

**Fifteen Questions Interview with Deep Imagination
Archaic Impulse**

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Nationality: German

Occupation: Producer, composer, multi-instrumentalist



When did you start writing/producing/playing music and what or who were your early passions and influences? What was it about music and/or sound that drew you to it?

Music was something magical for me that attracted me as a child, but without me seriously learning an instrument myself. It wasn't until I was 19, in 1982, that I started playing drums and then explored other instruments more or less self-taught.

My early passions were glitter rock, followed by art rock. A short time later, post punk and dark wave came along.

What attracted me to music was the rebelliousness and weirdness compared to the sober world of adults.

When I listen to music, I see shapes, objects and colours. What happens in your body when you're listening and how does it influence your approach to creativity?

That's a very interesting question. I think the emotions that music triggers are archaic in nature. When I was making music, I felt at some point that something deep inside me was triggered when I heard a repetitive musical pattern, for example.

I also think of the first instruments. They were drums that our ancestors used to put themselves into trance-like states. And there are these emotional turns in music that also give me these impulses. Music is the expression of the emotions in life. And when you create music yourself, it is your natural expression. That is the core.

That is then what I always seek and want to experience anew when I work on a composition. In the end, it is the archaic impulse and the desire for expression that inspires me to be creative.

How would you describe your development as an artist in terms of interests and challenges, searching for a personal voice, as well as breakthroughs?

Perhaps the interests lie in the fact that you can express things and an attitude through music that you cannot express in any other way. That alone is the challenge you have to face again and again as an author. Over time, you naturally demand certain standards from yourself.

There are many personal breakthroughs or better milestones. I've been making music for 40 years now, and it adds up. The most important ones were perhaps my first beat on the drum set, my first band, my first studio, my first professionally produced song, the purchase of my first workstation and the record deal with BSC Music.

And of course the founding of my solo project Deep Imagination as a personal breakthrough to total artistic freedom and self-determination.

Tell me a bit about your sense of identity and how it influences both your preferences as a listener and your creativity as an artist, please.

To always tackle what I haven't done before in this form.

For me, identity equals development. I have no interest in repeating things I've already done. I always work, at the core and in principle, in a specific era around an album production. They're cycles where you're implementing a certain concept that you've come up with. For me, there always have to be elements in it that need to be explored anew. In that sense, it influences my artistic approach.

As a listener, it influences me in the sense that I listen to music that lets me rest and favours this development.

What, would you say, are the key ideas behind your approach to music and art?

The aspiration to create my own music that is distinctive and lifts you to a higher level emotionally. The idea of creating a strong, high quality production within my means.

That's what I'm always looking for and if I can do both, I'm happy.

How would you describe your views on topics like originality and innovation versus perfection and timelessness in music? Are you interested in a "music of the future" or "continuing a tradition"?

Neither, I am in the here and now and at the same time always on my way. That's why I create music that reflects the current state of my musical development. If originality arises from an idea, then it can of course be innovative, but it doesn't have to be.

As far as perfection is concerned, I am sometimes quite obsessed and work on some parts for a very long time until I am satisfied.

Whether music is perhaps timeless is a very subjective thing. But if it is beautiful and if it touches again and again, then it is timelessly good.

Over the course of your development, what have been your most important instruments and tools - and what are the most promising strategies for working with them?

Chronologically, in the early days, that was my first drum set from Tama, my first electric guitar, a Squire Stratocaster, my first keyboard, an Alpha Juno 1 from Roland and a Yamaha RX11 drum machine. Very important at that time was also getting my Fostex 4-track tape recorder and my first spring reverb, also from Fostex.

With my Tascam 8-track tape machine I took another step in terms of sound and production. Even then I recorded almost everything myself, because I always wanted to hear something that sounded like a production right away. Later in the 90s I bought a Kurzweil K2000 keyboard. That was a workstation on which I composed the first pieces of Art Of Infinity, a huge step. In the noughties I started working with the production software Logic and later with Cubase.

At times I worked exclusively with keyboards, but lately I've been composing more with the acoustic guitar again, playing a lot of percussion and I've also bought a new electric guitar. I also focus on my own lead vocals, which I want to improve all the time.

My strategies for working with all the instruments and technology is that I never let myself get distracted by the infinite possibilities for purposefully translating the musical idea into a production. It's not about virtuosity, a trendy sound or mastering technology, but about the song, the arrangement and the artistic expression it contains.

Take us through a day in your life, from a possible morning routine through to your work, please.

That's not so exciting. I moved from the city to the countryside with my wife many years ago and we love the peace and quiet and nature, the garden, our house. That's the base and that's also where my recording studio is.

