

## Interviews 2008-08-25



Bassist Dominique Di Piazza

Ask any bassist today, Hadrien Feraud, Matthew Garrison, Adam Nitti, Neal Fountain, and they will swear that bassist Dominique Di Piazza has had a profound influence on their bass playing.

Dominique's right hand approach is some of the most cherished techniques in bass playing today. It began by using the thumb, index and middle finger instead of the traditional two finger approach, and that move gave birth to the four finger technique which is used as a secondary technique by many of the top players in the world. In addition to that, he also enhanced this technique by using a pedal steel guitar pick on his thumb and index finger, and carved out a unique and distinctive sound on the instrument.

In 1991, Dominique was asked by John McLaughlin to become the member of his trio with Indian drummer and percussionist Trilok Gurtu which resulted in over 300 concerts worldwide and the revered *Que Alegria* record. John McLaughlin was so amazed to see his virtuosity that he said at the time , "His talent is immense, and I feel he is one of the most musical bass players in the world today."

When Hadrien Feraud met with an unfortunate accident this past summer, John McLaughlin requested Dominique who was gracious enough to cancel his shows to join the 4th Dimension for an extensive European tour.

Princess Sita (Sunnyside) is his latest offering, a very deep and thoughtful musical recording, available today at Abstract Logix.

**Abstract Logix :** It was such a pleasure to meet you and see you perform with John McLaughlin on this extensive tour. How does it feel to be back playing with him again ?

**Dominique Di Piazza :** It was a real blessing playing again with John after quite a while. I had such a wonderful time on the tour and honestly it felt like we had never stopped playing together. Very beautiful, I am thankful that John invited me.

**Abix:** The last time you did a long tour with him was with Trilok Gurtu. How do you think John has musically changed or developed since the last time you performed with him ?

**DP:** Concerning the trio in 1991 and 1992 we actually did more than a tour.. It was close to 300 concerts worldwide. Looking at John today, he has gained so much in maturity. It makes me think of all those great painters who with age develop their style to a point that the music speaks for it.



**Abix:** You told me once that you were one of Hadrien's teacher and that he stood apart amongst all of your students. As a student, what made Hadrien so special ?

**DP:** Yes I was Hadrien's teacher for a period since he was seventeen years old and honestly he was the best gifted student I ever had.I remember at that time he could plays almost all Jaco's solo perfectly; but he was not able to improvise over chord changes and was really interested to learn that from me, especially the use of the altered scale and symmetrical diminished scale on a 251 form...But what was so special about him is his incredible technique and phenomenal ability to understand and reproduce any traits regardless of the speed or complexity..

I am proud that I could contribute to his musical enrichment and from my opinion I really think that Hadrien is the "future of the electric bass from his generation."

**Abx:** Gary Husband and Mark Mondesir are your co-players in the 4th Dimension. How are the dynamics in the 4th Dimension ?

**DP:** I have known them for a longtime through the records they have played in. They are not only two great musicians but they are great guys to hang out with as well. They play very solid and know how to use the dynamics.

**Abx:**We are all waiting for your solo record "Princess Sita". What can the listeners expect ?

**DP:** It is a recording we have done last year in Italy with Nelson Veras, a Brazilian guitar player and Manhu Roche who is a great jazz drummer. He has played with Michel Petrucciani in Europe. This recording is very close and personal to me. It is neither a fusion record nor a straight-ahead jazz thing. Nelson plays acoustic nylon guitar and has got a unique voice on guitar which is rare nowadays. The album in my opinion has melodic and lyrical atmosphere and I have a few bass only compositions as well.

**Abx:** Reflect on how you have musically evolved over last 15 years.

**DP:** I think I know more about myself now than ever before; I mean I know more my strong side as well as my weak one and I know more about what I want to do and the orientation I like to follow.

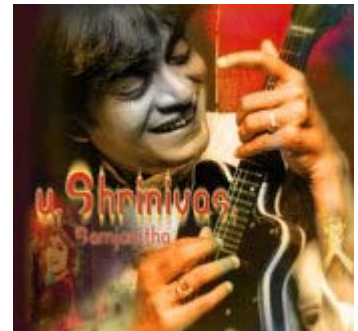
**Abx:** I can't help but get a bit nostalgic, looking back at the trio with John and Trilok , what are your impressions today ?

**DP:** Looking back I feel this trio was the best trio format John has ever created. The synergy between John and Trilok is fantastic. The mix of synth-guitar with acoustic guitar and the different influences from Jazz to Spanish and Indian music created so much of space for the bass.

**Abx:** I heard your playing on the new U.Shrinivas record, Samjanitha (Dreyfus). How did it happen ?

**DP:** Firstly, I like to say that I been a big fan of Indian Music for a long time. The sound of the sitar and tabla have always been familiar to me because my step-father who was a gypsy used to play Indian music at home when I was a child.

I encountered U. Shrinivas through Christian Pegand who used to book Remember Shakti. I am very honored to be a part of Samjanitha. He is phenomenal musician and very open to all other kinds of music.



**Abx:** What do we expect from Dominique in the future ?

**DP:** I am currently composing new tunes as I am about to form a new fusion band that will performing more energetic music using keyboards, drums and a guitar player. I plan to record something next year and it is quite possible that I would like to have an Indian musician on it. I can't wait.

Thanks Dominique for your time. I am sure we will meet soon.

Abx Staff