

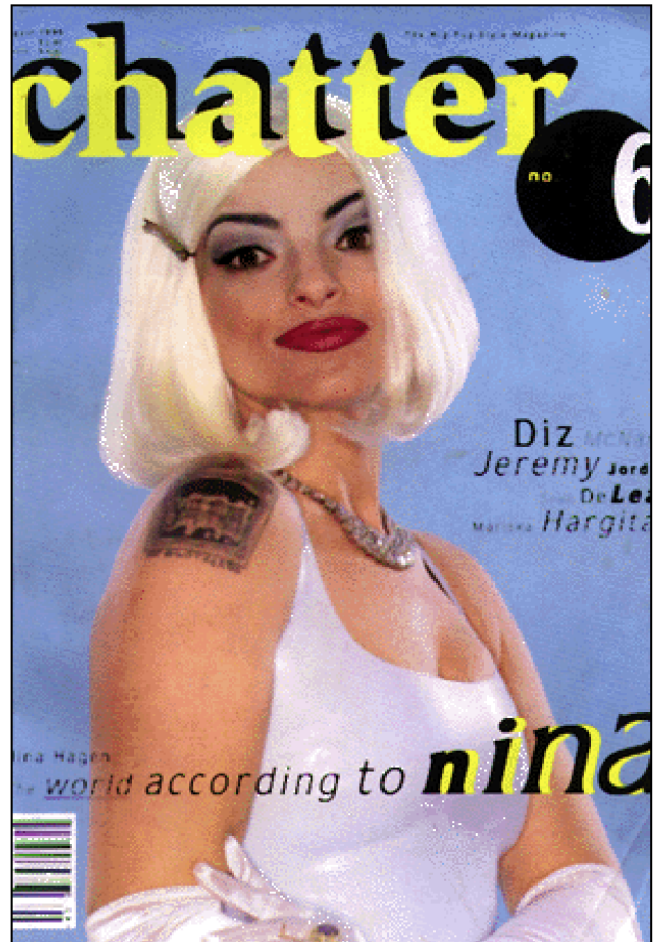
The World According to Nina

Chatter Magazine - August 1995

Interview by Michael Roche

Photos by Lucas Muehlenweg

Recently myself and a small portion of my staff were abducted by U.F.O.'s and transported to the Hollywood Hills, Where I was quickly greeted by Miss-Spaced-Out-Cosma-Shiva herself. The first words out of her mouth were something about meeting-possibly in other lifetimes. I was going to need a very large cup of coffee. I tried to keep pace with the interview, but somewhere the conversation just took on a life of its own:





Michael Roche: I'm at Nina Hagen's home up in the Hollywood Hills.

Nina Hagen: Estate.

MR: Estate!?!?!? You live here with Franck and your son Otis

NH: Yes, Franck, who is the father, and Cosma Shiva. She is coming when her holidays start, like in two weeks. She is fourteen, my Cosma Shiva.

MR: Is Franck your husband?

NH: No. We are not married. He didn't come with me to India where the real wedding would take place in front of "The Holy Fire."

MR: Why India?

NH: I met my teacher in India. Well, actually I met him in Europe before I went to India in 1993, to the Himalayas. And I do have a teacher there and I spend three months there.

MR: Do you call him a guru?

NH: Well, his name is Muni Raji, and he hangs out at the same area where Babaji came from. Muni Raji means "Holy One." He came into my dreams, of course. He has an ashram on the border of Tibet in India, up in the Himalayas. The little village where this take place is called "Chilanola." It is a very Italian name. And indeed, you do find very many Italian young revolutionary people there. And to hang out with these people was like finding the real Ibiza, because I did spend a couple years in Spain.

MR: I first met you in Ibiza.

NH: Yeah, I have friends there and I had a couple of different places there since 1979. I went there first, so that's like a home island



also. Anyway, where were we?

MR: I was asking you...about God knows what.

NH: Oh yeah, we were in the Himalayas, and then...before...I don't know how all this started. But you asked me what brings me to Hollywood?

MR: I asked you if you got married?

