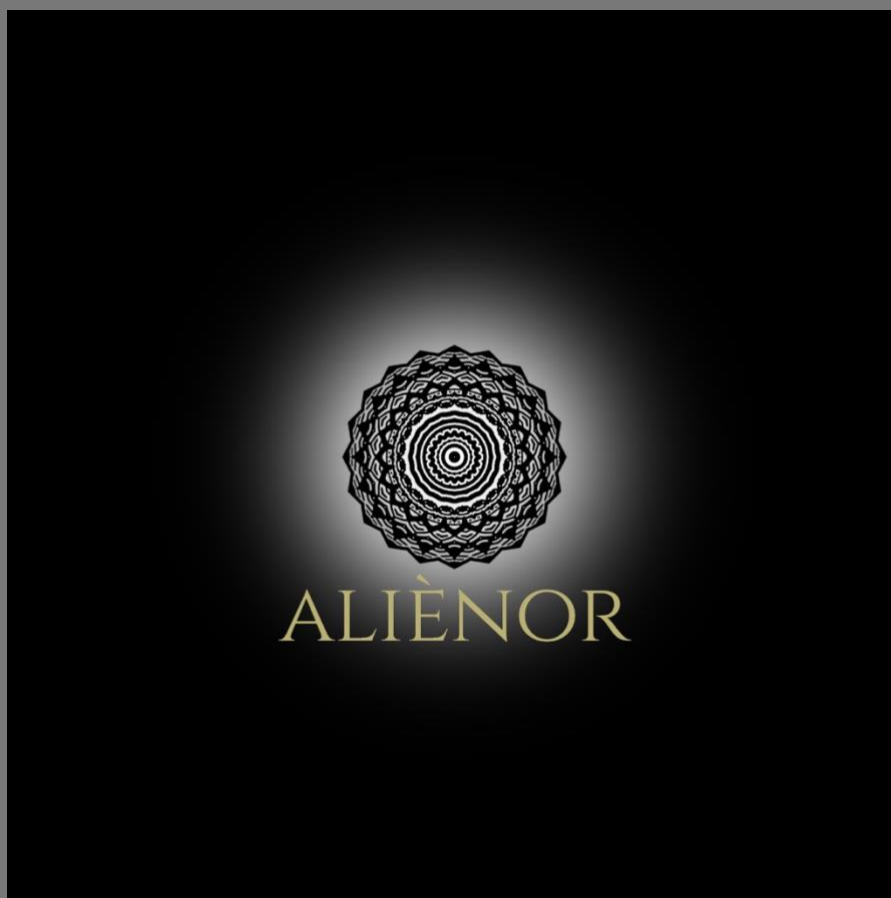


Electronic Press Kit



Intro

Review
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.

Biography

I'm Eleonore, keyboardist and songwriter.

Aliènor is an online project I started 2021, involving musicians from all over the world.

I was born 1953 in Marburg/Germany and I'm still living near my home town.

1978 I got hired as a „substitution” keyboardist by a local Prog/Hardrock band.

In the beginning they gave me a hard time!

I was a classical piano player, used to sheet music.

Furthermore, I was suffering from severe stage fright and I always felt best when I could hide behind my small tower of keyboards!

The years went on, we played a lot of gigs, released 2 albums and my substitution time ended only 1982 when I left the band to finish university and start working as a Special Education Teacher.

Although these years were the best of my life (no romantic hindsight, it's the truth) I really thought I had closed that chapter forever.

But life had other plans and when I retired I started rehearsing again.

It was tough after a break of more than 30 years and fingers that were not in the shape I remembered them ;-)

Next step was looking for a band. I was expecting to easily find likeminded people in my age but unfortunately it wasn't so.

After a very frustrating year of trying to find the right people (you all know what I mean ;-)) I finally abandoned the idea but wasn't ready to give up on making music again.

I had quite a collection of ideas and decided to give home recording a try.

A real challenge for someone who at that point in time could hardly handle a mobile properly. But it finally worked.

