

NICO

**'NICO' FROM PAGE 11**  
really have to compromise. There's nothing *wrong* with that, but I don't think it would be honest. I prefer to stay honest.

**Do you think the electronic backing suits you? I think there's a chill in those sounds that complements your voice.**  
Yeah, well ... I'd like a few brass instruments too. Maybe by the end of the year I can have a double bass clarinet and a saxophone, or a trumpet.

**You get all the original songwriting credits on the album — do you come up with all of it on the harmonium?**  
Yes, I have to get a new one though. This one is falling apart.

**How long have you had it?**  
Three years. It's my fourth one since 1968. They come from New Delhi. The Bina Pump Organ.

**Do you write constantly, or is it a burst before you do an album?**  
Not constantly. But I write quite a bit, yes.

**So if someone asked you what your job was, what would you say?**  
Singer-composer.

**You don't consider yourself anything else any more?**  
Well, no. I wouldn't say I am an actress, unless I am actually making movies. You can't call yourself more than one profession really.

**What's behind the title of the album?**  
It's a lack of making a movie. Instead of making a movie, I recorded it.

**Did you see it that way from the outset, a**

**record of a movie?**  
From the beginning, yes. Because during that recording I was watching the same movie all the time, *Apocalypse Now*.

**Do you want to make a movie?**  
No. I leave that up to men, I think men should be movie directors.

**Why?**  
It doesn't make sense ... there are some good women movie-makers, but ... like I wouldn't let any woman produce my record. I'm sure there are some good woman producers. Maybe not well known ones. Executive producers there's lots, the ones that do the artwork.

**Why do you think it works in that way?**  
(*Nico laughs*) Because it's a man's world. Is that silly of me to say?

**No. And you're successful in your own way in a man's world?**  
Well, I'm not on any great scale. I don't need to be. But I wouldn't have minded if that place last night had been completely full, yes. Because the other places were full. Except for Wellington — in this huge theatre 300 people show up. How come?

**It's a town full of civil servants in some ways, people who don't go out in public much — except to Laurie Anderson.**  
Yes. I would have liked to have been part of the festival. Why is she doing well? Because of the music?

**You wouldn't like to make a movie — would you like to be in one again?**  
Yes, but I'd like to make a movie with

Francis Ford Coppola. Because I made seven movies with a French movie director, which are experimental, *nouvelle-garde* films, and they are only being shown in cinemateques and film theatres. They have retrospectives, like they show a whole week at the Centre Pompidou. But it never sees no commercial theatres.

**Do you listen to much current music?**  
At the moment I only listen to a film that I've taped, *Suddenly Last Summer* (*she laughs*). Monty Clift, and Elizabeth Taylor, she's great in it. So I don't always listen to music, but I listen to music of course. I listen to all kinds of progressive jazz and mainly *classic*.

**Do you pay much attention to what's going on in the world around you?**  
Not in detail. Because I wouldn't be a good enough politician to even try and understand. I mean, the Libyan, what's his name? Arafat? **Gadaffi.**

Gadaffi. I don't really understand it and I don't want to. I mean, if Reagan attacks him there must be a reason for it ...

**What does living in Manchester do for your worldview?**  
I don't live there any more, I live in Brixton now. I thought three years of my time was enough to be in Manchester, I'm not from there. I'd sometimes like to live in Berlin again, for a few months.

**Why does your press bio say you were born in Cologne? Weren't you born in Budapest?**  
(*Pause and then smile, intently*) No, I'm not Hungarian. Do I have a Hungarian accent?

**No. So where did that story come from?**  
Can we do the rest of the interview outside ...?

(*The three band members have just returned from a shopping expedition and Chad wants some light, so we shift onto the verandah. Nico is as efficient at being photographed as you'd expect.*)

**You're sometimes described as a survivor — do you see yourself as one?**  
I'm not really in the situation of surviving. I mean, you can only survive a war, or some catastrophe, but not when there's peace. Survive myself? (*Laughs*) I don't know, I'm not that much of a block. I feel like I'm part of the wind ...

**But you were in a similar circumstance to, say, Edie Sedgwick in the late 60s — and she didn't survive.**  
Yes, because she was 28 and everybody had to die by the time they were 28 (*she laughs*). They were all 28 — Jimi Hendrix, Brian Jones ... *Jim* (*a weirdly wistful tone*) ... Janis, Edie. Maybe it's best for some of them. Because, you know, you remember the beauty. It doesn't get to the tragedy of decaying, disintegrating.

**Do you think about getting old?**  
No, not much.

**Any particular reason?**  
Because I can't feel any different from 20 years ago. It's like I stood still more or less. Except that I don't bother bleaching my hair any more.

**A career junkie once told me that you don't get any older after 23. When you get there you either go on or you don't.**  
No, that's about 33 I would say. He's about 10 years mistaken — 23 is very young. Most people only start discovering themselves at that age. Late developers — I'm a very late developer.

**Are you still discovering yourself?**  
No ... (*laughs*).

**What's your son Ari doing these days?**  
He's going to acting school in Paris. I see him quite a bit. I thought he would come here to Australia and New Zealand but he had something to do. He's a writer and an actor. He's 23 now.

**Do you think these are good times for you?**  
Yeah, because the record coincides with the type of music that is being popular. Not on a big large scale, but on a large scale. It always depends, you know, on the budget. You can't make a masterpiece — well you *can* make a masterpiece ... it involves money, yes, masterpieces do.

**Did you have as much as you needed for this album?**  
It could have been double. It was only 15,000 pounds, very little. We didn't even have time to do my vocals over again.

**Would you consider some live recording?**  
Yeah, I think we have to rehearse a few numbers that we can do, because we only change once a year. That's not very often is it?

**I think we have to finish soon. A lot of people think of Nico as a miserable person — but you've been smiling almost every time I've seen you, apart from being on stage.**  
I'm not miserable. I don't know why people always like to say that. Maybe it's the type of music, they identify it with me.

**Why do you choose that kind of music? Is it cathartic?**  
I leave it to the other people to make happy music. There's enough around ...

**That's enough for me. Thank you, you're very gracious.**  
(*Nico smiles*)

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