

## **Graziella Schazad – “India”**

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Everything is possible. Always. You just have to allow it, be open for it, and not overthink it beforehand. At this point, you almost want to call upon the old saying of daring and winning if it wasn't overused already, because: it is actually true.

Everything is possible. “India”, the new album by Graziella Schazad, has been created exactly from this state of mind: with a lot of courage, newly gained self-confidence, and an almost childlike trust – in her music, her new songs, and also in herself. However, getting there was everything but easy. Because being the daughter of a Polish-German mother and an Afghan father, strife comes with the territory.

When her dad arrives in Germany at the age of 17, he is overwhelmed by the cultural differences of his new home and experiences difficulty in coping with them, to say the least. And her parents' constant conflict naturally leaves its mark on Graziella. “My parents' love has always been there, but they simply had too much to struggle with concerning themselves and their sensitivities. As a consequence, I've often fallen by the wayside”, Graziella recalls. “Home often felt like a world war to me; then again, a world war nobody ever talked about. I had to sense and anticipate everything myself. And for a child that's incredibly tough.”

She only finds consolation, support and strength in music. Already as a three-year-old, she learns to play the guitar, one year later follows the violin, and at the age of nine, she gets a piano. She starts writing her first songs at the age of twelve and discovers music as an outlet to come to terms with the difficult situation at home. When she drops out of school shortly before her graduation in 2000, she already has a band with first small successes – but it does not quite get off the ground. So, after some ups and downs, the band falls apart in 2004 – yet another disappointment Graziella has to cope with.

Her husband is a big help and eventually offers her the support and affection she lacked since her childhood. “Only the love for my husband made me capable of really trusting somebody – including myself”, she confesses. “My heart bears scars and I don't know if I'll ever be able to not feel them anymore. However, I've grown from them. They made me strong.”

Because scars are not signs of weakness, but of strength; of the ability to weather difficult times. They made Graziella realize: everything is possible. Her husband on the other hand is the one encouraging her to start writing songs again. The result: her debut album “Feel Who I Am” in 2010.

The record is a success, press reviews are massive and everyone, who sees Graziella live, is delighted by her skills and her charisma anyway. Her handmade, organic pop music is special enough to stand out from most other productions, but not too special to not find any listeners. After the release – despite the chosen path and the great reactions towards her debut – Graziella withdraws once again for the time being. She continues to work on her complicated family situation and finds strength in having become a mother herself.

“My daughter helped me to come to terms with myself. I always thought having a child would mean that I’d have a lot less time for myself, but the opposite is the case: I’ve grown much closer to myself”, Graziella states. „I am much more content, much more confident – and you can actually hear that on my new songs.”

Indeed: You can unmistakably tell that the songs on “India” are coming from a changed, improved point in life. Graziella has arrived. She doesn’t seem lost anymore, because she has finally found herself – being a wife and a mother, but also as an artist. “The new record has a lot more soul – not in terms of the music genre but in terms of emotion”, Graziella points out. “The new songs are more eclectic, they have more depth. There’s much more to discover.” In fact on all levels.

The arrangements are much more complex than on its predecessor without seeming overburdened. At the same time, there is an incredible lot happening musically, so that every play of the album means a new revelation. “India” still is mainly about Graziella coming to terms with her difficult family situation. However, on the one hand, the 31-year-old finds perfectly chosen words, offering a great latitude for interpretation and allowing various possibilities of reading, and on the other hand, there’s an incredible power resonating consistently that in this form didn’t exist on her debut album four years ago. “I have something destructive in me indeed; a fear of being hurt, that I am investing into my music as well. Nevertheless, my own little family has given me a lot of strength in the last years, and I’ve put this strength in every single one of my new songs.”

A prime example of this would be the song “Before We’re Done”, which deals with the overcoming of fear; a motivational hymn based on self-experience, saying that giving in is not an option and insisting with childlike optimism that everything is possible. Comparably as much hope is radiated by the track “Love Is”, which in all its orchestrated fragility contains a lot of power.

At the same time, the album deals with tremendously dark moments, like in the eponymous song “India” and the first single “How Many People”. Nevertheless, “India” is not a grave record. Because in all the songs, between all the lines, you can hear a woman, who has gained strength since she shares her weaknesses openly; a woman, who has finally found her path into the world – above all, into her own world of emotion; and a woman, who doesn’t intend to leave this path prematurely, before she has accomplished all of her goals.

Everything is possible.