



I have told the story before, but it was at Danny's birthday party a couple of years ago, while walking up the path that leads to a vista on the top of his property, that I met a woman with the most beautiful eyes, who, noticing my 'Dagobert's Revenge' tee-shirt, said "Hey, we're in that magazine." This, it turned out, was kaRIN of the band Collide. We soon struck up a conversation, and have been friends ever since. Although both kaRIN and her band mate, Statik, tend to be somewhat reclusive, I would see them every now and then at little barbecues at the Carey manse, and at their place (which contains a turtle sanctuary built by Statik), and each time, I'd ask the same question: "When's the new CD going to be finished?" Having been very impressed with the band's last recording, "Chasing the Ghost", I was most anxious to hear some new music by the two. Well, that moment arrived several weeks ago when Danny played the unmastered disc that was given to him by kaRIN and Statik, who had asked their friend to play live drums on a track entitled "Somewhere." And listen to it I did, several times that night alone (even sneaking it home with me so I could hear it on my headphones). Although I wasn't sure that they could top "Chasing the Ghost", I quickly realized that they had. In fact, Collide's new release, "Some Kind of Strange" is a remarkably beautiful collection of music and lyrics, with kaRIN's mellifluous vocals 'colliding' heroes games fashion with Statik's exquisitely orchestrated 'noise.' Recently, I had a chance to ask the two a few questions about "Some Kind of Strange." Although, conducting an interview like this is definitely not my forte, I am nevertheless pleased with the result, mostly due to kaRIN and Statik's honest and sometimes humorous answers.

(NOTE: For more information about Collide, including how to order their CDs, merch, etc., their website is: <http://www.collide.net>. Email: xcollide@aol.com)

... though your hunger feels the same
i am wanting give me breath
i am truth you can't explain
i am treasure i am dust
i am water i am rain
i am tempted here
i am the hunter i am the prey
though you're ten thousand years
every moment remains
i am future i am past
i am haunted i am blessed

and i'm filtered through like sun
until your moment comes undone...

-from tempted (Collide: Some Kind of Strange)

Q: What's the major difference between the new release, Some Kind of Strange and your last recording, Chasing the Ghost? Did you approach the writing, arrangements, and production in any way different?

kaRIN: Hummmm... I don't know that I ever approach music differently. My favorite thing to do is to be by myself with a song that I have never heard before and just let my vocal emotions pour out; it's such a release. I never know what will come out. I do not like to hear a song before I work with it. I want that impact of the moment of how I feel when I hear it... like a dream, later I can analyze it if I want to and say ohhhh... this is where this is coming from. My approach is always purely emotional... I would say that I just feel my way into a song and that approach never changes, it's all I can do really.

Statik: I think they are similar but different (if that makes any sense). Some Kind of Strange might sound clearer, and I think kaRIN's vocals are a bit more upfront, and less processed. That was about the only thing I did consciously from a production standpoint. I didn't want people to think that we had to hide kaRIN's vocals behind any type of vocal effects. When we do use fx on the vocals, it's really just to put another type of sound in the mix. Sometimes I like the sound of really affected vocals and sometimes I don't. I know that some of the songs on the last CD are definitely slower than our earlier work, but it's just my taste I guess. If I go back now and listen to our first CD, Beneath the Skin, some of the grooves on it seem to have what I would call a standard industrial groove. Sometimes I like working at slower tempos because there's more room in each bar. It's also just kind of a rebellion to a lot of dance music that I don't like.

Q: Rhythmically speaking, the drum programming is very trance oriented with a half time trip hop sensibility. The sounds, however, lend themselves to a more glitch-core, bit-crushed post-industrial sound. How did this develop over the course of five or so different CDs, and is this a further example of the band's name, 'Collide?'