2022 I finished a 12-weeks coaching program in Music Production at DRUMNOTE productions.

I took part in the HOFA Song Contest 2022, 2023 and 2014 and finished 3rd, 2nd and 2nd in subcategory *Progressive* with songs from my first album “The Raven”.

I love to experiment with different styles and to collaborate with other musicians.

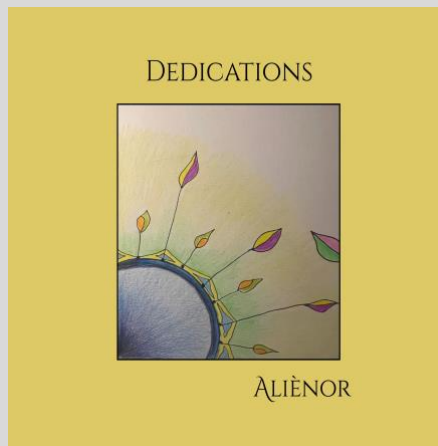
Discography

DEDICATIONS

by Aliènor

released 12.12.2024

Genre: Folk Rock, Progressive Folk

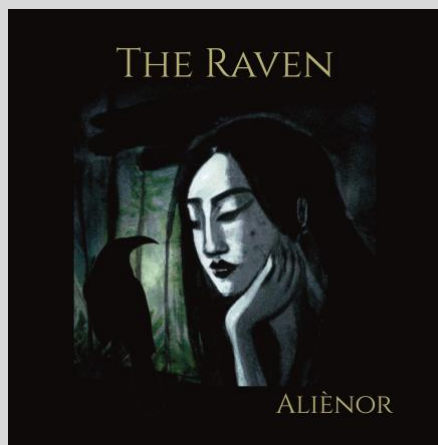


THE RAVEN

By Aliènor

released 15.6.2023

Genre: Progressive Rock, Hardrock

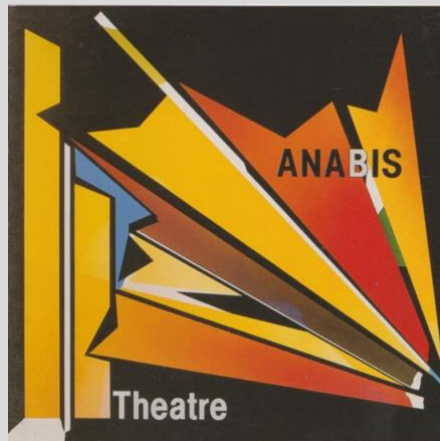


THEATRE

by Anabis

released 1988

Genre: Art Rock, Progressive Rock
featuring as a guest keyboardist



EISKALT

by Softeis

released 1981

Genre: Hardrock
member of band



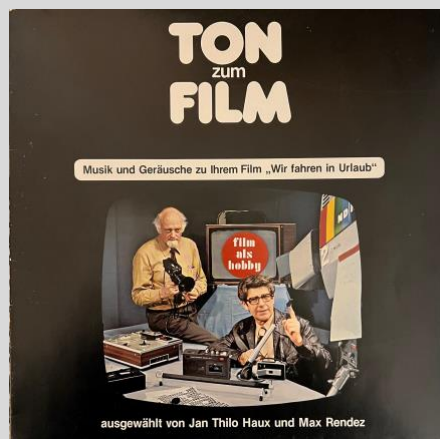
TON ZUM FILM

by Softeis et al.

