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Dear radio team, producers and others interested in my music!

This is my Electronic Press Kit.

You will find a review, bio, some fotos and an interview that answers most questions about me and the Alienor project.

For further information, please email me or use the contact form on my website.

Thanks for your interest, hope to speak soon.

Kind regards,

*Alienor*

# INTRO

by Raphael Lukas Genovese

for

Mangowave Magazine

December 2023

In 1982, German musician Eleonore Pongratz decided to leave the Hard Rock and Prog Rock band that she had been part of since 1978.

Not only did she leave the band, she furthermore hung up her instruments and let music sit for quite a while. Years and decades have passed, until something woke up underneath the ashes.

But it was no phoenix that arose, it was The Raven.

The re-birth of Eleonore Pongratz as a musician has taken place in 2021, when the online project Aliènor came to life. Aliènor's first full-length release is called The Raven, and it features twelve international guest musicians on eight tracks written and performed by Aliènor. With the grace of a bird, Aliènor floats through Progressive Rock, Symphonic Rock and Hard Rock without ever touching the soil. It is a re-birth of timeless sound, a heavy score of freedom, peace and self-determination.

# BIO

1953	EleonorePongratz (aka E. Wittekindt in former productions) born in Marburg, Germany Classically trained piano player
1978	keyboardist at Progrock/Hardrock band SOFTEIS album "The Colours Of A Rainbow" with SOFTEIS various gigs in Germany and Austria
1979	Studio jobs at KINAX Studio Dillenburg, album "Ton zum Film" with SOFTEIS et al.
1982	album "Eiskalt" with SOFTEIS
1988	guest appearance on the New Prog album "Theatre" by ANABIS  Long break ;-)
2019	started home recording
2021	Alienor Music Project, involving musicians from all over the world
2022	12-weeks coaching program in Music Production at Drumnote Productions Studio Augsburg 3 <sup>rd</sup> place in subcategory Prog at HOFA Song Contest
2023	Release "The Raven", album 2 <sup>nd</sup> place in subcategory Prog at HOFA Song Contest
2024	release EP "Dedications", Folkrock 2 <sup>nd</sup> place in subcategory Prog at HOFA Song Contest
2025	release single "The Place Where We Are Right" release cover version of "Alone And Forsaken" by Hank Williams

# FOTOS



# INTERVIEW

with Jerry van Kooten for dprp.net

February 2025

With a musical history that started in the mid 1970s and included two albums with the band Softeis, keyboard player Eleonore Wittekind was never much interested in taking the spotlight. After a long gap where life events took priority over making music, only broken by an appearance on the third Anabis album in the early 1990s, the artist currently working under the moniker Aliénor made an unexpected but very welcome return with The Raven last year. One year on, a very different sounding EP was released, so either a musical road of discovery or a conscious decision? Time to ask a few questions on what happened!

## **Can you tell how you got involved in music, and how you got to play the kind of music you played?**

My parents both loved music, so I was allowed to take piano lessons at the age of 12 but quit two years later after my piano teacher moved to the US. I started listening to rock music: Deep Purple, Uriah Heep, King Crimson, and my all-time favourite band Eloy.

One day, a friend took me to the rehearsal room of another local band Scrifis, which included the Eismann brothers. When they decided to leave Scrifis, they asked me to join their new band. I wasn't too excited since I was classically trained and used to play from sheet music only. But I agreed to do the job as a substitution until they had found a "real" keyboardist. Which never happened! ;) That substitution lasted four years.

## **Your first recordings, as far as I could find, were with Softeis. How did that band come about?**

When brothers Werner and Gerard Eismann left Scrifis, they started something new, together with Peter Bellendir (drums), who later joined X-Mal Deutschland and Eisenvater, and Gerald Schwarz, a blues guitarist from my hometown. That band became known as Softeis.

## **A woman behind the keyboards in this type of music was not very common. How was that?**

That was totally OK. Sure it was more common to have a female singer than a female keyboardist, but I received positive reactions only. I'm also not the most extroverted person, so I guess many people didn't even notice there was a woman hidden behind the keyboards!

## **The first two Softeis albums were from 1978 and 1981. How was the musical climate at the time for a band playing this kind of music?**

It was very good. There were many local bands playing all kinds of musical styles, each had their fan base. It was nice to have clubs and small town halls crowded. Besides the LPs, we also did some interesting jobs creating music for Super 8 film or commercials.

### **Some other prog-related part of your history but much later involved the band Anabis. How did you get involved with them?**

They were practically neighbours and since there was quite some fluctuation of musicians between the local bands, people knew each other. Mike Morkel, drummer of Anabis, was Werner's friend. I remember there were many musicians involved in the production of Theatre, even several keyboardists, and I was asked to play some minor parts. Don't ask me which, I can't remember!

### **After Anabis you did not release any music. What happened?**

I left Softeis in 1982, shortly after the release of the second album Eiskalt. The first time I thought about leaving was when Peter Bellendir (drums) and Gerald Schwarz (guitar) were replaced. It marked a turning point in the musical direction of the band. As the second album shows, the proggy vibes had all but gone, and we went into a more "commercially digestable" direction. I wasn't too happy about that. I finished studies, worked as a Special Education Teacher, had a child/family and my musical ambitions got buried under real-life challenges.

### **What brought you back to the recording and releasing of music?**

That was in 2019. Recording and releasing music played no role in my thoughts at that time. At 66 years old, I had a feeling of having made not enough in my life, so I started looking for likeminded people to form a band again. To be honest, it wasn't the best idea I ever had. Although I was already warned, musicians can be a very special breed! ;) My experiences during the next two years or so exceeded everything I was used to before! In hindsight, I feel like I must apologize to my former bandmates forever having called them "difficult", sometimes! I abandoned the idea of being in a band. Since I already had a collection of ideas, I decided to give it a try and start recording.

### **How was it, getting back into this world, at your age?**

Regarding the physical aspect of age with a musician/keyboardist, the biggest problem was that due to not touching a piano for almost 30 years, my fingers had become less flexible. Unfortunately that's an ongoing process, so I have to hurry up creating more music! I have never been overly interested in the technical aspects of music so the first steps of working with a DAW and finding the right equipment to build a small studio have been difficult.

### **How did The Raven come about? Where did the ideas start, how was the style determined, etc.?**

To be honest, I never determined a certain style. I had some ideas, played, tried sounds, and somehow it happened to be what it is now. I think my musical taste is influenced by early progressive and hardrock bands, but I love to experiment and integrate other styles and little surprises into my music. Of course, I like my music to be

heard, but I don't care about commercial success, just do what sounds right to my ears. That's freedom for me, even though it seems to be a problem for people who like to label or categorize music.

**One year later we have an EP with quite a different sound. Was that deliberate?**

Yes. I am interested in and listen to various styles of music (except jazz... 😊). I prefer being perceived as a musician, rather than a progger, hardrocker or folk lady, and I was curious to see what I can come up with in another genre. I had by chance found some very old lyrics, written in 1974, and came up with the idea of writing some songs dedicated to important people in my life, plus things that are important to me personally.

**What are your plans for the future? Are you going to explore the new musical direction more? Will there be more music?**

Yes, I hope there will be more music. The Raven took me almost two years, learning curve included. Dedications took one year, roughly. Currently, I'm taking a break from composing, trying to reset my ears. Instead, I'm busy working on cover versions of two songs I like very much.

I've never done any covers before so that's a new challenge. Both songs will be in a similar style as the ones on Dedications. Then there are already a few ideas for another project, kind of psychedelic prog, which I will start working on soon!

