

Ginger, Lemon Juice and Maple Syrup

Telephone interview with Nina Hagen on 4/15/97

Interview by Robert Vickerstaff and Peter Marshall (Thanks for making this available to the Shrine!)

About 3.30am- excited, more than a little nervous, Robert and Peter hook up the 'bug' to record their first meeting with Nina Hagen. The espresso machine works overtime and the household cats are more than a little puzzled by the hour.

Connection with Nina is achieved. Immediately Nina is into the interview- "So you want to do an interview?"

Nina enthuses first about Cosma Shiva's upcoming sixteenth birthday and a film which Cosma has just made. Nina is busy making packages to send to Cosma to remind her that she too is a Goddess. I am very touched by what a loving mother Nina is.

Nina tells me also about the drink she is having- a blend of organic Lemon Juice, pure Maple Syrup and Ginger.

When I get a chance to interrupt I warn Nina that I am about to *turn on the machine*. Nina continues to talk about Cosma Shiva.

NH: She's very deep. As an actress she can play very convincing drama, sadness, but her real self is very happy, outgoing. So I wonder about the new film? What part she has to play there?

RV: Yes, acting must be good fun for her.

NH: It's so difficult to get hold of her- she's so busy!

RV: [Laughs] Like her mother?

[Nina giggles modestly]

RV: So what about your movie Cha-Cha? We've only ever read about it but not ever been able to see it in Australia?

NH: Um?

RV: Way back. With Lene Lovich in the seventies?

NH: Yes. I just did some Fasting in January and got rid of all that past stuff.

RV: [a little surprised!] all that past stuffs gone?

NH: Yes- it came into my dreams and then I said "OK, bye-bye memories. Out with the old and in with the new."

RV: Can I ask you about languages- how many languages do you speak?

NH: [puzzled tone, very High Pitch] What?

RV: How many languages do you speak?

NH: [very long pause] I'm drinking my lemonade, ginger and maple-syrup.

RV: I'm still on morning coffee- the sun hasn't risen in Sydney yet.

NH: [mock scolding tone. High pitch again] Coffee! Robert, that's BAD for you. [giggles]
[Both Laugh] You should come over here one day and I make you a Lemonade with Organic Lemons

RV: yum

NH some Blood Oranges; lots of Maple Syrup; half the water is cool; half the water is warm to hot; and so it's kind of like a warm thing. And with the maple syrup, dear. Dearest Robert, the Maple Syrup will really set you free

RV: yes?

NH: Because it is the most balanced sugar you will find on this beautiful Planet. Try Maple Syrup. Try {I'm not sure of exact words here may be "Great B"-possibly a US Brand name I don't recognize, help!} that's the second one. And you'll have a lot of minerals and Vitamin C!

RV: Wow- I'll give that a shot.

NH: and ginger, you press it in your juice machine. In your juice machine.

RV [getting a little lost] in the juice machine?

NH: I mean the ginger.

RV: Good for the bloodstream.

NH: [emphatically] Oh, yeah.

Nina unexpectedly changes the topic.

NH: The other Saturday we went to a Children's birthday and they did some archery, in a park, they were shooting arrows- the children. And there I met a big man, and he was talking to another big man, {inaudible} they had brought their little sons. And anyway, and I heard the [Nina's voice goes up at least an octave and speeds up]
REDHOTCHILIPEPPER!

RV: [very excited] oooh!

NH: And I went, my elephant ears went, wiggle wiggle

RV: [Laughing] I bet- mine would too!

NH: So I grabbed a Colour Xerox copy I did the other day of George Clinton and me, and the moment when I am touching George's feet.

RV: uh huh-

NH: like grinning into the camera. And anyway I wrote my telephone number down and the guy who apparently was a roadie for the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

RV Anthony and Flea are both living in Australia now. No, Flea is in New Zealand and Anthony in Australia? They're both floating around here at the moment anyway.

NH: [a curious tone] I know!

RV: It's strange, Henry Rollins too

NH: And so for six years or even more I talked [voice starts to rise in glee again] to Anthony this morning on the telephone! He actually called me because he got this piece of paper from the roadie! Isn't that amazing?

RV: It's good, it's good!

NH: After six years. You know, the last time I saw him I was four months pregnant with Otis. Otis is six now.

RV: So are you going to come to Australia to sing for us one day?

NH: Yes- if the Earth's atmosphere doesn't get too thin. I'll come over and stay in the shadow

RV: [Laughing] Well come sooner, rather than later would be the best tip I could offer you! You have lots of fans here but we don't show up in Sales figures because we buy most of the records on Import from America.

NH: Really? I have to go to India one more time before, before. My next trip's going to be to India then maybe after India I might come to Australia. I have a girlfriend who travels all over the Planet and she gives {inaudible} about , umm, like, well, loving relationships with God and Goddess and with each other- her name is Zondra Ray. Have you heard of her? She was in Australia also recently.

RV: Say her name again for me.

NH: Zondra Ray

RV: Yes, I did see posters.