NH: Oh, married. No, we didn't. I never got really married. A couple of attempts and stuff, and halfway through even once. But never really.

MR: O.k. So what brought you to Hollywood to live in the Hollywood Hills?

NH: O.k. When I came here it was in the end of November and kind of December-ish. And I was pregnant. I felt so sick and I went to my doctor who also helped me to give birth to my first-born daughter. He helped me to escape from going through a whole pregnancy again. I was able to do an abortion in Los Angeles, right when I came over from Europe, which is the reason I came here. The doctor-he is such a wonderful doctor-like I said, he was there when I gave birth to my first-born. He's a fabler mane, and he has children too. He's just what a doctor should be.

MR: So you came back to Los Angeles not necessarily for music...

NH: Oh, yes. I was singing during the procedure. Also, I was singing, 'I go to the dentist soon--It's going to be even more painful.'

MR: All day long you've been talking about the dentist. Would you please go get your fucked-up teeth taken care of.

NH: Yeah. Yeah.

MR: I know you've been sucking your thumb for many, many years. What's that about?

NH: When I was little I sucked my thumb and then later when my teeth came. When I became an adult I was still sucking my thumb, occasionally. Here and then, there and that. So my teeth, they go a little up and down.

MR: When did you stop sucking your thumb?

NH: I never did.

MR: You're still sucking your thumb?

NH: Occasionally, here and then, I guess. But not as much as I used to. Especially after India. I found another thumb, which is called *Kriya-Yoga*.

MR: And what's that about?

NH: Well, that's a very old technique of these old yogis there in the Himalaya. They rejuvenate through breathing. Breathing a certain way every morning, and then they go straight to Nirvana. they stay there for awhile, it's also called "rebirthing." But in India they call it *Kriya-Yoga* since the old times. So it's like the natural way of being who we are supposed to be.

MR: Who originally inspired you to go towards India?

NH: Well, I met God actually when I was nineteen. And apparently, by so-



called accident, I swallowed my first LSD trip. I did that because a friend from Poland went to West Berlin and was supposed to get hashish, but came back with LSD. After I took it, I felt like I have to die, but I couldn't. And this was going on forever and like being in hell. And then I was calling God because I remembered all these stories about LSD. I remembered that I took LSD and that brought me into those circumstances. So now I know what people, like "nature people," they don't take LSD, but they take awaska in the rain forest. So it's like a way of being initiated to all the other worlds and dimensions out there. And eventually, finally, to the dimension where God resides.

MR: Do you consider yourself a spiritual person?

NH: Well, yes and no. And like everybody else.

MR: So you're searching? Or are you confused?

NH: No. I'm not confused at all. What I'm telling you is that I already found God through and out-of-body-experience after the influence of LSD when I was nineteen in East Berlin, where I came from. And then much later, many, many years later in 1987, I found like those books and stories and things about Babaji and *Kriya-Yoga*. I know that you do not have to even take a drug or an herb or peyote or kreyote or whatever, to go out of whatever-you-might-call-it. You can do it through so-called breathing techniques. You can really go out of your body and experience Nirvana. Everyday.

MR: You're very much the mother of the whole punk movement. Were drugs always part of the early days of the punks?

NH: No, but drugs for the humankind--let's say mescaline or holy mushrooms and things, always played the biggest part in our understanding of everything.

MR: How do you relate to your music in the nineties?

NH: I don't relate to it at all. I am just writing all the songs and all the lyrics. And I'm doing this new album now. Saturn just recently moved out of my Pisces accommodation-constellation-vibration situation. So there we go. And now my new album is coming out together with a CD-ROM. I will lead you all the way to the Himalayan to my new ashram and then one day we gonna meet up there. Look down on the clouds and think you are in Heaven. But...you are.

MR: What are you talking about?

NH: The Himalayas.

MR: No, no, no, no.

NH: It's so high that you look down onto the clouds and you think, 'God, the clouds are below me and I'm in Heaven.' It's a beautiful place I am talking about.

MR: How do you get up there?

