

Jersey-Raised Rocker Ranjit Arapurakal Takes a Pause for the Cause

By Kam Williams
For The Skanner News

Born in his mother's hometown of Trivandrum, India, the terra cotta-colored capital of Kerala, Ranjit Arapurakal spent his infancy in Vienna and Frankfurt before being raised in New Jersey from the age of 4. Today, the versatile vocalist, composer, multi-instrumentalist and music educator is based in Goa, India, and is currently on an extended tour across Russia.

The Jersey boy started playing rock music in high school and never stopped, except for slowing down a bit to earn a bachelor's degree in Literature with honors at Rutgers University. After graduating, he migrated to NYC where he honed his stagecraft, while working as a jazz singer, session musician, bartender, open mic host, dance accompanist for Alvin Ailey, Juilliard and several other leading dance academies, and as a music teacher for infants and their parents.

Visit Ranjit's recently-launched Patreon page at www.patreon.com/RanjitArapurakal/overview to help enable folks all over the world to follow and support "Ranjit Arapurakal's World Peace Tour."

Kam Williams: Hi Ranjit, thanks for the interview.

Ranjit Arapurakal: It's my pleasure. Kam. Thanks for reaching out.

KW: When did you develop an interest in music?

RA: I started singing in the church choir when I was 7 years-old, and I enjoyed it from the start. But I was drawn to the mysteries of sound even before that. There was a

lot of music in the house.

KW: How would you describe yourself, musically?

RA: As a psychedelic singer/songwriter. But it changes all the time. As a multi-instrumentalist, I get to play with many different musicians in many settings. My comfort zones include Funk, Groove, Soul, Reggae and Rock & Roll. And I'm delving into Psychedelic Rock and live Techno at the moment.

KW: Do you prefer playing solo or with a group?

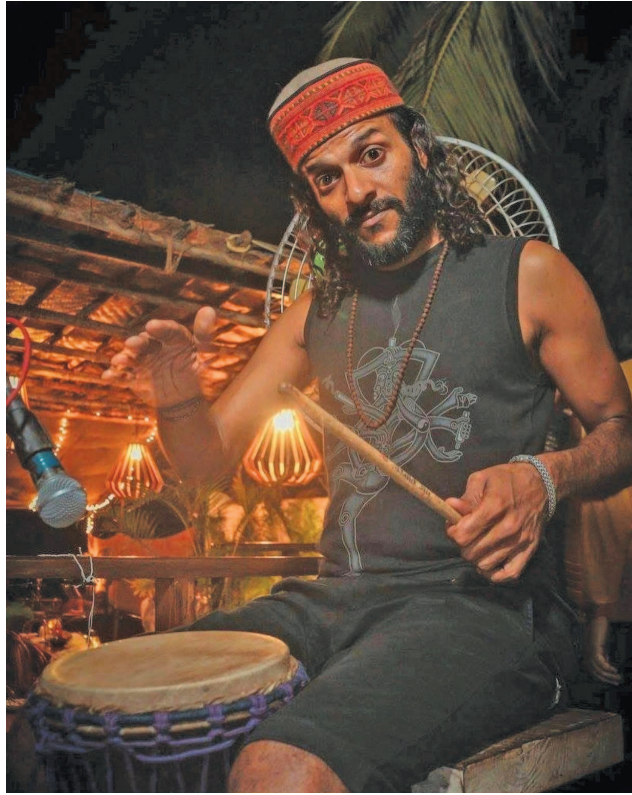
RA: I don't have a preference. Both have their own unique charms as well as limitations. When you can communicate with other musicians the same way you can communicate with yourself, you get the best of both worlds.

KW: I enjoyed listening to a lot of your songs, especially "Lonavala," "That's My Name" and "Since the Start." What is the source of your inspiration when creating a tune?

RA: The songs usually just bubble up from my subconscious or inner voice or paramatma. Some songs are about love and some are about the environment, from fracking to the Dakota Access Pipeline. I also have a penchant for post-apocalyptic love songs, as a genre.

KW: You hail from New Jersey, but perform in India and elsewhere around the world. Where do you like playing the most?

RA: I have been based in Goa, on India's west coast, for the last three years. The music scene there, as well as the audiences and the beautiful nature, are what made



Ranjit Arapurakal

me stretch out what was originally meant to be a two-week holiday.

KW: You play both guitar and piano. What is your favorite instrument?

RA: My favorite instrument is the human voice. It's easy to transport and can touch, directly, the soul of any listener.

KW: Who are some of your musical influences?

RA: Lenny Kravitz, The Doors, Blues Traveler, Caetano Veloso, Michael Jackson, James Brown, Fela Kuti, Ella Fitzgerald, Stevie Wonder, Chopin, Fauré, Monteverdi, Frank Sinatra, The Band, The Beatles, Antonio Carlos Jobim, Santana, Terrence Trent D'Arby, Bob Marley and the Wailers, Gil Scott Heron, Motorhead, The Cure, Tom Petty, Jeff Lynne, Phish, and Dave Mathews Band, to name a few.

KW: What was the last song you listened to?

RA: It's been ages since I listened to a song. I was recently exposed to some Russian minimal techno, but these are not songs;

more like moody soundscapes.

KW: What is your earliest childhood memory?

RA: I remember my nursery school at All Saints Church in Princeton, NJ. Mrs. Weatherall had a pair of gray rabbits in a cage in the garden. And apple juice and graham crackers. It was paradise!

KW: What is your favorite dish to cook?

RA: Most recently, carrot-ginger soup.

KW: When you look in the mirror, what do you see?

RA: I see a guy who's ready for showtime!

KW: What's the craziest thing you've ever done?

RA: Aside from being born yet again on this plane of reality? Nothing.

KW: If you could have one wish instantly granted?

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And they showed up in droves, not bothering to hide their faces as they entered the venue, although there's footage of one snarling, "Don't record me, [N-word!]" at a Black counter-demonstrator with a camera.

But from footage shot at that rally in Dickson, Tennessee, you could already see trouble was brewing. For, there's a chilling video clip of a

ont Jenkins, an African American veteran of the U.S. military who fervently believes that "evil flourishes when good people do nothing."

For decades, Daryle has dedicated his life to monitoring people like Spencer, if only to inform their bosses and neighbors how they spend their free time.

You might be think-

“The new President had sent out a signal that it's perfectly fine to be a racist

neo-Nazi revving his engine as if he wanted to hit some protesters standing in the street. "You're not running anyone over!" a female marcher yelled at him. This was just a month before the Charlottesville rally where Heather Heyer was struck and killed by a car driven by one of these hate-filled creeps.

Directed by Adam Bhala Lough, *Alt-Right: Age of Rage* is an eye-opening documentary chronicling the recent rise of the white supremacist movement in the age of Trump. This fascinating film features interviews with both neo-Nazis and the intrepid activists determined to expose them.

Specifically, the director opted to focus most closely on Richard Spencer, the advocate of Black genocide who coined the term "alt-right," and Daryle Lam-

ing, "Hey, why not just ignore these neo-Nazis, and maybe nobody will know about them in the absence of any media attention?" That tactic might have worked prior to the digital age, when recruitment is rampant over the internet.

The picture culminates with the confrontation in Charlottesville where all hell broke loose when the police inexplicably allowed armed White supremacists chanting "Jews will not replace us!" and other vile slogans to surround anti-Fascists in an area of Emancipation Park set aside for a counter-demonstration. Overall, a sobering expose' proving the President wrong when he suggests that there are both good and bad Nazis.

Excellent ★★★★★
Unrated


Kam Williams
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