NH: [extremely excited] You did? She's amazing!

RV: I think a friend may have spoken of her to me

NH: When she does her seminars, when she does them here, I'm there playing music on my guitar and with my friend Dana. She plays on the Harmonium and then we sing songs for the Divine Mother.

RV: [Emphatically] YES! [Robert and Nina say "Yes" to each other in silly voices for a couple of seconds and both giggle] I think it's close to my mission at the moment. I'm learning to balance the physical part of my Mind, Body & Soul equation. So lots of dancing with Shiva for me at the moment.

NH: Well, I have a great book for you. It's written by an English man who lives in India, and any way, he's Gay, and he's married to his Boyfriend and he went through a lot in his life. Like, he met Mother Mira in Frankfurt who he didn't like in the end because she was considering his being Gay as [Starts to laugh- a little sadness] has to be changed or something!

RV: [resignedly] right.

NH: So he got out of there [Nina's voice starts to brighten again] and married his sweetheart. Who was also there [ironic laugh from Nina] in the Ashram, and then they found out that Mother Mira is a [Nina uses her 'distasteful' voice- the one that says "Like Diet Soda" on *So Bad*] scam. She is not really an enlightened Mother.

RV: [very surprised] oh really?

NH: It's a book called "Return to the Mother"

RV: I've heard of that one.

NH: This Gay guy, he is SO sweet and beautiful, um his name is [a "Minnie Mouse" voice emerges as Nina becomes more frustrated trying to remember the name] GEE! I HAVE THE BOOK UPSTAIRS! [returns to ordinary voice] I think his name is Andrew something.

{ The book Nina is trying to remember is:
Andrew Harvey: *The Return of Mother*
Published by Frog Ltd. }

RV: It all makes me think of a wonderful new Australian film called 'Sexing the Label' which we just saw. It has a lot of Sydney Queer people in it including a Transsexual who met with Dalai Lama and that Dalai Lama simply said to her "Don't worry about it Darling, the Soul has no Sexuality" and kept moving.

NH: [Childlike wonder in Nina's voice] HOW COSMIC! Ohhhhh! [thoughtful pause] I know a Transvestitie, ah transexual, who is a friend of mine, she's a fabulous singer and actress- her name is Zazi Du'Paris {If I have mis-heard this name I stand willing and ready

to be corrected} she plays at the Brecht Theatre {again, I may require correction here?} in Berlin. And then my other friend Romy Haag

RV: Yes, I've read about Romy

NH: [Nina becomes extremely excited here- inflects toward end] Romy is a very sweet friend of mine

RV: [getting caught up in Nina's infectious enthusiasm} yes

NH: they are wonderful and Romy also met the Dalai Lama. Is that the same girl you're talking about?

RV: Um, no, a Sydney woman. The film's called "Sexing the Label".

NH: Oh, it's AUSTRALIAN.

RV: What about the new album? Have you got any clues for the fans about what's going to be on it, who you're working with?

NH: [Very excited] Well Well What can I say? How can you describe a project, that's difficult, you have to hear it. Hold it in your hands. It's very umm well, how shall I say, Very Cosmic [happy chuckle]

RV: Lovely!

NH: Very X-Fileish

RV: Uh-huh. [curious tone] ooooooh?

NH: Sometimes, yes, sometimes. And very Divine Mother and Babaji and the Cosmos and the ETs and everything.

RV: Lovely! I can't wait.

NH: And soon I'm about to film with Peter Semple, he's making a documentary about my life. It's going to be a movie for the Cinema. All we have to do, he has filmed me already for three years, we did a lot of things. Rodney Bingenheimer and with George Clinton. Soon Junie's {more name identification difficulties} going to come one more time to the United States where we are going to do a benefit concert [now Nina starts to get REALLY excited] in San Francisco. For, our beloved Hospital in the Himalayas. Already half of the Hospital is standing and it is already working as a Charitable Hospital

RV: Marvellous

NH: And it's a beautiful project. My Guru, and the Guru of my Guru, called out ten years ago that this region should have a charitable Hospital. It's something that's growing and already working. It's SO COOL- and it's in the most beautiful spot in the world! It's in the

Himalayas. It's in India, the border of Tibet is not far away, you can touch the clouds because you're above, and there's a beautiful Ashram there, and the Village, and some shops, and a Hotel. There's a little town next-door where some Army people are because it's the border between Tibet and India, in Ranikhet where we go to the Market [Nina says 'Ranikhet' several times rolling the Rs on her tongue joyfully]. That Village is called {I stand requiring further correction "Tileonola"- someone out there knows?} it is where my Guru, my sweet teacher from India, Shri Muniraji comes from and he was the closest disciple of Babaji who was also there until 1984.

RV: Muniraji will be on tour soon I believe.

NH: [excited] Yah!

RV: Do you know if there will be a visit to the Babaji Ashram in Australia?

NH: Yeah, I can, well. But we're gonna film the whole thing so you at least can see it in Peter Semple's film because he's {Shi Muniraji}also gonna do a fire Ceremony. He does it everyday after the benefit in the morning.