Statik: The Collide name just always seemed to fit because we always have come from totally different places when we work on music. Sometimes it is surprising that we are even able to finish a song and have it sound as cohesive as it does. As far as sounds go, I'm always just trying to use sounds that are new sounding to me in some way. I guess I just like glitchy bit-crushed sounds. Using sounds like that in combination with bigger, more lush sounds is part of what Collide is all about.

kaRIN: We like a little friction; if it was too comfortable, that would be odd for us. I always like things a little weirder; in art why not try to push some boundaries while still remaining in the realm that we are interested in.

Q: The band's treatment of the vocals seems to allow kaRIN to be at the forefront of the song, but when the music takes precedent, the vocal processing can turn her voice (in particular, the sub-vocals) into a unique instrument, reminding me of the way Eno would run the various vocalists he worked with through Moog synthesizers and such. Statik, is kaRIN's voice one of your favorite synths?

Statik: I would have to say that it is, really. I like what a lot of the new processing that has come along in recent years has allowed people to do to sounds and instruments like vocals. Vocals can be by far more expressive than just about any keyboard... especially with a good singer. There's pitch, volume, words, attitude. kaRIN can definitely do more than I can playing an instrument, so when I can take her voice and use it as its own layer, it really works out great. Also, a lot of that has to do with how we come up with songs. Sometimes in the beginning of working on a song, kaRIN comes up with a vocal line that may not be words, but I'll take it and build part of the song around it. In the end, I'll want to keep it in, because it's important, but I'll have to find a way for it to be there without getting in the way of the real lead voice.

kaRIN: I would say that it would be very freeing for me if I did not have to use words... to just use sounds or pseudo words. We often do that sort of thing, or I may form them into words later. Often I feel restricted by words as they are so important to me in what I'm saying.

Q: The 'demon' (looping sample) on "Modify" sounds like a vocal line that's been reversed and pitch-shifted down. Is there some subliminal message in this track that you'd care to divulge?

Statik: I can understand it perfectly, but I think my head has some sort of built in demon translator.

Q: kaRIN, I read in another interview somewhere about you attending angel singing school. All joking aside (although I could very easily believe this), what is the extent of your vocal training?

A good friend of mine, Camella Grace, once told me that you and her had the same vocal teacher. Do you still take lessons, or was this vocal coaching in the past?

kaRIN: We like to fool around. Unfortunately I didn't really attend angel singing school. As far as my vocal training, I grew up with all my friends being musicians and we sang every song we knew. Somewhere in my head I knew I had to sing as much as I could as it would help me later. I had a friend, Anita, who is an opera singer and we traded (for a couple of things I made) for a tape that I still use to vocally work out with (lazy now, though). The teacher that Camella is referring to is another good friend of mine named Nijole. We also traded for some things I made. She was so much fun. We would get together and at the time I was interested in exotic sounds, so we would listen to and talk about exotic scales and different types of singing and what made them different. Her husband, Fritz, also played sitar on our last CD.

Statik: You didn't ask her about her demonic singing school. I guess she'll keep that quiet.

Q: kaRIN, I've noticed that you have a very unique style of writing lyrics - there's little or no punctuation for one thing. When you write lyrics, do they just flow from you (when inspired), or is there some other process that you utilize to come up with the words?

kaRIN: I have always written like that. I hate to plot things out. I just like to go to the short impression form, which is great for lyrics. I don't feel the need to follow rules, so no punctuation is necessary. I remember reading a review that said something to the effect that my songs did not rhyme. I thought that was a good thing. I hate to force words.

Q: On the new recording, the idea of 'in-betweenness' turns up in the lyrics of several songs, including "Mutated", "Shimmer" and "Complicated." Having sipped margaritas with kaRIN at parties, I know about the "in-between round", but what does this concept of 'in-betweenness' mean to you in

relation to these songs?

kaRIN: It revolves around a system of balance. I was brought up with absolutely no type of religion, which I think gives me an interesting perspective on the world. I started to invent the theories that would work for me in my own life. Cause and effect and balance are big in my belief system. I feel that nature is the universal being, and that it relies primarily on these elements. So they can apply to any principle in my life. Even my drinking life. I always try to have water to offset the alcohol... it's my way to balance. A little Ying and Yang.

