

Summer

interview with Dani Dimitrovska

POP SINGER FROM MACEDONIA AND COMMITTED PERSON
IN FIGHTING HIV/AIDS



DANIELA DIMITROVSKA AKA DANI FIRST APPEARED IN THE MUSICAL SCENE IN MACEDONIA IN 2000 WITH THE SONG "YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE I NEED". THE SONG WAS VERY WELL ACCEPTED BY THE PUBLIC AND ALSO FROM THE PRESS. IT WAS IMMEDIATELY CLEAR THAT THIS IS A SINGER WITH AN IMMENSE POTENTIAL AND ORIGINALITY. WITH HER SINGLE "TWO HEARTS", RELEASED IN 2005, DANI CONFIRMED THAT SHE IS THERE TO STAY. THE SONG MANAGED TO STAY ON THE MACEDONIAN TOP LISTS FOR 4 MONTHS, AND REMAIN NO1 FOR 5 WEEKS. THE VIDEO SPOT FOR THE SAME SONG BECAME ONE OF THE MOST PLAYED MACEDONIAN SONGS ON MTV-ADRIA, AND CLIMBED UP TO THE 4TH PLACE ON "TOP 10 AT 10 ADRIA GRILS".

IN SEPTEMBER 2006, DANI RELEASED THE VIDEO OF "RED RAIN" WHICH BECAME A HIT AND KEPT THE KEY POSITIONS ON THE MACEDONIAN PLAY LISTS FOR THE FOLLOWING 6 WEEKS. WITH "RED RAIN" DANI WAS THE FIRST MACEDONIAN SINGER EVER, WHICH FOUND PLACE ON MTV ADRIA'S OFFICIAL TOP 20 CHART. THIS SONG MADE DANI KNOWN NOT ONLY IN MACEDONIA BUT IN OTHER COUNTRIES OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC, PARTICULARLY SLOVENIA WHERE SHE ACHIEVED A GREAT SUCCESS.

THIS VIDEO WAS RELEASED ON THE WORLD FAMOUS MUSIC CHANNEL- MTV EUROPEAN AND SHE WAS THE FIRST MACEDONIAN MUSICIAN WHOSE VIDEO REACHED MTV EUROPEAN. DANI'S "RED RAINS" VIDEO TOOK 5TH PLACE ON MTV EUROPEAN "WORLD CHART EXPRESS".

DANI IS NOT A SINGER BUT A MOTHER AS WELL. SHE IS CONSIDERED TO BE A MODEL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE COUNTRY AS SHE PROVED THAT HER EARLY MOTHERHOOD CAN BE A REAL SOURCE OF ENERGY, NOT AN OBSTACLE, AND THAT WOMEN THAT ARE MOTHERS CAN ALSO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS SPECIFIC PROFESSION. THE KEY FACTORS FOR HER SUCCESS ARE LOVE, TALENT, HONESTY AND HUMANITY.

FOR MORE INFO YOU CAN VISIT DANI'S OFFICIAL WEB SITE:

WWW.DANI4U.COM.MK

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Q: HOW DO YOU FEEL NOW, BEING PART OF THE Y-PEER FAMILY?

A: THE FEELING IS VERY GOOD, ACTUALLY. I FEEL RELY EXCITED TO BE PART OF Y-PEER FAMILY. THIS IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE ITS AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION, CONNECTING PEOPLE, YOUNG PEOPLE, FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD. AND, AT FIRST I SEE THIS "BEING PART OF THE FAMILY" AS VERY HUMANITARIAN INVOLVEMENT. I FEEL SPECIAL AND HONORED. IT'S ALL ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE, THEIR LIVES, THEIR CHOICES. I LIKE THE POSITIVE ENERGY, THE FLOW OF IDEAS, CREATIVITY AND MOTIVATION THE YOUNG PEOPLE OWN. WORKING WITH YOUTH, ENTERTAINMENT, HAVING FUN, EDUCATE...HMMM.. DEFINITELY, YOU FEEL LIKE A PART OF SOMETHING GOOD. AND SOMETHING THAT HAS GOALS. IT'S WORTH FULL, FOR SURE.

Q: HOW DID YOU JOIN Y-PEER, AND BECAME INVOLVED IN PROMOTION OF SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH MESSAGES?

