



Monica: I met kaRIN because I had to. It was simply Fate. We had a mutual friend, a composer for television, who told me often that kaRIN and I should meet. "You really should meet my friend kaRIN, you remind me of her so much," he would tell me. "She's in a band, too." And to kaRIN, he would say "My friend Monica is so similar to you, you really should meet her. She's a singer and an artist also..." Needless to say, it was inevitable. I called her up and she invited me over. Like me, she had an art studio, her walls were covered with her artwork, and she loved more than anything to create things with her hands. Meeting kaRIN was like finding a long lost sister. I found her to be one of the coolest, open, imaginative and down-to-earth women I've ever known. We have similar backgrounds, we both lost our mothers early, we have houses full of animals, and we both feel driven to create something new every day. Our friendship over the years has been one of mutual respect and support. It gives me great pleasure to do this interview and show a bit of a window into her world...

Monica: First, let's talk about your new release. You have a new double CD coming

out, all remixes! Are they mainly from your last CD or from all of them? How did this project come about?

kaRIN: It's called VORTEX, and it contains remixes from both of the last CDs "Some Kind of Strange" and "Chasing the Ghost". While working on our last CD, we did a remix trade with Mike Fisher (Amish Rake Fight) whom Statik had done some programming for when Mike was in a band called Machines and Loving Grace. Mike remixed "Slither Thing", and took the song to a whole other place... making it more like a sultry lounge song. We loved it and knew that we would need to find a good home for it...so the idea to make a remix CD was born. The next song that was important to include was the remix that we had previously done for Frontline Assembly called Predator. This song was always special to me, I really connected to the lyrics (written by Bill Leeb), so it seemed like a good place to release that as well.

Monica: How did you put the word out and how many remixes did you get back?

kaRIN: Well, we decided to have an open remix call to see if there was someone who wanted to give remixing a try. We put the word out on our website and through our newsletter. We were amazed at the response we got. We had no idea that many people had even heard of us! We got somewhere around 120 responses which led to over 50 remixes turned in. The remixers came from all over the world...from Russia, Germany, Ireland, Macadonia, Canada etc. We got so many back, that the plans for a CD grew into a double CD.

Monica: That's amazing! I know you also have some known "remixers" on this...

kaRIN: Yes, we also had some friends do some remixes, Kevin Kipnis from Purr Machine, the return of Wade Alin (Christ Analogue), who had done a remix on our first CD. Then we were lucky to arrange some special guest remixes. One from Charlie Clouser (NIN), and Mark Walk (producer of Skinny Puppy/ Oger/ Ruby). And Rhys Fulber (Conjure One/ Delerium/ Frontline Assembly)...

Monica: I adore that one! "Tempted" is my favorite song from 'Some Kind of Strange' - the lyrics really hit the very definition of the goddess aspect right on the head for me...

kaRIN: Lastly, we added some cover songs.

Monica: That's always such a fun thing to do. We enjoyed doing that on Vera Causa. I'd love to do an entire CD of covers.

kaRIN: The first one we chose to include was 'The Lunatics are Taking Over', I feel the words on this song are so extremely important that someone had to say it. We also added 'Feed me to the Lions' by Adam and the Ants.

Monica: May I say that's probably my favorite track on the entire thing. You really made it your own! William and I have toyed with wanting to do a cover by them, such a great and unique entity, Adam Ant...

kaRIN: Also 'Haunted' from Love and Rockets and had special guest and good friend William Faith play on it.

Monica: He had a great time playing on that for you. How did you choose which remixes to put out? What are your favorites?

kaRIN: We would not have considered making it a double CD, if we did not feel the material was there. As far as picking a fave, I don't know really...by the time we are finished an album, it all becomes a big whole and it's hard to separate...I love all of them for different reasons. It's feels like a big collaboration of so many creative minds.... I love that... each new addition takes things to new places. I suppose I am inspired even thinking about it. I feel blessed to be able to create and be surrounded by creativeness.

Monica: I agree so much... You know, I think many people don't know just how good of friends you and I are, we've been there for each other over the years - and having such a close friend who is also an artist helps keep me inspired in my own work...

kaRIN: Yes, many people don't know that we are the best of friends and have been collaborating and sharing things for years. You and I often work on other types of artwork together as well as share a deep sort of friendship of two very similar, yet different people.