NH: You fly to Delphi, you take a taxi from Delphi-like a newspaper taxi-it's very cheap. And you drive six yours through the most beautiful, huge countryside with people and cows and animals and monkeys outside. And little cities and everything. You see the whole thing, the walls with the cinema posters and everything. You go six hours and deeper into the direction of the Himalaya, which is on the border to Tibet, and there is a city called

Haldwani, and it splits up going directions...

MR: No, no. I was thinking more like--'did you ride a donkey or a camel up the mountain?' Not specific directions.

NH: Oh, right. You have to meet me in order to get there, right? Yeah, that's it.

MR: So you give directions to this location?

NH: Well, I went there two times. The next time I'm gonna go there is gonna be in October with my friend Peter Sempel and a couple of friends.

MR: Who's Peter?

NH: Peter Sempel is a German filmmaker. And he's making a film about me and my life. This is like a two year project.

MR: Let's talk about your life in the fashion lane. I saw you perform at an Aids benefit in Paris.

NH: I was at an Aids benefit and I came out with lots of other people and I was singing a song about "Move on, time to move".

MR: Did Jean-Paul Gaultier do it?

NH: Gaultier was in it.

MR: You wear a lot of Gaultier.

NH: Yeah, naturally. Because I met Jean-Paul in 1989, at a party.

MR: What kind of party did you meet Gaultier at?

NH: He threw a party, and it was a party where he invited all kinds of friends and relatives and everybody to choose the most beautiful mode. And he had old models and young models and male and female. Everybody was voting for the most outrageous person-model-type thing. That was when I met him in 1989 in Paris, the same evening

I met Franck, who used to be his assistant and who worked for his press agency and stuff. And Franck and me, we made Otis. Little Otis with the bad teeth. The dentist said his new teeth are fine.

MR: So you're all going to have new teeth here in Los Angeles?

NH: Oh, also. Yeah, I have a wisdom teeth definitely being pulled out.

MR: When are you having those pulled out?

NH: Um...I got my X-ray picture, which is like a picture of a gigantic skeleton.

MR: Let's talk about your new band. What's the name of it?

NH: Um... no idea. N.H.B. or something. I don't know--we are *Nina Hagen*. I have a couple of musicians in the band who are from the all-girl punk band called *Snap-Her*. And then I have my old Spock on the keyboards and I have a lead guitar player. And I'm doing this album now on CD-ROM.



MR: When will the album be released?

NH: O.k. In Europe, it's gonna be out in the end of the summer, and here whenever somebody ,picks up my English-spoken material. I am working with somebody, who, even if the record company RCA doesn't want to bring the English version out in America, I am free to go with another record company here.

MR: Are you producing this album here in the United States?

NH: No. We are recording and producing it near Cologne. It's a studio from Connie Plank. Connie used to make records with the *Eurythmics*, *Ultravox*, and *Devo*, back in the eighties. And he died a couple of years ago, but the studio still has access and that's where we'll do the record. It's a very beautiful country hangout.

MR: So how long do you think you're going to stay here in the Hollywood Hills?

NH: I'm going back to the studio. I'm gonna have a touch-down in Frankfurt and leave here by middle of July. Yeah, I'm gonna miss it here.

MR: Where do you see yourself in the future?

NH: Well, I see myself touring again all over the world. Again in Brazil, where I did thirteen cities once upon a time in 1985. I know that now--as I said, Saturn moved out of Pisces--there will be no more difficulties for me to release my album worldwide again. Like I used to be able to in the eighties, when I was still with so-called *CBS Records*. Then I was three years with *Phonogram*. I did three albums with them in the beginning of the nineties until now. Nothing was being put out here because the "big boss" in New York, Allen Levy, who is a Frenchman, has hated me since the seventies.

MR: Why does he hate you?

NH: I have no idea. Maybe because he is smaller than me. And he's Jewish, too.

MR: What does that have to do with...

NH: I have no idea, as I said. But he used to be "the boss" of *CBS France* in 1979. That is when I was first just coming out of East Germany doing my first record and my first tour in the Western of Europe.

MR: When was the last time you toured?

NH: It was in America. It was last August, and Canada too and also Europe.

MR: You've been playing at some clubs around Hollywood.