Q: "Tempted" is one of my personal favorites on the new CD. The lyrics (or concept) remind me a bit of "Halo" from Chasing the Ghost. I've my own esoteric interpretation of these lyrics, but I'm curious as to what the song is about to you, the writer?

kaRIN: We always like to hear what people's favorites are and interestingly they are always different. I don't always like to explain myself on lyrics as ultimately, although they have very specific meanings to me, I would prefer that you draw your own conclusion through your own experience. Often I even write that way where it is twisted between ideas or could go either way. My words are about deciding for yourself how you want to interpret it.

I will tell you a bit of the circumstance when I was writing the lyrics of this song, and hope it doesn't spoil the illusion. I had just discovered I had a lump in my breast. I had taken care of my mom for 4 years who had a slow, painful, sad cancer death. When it came up for me, it of course puts your life into perspective. At the root of the song for me is my plea for life... give me breath and my feelings about life... some light... some rain... or some good and some bad. In a larger sense, it turns into the world... wanting life. I would call it a very earthy song.

Q: Can you describe the creative process that goes into making a Collide record? Do you work separately and then combine each other's ideas, or is there some other method or formula that is employed?

kaRIN: We try all of the above, but most songs are VERY separate. Sometimes I feel so isolated in my process as it is very internal. Statik will give me music and I will work by myself and evolve the song until I am happy with it. Singing to a song is easy, singing something that you really like melodically, vocally, and lyrically is really hard. Before I even let Statik listen, it may change several times. Then I turn it over to him, and we may sing it in his studio and then once he has a vocal frame he will sculpt the music around it. We will go back and forth a bit, and then sing it for the final time and usually add some new exploration free form tracks at this time. This is a pretty typical way of working for us.

Statik: That is really one of the biggest hurdles when we work together. kaRIN needs time to work out her parts and lyrics and at some point I come into her studio and listen. It's at that point that I have to put my producer hat on and give suggestions as to what I think is working and what isn't. It's hard for me to do that, but hopefully it works out in the end. I have to admit for me, it isn't really so much about the lyrics, but about the melody. As long as I like the melody, just about any words will do. For most songs... ours, or anybody else's. I don't even pay attention to words. I can even kind of sing along over and over, but the words just aren't really registering, it's just melody and sound. So, that makes things extra difficult when we are working together sometimes, because I'll want to change something of kaRIN's, and it will be hard for her to separate the words from the notes that she is

singing. Anyway, it's just what we've come to expect... we don't know what it would be like if it was too easy.

kaRIN: If it was too easy, it would just feel bizarre to us. It does cause a lot of friction that I am very word oriented and to me it's very important what I say. I may play Statik something that I feel is really saying something and he'll say... "It's alright." It's safe to say that drives me crazy, but in the end it makes me work harder... it's not done until we are both satisfied.

Q: I know that Statik played on the song "Triad" on Tool's Lateralus, and that you have performed live with the band on a few occasions. So, now, on Some Kind of Strange, Danny Carey is playing the drums on a song entitled "Somewhere." How did you come to meet Danny, and why did you feel that his particular style of drumming would work better on this track as opposed to programming a drum machine?

Statik: I met Danny during the recording of Undertow, actually. I knew Sylvia who was producing the record, and she had me come in to help on the programming of "Disgustipated" (it was actually sequencing and taking sounds from a tape that Tool had made while they were destroying a piano with sledgehammers and a shotgun). We didn't really meet up again for quite a few years until a party at cEvin Key's (Skinny Puppy) house I believe. The three of us have actually been friends for a few years now, and wanted to contribute to each others songs at some point. For Danny it was hard because he was quite busy last year with all of the touring he was doing. By the time he got back all of our songs were done except for "Somewhere", so it kind of worked out that he was able to play on that one.

Q: The snare on "Somewhere" sounds distinctly different from the Tool and Pigmy Love Circus recordings. Was Danny playing a different kit, or triggering electronic samples?