I live according to an inner clock, a rhythm or also a daily cycle, like day and night, determined by the orbits of the planets. Within this, of course, there are many quite ordinary routines that almost always take place at the same time of day for me. It plays a big role for me that I consciously develop creative freedom in the form of time. That is the prerequisite for my artistic work. Of course, business things have to be taken care of all the time and you have to keep up with the various timelines so that you can keep the upper hand.

And when I then enter the free space, I can realise the things that have previously matured in my head or I can do spontaneous things. I can then find the peace necessary for the creation of my music. I am in the Imagination Studio practically every day and work continuously on my current projects. That is the way I live by.

Could you describe your creative process on the basis of a piece, live performance or album that's particularly dear to you, please?

In 1996, I founded the ambient music project Art Of Infinity with Thorsten Rentsch. For our first album, *New Horizon*, we had the crazy idea of setting evolution to music in a 20-minute long track. For me, the title still stands for how we conceived and created Art Of Infinity. We had a vision and then we realised it in a long creative process and in the end over four albums.

With my solo project Deep Imagination, founded in 2005, the current work and creation of the album *The Children Of The Moon*, planned for 2023, is a very big affair of the heart for me. In 2020 I invited Achim von Raesfeld, my old friend and musical brother from the 80s, to play guitar on a Deep Imagination piece. What can I say, it kind of clicked with both of us and we picked up exactly where we once left off, only in a different time. Achim von Raesfeld plays guitar on all the tracks on the upcoming album, and he also appears in the video clips.

For the album I have developed what I call a New Dark Wave and Achim is not only humanly the perfect man and guest guitarist to work on this production. It's amazing with what ease he approaches things. I really enjoy how naturally we communicate through the music.

Listening can be both a solitary and a communal activity. Likewise, creating music can be private or collaborative. Can you talk about your preferences in this regard and how these constellations influence creative results?

I think with the record deal in 2004 with BSC Music, my music left the private space. Today, I am still just as grateful and proud that a label and publisher like BSC Music publishes my music. In that respect, you can see this creation as communal.

But I also play a few songs at a party with friends, which is also wonderful, but remains private. No matter what musical constellation, for me there is always a positive influence on the creative results.

How do your work and your creativity relate to the world and what is the role of music in society?

If by the world you mean politics, I am a person interested in politics. Democracy and the constitutional state are a great good for all of us. But that doesn't play a particular role in my music and lyrics. It's more about human things.

Music has always played a major role in society, even though it has become virtually free thanks to the Internet. Classical music, including that of the last decades, is a valuable cultural asset. But current music also always plays an important role.

Basically, I think people should rather make music than war. That has always been the better idea.

Art can be a way of dealing with the big topics in life: Life, loss, death, love, pain, and many more. In which way and on which occasions has music – both your own or that of others - contributed to your understanding of these questions?

On the album *Endless Future* by Art Of Infinity we dealt with these big themes you mentioned. That was and is very deep. Another example is the album *Carefully Kept Secrets* by Deep Imagination. This was about discovering and seizing the opportunities that life offers. When you deal with such themes artistically yourself, it naturally contributes to your understanding of these big questions.

When I was 17, the concept album *The Wall* by Pink Floyd came out and it

still impresses me today. I think it's one of the best things, musically and in terms of content, among many other good works, if you want to deal with these questions.

How do you see the connection between music and science and what can these two fields reveal about each other?

This is a big topic and I think there is a very strong connection.

Science always tries to make things comprehensible. Musicology alone is a huge field and I am certainly not an expert who could give a lecture on it. But science can try to explain what music and its effect on us is all about.

There will always be something mysterious and enigmatic in music, just like in science.

Creativity can reach many different corners of our lives. Do you feel as though writing or performing a piece of music is inherently different from something like making a great cup of coffee? What do you express through music that you couldn't or wouldn't in more 'mundane' tasks?

Making a good cup of coffee can be something very beautiful. But when I'm writing, things happen that I can't otherwise experience.

I picked up on this theme on the album *My Silent Celebration* by Deep Imagination.

It stands as a metaphor for the moment when you create something new. A moment that is magical and with which you can also surprise yourself with things that you don't know where they actually come from. You express things that you can only express through music.

These are deep feelings or a certain attitude, which in the best case are understood and supported by the listener.

Music is vibration in the air, captured by our ear drums. From your perspective as a creator and listener, do you have an explanation how it is able to transmit such diverse and potentially deep messages?

The explanation is perhaps that it's somehow magical and we don't have one. There is a lot of mystery in the essence of music. Basically, however, every sound can be traced back to vibrations in the air.

But music is made consciously by people and they transport messages and emotions through it. It is like a non-verbal, superordinate language. It is and remains very fascinating. (15questions.net | October 2022)