NH: Oh, yeah. We sure did. We never stopped. I'm also preparing a little gallery where I'm hanging my collages up and singing my new songs by myself on the guitar. I do that too. Now we are putting the big band together for summer open-air festivals. But just occasional, a couple of them.

MR: You're going to be out on the *Lollapalooza* tour also.

NH: Just a couple of them.

MR: Do you know which ones yet?

NH: No.

MR: Tell me what your philosophy of life is.

NH: O.k. (sings) 'Come with me to India, to be



with Muni Raji. Meet the great master, avoid the disaster.' The address is...

MR: That's your philosophy of life?

NH: Yeah. You definitely have to see that place. Then you know where your roots come from. Who we are. What we are supposed to be.

MR: What's your favorite thing to do in Hollywood?

NH: Um, working. Creating, having fun, and hanging out.

MR: Where do (you) like to hang out at?

NH: Everywhere. Where somebody who drives takes me.

MR: You don't have a car?

NH: I sure don't. I don't even drive a car. But I sure play guitar.

MR: It's almost impossible to live in Los Angeles and not have a car.**NH:**

Well, but not for me, you see?

MR: People escort you everywhere.

NH: Yeah. (sings to the melody of...) 'People. People who need people to go, are the luckiest people in the world. Who know people, who love people.'

MR: Let's talk about your great fiends 'Pierret Gilles'. How did you meet them?

NH: I also met them through Franck and Jean-Paul and all the friends we have in Paris. I was pregnant with Otis in Paris. I gave birth to him in suburbs of Paris. and you are incredible, beautiful boy! (to Otis) He always freaks me out when he comes to me. Where were we?

MR: 'Pierre et Gilles.'

NH: Oh, definitely met them in Paris, and we became friends. We don't talk much, because they don't talk too much English. They do all this incredible beautiful art, as I would call it. It's so much fun to just look at one picture and think, 'My God, what happened here?' And so we ended up working together too, you know.

MR: What are the differences between the German club scene and the American club scene?

NH: I always said, 'I don't know,' when people ask me 'Where is the audience different? There? Or *there*? Or there?' People love the same types of music, and there are different clubs for different kinds of music all over the beautiful fucked-up place. I'm very concerned about what's going down in china now. Because this old guy Ding, he has a really strange name, Ding something. He's like ready to die, and it's like each time a leader in China dies, everybody goes crazy. And they are expecting big upheavals. Like in Yugoslavia, they have the atomic power there and everybody is really concerned. I just wanted to mention that too in the interview.

MR: What does that have to do with the club scene?

NH: No, to be honored. To like, if you have a dream of a bad earthquake, then just get out of the city because before the last earthquake, I was here. Franck had a dream two nights before...

MR: Kent and I met you at the *Greenwich Pizza* shop the day of that earthquake. Do you remember?

NH: Yeah. Was that you?

MR: Kent had you sign autographs on the pizza plate.

NH: I was running around with my friend, and I was so tired of taking pictures.

MR: You were catching a plane back to Paris.

NH: Yeah, But, I stayed until after the aftershakes were taken. Yeah, that was great. You know, what I was saying is 'just be alert.' Because Franck had a dream and in the dream it said like, 'Don't worry, it's not such a big earthquake.' And so, I believe that somebody in your surrounding, or maybe yourself, is gonna have a dream about what's happening and then you escape a dangerous area. Eventually. That's when God comes into the dream.

MR: To shake up everyone in Hollywood?

NH: No, I mean to get out when the whole place breaks down. Before the whole place breaks down.

MR: And you can predict this?

NH: Or one of us. Around us. Like we are a huge group of people, and I think one of us will have a dream and tell us, 'Oh! You guys better get out of here! I had a dream there was a big earthquake!' Whoever the prophet might be, we don't know. But we sure know in Hollywood and L.A.--we are a group of very incredible lovely people. One of us is going to have "the alert" dream. And then we have to get up in the air.

MR: If it's you, will you call me?

NH: Yeah. Leave me your number.

MR: Thanks, I feel much safer knowing you'll call.

