



I Adore Artists Who Make Music With The Heart- Dario Chiazzolino 0

BY AKIN AKINGBALA ON FEBRUARY 19, 2016

ENTERTAINMENT

There is a new guitar prodigy on the global music scene, his name is **Dario Chiazzolino**. His new album **'Red Cloud'** is a must have for all lovers of jazz and good music. In this interview with ARM's Akinola Akingbala in New York, Dario shares his musical distinctive style, philosophy, inspirations and why the new album (**Red Cloud**) is so special. You just have to read this!

When did you start playing guitar, what were your influences and the first songs that you played?

I started playing the guitar when I was eleven. The first time I picked my guitar up was the most exciting moment of my life. I felt immediately a sense of immense joy and gratitude! It's very hard for be to describe it with words. It was a moment of clarity. I knew that music and guitar were going to be precious things to me. The first song that I played was Zombie, the famous piece from the Irish rock band **Cranberries**. It's so fun how I can perfectly remember all those details of my first months with the guitar, it was an intense loving relationship and it is still the same.

At the beginning I was attracted to rock bands such as **Pink Floyd**, **Led Zeppelin** and **Deep Purple**. I loved the distorted guitar sound. It really drove me crazy! When I was a teenager i was used to stay in my room playing the guitar very loud. My neighbors were anything but happy. Jazz came to me a little bit later and it was a real revolution.

Critics have deemed you as one of the greatest guitarists of the present generation; of what impact is such a glowing accolade on your career and who is the music icons that you wish to emulate?

I love my job with all my soul. I thing making music for a living is one of the most exciting things you can do. I mean, playing music is always great, even if you don't do for work, but if you have this privilege you can feel extremely fortunate. I am! That's exactly why I have always tried to do my best in any music situation.

I am really pleased to have such a good consideration from criticism and exponents of the music industry. But to be honest what really counts for me is to continue writing and performing my music, always looking forward to the future. I have been influenced by several music icons, not necessary by jazz players. I love music in its entirety - but only when it is well played and well intended. It's hard for me to mention a specific name, what I can tell you is that I adore artists who make music with the heart.



How did you develop your amazing improvisation skills?

Well, first of all, thank you. I think it's a matter of how much you love improvising. Improvisation is one of the things that I like the most. I love improvising over a chord and over a tricky chord changes as well. Philosophically speaking, improvisation is probably a natural inclination that is connected with your character as well. There are a lot of great musicians who do not improvise at all, but maybe they have a wonderful sound and other good abilities. In my case I can say that all begins from improvisation.

Every time I pick my guitar up, I start improvising with total freedom. It's a warm up and a creative exercise too. I thing this approach has allowed me to develop my skills in this direction.

Your technique is pretty amazing. Do you have any advice for upcoming guitarists on how to develop their technique?

I think technique is very important for a musician. Of course it is not the goal but it is a very useful tool. The more technique you have, the better you are able to express your musicality. At the beginning it's a question of how much you practice with your guitar. At a certain point, once you get a good level of technique you need to focus on music. The last step in order to improve your technique is to put all of your skills at the service of music. Even if you have an excellent technique, to make music you need to be connected with it. The other thing I need to say is that having technique doesn't mean being super fast while playing. Having a good technique means having a strong control of the instrument and above all being able to get a good sound out of the instrument.

You have the perfect pitch. How much did it benefit your career?

In general it is very helpful. You can guess any note in real time and often you are able to learn new repertoire with less effort. But I don't think it is a crucial capacity for a musician. A good musician should have three basic elements: timing, sound and phrasing.

How do you compose and arrange your music?

As you can guess I always start from improvisation. While playing freely with my guitar sometimes I guess a good melodic line or an interesting chord change. When it happens I am used to record myself.

In some cases the process of composing can be very fast, in other cases it requires several revisions. But the constant is that the music I write comes always from the freedom of improvisation.

Let's talk about your new album release "Red Cloud", what are the unique things that you think your listeners and music lovers in general will get from it?