Monica: In some ways, we're almost in different musical genres, but yet so similar in our aesthetic, in that we both love to transform ourselves for our music, search for new avenues of dress and expression, and really use the visual aspect of art and image to help define our music.

kaRIN: And we both share in common that we are totally creative entities. We both paint, sing, write and will generally creatively transform all that we can.

Monica: But what makes us different is our approach, I think, to music as well as art. Can you describe your way of working?

kaRIN: As for our approach, yes it may be different. I think I have a very non-conventional approach to anything. I am the opposite of structured and the only way I can do things is just through my emotions...it can be loose and abstract. I want to express something that is larger than myself, so I loose myself to tap into the moment. I rarely know what I will sing about or even what I will paint...I just let it tell me. You, on the other hand will weave an interesting story or cultivate a painting to great detail.

Monica: Yes, I think I have a more orderly way of creating, a sense of what it is before I even begin... "This is the chorus, this is the verse"... Detail is very important to me, I tend to work very closely to one piece at a time.

kaRIN: I really can't even do that...I am much better at very broad strokes.

Monica: And now you are entering a whole new arena, and I think may of your fans can't wait to know: you will performing live soon! Having seen your videos, I've always thought you as such a gorgeous and sensually expressive character. I know in your live persona, you will knock people dead! Tell me what you are doing in preparation for the live show.

kaRIN: Yes, we are definitely trying to finally put together a live version of our music. It is probably way too early to speak of, as it is still in it's generating stages. We are just now starting to find people to help us translate our sound into a live setting. Our music is very untraditional as far as instruments go. Its layers and layers of computer manipulated sound, which makes it a little challenging to make all that live. For us, creating new things has always been our priority and always will be. Anything we tackle, we want it to be well done or not at all, we are both perfectionists. When we are working on a CD, it takes us so long and totally consumes us. Now that we have just finished VORTEX, it feels like a good time to concentrate on answering that live question. It is safe to say that I am nervous and very excited about hopefully opening a new door...

Monica: I'm happy that all the stories I tell you after I come home from touring haven't scared you off from trying!!!

kaRIN: It's true, I hear all the horror stories and have fears of things going wrong, I hate being out of control.

Monica: It's a whole new side of things that are not going to be in your control - you'll need to surrender to that... Yet, William saw you play live many years ago in other bands... Tell me about your musical history.

kaRIN: William and I were friends years ago before there was a thought of Collide, or Faith and the Muse. We used to always run into each other at clubs. As far as my musical history... well in my teenage years, all of my friends played guitar and we would play and sing every song we could think of. We just did it for the love of it and I started to have the need to sing. In the first band that I helped

out on, where William saw me on stage, I played "pseudo" keyboards. In other words, I filled out the stage as something to look at ...scenery. This was my first taste of live shows, where I saw all the problems, no sound checks, equipment failures, not being paid properly, disrespected by promoters etc.

Monica: Sounds like a typical tour for most bands I know! Those kinds of problems never go away, no matter how many years you tour. I'm an old road horse, and still, it's a struggle to present the live show the way we'd like to. F&TM are blessed in that we have Patty Hele of Mother Dance to take care of these things for us, but still, equipment and power problems can be there the moment we get to the venue! Fans never know what troubles bands have before they walk on stage, nor should they. It's supposed to be magical, bigger than life... So what did you do next?

kaRIN: After that, the next band I joined to actually start singing myself was after a devastating experience with a relationship. I knew I had the capacity to do something destructive... so I answered an ad to join a band to channel my energy and avoid becoming self destructive. When I answered the ad and went to see them, my thoughts were... they were kind of bad... which was perfect for me. There would be no pressure... only escapism, I could write and sing and vent about everything that was stuck inside of me.

Monica: That must have been a great release for you...

kaRIN: Then of course, we started to do live shows... I remember thinking that I could not hear myself...

Monica: I never could, back in the day - it was just how it was!

kaRIN: Oh well, at that point you just have to sing.