Statik: That particular song wasn't completely finished when Danny played on it, but it was almost there. I had already done quite a bit of drum programming on it, and in the end I kept it in with Danny's drums. I believe he was playing his practice kit, which sounded great. It was only the second Collide song that had live drums on it, but they really seemed to mesh right in, which I think is a testament to Danny's playing ability.

Q: kaRIN, I've been told that you recently beat Danny in a game of bowling? If true, has he returned the favor yet, or do you still have his number out on the lanes?

kaRIN: Never believe anything you hear unless you witness it for yourself.

(NOTE: it was Danny, himself, who told me this. However, he'd forgot to bring his purple ball with the gold unicursal hexagram, and had to rent an ordinary one from the bowling alley. A few days ago, or so I'm told, Danny returned the favor).

Q: kaRIN, where do you draw inspiration from with regards to your lyrics? Do you ever feel that it comes from a source that you're not consciously aware of?

kaRIN: It always stems from my subconscious emotions. I just let it come out... it does feel sometimes as if I'm channeling, but ultimately it's me.

Statik: It's always kind of weird, though, when she starts singing and I hear the sound of a 2000 year old monk coming from the vocal booth.

Q: Another question for kaRIN: I know Kate Bush is a major influence. Who else do you admire and consider to be an important influence on your writing and vocal style?

kaRIN: I like things that work on all levels: mentally, physically, spiritually and artistically. The artists who have done that for me are Salvador Dali, Elizabeth Frazier, Lisa Gerrard, David Bowie, Pink Floyd, and Terry Gilliam to name a few. That which I would have done or could not have done, greatly inspires me.

Q: Statik, who are some of your major influences?

Statik: It's really a lot of people for me. Sometimes it's more of an album than a particular group. Some of my favorites are (in no particular order): Massive Attack "Mezzannie", Curve "Cuckoo", Dead Can Dance "Toward the Within", Queen "Queen", "Queen II", "Sheer Heart Attack", "A Day at the Races", "A Night at the Opera", "News of the World", and "Jazz." Ministry "Twitch", Nine Inch Nails "Downward Spiral", Peter Gabriel "Passion" and "Security." Skinny Puppy "Cleanse, Fold, and Manipulate", Tool "Undertow", Snake River Conspiracy "Sonic Jihad", Ruby "Salt Peter", The Residents "Duck Stab", Adam & the Ants "Prince Charming", "Kings of the Wild Frontier", XTC "Skylarking", Cocteau Twins "Heaven or Las Vegas", Kate Bush "Hounds of Love", Kraftwerk "Computerworld." Also, Gary Numan was a big influence, although I wouldn't pick out just one record.

Q: Switching gears a bit: Are there any new members to the turtle sanctuary?

kaRIN: What people do not know about Statik is that he is the Dr. Dolittle with animals. He takes care of all the animals. He used to keep snails in a terrarium. I think he relates better to animals than to people. We have a pond with frogs and turtles at our studio. He gathers bugs for them to eat. For a while we were the turtle sanctuary, where people would bring their turtles that they could no longer keep (note: turtles do not like those little plastic bowls). We now have eight turtles, so we have to stop taking them in so as not to upset the balance.

Statik: No new turtles for almost a year now. We'll see what happens this year, though. I might be a turtle grandpa.

Q: Now for the big question: Is there any chance that Collide will be performing live in the near future?

kaRIN: The truth is... we do not even know the answer to that question. My main priority has always been to create something new and I never have enough time. Time is my biggest enemy really.

Statik: We really need to clone ourselves and that would make life easier. I think we both love to make the creation that turns into a record, and then when we get done, it's not really a priority for us to recreate it by doing a show. At some point we will really have to find how it works for us. We keep saying every year that we will try, but it never seems to happen. Maybe this year? We don't really know.

Q: And the really big question: when are we going to get together again for margaritas with the occasional "in-between round?"

kaRIN: That we can arrange very soon!

Statik: Whenever it is, it's not soon enough.

(NOTE: Did I detect a little sarcasm in Statik's voice?)

Alright, that's all for this month... unless anyone wants to hear some more about that crazy banana squash?