A: I'VE BEEN ALWAYS CLOSE TO THE YOUTH ENERGY. AS YOU KNOW, I HAVE CONCERTS, BIG ONE, OVERCROWDED, BUT I STILL LOVE MY MINI CONCERTS IN THE CLUBS, NIGHT BARS, WITH NO BARRIERS BETWEEN THE SCENE AND THE VISITORS, NO BODYGUARDS AND STAFFS. I WANT TO BE NEAR MY AUDIENCE, MAINLY YOUNG PEOPLE, WHO ALSO FEEL MY ENERGY AND GIVE ME FEEDBACK. PEOPLE RECOGNIZE ME BY THIS, AND I LIKE THAT. I AM ALSO VERY OPEN TO THE MEDIA, TO THE JOURNALISTS.

DANI IS PHILANTHROPIC (SHE SMILES). I AM ADDICTED TO "HAVING FUN" ALSO. THAT'S MY COMMON POINT WITH THE YOUNGSTERS. I WAS MUCH HONORED WHEN THE PROGRAMME COORDINATOR FORM THE UNFPA OFFICE-TATJANA CALLED ME AND ASKED ME TO COOPERATE AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE MISSION. I FELT NICE TO BE CHOSEN TO PROMOTE HEALTHY LIFE STILES AMONG MACEDONIAN YOUTH. I AM VERY OPEN IN SPEAKING ABOUT TOPICS OF SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH DUE TO MY UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT OF YOUNG PEOPLE, PEOPLE WHO NEED TO MAKE INFORMED CHOICES.

I AM ALSO A MOTHER, WHAT MAKES ME MATURE PERSON, WITH HIGH OPINIONS REGARDING FAMILY PLANNING, FREEDOM OF CHOICE, FAMILY VALUES...

I AM A STAR, THAT'S TRUE. I HAVE FANS, AUDIENCE, MEDIA INTEREST ABOUT EVERYTHING I DO...BUT, AT FIRST, I WILL SAY THIS AS MUCH SIMPLE AS I CAN: I AM A HUMAN!

Q: YOU'VE PARTICIPATED ON THE WORKSHOP ABOUT "HIV/AIDS, MEDIA AND POP CULTURE" IN TURKEY , 9-12 APRIL, THIS YEAR; PLEASE STATE US YOUR IMPRESSIONS; WHAT IS YOUR OPINION UPON THE TOPICS COVERED ON THE WORKSHOP?

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A: THIS WORKSHOP WAS MY FIRST STEP OF JOINING Y-PEER AND GETTING FAMILIAR TO ITS WORK. IT DEFINITELY BECAME MORE CLEAR TO ME WHAT WILL BE MY ROLE, ROLE OF FAMOUS PEOPLE IN FIGHTING HIV. MEDIA IS POWERFUL. IN MACEDONIA GREAT PERCENT OF THE POPULATION FOLLOWS THE NEWS, BUYS NEWSPAPERS ,WATCHES TV AND LISTENS RADIO. PEOPLE'S THOUGHTS ARE INFLUENTIAL. YOU GET AN INFORMATION AND YOU SHAPE YOUR BEHAVIOR. YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ESPECIALLY EXPOSED TO MEDIA MESSAGES. WE SEE HOW IDOLS CREATE NEW LIFE STYLES TO THE FANS. TEENAGERS CREATE THEIR ATTITUDES (EVEN BODIES, LOOK)BY THE POP CULTURE AND THE MEDIA ENVIRONMENT THEY FIT IN. THAT DEFINITELY SHOULD BE USED IN EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES. MESSAGES SHOULD BE INFILTRATED IN SONGS, IN INTERVIEWS, IN ARTICLES. REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE POPULATION MEDIA CENTER IN ISTANBUL ALSO SPOKE ABOUT POWER OF SOAP OPERAS, USAGE OF MEDIA IN DISSEMINATION OF HEALTH INFORMATION. THAT SOUNDED VERY IMPORTANT FOR ME, AND I THINK IT WILL WORK FOR MACEDONIA, TOO. SO, YES, I WAS IMPRESSED BY THE WORKSHOP IN ISTANBUL. I ALSO LIKE TO HIGHLIGHT THAT IN TURKEY I'VE MET AND TALKED WITH VERY INTERESTING PERSONS LIKE ALEXANDER BODIROZA, TIM THOMAS, GEORGIA ARNOLDS, VOJKAN, AND LOTS OF OTHERS. I SAW TONES OF POSITIVE ENERGY AND MOTIVATION IN THESE PEOPLE. THEY DEVOTE THEIR LIVES TO SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT: FIGHTING HIV/AIDS AND HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE. AND I'VE JOINED THE MISSION TO HELP THEM, TO HELP US, PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD.

