

BassPlaza.com Forum
posted on 30-3-2004

This is a very interesting interview. Dominique is a bassist who left the music world to pursue religion. Years later he has merged both religion and music into what he has proven to be a creative and inspiring combination. Online i have only found one other interview. I feel honoured he took the time to answer some questions. Enjoy.

Firstly, why the bass? Can you explain what it was like the first time you picked up the bass guitar and how it came about?

When I first picked up the bass It was with an African group in Lyon in 1975,at this time I had been initiated in this kind of music for 2 years ,playing both guitar and bass, I remember once, the regular bass player could not come one day ,as i was watching them rehearsing since a while ,I just asked my friend the guitar-player who had taught me some nice African licks on the guitar using the thumb and the index of the right-hand, if I could take the bass to replace the bass player for the session, in fact it was successful for me and later they wanted me to play with them for a couple of gigs playing for an African audience, I was the only white people in the band, as the people were having a good time and dancing on the music I remember some people asking me if I was from Africa, just to tell you how much I integrated the band ,I remember the nice feeling I had when I started playing the electric-bass, I was more at ease physically and technically speaking than the guitar, I fell in love with the rhythmical role of the instrument, especially in playing those fast quater-note African-lines, to play that fast I was using a pick, by the ways it 's when I first heard Jaco in 1979 playing ,from my own perspective, the same kind of afro-lines ,that I immediately left the guitar aside to be a bass-player, the dilemma I had before I knew Jaco was ,I had some knowledge of the Jazz guitar, of Django Reinhardt 's style and players like Wes and G ;Benson, so I use to love playing the bass but I was a bit frustrated to leave behind playing melodies and improvising, and I am so grateful to Jaco that he opened the way for people like me and so much others.....

As musicians, what do you think are the fundamental aspects that can further develop not only the musician, but the person as well?

I would say, learning step by step to find his own voice in expressing himself in the instrument, but I think, this has to take place after having learn other's style after long and perseverant work, always willing to give our best and never being satisfied with mediocrity. Set a goal before us and be willing to pay the price even if the standard seems to be unreachable at the beginning. Secondly, never stop the process of learning, stay fresh, and keep in mind to be a seeker of new ideas

Many interviews and biographies on your music mention "Que Alegria" by John McLaughlin, That the middle track is "arguably the quintessential two minutes in the instrument's short history". When you were playing this piece what were you thinking and/or feelin

I wrote this piece for the birth of my Daughter Tcha-Tcha who is now 13, in honour of God the creator. When I recorded that piece I was thinking, now it's an opportunity for me to really express myself in this record, expressing all kind of sweet emotions due at the event quoted above, the difference in the tune between minor and major mode made me think of the birth of a baby, the period before the birth (minor passage) and the joy of the birth (major passage).

It is also widely documented that you stopped bass playing for up to 7 years to pursue religion. Was the "Que Allergria" a prominent factor in this decision seeing as it is highly regarded as the pinnacle of bass? Why just stop? How tough was this decision?

I can say that "Que Allergria" helped me to make this decision by the fact; I've always wanted to reach that level, playing with great musicians like John and Trilok, being a part of such a group and touring around

the world with great conditions. It is only after 2 years of that kind of life, that I've realized my hunger for spirituality especially after realizing that music could not give me what I was really looking for, I decided to stop after I accepted Jesus-Christ as my savior and Lord; it was such a change for me that I needed to make a break. Thinking that I was in a cross road in my life like never before, and that the rest of my life on earth would depend on this decision. I really needed to know who I was and be totally rebuilt in my identity, And I've found all that through my relationship with the love of God....

I pursued biblical theological studies to go deeper in my faith and had all this past years pastor Louis Demeo, who is an American pastor in the south of France who became my best friend for spiritual care and guidance. I graduated for a master degree in Theology and I am now a part-time assistant pastor as well as a music-minister in a church in the south of France.

Of course the decision to stop playing was hard to make but we cannot isolate that though of his spiritual context, but I realize now that it was the best decision I had ever made in my life, why I say that because my life now is meaningful. I have a happy marriage and family life and on top of that my musical inspiration has been totally renewed as well as the desire of playing...

What does your practice regime include?

I like to practice on jazz-standards or one chord, I have always been using a jammer to play with, Or playing alone on a standard form, being careful that we can hear all the chords changing in my playing, developing new idea on the major scale, or minor melodic scale and finally work on the symmetrical-diminished scale, I like as well working on phrasing seeking great fluidity in execution.

What inspires you when it comes to music and in what way?

What inspires me the most is trying to give to the listener real emotions, I mean using the music language to express myself, I mean what is really inside, try to "tell a story." Since I became a believer what inspires me the most is to praise God expressing the joy and hope that are related to faith, or expressing the compassion for those that suffer in this world, and I would add all those reflections about playing came to me only by modestly trying to follow the example of the beloved John Coltrane.

Has any musician influenced the way you play or approach music?

In order I would say, Django Reinhardt, Wes Montgomery, Georges Benson, John Coltrane, Paco de Lucia, Allan Holdsworth, Jaco (of course), Scott Laffaro, Bill Evans, Eddy Gomez, Mike Brecker, Joe Pass, John McLaughlin, Chick Corea.....

In the period of time you had away from the bass and music altogether, did you miss it? Did you ever have the feeling that you had bitten off more than you would chew by just walking away from music?

Honestly, no because I had not stopped music for doing nothing, The life I had at this period was so full, meeting people coming from all around the world, visiting countries like Romania, Africa and India visiting orphanages, visiting and helping poor children. As I said early it was a faith-decision, I had put this musical gift not in a garbage can but trustfully in the hands of God who is the giver of all good gifts for him to put it to death so that could be brought back again to a new life, I hope this make sense.

Many bassists spend their careers trying to find "that sound" or "that amp rig." Do you have this too? If not what combination have you fallen in love with sound wise and ease of use?

YES, I am not different than anyone else, I am always seeking for new sound. Lately I have been using a Line 6 Bass-pod xt, it provides me great sound for recording. But recently I fell in love with Fodera instruments, I play on one 5th string, similar as Matt Garrison model, but especially customize for me, equipped with a NFS bridge (It is a special bridge that allow a fretted bass to sound like a fretless-one, I gave the Inspired the Idea to Neuser company and they market it at www.neuserbasses.com. Also I use Epifani amps and cabinets www.epifani.com

What can the world expect from Dominique DiPiazza musically and as a person?

Musically speaking I would say, to a lot of things, I feel more creative like never before; I have a lot to say. I

am working on new bass-solo-tunes, I want really continue walking in the way that Jaco has opened and make known to the world that the electric-bass is a real instrument. Also continue in my own way as a bass-soloist player; don't forget what Jaco said once to Michael Manring when he did study with him, "the electric bass is a mixture of a bass and a guitar."

For me the bass is not only an instrument attached to the ground to play some groove, but also and much for me a tool with medium; low range to improvise like a guitar or a piano or a saxophone. Music is music, I am sure that if I were to play another instrument that I would play the same thing, because music starts firstly in the mind, and then coloured by the heart and worked out by the fingers, instruments are only a tool, and finally as a person I want to use music to inspire faith and hope.

Damien

Link : <http://www.basslinks.nl/xmb/viewthread.php?tid=3527>