RV: Well this film will be very exciting. About when will the album be out - that's what everyone is asking - when will we hear??

NH: Well, as long as the Earth is in orbit we will always hear when it's done, and then we're gonna have so much fun!

RV: A perfect answer, I love that! Can I ask one more question?

NH: Hang on one second.

*After a Domestic interruption Nina returns to the 'phone. *

NH: Hey, I'm back. Later Keith is coming we're going to listen to some stuff- Keith Forsey, I did Fearless with him in 1984.

RV: Ah- Keith Forsey, yes. One of your better producers in my humble opinion.

NH: Ja! And we can work *SO* well together we made a song called "Frequency Control"

RV: uh huh.

NH: Freak! Like FREAK [Nina really emphasises the Freak!]

RV: Oh- like F R E A K?

NH: Yes

RV: [Laughs] How wonderful!

NH: Yes Freakquency Control! It's going to be very outrageous.

RV: Oh Good. That's great. That's one of the things I was going to ask you. Everyone says, we read, that you weren't so happy with the Freud Euch / Bee Happy Project

NH: Well, now I am happy because I have just the song we are working on and it's Freakquency control and I put everything in there which needs to be in there including some, when some people call me on the 'phone they say "Hi Nina this is so & so" or some just say [Nina adopts a mock 'gruff' voice] "Hello, Hello, Hello" that was George Clinton. So I have some really funny things including one person from a prison. He tries to call- it was this collect call situation and there was an automated voice and she says [Nina's voice changes to sound like a computer] "If you want to pick up this call press 1, if you never wanna receive a call from this Inmate Facility press 2".

RV: Oh No! Strange things happen in America, Nina.

NH: But it's all things that happen to me. And it's going to be a like a movie. We're going to make a video to the song. So it's going to be very clear what we talk about.

RV: So a bit like Universal Radio?

NH [Emphatically] Oh no, don't mention anything from the past. What I do now is BRAND NEW INFORMATION. You, know- I am removing frequencies of limitation to bring in the frequency of INFORMATION- that's it- ja! With Music you can definitely spread information and even better with some pictures.

RV: When Phoebe Legere was in Sydney we got to talk to her for a while and she kept telling me "You can sing, you CAN sing, go and learn to sing -teach yourself"

NH: Yes, you can chant, you can sing

RV: Yeah, all these years of people telling me that I can't sing and I can! We practice with Nina. I like to sing along to some of your more peaceful songs like the Omhaidakhandi when I need it - and Giant Step.

NH: You're mentioning embarrassing moments of my life again - this is not an interview about this was my life - this is an interview about this IS my life! It's recyclable though, you can keep "collectors items"!

RV: Of course!

NH: I have to do so many things. I have to go and pick Otis up now

RV: Is it the end of the schoolday in LA already?

NH: Um, definitely

RV: Oh dear, and we're only starting on a new day. Nina its great to talk to you, just one

thing I wanted to ask you- I'm going to post this for all the fans once I've typed it all up - but if you were happy I'd also like to use a couple of little extracts about the upcoming album for the local punk 'zine, would you be happy about that?

NH: Whatever you want to do man, go ahead man.

RV: All the local punks will be so excited to know that Nina Hagen has got a new album coming. Especially the Dykes- you're a Dykon!

NH: Well I spread my vibrations when I was a squatter in Amsterdam so the spirits who dress up as punks they definitely recognise my frequency vibrations. [chuckles]

RV: Very much, very much

NH: Very good put, good put. Yeah well I better get back to my work here.

RV: Can I ask you to say hello to Peter, my partner, who is also a big lover of you?

NH: OK, yeah!

PM: Hello Nina

NH: Hi Peter, what are you going to have for breakfast today? [gleefully] Mango slices?

PM: No yoghurt, muesli and some fruit on that

NH: Oh lovely!

PM: What time is it there?

NH: I don't know - I am timeless (giggles) but I'm hungry too. I have to put some maple syrup in my lemonade

PM: Sounds great. I must go to work soon which will be very unexciting!

NH: Oh, then create a better work for you

PM: I'm always looking for the right place

NH: Yeah, it will come - it's already there! You just have to find it

PM: Just see it rather than try to find it?

NH: OK. I join you when you are going to eat your muesli I'm going to eat my sauerkraut like organic from the farmers market

PM: So we'll be eating at the same time! [Both laugh heartily] Much love.

NH: And you too

PM: and great cosmic vibrations to you Nina.

NH: I'll see you soon in Australia after my India thing

PM: [Absolute delight] Oh Great! We'll look forward to it a lot

NH: And actually my bass player he's trying to organise a gig there

PM: Oh great. We'd love to meet you

NH: [Minnie Mouse voice] You will!

PM: I have a feeling we will

NH: Sure. OK. Have fun there

PM: Thank you

NH: [big squelchy kiss noise] Bye!

PM: [big squelchy kiss right back] Bye-bye Nina!

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