Q: WHY IS IMPORTANT TO YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE PART OF THIS NETWORK? WHAT DO YOU THINK OF NEW GENERATIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE?

A: YOUNG PEOPLE ARE OUR FUTURE. THEY LEARN TOGETHER, THEY LEARN FROM EACH OTHER. SHARING EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE WITH YOUR PEERS IS ESSENTIAL WHEN YOU ARE YOUNG. BEING YOUNG GIVES YOU FREEDOM, POWER. YOU THINK YOU OWN THE WORLD, OR FEEL YOU OWN NOTHING. YOU FEEL STRONG AND SOMETIMES YOU FEEL POWERLESS. YOU THINK YOU KNOW AND UNDERSTAND, AND YOU MAKE CHOICES. WE NEED HEALTHY GENERATIONS. WE NEED WORLD WITHOUT AIDS. YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE POWER TO CHANGE THINGS. I SEE Y-PEER AS TOOL IN THEIR HANDS. EDUCATION, PEER EDUCATION PRECISELY, IS EFFECTIVE AND CAN INFORM INDIVIDUALS AND INFLUENCE THEIR BEHAVIOR. AND NEW GENERATIONS...HMM I DON'T KNOW...EVERY GENERATION IS DIFFERENT, BUT ALWAYS YOUNG, MOTIVATED AND DUE TO THAT VULNERABLE. MOSTLY YOUNG PEOPLE ARE TARGETED BY HIV, DRUG ABUSE, HUMAN TRAFFICKING ...NEVERTHELESS THE TREND THAT IS SET BY NEW MUSIC GENRES, FASHION CLOTHES, IDOLS AND ETC NEW GENERATIONS CAN LEARN BEST FROM THEMSELVES. WE JUST NEED TO GIVE THEM INFORMATION AND CHOICES.

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Q: YOU ARE NOW PART OF THE GLOBAL MISSION OF PREVENTING HIV/AIDS; CAN YOU TELL US WHAT ARE YOUR ACTIVITIES OF SUPPORTING THE MISSION?

A: WELL, FIRSTLY I MUST EMPHASIZE THAT UNFPA OFFICE IN MACEDONIA BEGAN WITH WORK IN JANUARY, ITS NEW UN OFFICE, "ITS STILL A BABY", AND ME AS WELL BECAUSE I'M PART OF THIS MISSION ONLY 4 MONTHS. I LOOK MY POSITION AS ROLE MODEL, AND I USE IT TO PROMOTE HEALTHY BEHAVIOR. AFTER ISTANBUL, I HOLD THE FEELINGS AND IMPRESSION FROM THE WORKSHOP AND TOLD EVERYTHING I FELT AND LEARNED THERE ON ALL INTERVIEWS, IN FRONT OF CAMERAS, ON THE RADIO IN THE NEWSPAPERS... AS GUEST IN MANY TALK SHOWS I WORE THE RED RIBBON AND, HONESTLY, I WAS SURPRISED BY THE FACT THAT MANY PEOPLE, EVEN THE JOURNALISTS (?!), YEAH, ASKED ABOUT ITS MEANING AND SYMBOLIZATION. BESIDE MEDIA EXPOSURE I ALSO PARTICIPATED ON ONE PEER EDUCATION TRAINING IN MAVROVO (MOUNTAIN IN WESTERN MACEDONIA). I WAS IN GROUP WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AND TOGETHER WITH THEM, IN THREE DAYS I'VE LEARNED MANY NEW THINGS ABOUT HIV/AIDS, STI'S, CONTRACEPTION, GENDER ISSUES, DISCRIMINATION... I AM VERY IMPRESSED FROM THE TRAINING. IT WAS VERY USEFUL FOR ME. I AM FOND OF THE METHODS OF EDUCATION. IT WAS VERY APPEALING, ALSO, TO LEARN VIA THEATER. THEATER EDUCATION IS ALSO POWERFUL TOOL AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE VERY FOND OF IT. THE TEAM BUILDING GAMES, THE ENERGIZERS ALSO IMPRESSED ME. ALL THE GUYS WERE CREATIVE, ENERGETIC AND THE GROUP WAS A PERFECT TEAM. WE EVEN HANG OUT TOGETHER AT NIGHTS CONTINUING TO TALK UPON TOPICS DISCUSSED DURING THE DAY.

