

Sonja Hubmann “Something about me”

I was born on the 25th of April 1968. I've always been a very curious and creative person, even when I was a child. I loved exploring the world outside, but most of all I enjoyed playing with my poodle Peggy and teasing my younger brother Horst. My parents always offered us a great variety of sporting activities, like skiing, swimming, tennis or horseback-riding. We used to spend our summer-holidays in the "Dachstein"-area, where we would run through valleys and climb up hills and trees. At that time there was nothing more exciting than getting in touch with cows, horses and other farm-animals.

At that time I loved to play soccer, tennis and shooting with a self-made bow and arrow. To say the truth, back then I would have preferred being a boy instead of a girl. However, my vacations were always great, especially when I was in Ampfelwang, a famous horseback-riding camp. We slept in tents with sleeping bags and I learned how to ride a horse.

During school days I've always had some difficulties to get up early in the morning. I really hated it. As if school wasn't terrible enough my mother wanted me to take piano-lessons, which I did – but not for long. Learning how to play by notes was completely out of the question! Nowadays I regret my lack of endurance. Anyway, the change from "Sancta Christiana", a monastic school, to elementary school was pretty hard for me, as in those mixed classes, there were a lot of young riots and nobody was really interested in graduating successfully.

At the age of 14 I discovered my interest in poetry and soon afterwards I became a member of the lyrical circle "Literaaktion23", hosted by my late mentor J.R. Panagl. Within a few years I wrote more than 200 poems. I soon wanted to extend my lyrical ambitions and started to take guitar lessons. Well, guess what? I still didn't want to play by notes, but with a few chords I was able to compose my very own songs. This helped me a lot to overcome my puberty-depressions. Writing lyrics, poems and short-stories indeed made me find a new sense in life.

My educational way led me into commercial school, which I didn't really finish.

You're wondering why? - Well, I had absolutely no talent for tabular bookkeeping and business administration and so I struggled myself through the years. Despite my poor performance at school, I was lucky enough to find a job as a secretary in a corrugated cardboard company. From my first earned salary I immediately bought myself a keyboard and recorded some of my songs,

which I sent off to several producers. Only one of them recognized my well hidden talents.

I've chosen a very odd pseudonym – “Sherey Champagne” – and recorded my first single “Don't be afraid” with my producer René Reitz. Well, I have to admit that I wasn't a natural born singer and so I had to practice a lot. At this point I wanna thank René for his patience as he taught me important things about interpretation, intonation and all the other stuff that a singer should know.

In 1990 I appeared in the Austrian TV-Show "Checkpoint", hosted by Joesi Prokopetz. I performed the song "Night after night", which was also released on vinyl. Another song, “Wet sheet”, completed my vinyl-trio. Though the songs were really great, we didn't have too much success with them and so René Reitz suggested to write some erotic songs in German. At the beginning I wasn't too excited about it, but I agreed on it and finally wrote some.

This time we've chosen "Xenia" as a new stage name and recorded the album "Ohne Zensur". Well, though the title translates as “without censorship”, they didn't play it on the radio. In our despair we created large displays and started a huge point-of-sale promotion. The concept worked out and the album soon reached platinum status.

Two years later we released a Christmas CD, called "Jesus Christus". I performed two of these songs in the ORF-Benefit-Show "Licht ins Dunkel".

During the video shooting “Wintermärchenwald” I had an unpleasant encounter with a deer that attacked me from behind and threw me up in the air. Thank God, my injuries were not that bad.

Anyway, there was one special thing that's been bothering me for years. What was it? My nose! I always considered it too big and bulky and it simply didn't fit into my face. Therefore I thought it was about time to undergo a little nose surgery and so I travelled to Munich. It wasn't such an easy decision as I was pretty scared having it done, but afterwards I didn't regret this step and I guess I'd do it again, if I had to.

During that time I started taking dance-classes at the "Tanzforum Wien" and the "Move on". I really loved jazz dance and hip hop, but I also tried out a little tap dancing, ballet and afro. Inspired by my passion for dancing, I wrote a musical, called "Dope". Four others followed within the next few years, but only one piece found its way on stage. The country-musical "Country-Hasi-Show" was a tremendous success at the premiere in Kritzensdorf. I played the

part of "Dragica" and lost a bit of my stage-fright. Unfortunately the ensemble split and I discovered something completely new – painting!

Of course, I needed a new name and thought "Santa Ameerah" would be perfect for my new passion. Within in few months I painted 700 original artworks of my series "Glücksbilder", that were supposed to bring luck to the owner. All paintings were exclusively sold to Kika and Leiner. What a deal!

After this intense period of painting, a new project blew my mind – giving German lessons on youtube. So, I started to create videos in four different languages (English, French, Spanish and Russian) that were a bit more than only language-videos. I also added little features of Vienna's places of interest and step by step it became an interesting mixture of a documentary and a language-course.

In March 2011 I had the shock of my life, as my partner was diagnosed with cancer. He was brought into the hospital and had been operated on immediately. We really went through some hard months - an eight-hour surgery, post-operative complications, three pneumonias, dysphagia, a massive weight loss of 24 kilos, a tracheostomy tube and a feeding tube. Anyway, with a whole lot of positive energy and strength we've finally overcome this horrible time and guess what? After a 20-year relationship – we spontaneously decided to marry. Though we've chosen a short civil marriage, the ceremony was nonetheless very emotional and beautiful.

However, I found my way back to music and started a new project, where I combined Austrian folk music with international cool grooves. As singing language I've chosen a mixture of several Austrian dialects.

In 2012 I continued my German lessons on Youtube. Since 2014 they are also available in Arabic and Chinese.

By the end of 2014 I had the idea to a musical peace project. I wanted to sing cover-versions of well-known songs in as many languages as possible. By the end of 2015 I had finished 15 music videos in different languages.

To be continued ...

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