

Dissidenten

“the godfathers of worldbeat”
(Rolling Stone Magazine)

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 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 like. 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 as 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 basin and 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. The album **LIFE AT THE PYRAMIDS** is recorded in Madrid, Tunis and Tangier and includes Dissidenten's hit song and video clip **TELEPHONE ARAB**. 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**. Today Dissidenten still enjoys 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 time 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 includes Native American Indian musicians with whom the band became friends and worked with while touring Canada.

1992/95: Concerts worldwide. Recordings in Mumbay 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 and 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 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 at 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, and featuring Charlie Mariano, Noujoum



Ouazza, Manickam Yogeswaran, Barabara 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 - broadcast by Spanish National Radio live nationwide. 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 to 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** 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 onward. The debut concert in Germany is broadcast live and online by German National Radio SWR in April 2008.

2009: Dissidenten tour Europe from Finland to Spain with »**TANGER SESSIONS**«. The line up includes guitar heroes Roman Bunka of Embryo / Mohamed Mounir and Henning Rümenap 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, and 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 in the 80s they shared the worldwide success of the ground breaking album **SAHARA ELEKTRIK**. In July Dissidenten are headlining

Portugal's prestigious Sines Festival, in August they play in England at Peter Gabriel's legendary Womad Festival. The concert is broadcast live by BBC. In fall the band returns to Morocco for more concerts.

2012: 'DISSIDENTEN RECEIVED THE INTERNATIONAL PRAETORIUS MUSIC PEACE AWARD 2012'

Dissidenten receive Germany's prestigious 'International Praetorius Music Peace Award'. They were asked to put together a live acoustic 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. The rest of the year they appeared at various Festivals in Europe.



2013: On the final date of the tour which mainly included Portugal, Morocco, Austria, and Germany, the trio record 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 led to the production of the album **HOW LONG IS NOW? - Dissidenten Unplugged Live in Berlin**, which presents another unexplored perspective of the group. Since they have been a Berlin band from the beginning, this album is also an homage to their home town.



2014: Except for occasional festival appearances (i.e. Bundeskunsthalle Bonn Festival) Dissidenten spends the year mainly working on the album **THE MEMORY OF THE WATERS – Dissidenten by Gordon Sherwood** recorded live at the Bruckner Festival Linz/Austria. Back in summer 1997 Dissidenten met the American composer and world traveller Gordon Sherwood in Tanger/Morocco, brought together via their mutual friend, writer/composer Paul Bowles. A new and inspired friendship began. The Memory Of The Waters bears witness to the years Dissidenten and Sherwood spent travelling and working together.

2015: Sees Dissidenten on tour - together with their long time friend Mohamed Mounir - at various Festivals in Europe (Afrika Festival Würzburg, Vienna and Munich as well as the Nuremberg Bardentreffen with more than 240,000 spectators). For many years Dissidenten and Mounir have been close friends. He has played and recorded a variety of their songs and Dissidenten's guitarist Roman Bunka has been a member of Mounir's band since the 80s. In 2015 they are joining together live on stage. Mounir is an iconic Egyptian singer and film star. From Alexandria to Aswan, the voice of Mohamed Mounir is as familiar to Egyptians as that of a brother or father or closest of friends. His warm, sweet contralto is an integral part of Egypt's soundscape, blasting day and night from countless CD-selling kiosks, sidewalk cafés and automobiles.



In November 2015 Dissidenten headline at the German "Creole" meeting in Karlsruhe, shortly after they performed a sold out concert in their old adopted hometown Tangier and at "Visa 4 Music" in Rabat, Morocco where they were granted the "Visa For Music-Award" as an homage to their inspired collaborations with Moroccan musicians. As the Jury states: "Modern Music in Morocco began over thirty years ago with Dissidenten".



Rabat, Nov. 2015: This edition of Visa For Music honors Dissidenten, a German group with over a 30-year career, and their mix of avant-garde rock, electronic music, African sounds and especially Moroccan music. Dissidenten, who collaborated with Lem Chaheb, Nass El Ghiwan and Jil Jilala, has been and continues to be regulars of Morocco since the 80s, and has delivered a memorable performance worthy of their status. The homage-award was presented by Mr. Brahim el Mazned, head of Visa for Music and the Moroccan Minister of Culture, Mr. Mohamed Amine Sbihi.

more information:

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