With this album I tried to describe the different states of mind of the human beings in connection with the weather conditions.

Sometimes we are upset, furious, stressed, concerned or on the contrary sometimes we are peaceful, calm, and joyful.

I composed eight tracks with the aim of transforming all these feelings in music. I hope I was able to convey these emotions to the listeners. So to answer to your question I would say that this is the central focus of my album.

Every composition bears the name of one of the sky feelings. Storm, Placid Sky, Lightning or Twilight are a few names.

Me and my band tried to improvise in line with the feeling of the composition – in connection with the sky. It probably sounds a little bit esoteric, but actually it is much more connected with the human than you can expect.

The music reflects all these diverse states of mind. "The dark and the bright side" of the moon coexist.

There seems to be a dearth of guitarists in the world today, how do you see the current guitar world and what do you think can be done to make it better?

Well I think that we are currently living a crazy time. World is saturated with everything. Sometimes I have the feeling that our lives are surreal and virtual. The advent of the internet brought amazing progress but in the same time it changed the world negatively too. It seems that we have been progressively missing the touch with reality and people have been increasingly distressed. So world of music has been suffering like everything of today.

I think that the immediate and negative result is that art has become more superficial and sterile.

Today it is easy to get information because of the internet and because of all the more modern technology. Talking specifically about music I can say that it is easy to see a lot of guitarists totally aping famous and legendary musicians.

I think that what is missing is undoubtedly the originality or at least the research in the originality. Being an artist means that you have to express your musical vision. You have to be honest with your listeners and above all with yourself.

So my best advice for upcoming and young guitarists is to follow their own paths. It is fair and sacrosanct to take inspiration from other musicians – in this case guitarist – but at a certain point you need to take your own way. It requires a little bit of courage. But it can really work. Everyone has their own visions, no matter how much you are talented.

What is the secret of your distinctive style?

Well, this question is connected to my last answer. I think that doing what you really love and being who you really are is the key. I think that every musician especially if they are jazz players should develop their own way of visualizing and making music. I have always tried to cultivate what I love the most in music. This is probably the reason why you can be recognizable while playing. It's a matter of how much honest you are with your inner part of your consciousness.

What do you think about guitar effects? Are they a real support or just a way to camouflage guitar sound?

I am not in the habit of using guitar effects while performing live or in studio. I feel comfortable with a natural guitar sound. I think that the sound of your instrument comes from your fingers. Having said that, there is nothing wrong to use guitar effects. The most important things is to you use them smart. You don't have to let yourself be run from them.

Do you have any collaboration or duet in the album? Could you mention one or two musicians you would love collaborate or duet with?

Actually the album features three important players who are among the best of European Jazz. I am talking about pianist **Antonio Faraò**, legendary bassist **Dominique Di Piazza** and drummer **Manhu Roche**. During the recording session I performed in quartet, trio and even by myself, or perhaps I should say – me and my guitar. I wanted to create diverse musical scenarios, in order to better outline the different states of mind. I can anticipate that I am working on a new project featuring an international female vocalist. I cannot reveal anything else.

What's your take on African music especially the jazz genre? And do you have any African musician you would love to work with?

I love African music. I think it is the most interesting and joyful music ever. I have been influenced a lot by African music, specifically that from Madagascar. I am a great fan of the way African musicians feel the rhythm, it's absolutely astonishing.

There is a lot of great African musicians I would love to perform with. I can mention a few names: **Richard Bona**, **Malika Zarra**, **Hugh Masekela** and **Lionel Loueke** who really strike me. I hope we will a chance to collaborate together in the future.

What are your future plans?

I like to think that I will always be performing until I am on this earth, but even after, if possible. After my album release I will have a tour with my band. But there are so many upcoming things. Since I am hyperactive, I am used to work on different projects even simultaneously.

ABOUT AUTHOR



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Akin Akingbala is an international journalist based in Lagos, Nigeria. Aside being happily married, he has interests in music, sports and loves traveling.