

Sonic Seducer - full interview (English)

10 years of silence: Why did it take so long to release a new album?

The deadline for my previous album was the birth of my daughter. She came one month early, so that made things a bit challenging. She is 10 now and we also had the luck to welcome another girl on our family. So the 'lack of sleep baby-years' are one part of the reason.

The other part was combining health issues, job changes and construction works around the house that consumed a lot of energy. When I finally finished building the new homestudio and my health was ok, I started recording the new tracks.

Why did you choose "End Of I" as album title?

'End Of I' refers to the actual period in history, in where (Western) civilization is confronted with the boundaries of the hyper-individualization. I am very happy that I was not born a century ago and that I have a lot of individual rights and freedom, but since the falling of the 'great stories', the new 'great story' seems to be the one of neoliberal meritocracy. The world has become a place for competition in which you'll 'get what you deserve', as long as you fight hard enough for it. Everybody is trying to reach the top and the basic attitude to get there is distrust, because every other person is your opponent. All this results in a world where psychopaths are on top of the chain and are even admired for their antisocial, selfish behavior.

'End Of I' stands for the fact that there is a shift happening in the frame of mind of many people around the world. Gigantic inequality in wealth, climate change, COVID-19, ... are actual challenges which demand a total different approach, other than the 'divide and conquer' policy that was installed upon us for many of years.

When and where did you record the album?

Three years ago I started with the creation of the new album. The homestudio was build and I had a lot of inspiration. Because AOE is a one man hobby project, it took more than two years to finish the album. It is very time consuming to combine this with a full-time job, household, etc.

I started assembling lyrical ideas on my cellphone, on which I could work wherever I was. I also remember humming and singing in the car, while driving to my job. At home I made some quick recordings to give a bit more shape to the songs. Actually, it was very similar to making a sculpture.

The great thing about working within the comfort of a homestudio gives you a lot of freedom and time to work on all details. Listening to this music, you can hear many different layers, which define the AOE sound.

On the other hand, it's very time-consuming, so I consider a different a different approach the future. Less = more, maybe? And more collaboration. 'End Of I', that's why!

Where did you draw the inspiration for your lyrics from? It's all about getting in touch and find connection: Can you please explain the main theme of the album and what it means to you? What are your songs about?

Thematically, all lyrics come from personal, daily experiences and stories from other people. If you listen and observe well enough, you start seeing connections between the dots you see. Luckily there are some smart people, walking this earth, who are able to connect a lot more of those dots. They write books about it, just like the ancient philosophers did, and which also affect AOE's lyrics.

More than ever, when dots are connected, this results in a 'concept album'. That brings me back to answer on your second question in which I stated that 'End Of I' stands for people looking for trust and connection with others, because they are tired of the 'rat race to the top'. Today, there is scientific proof that wealth only makes you happen until a certain amount. There's also proof that we are social animals, so we depend on other people for our own happiness.

So why distrust everybody else and push others aside for our own greed, if that only benefits 4% of the population? And by that I mean the psychopaths, who care only about themselves.

Did you already release some of the song of the album on youtube, bandcamp or another social media platform? If so: What has the reaction been like? What kind of feedback did you get so far?

It is a lot more difficult to be seen on the social media, nowadays. Things have changed a lot and the amount of data-traffic on social media has become huge. The advice is given to constantly offer content to the audience, but I am not the best salesman around and I don't liked to be overloaded by ads myself. So I focus on the direct contact with fans, which I value most.

The feedback on the new album has been great so far. 71 minutes of AOE music is a lot to digest, certainly in a world where everything has to be fast and flashy. But people

who dared the journey tell me that they were overwhelmed in a very positive way. Almost all of them also say that they have never experienced this type of music, which means that the AOE sound is quite unique.

My favourite song right now is the title track "End Of I" which reminds me in parts of songs by Leonard Cohen. Can you please tell me more about this song?

You were not the first one to refer to Cohen. I think my vocals sometimes elicit this comparison. The song starts like your typical neofolk song, but eventually turns out to be a song consisting of two totally different parts. You'll hear that Type O Negative influenced me a lot in my music writing.

The song describes the current zeitgeist, which I also refer to in the album title. I do not want a society in which the unique in every individual has no chance to develop, but it seems that the pendulum of individualization has swung too far the other way, resulting in people going astray. Solitude is bliss, but strength is in numbers.

What's your favorite own song on the album and why?

Quite difficult question, but I think the break of Ninety-Six Percent is my favourite part of the entire album. "Cease the worship of conceit. Cease the worship of pride. To those lacking virtue, your destiny is not tied!"

Mind / Matter is the full track I like most. Probably because it is also a "waltz" with time signature 3/4. That makes me think... I guess almost the half of the songs on the album are "waltzes". This signature inherits a nice, organic flow which I totally adore.

How much of yourself goes into your music?

Last years, I spent too much time and energy into this music. It was not very good for my health and social life. On the one hand, I personally needed the album to close certain chapters of my life, but on the other hand it also felt like a burden. "Passion" means "suffering". That says it all. Anyways: it was worth it.

Can you please tell me more about your concept (Sharing = Caring) to make your music available to everyone for free?

Since the start of AOE, I offered my music for free. It was the period internet became faster and the MP3 format found its way across many music lovers. Somehow I realized that the music industry was at a tipping point and I planned to surf on the new waves of the internet to spread my music. In those days Myspace was a great platform to do so. I also realized that the musical style of

AOE would never appeal to a large audience, so, you have to get word of mouth. My only aim is that possible lovers of the AOE music can be reached, with as less boundaries. Therefore the music is free, without saying that it is worthless.

These days, the internet streaming days of high quality Netflix, etc. content, it seems that music has become less valued. A song has become just one click among many other clicks. I never cared for physical releases myself (it was all about the audio waves reaching my ears), but creating a special edition for the fans, like I'm doing now with Aenaos Records, somehow gives an extra dimension to the entire album. People search for authenticity and durability in a world that's full of falsehood and volatility. And music will always have an compelling power that nothing else can match.

Any final comment?

Thanks a lot for the opportunity and the support of the dark music scene. It is in darkness, where souls shine brightest. It is here where you can find the authenticity I just mentioned. Music is all about connection, because why else would you release music?

I hope for the world that people will transcend the 'posthuman decadent' way of living and find this connectivity with each other, other species, and mother earth in general. Because we are all part of the same organism. Denying this, is of the greatest stupidity.

Be well and take care!

Karin Hoog - [Sonic Seducer](#)