensible can stay a cultural agnostic for long, especially when confronted with a name like theirs. So, what are Dissidenten really against? They target “the triumph of style over content, the invisibility of the artist, the unreality of the media.” Or to paraphrase, in no particular order: the bland, the colorless, the bloodless. But what they are for is enough to make converts of us all.

To close on a more prosaic, yet factually useful note: Dissidenten began life nearly 30 years ago in 1981 as an outgrowth of the German band Embryo – as Embryo’s Dissidenten – the trio of Josch, Klein and Müllrich has been the core travelers at the heart of Dissidenten ever since. That is why the one and only Dissidenten are still making music together. It’s not just the journey: it’s the arrival and the places they go as well.

Theodor Fontane (1819 -1898): “Mehr als Weisheit aller Weisen/galt mir reisen, reisen, reisen.”

– by Ken Hunt

Dissidenten - The Penguin Encyclopedia of Popular Music:

'The World' was Dissidenten's main musical subject long before such ideas floated into fashion. Over a thirty-year span their projects have ranked not only among the most innovative multicultural collaborations but they also figure among the most telling and groundbreaking contributions to the development and broadening of today's popular music. Since the term 'World Music' entered the music lexicon in the early 1980s their name has been synonymous with, and at the forefront of 'World Music'. After all, it was the Rolling Stone that dubbed Dissidenten "Godfathers of World-Beat" long before the term became popular."

The history:

1981/83: Dissidenten and their own label Exil Musik are founded in Berlin by Uve Muellrich, Marlon Klein and Friedo Josch. Following a one-year tour of Asia, the group decides to stay in India to produce their first album GERMANISTAN with the help of the Karnataka College Of Percussion, their charismatic female singer R.A. Ramamani and percussionist Ramesh Shotham. The live line up is joined by India's outstanding pianist Louis Banks and american sax legend Charlie Mariano. Concerts between Calcutta and Madrid, Casablanca, Berlin and Stockholm are documented on the live album GERMANISTAN TOUR 83.

1984/85: Concerts worldwide. Having toured North Africa, Dissidenten set up camp in Tangier, Morocco. Composer and author Paul Bowles and Tangier's musical godfather Abdesalam Akaaboune introduce the group to moroccan musicians Jil Jilala, Nas El Ghiwane, Lem Chaheb and the likes. Dissidenten's third album SAHARA ELEKTRIK is recorded in Tangier with Lem Chaheb and their outstanding leader Cherif Lamrani. FATA MORGANA -the album's hit song becomes famous not only in North Africa but a top dance floor success in Europe and South America. 250.000 people see and hear Dissidenten live during a three-week tour of Spain. British DJ John Peel features the group in his legendary BBC program. 'Dissimania' -initially started out in the mediterranean bassin, spreads via England to Canada and the US. Dissidenten make it to the top of independent charts worldwide. Concert for German TV-WDR at the famous Rock Palast is televised live all over Europe



1986/88: Concerts worldwide. Dissidenten move to Spain. LIFE AT THE PYRAMIDS is recorded in Madrid and Tangier. The album includes TELEPHONE ARAB -Dissidenten's hit song and video clip. With a cover version of TELEPHONE ARAB, Egyptian superstar Mohammed Mounir makes it number one all over the Arab world. Dissidenten tour major places in Europe and North America as well as North Africa and Asia. One of these legendary concerts at New York's packed Palladium is recorded for the album DISSIDENTEN LIVE IN NEW YORK. The song FATA MORGANA from the 1984 album SAHARA ELEKTRIK becomes a major hit in Brazil and South America –10 years later it will have sold more than 1,5 million copies in Brazil alone. Dissidenten play the title song for the famous tele novela SASSA RICANDO. Till today Dissidenten enjoy a strong following in Brazil.

1989/91: Morocco: Recordings with the Royal Orchestra of Rabat for the album OUT OF THIS WORLD, featuring singer Mahmoud Saadi of Morocco's legendary Nas el Ghiwane and the incredible talents of Cherif Lamrani on mandolin cello. 1989 OUT OF THIS WORLD is released worldwide.

The video for the album's title song was filmed and produced by Dissidenten in East Berlin - just before and during the Berlin Wall came down. Concerts in North America follow and Dissidenten start recording for the yet unpublished album REAL AMERICAN MUSIC in the Five Nations Indian Reserve near Toronto. The album involves native American Indian musicians made friends and worked with while touring Canada.

1992/95: Concerts worldwide. Recordings in Mumbai and Bangalore for the album THE JUNGLE BOOK -an artistic reunion with many musicians and friends from the group's past years working and touring all over India. Most of them have become internationally acclaimed by now. Ramesh Shotham, R.A. Ramamani, Karnataka College of Percussion, Louis Banks or Trilok Gurtu to name a few. European radio DJs



vote Dissidenten second place amongst 800 albums in their annual European World Music Charts. DJ Sven Väth remixes the single-release JUNGLE BOOK PART II from the THE JUNGLE BOOK and thus introduces the "Love- and Trance-Generation" to Dissidenten.