I AM ALSO PROUD OF THE CONCERT WE HAD IN SHUTKA-THE BIGGEST ROMA COMMUNITY IN EUROPE. MANY YOUNGSTERS WERE SINGING WITH ME, SHOUTING "WE USE CONDOMSSSS!!!". ALSO, THEY RAPPED, DID MARVELOUS BRAKE DANCE SHOW, DID A HIP- HOP FREESTYLE SHOW, AND GOT BROCHURES,

Dani ADVICES A CRYING TEENAGE GIRL....

WE WERE SINGING AND DISCUSSING IN THE BAR IN THE HOTEL BUT IT WAS LATE, AND WE NEEDED TO BE FRESH TOMORROW, ON OUR LAST DAY FROM THE TRAINING SO WE ALL WENT TO OUR ROOMS. ON THE WAY TO MY ROOM I HEARD CRYING SO I WENT TO CHECK WHAT'S WRONG. ONE GIRL FROM THE SEMINAR, VERY CUTE, SMART BUT MOST OF THE TIME SILENT, WAS SITTING IN THE CORNER AND CRYING. I'VE APPROACHED HER AND ASKED WHAT'S THE PROBLEM. SHE SAID THAT WHETHER SHE TELLS ME OR NOT I CANT HELP HER. I JUST SAT NEXT TO HER, ON THE GROUND. WE WERE SITTING FOR A WHILE WHEN SHE STARTED TELLING ME HER STORY. I WAS SCARED THAT SOMETHING REALLY BAD HAPPENED TO THIS YOUNG FLOWER (HER NAME, ON MACEDONIAN, REMINDS ME ON ONE BEAUTIFUL FLOWER). SHE TOLD ME A STORY ABOUT HER BOYFRIEND, NOW HER EX. HE WAS AN OLDER GUY, FANCY BOY, "PLAYER", WITH LOTS OF GIRLS, FRIENDS... THEY WERE TOGETHER FOR FEW MONTHS AND THEY "DID IT". SHE FELT IT WAS WRONG, RUSHED AND UNDER INFLUENCE OF THAT SWEET COCKTAILS HE OFFERED HER SO MANY TIMES... THEY DIDN'T USE CONDOM. ONE OF THE CLASSIC TEEN STORIES. I'VE CALMED HER. WE TALKED ABOUT GUYS, GIRLS AND RELATIONSHIPS. SHE GOT HER PERIOD BUT SHE FELT STUPID OF BEING SO -NOT RESPONSIBLE-. THE GIRL REMOVED THE TEARS FROM HER FACE AND CONTINUED TALKING WITH ME. WE MIGHT SPENT AN HOUR IN THE CORNER ON THE 3RD FLOOR. I'VE HUGGED HER AND SENT HER FOR SLEEPING. SHE PROMISED THAT SHE'LL VISIT DOCTOR AND MAKE ALL CHECK UPS. WHEN SAYING GOODBYE SHE SMILED AND THANKED ME FOR THE ADVICES AND COMPANY. " UHHH THAT GUYS AND THAT HORMONES... IS IT ALWAYS LIKE THIS WHEN YOU ARE YOUNG? SHE SAID. LESSON LEARNED DANI. YEP. DREAMS NOT NIGHTMARES. THAT'S HOW I SHOULD SPEND MY TIME IN BED" SHE SMILED. I WENT TO MY ROOM. I FELT NICE FOR BEING THERE FOR SOMEONE. AND THEN I FIRST THOUGHT SERIOUSLY OF MAKING SPECIAL SONG UPON TOPICS RELATED TO HEALTH. PEOPLE LIKE MUSIC. IT HELPS THEM. IT TOUCHES THEIR HEARTS. I WANT TO HELP PEOPLE. THAT'S WHO I AM AND HOW I AM.

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ADVICES... THE EVENT WAS NAMED AS "PROTECT YOUR HEALTH, FIND OUT YOUR RIGHTS" AND I THINK IT WAS HIGHLY IMPORTANT FOR THAT COMMUNITY TO GET INFORMATION AND HAVE FUN AT THE SAME TIME. SOMETIMES FUN/ENTERTAINMENT IS THE BEST APPROACH TO MARGINALIZED GROUPS

Q: YES, DANI I TOTALLY AGREE WITH YOU, AND ME ALSO, AS YOUNG PERSON, I'D LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR ALL THE THINGS YOU'VE MADE DURING THE 4 MONTHS, WHICH IS SHORT PERIOD. WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO DO IN NEAR FUTURE?