Monica: There's really no other choice...

kaRIN: We only played twice and then the band broke up... I never got the feeling of how great it could be playing live. Now, in Collide, as we are about to release our 5th CD, I feel it is time to at least try to make it a priority. I never want to look back and I wish I would have at least explored it... so I want to confront that which is foreign to me and at least know what it would feel like?

Monica: I think you'll really learn what it is to connect to your fans live. That's what it's really about. The problems will always be there, it's a matter of transcending the moment.

kaRIN: If you think about it...in every thing you do, each step leads to the next. Music has always been a way to release myself, I never would have thought I would have come this far. I have felt driven to sing and create, but I even when Statik and I formed Collide, we just did it to make music. So who knows what happens on the next step, I guess that makes it interesting.

Monica: You and I both talk about how lucky we are to have come as far as we have. We're both totally self-made. There are no marketing dollars behind us, no PR firms, no money exchanging hands to get our songs on the radio. Our fans find us more through word of mouth than anything, and it makes it all the more special that we've been able to live our life for art in such a way. Though we

both wonder what lengths we could go to if we were able to achieve major-label status, but I think the pressure to "write a hit" and stay on top, where you're writing to keep fans happy, not to express yourself, that's not something I can imagine.

kaRIN: You know, I have to say that I have so much respect for anyone out there trying to do what they really believe in. It's not an easy choice, you have to do it for the love of it, as that may be the only reward you get. I think once you start creating externally or thinking what other people want out of you...you lose the connection that was pure...the source from your soul to the next that actually reaches in and has the capacity to touch something. That's what I want to do...reach from my inner being to the next. I do not make music for money or fame, I do it for my own artistic satisfaction and I could not have that if someone told me what to do. As we both know only too well, doing everything ourselves is definitely the long hard way to go. A lot of life sacrifices have to be made to try to survive at it as well. It is however, the highest source of personal satisfaction to follow a passion that you believe in. Who cares if you have to live on the street... (joke).

Monica: And we've both come very close to that by doing what we do, ha ha!!! No, I think fans know that we're true to our art. They may not agree with the artistic choices we make - but they understand the path itself...

kaRIN: Of course, change is not for everyone, and people may not like change if it affects what they liked before, but I find it's necessary to creation, or you become stagnant. We certainly would not want to write the same album or song over and over again or even stay in what was a perceived box for us. We have touched on a lot of genre's and I like that, we draw on all the elements that we like. I think each individual is responsible for the direction in their own path and that's all they can do.

Monica: Yes, I remember when I was a child, I had dreams of being free, to be an artist, a performer... I just knew the kind of grown-up I wanted to be, and I was able to become that strange and unusual person. I think we both had very unusual mothers, artistic and creative, and losing them caused us to continue down the eccentric path. I'm nearing the age my mother was when she died, so I'm seeing things almost through her eyes these days, and I feel as if I lived the kind of life she wanted... It's hard to articulate.

kaRIN: It's so interesting when you look at children, I think for the most part they show their true selves early on. I used to spend my time making things and I would sing and dance and make up my own songs. As far as a mother goes, having and then losing the presence of such an amazing human being in my life, has also had a profound impact on me. She really had an amazing view on life, where she saw the big picture. She understood people and humanity. She felt that she was raising the ambassadors of the future. I see so much of myself, as a reflection of the person she was. Her presence in my life was such a gift that I am so thankful for. I feel power in her energy and her dreams for me as well.

Monica: My mother's influence is so evident in all I do, I really think it has a great deal to do with my connection to the Feminine side that permeates my lyrics and art. I would not be the person I am without losing her, it's a harsh reality to say that. Even artists like Madonna have this same knowledge, it's a wound that doesn't ever heal, but somehow can cause a strange leaning towards the creativity...

kaRIN: Understandably, sometimes the most moving creations are impacted from experiences which are the most upsetting or painful. In my world, the best way to deal with emotional distress, is to find a way to turn it into something positive. Out of the depths of hell comes great art...it can be so expressive and poignant. Everyone has all sorts of different things that they deal with, at the end of the day, it's how you deal with it that makes the difference.

Monica: Well, my dear, you have your plate full. I wish you the best on your new release, and hope to see you performing live soon! My love to you!

kaRIN: And to you!