released 1979

Genre: Super 8 Music Scores

member of band



THE COLOURS OF A RAINBOW

by Softeis

released 1978

Genre: Progressive Rock, Hard Rock

member of band



Fotos



Studio





GOOD OLD TIMES
1978-1982



Reviews

The Raven



Thomas Otten for dprp.net

Issue 24-021

"Better late than never" — this may have been the motto and the motivation for Marburg (Germany)-based Eleonore Pongratz. Born in 1953, she made her starting experience in prog/hard rock music between 1978 and 1982, when she was the keyboard player of the German band Softeis, which she released two albums with. Thereafter, she abandoned her music career and pursued other life plans. However, she couldn't seem to let go of music completely, so after her retirement she decided to continue her musical career and to form a band of like-minded people. That band project, however, turned out to be easier said than done. Having had no (or no satisfying) reactions to her requests, she opted for creating her own online project under the name of Aliènor in 2021. Her website gives an interesting and in-depth insight of the "making-of"-process of The Raven. Someone like me, who used to (and still sometimes does) play analogue keyboards but does not have the slightest clue of nowadays digital producing and composing possibilities, couldn't help but be amazed when going through the descriptions of the various stages of the project. Apparently, Eleonore started the entire process in a self-educated manner, something that I find even more astonishing and that has my full respect.

[Read more](#)

Dick v.d.Heijde for prog & rock

More and more, labels and bands are finding their way to my mailbox, and that delights me. Recently, I received an album from a German keyboardist, artist name: Aliènor. Her real name is Eleonore Pongratz, and an interesting story emerged from the Aliènor website. Because I enjoyed the music more than well enough, it was clear to me. This album, titled "The Raven," must be featured on Prog & Rock.

Born in 1953, Pongratz played from '78 to '82 with all her heart and soul in Soft Eis, a progressive hard rock band. After leaving this band to complete her university studies, there was a deafening silence for more than thirty years. Eventually, during her retirement, she decided to pick up the thread again. After several unsuccessful attempts to join a band again, Pongratz decided to create the online project Aliènor in 2021. She set out to make an album, recorded the material gradually, and added guide vocals and other parts using various software. Through an online platform, she recruited a number of singers/musicians from around the world, and after a thorough period of mixing, producing, and mastering, the first Aliènor album, "The Raven," went online on July 6, 2023.

The result of all her efforts is, in my opinion, an album she can be proud of. "The Raven" contains a lot of herself, both lyrically and musically. One could even argue that her philosophy is the concept of the album. All of this is evident in passionate progressive hard rock that sits somewhere between Ayreon and Camoora. The use of different male and female vocalists also gives the music a rock opera vibe.

The album opens strongly with the title track sung by Argentine Natalia Nekare. Her voice is a mix of Heather Findlay (ex-Mostly Autumn), Agnieszka Swita (Camoora), and Laura Piazzai (Imaginaerium) – clear, powerful, and enchanting. She serves as the lead vocalist frequently throughout the album, and that is no punishment. Musically, the craftsmanship is evident. Pongratz doesn't like frills, and that attitude shines through the music consistently. Everything is to the point. In the case of this opening track, we hear a atmospheric intro reminiscent of Jean Michel Jarre, leading into the actual song. The keyboards are elegant, while the guitar sounds fiery. This interplay takes place on a gothic-light foundation, setting the blueprint for the rest of the tracks.

This doesn't mean that each track doesn't have its own identity. For example, there is the instrumental Circle Of Life. It's not a standard showcase piece, but a atmospheric composition where the violin sounds ominous, and the drums resonate deeply. In Inescapable, Chilean singer Lukas Sparke makes his entrance. His warm voice, combined with sparkling guitar play, gives the hard rock essence of the music a comfortable feel. In a way, "The Raven" sounds disarming and fresh. Even in the more theatrical numbers Back From Eternity and Pray For Silence, the charm offensive predominates. Think of the Cindy Oudshoorn years with Kayak for Back From Eternity. Evil Rising, on the other hand, is the most ominous track on the album, and understandably so, as the lyrics deal with the rise of the Third Reich. The track is somewhat in line with Circle Of Life, but with vocals. Sparke, as in Inescapable, proves to be a great vocalist, and the many vocal background sounds, ranging from whispers to screams, make it distinctive. At that moment, there is a somewhat eerie atmosphere in the album. Salam also contributes to this atmosphere. The tension in the music is resolved by the closing track, Judgement Day, where sharp riffs and a playful rhythm create a certain musical euphoria.

All in all, "The Raven" is a remarkable album that is highly original. Most points, in my opinion, go to the creativity, which is boundless.