A: THE THING THAT LATELY CAPTURES MY THOUGHTS IS THE PREPARATION OF THE SONG WHICH SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED AS MACEDONIAN NATIONAL ANTHEM OF FIGHT AGAINST HIV/AIDS. WE HAVE PREPARATIONS NOW, AND AT THIS MOMENT I CANT TELL YOU ANYTHING, JUST MAYBE GIVE LITTLE HIGHLIGHT THAT IT WILL BE REAL, EMOTIVE AND HONEST SONG WHICH WILL TOUCH MANY HEARTS AND AT THE SAME TIME WILL EDUCATE THE AUDIENCE

Q: CAN YOU TELL US THE NAME OF THE SONG, OR MAYBE BIT OF THE LYRIC?

A: HEHEH...YOUNG AND CURIOUS. SURE...THE SONG WILL BE NAMED "HERO" AND THE LYRICS...LET THEM BE SURPRISE. YOU NEED THE WHOLE IMPRESSION OF THE MELODY AND VOICE. WE ALSO PLAN TO SHOOT A VIDEO. THE SONG WILL BE A HYMN CAUSE IT COMES FROM THE HEART (DANI SINGS THE MELODY)

Q: Wow! I DIDN'T EXPECT THAT! THE MELODY IS STRONG, DEEP AND INSPIRING. I BARELY WAIT TO HEAR IT ON THE RADIO. WHERE, WHEN, HOW DO YOU PLAN TO PROMOTE THE SONG?

A: I AM GLAD THAT YOU LIKE IT. THE PROMOTION WILL OCCUR SOON, WHEN WILL HAVE READY THE FINAL STUDIO VERSION AND THE VIDEO CLIP. IT WILL BE PLAYED ON ALL STATIONS WHERE MY MUSIC IS PLAYED, MEANING THAT JOURNALISTS GREATLY WAIT FOR IT TO BE BROADCASTED ON ALL MEDIA

I ALSO PLAN TO SING IT IN LIVE, WHENEVER THE AUDIENCE WILL FEEL NEED TO HEAR IT. IN MY NIGHT BARS MINI CONCERTS, I WILL PLAY IT UNPLUGGED, ONLY GUITAR AND VOICE.

MY FUTURE ACTIVITIES DON'T STOP HERE. WITH THE BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR I PLAN TO HAVE EDUCATIONS IN SCHOOLS. I WILL VISIT SCHOOLS FROM THE RURAL AREAS, I WILL GO AND TALK TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE OUTSIDE FROM THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT,

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CAUSE I FEEL NEED TO TELL THEM SOME VERY IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR THEIR LIVES. IN MACEDONIA, AS YOU KNOW, WE STILL HAVE CONSERVATIVE, TRADITIONAL SETTINGS WHERE SEX EDUCATION IS STILL TABOO. IN THAT SETTINGS WE SEE HIGH RATE OF UNWANTED PREGNANCIES, GENDER DISCRIMINATION ETC. I SEE PEOPLE THERE, YOUNG PEOPLE, WHO DON'T FEEL FREE, DON'T FEEL YOUNG, THEY ARE LEFT WITHOUT CHOICES, WITHOUT INFORMATION...AND WE MUST SOMEHOW, CHANGE THAT. WE MUST TRY AND APPROACH THEM. VIA MEDIA, THEATRE, PEER EDUCATION, CELEBRITIES, CONCERTS...WE NEED TO TRY ALL PATHS, TO DISSEMINATE THE MESSAGES AND STAND BEHIND FUTURE HEALTHY GENERATIONS.

Q: IN THE END, WHAT WILL BE THE MESSAGE FROM DANI TO ALL YOUNG PEOPLE?

A: STAY YOUNG AND STAY HEALTHY GUYS! I AM NOT JUST SOME POPULAR SINGER TELLING YOU THIS, NOW I AM ROCK SINGER WITH RED RIBBON. TWO SYMBOLS! STRONG SYMBOLS FROM WHICH, THE FIRST ONE ASSOCIATES MUSIC, YOUTH AND ENERGY AND THE SECOND ASSOCIATES HEALTH, EDUCATION, LOVE, SUPPORT...