1996/99: INSTINCTIVE TRAVELER is recorded in Hawaii, India, Canada, Morocco, Spain and Germany featuring the charismatic voice of Bajka and Germany's Manfred Schoof on trumpet. This highly esteemed album incorporates Dissidenten's decades of experiences in almost every corner of the sounding globe. INSTINCTIVE TRAVELER

is a time-travel between the various planets of Dissidenten's unique musical universe. Hawaiian singers meet Basque accordionists, native American vocals, Arabic court musicians and Celtic drone as well as South Indian chanting and European Zeitgeist. Dissidenten live -featuring Izaline Calister, Noujoum Ouazza, Manickam Yogeswaran, Charlie Mariano and Manu Gallo of Zap Mama- play Europe's biggest festivals including two times in a row Glastonbury, Montreux Jazz Festival and Denmark's Roskilde. Highlights from each of these shows are released on the album LIVE IN EUROPE.

2000: Dissidenten are exploring yet another musical world. Teaming up with composer Gordon Sherwood and video artist Stefanie Seidl they create the "Documentary Opera" THE MEMORY OF THE WATERS,

first performed at "Internationales Donau Festival Ulm" for German National Radio SWR by the Bratislava Sinfonic Orchestra & Choir. Director: Peter Feranec, featuring Charlie Mariano, Nojoum Ouazza, Manickam Yogeswaran, Barbara Buchholz and Tomás San Miguel - more than 100 musicians on stage. Between 2000 and 2005 THE MEMORY OF THE WATERS is performed by various orchestras all over Europe. LA MEMORIA DE LAS AGUAS, the Spanish version is performed with conductor Tomás Garrido and the Orchestra & Choir Pamplona for the Festivales de Navarra -broadcasted by Spanish National Radio live nation wide.



World Exhibition Expo 2000 Hannover: In collaboration with German sculptor Albert Hien Dissidenten compose and perform a piece for 96 Bavarian brass bands and a sound installation incorporating the sound of bells from 96 different Bavarian cathedrals and churches.

2001/05: 20 years around the world: Dissidenten once again call upon friends and collaborators to celebrate the anniversary. The album 2001: A WORLD BEAT ODYSSEY, gathers some of Europe's most famed DJs: Badmarsh, Tricatel, Ravi Bal, Shantel, Deep-Dive-Corp, Lelonek, Kulisch & Vana and Slop Shop remix nine tracks from almost all musical phases of Dissidenten. In 2003 the remix-collection is completed with the album DISSIDENTEN REMIX.ED 2.0: A NEW WORLD ODYSSEY.

At Womex 2001 in Rotterdam Dissidenten present their project IN 80 NIGHTS AROUND THE WORLD - including various DJs, VJ Annahd and Andreas Leifeld, which later is performed live all over Europe.

2006/07: Dissidenten are touring North Africa with Moroccan heroes Jil Jilala. Between concerts they work together in Tangier and Casablanca to complete the new DISSIDENTEN//JIL JILALA album »TANGER SESSIONS«. 2007: The band composes and arranges the musical program at the final party of Germany's spectacular CREOLE-Award for World Music. French/German TV ARTE and German TV WDR broadcast a lengthy feature about Dissidenten's Moroccan experiences.

2008: The album »TANGER SESSIONS« is released. Concerts in Europe and North Africa from April onwards. The debut concert in Germany is broadcasted live and online by German National Radio SWR in April 2008



2009: Dissidenten are touring Europe from Finland to Spain with TANGER SESSIONS. The line up includes guitar heroes Roman Bunka of EMBRYO/ MOHAMED MOUNIR and Henning Rügenap from the GUANO APES.

2010: sees Dissidenten performing at the two biggest African Festivals L'BOULEVARD in Casablanca (featuring CREATEUROPE fashion design award winner Amine Bendriouich, Morocco's DJ MOOD plus MCs Flip & Flo) and the MAWAZINE FESTIVAL in Rabat, (feat. JIL JILALA). Later in the year concerts in Russia, North America and Europe are scheduled.

2011: The band is on the road in Europe and Morocco. In Casablanca, Fes and Rabat they reunite with Morocco's cult band LEM CHAHEB, with whom back in the 80's they shared the world wide success of the ground breaking album "Sahara Elektrik". July Dissidenten are headlining Portugal's prestigious "Sines Festival", in August they played in England at Peter Gabriel's legendary Womad Festival. The concert is live broadcast by BBC. In fall the band went back to Morocco for more concerts.

In 2012, the band received Germany's prestigious INTERNATIONAL PRAETORIUS MUSIC PEACE AWARD. Now the Dissidenten goes unplugged. They were asked to put together an acoustic live set for the occasion, taking a retrospective look back over the band's unique history. This gave them the idea of doing a tour featuring unplugged versions of their greatest hits. One concert was recorded and broadcast by the German National Radio.

2013: The tour -mainly Portugal, Morocco, Austria, Germany- led to the production of the new album "HOW LONG IS NOW?" It presents another unexplored perspective of the Dissidenten. Since they have been a Berlin band from the beginning, this album is also an homage to their city. On the final date of the tour, the trio recorded a spontaneous concert for friends on the banks of Berlin's River Spree, along with musical guests who have been part of the long Dissidenten story. This concert is presented on "HOW LONG IS NOW?" Dissidenten unplugged live in Berlin

more information:

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