

Music and more... stories & testimonials

To talk about Vollenweider's work, it is naturally quite obvious to talk about music, and we will find many interesting aspects around his uniquely distinctive and innovative sound-scapes. Vollenweider revolutionized contemporary instrumental music and became the first composer/producer gaining worldwide recognition (incl. a Grammy Award) for instrumental music. In the process more than 15-million albums were sold worldwide. But for those, who want to take a closer look to what is behind the legendary sound, there is much more to discover. Over twenty-five years Andreas Vollenweider's music has reached millions of people from all continents, nations, cultures and ages in unique and profound ways. From the pulsating complex live of the capital cities of the world to the most remote places in India, Africa, Nepal, Russia, Latin America, China etc. To reflect on this phenomenon, we only need to follow the trails, the music has already left all these years.

Vollenweider's music and its effect on people:

- Innumerable reports of how AV's music has inspired people to search their own creativity; individuals as well as groups, school classes, professional musicians, painters, filmmakers, choreographers...
- Hundreds of documentary films used AV's music, incl. legendary French adventurer and filmmaker Jacques Cousteau
- The internationally highly respected American choreographer Alvin Ailey has built an entire piece with AV's music. His company toured the world with „Caverna Magica“ for many years
- The National Ballet of Peoples Republic Of China performed a piece, choreographed around AV-music
- Filmmakers such as Robert Altman, Ridley Scott a.o. have approached AV for collaboration
- For the last 15-years "Prince" has played AV-music as the music you hear both before and after his concerts
- AV has been recognized by the international guild of audio experts as one of the pioneers in sound design
- AV's music was used in Wendy Wasserstein's Broadway play "The Heidi Chronicles", which won both, the Pulitzer Prize and the Tony Award
- International Edison Award for innovative sound, Amsterdam
- Grammy Award for the album "Down to the Moon"
- World Music Award for his work
- Nomination for the first Latin Grammy
- Vollenweider was a core artist for VH-1 in its seminal years
- TIME Magazine heralded Vollenweider as the "King of New Age", not entirely to the benefit of AV's broad view of life and the particularly diverse audience (from Classical to Jazz, Rock to World, Hip-Hop and even Rap)
- In 1997, shortly before his death, American Rapper Notorious BIG has asked AV for some of his music for his last album. For obvious philosophical reasons AV declined...

A very different side of the impact of AV's music - selected reports, how Vollenweider's music helped people through difficult times:

- Already in the early eighties, South Africa's black community adopted AV-music. During the uprising and liberation, on the historic freedom marches ten thousands of people were chanting songs of AV
- AV concert in Bloemfontein, South Africa, October 2004: 40'000 people, chanting entire AV songs, sometimes even on their own, between the songs of the band, much like it was their own folk songs (even music from latest releases)
- The song „Pace Verde“ (Green Peace) has become the anthem of the European Peace Movement
- Sarajevo and other cities in former Yugoslavia: during days of war, independent reports from groups of people, who would be listening to tapes with AV-music in their shelters, to calm their children and to keep up hope
- Same response from other regions of war; soldiers in Kuwait, Baghdad (both wars) as well as in Afghanistan
- 1987, Soldiers in Chernobyl, cleaning the site of the catastrophic accident at the nuclear power plant. Being aware, that they all are not going to survive, they were listening to AV-music in the evenings at the camps, to regain motivation and strength for the difficult work
- Innumerable reports from people engaged in the field of social work around the globe (juvenile prison for severe cases, street children, alcoholics, homeless...)
- Equally from therapists, working with different methods for; manic-depressive, autists, severely handicapped, cancer patients, people in the process of grieving From maternity wards as well as hospitals with mortally ill and dying people
- Rescue workers around the world to allow a moment of relief and comfort for the traumatized victims as well as for themselves

Just a few selected excerpts from letters or emails:

„...for almost my entire life I have suffered from severe depression. My life stood practically still (...) listening to your music was like a medicine. I took my dose of Vollenweider once or twice every day (...) no more dark days since years now...“ (Netherlands) „...your music has been an indispensable help in my battle against breast cancer! Every day it kept me going...“ (USA)

„...I lost my entire family in a car accident and frankly, if it wasn't for your music, I don't think I could have ever endured the pain...“ (USA)

„...over many years of my childhood, I have been sexually abused by my father. I could not talk to anybody and during high school my isolation became unbearable. The experience has completely occupied my thoughts and emotions. But when I have heard your music for the first time, I could begin to let loose and make room again for the beautiful things in life...“ (Germany)

„...I am a firefighter. My life has turned into a absolute nightmare, after I have witnessed a car going up in flames and I saw two children dying in this fire (...) and there was nothing I could have done, it was much too late. But still I had this feeling of guilt for many years and could not sleep at night. After I listened to Andreas' music, it all changed like as if it was washed away. I have not forgotten, but suddenly the vicious circle was broken and it felt as if I could pass on with my life again...“ (Spain)

„...after a sports accident, I became a paraplegic. My entire life fell apart and my only thoughts spun around committing suicide. I have successfully avoided anything that would bring back joy into my life. But a friend has insisted that I listened to this harp music. And to my own surprise this sound must have melted the steel belt around my heart. I became as hungry for life as I was before and I became a fairly successful writer here in Norway...“ (Norway)

„...I gave up very quickly, when I was diagnosed with cancer and only had a few month to live. I wasn't going to fight. Then I have been given your music! Already the first time I listened, it all changed. I so much wanted to live! I suddenly have realized what I was about to loose. After going to a homeopathic therapist my health has improved and now I am looking back to seven years, a gift, so precious...“ (Italy)

Letter from a unit of Russian soldiers in Chernobyl in 1986, who were sent on duty, cleaning the highly contaminated nuclear site: „...we do not speak about it, but we all know, that non of us will ever survive this nightmare. But when we return to the barracks after work, we listen to Andreas' music. It's so comforting, and it makes us feel relieved and even motivated...“

From Sarajevo, Bosnia, during the war, 1994:

".....and when we are hiding in the basement with our families, we still can hear the horrifying sounds of war, and our children are crying with fear. And we play Andreas' music, to calm ourselves and to not loose our minds....."

From Bihac, Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1993:

".....in the midst of this horrifying war, when we have lost everything, two things in our lives have become essential for us; one is to be brushing our teeth every day! It meant we have not lost our dignity and the other is Vollenweider's music, it meant that we have not lost our spirits and souls..."

Kuwait, first war in the gulf region, US soldier ,1990:

"....Before leaving to the Middle East, someone gave me a cassette, I didn't even know whose music it was. And when everything got really bad, I listened to this music. At first it seemed a little strange, it wasn't the kind of music I normally listen to. But it has grown on me and it became my remedy to mentally and emotionally survive the insanity of war..."

Baghdad, Iraq, British soldier, 2005:

"....After the first month I didn't think that I am ever gonna make it through this hell. I begun to even hate my own folks, and I hated myself. When I was at my lowest, someone played this wonderful music for me. It really helped my soul to survive..."

Research Center for Autism, France, 2001:

"....using Vollenweider's music when working with autistic children has opened a whole new chapter. This sound seems to reach right through the walls of isolation of these children. Their reaction sometimes makes us just want to sit and watch and wonder..."

Newport News, Juvenile Prison, Virginia, USA, 1998:

The teacher for art and music reports; "...my guys are very tough, hardened criminals, from rapists to murderers. Their music is Rap. But I wish you could see what happens when they listen to Andreas' music. Their whole body language changes. Rough language softens into murmurs, eyes become dreamy, and often their shoulders drop in a relief of tension. The guards smile, the teachers smile, the kids smile. At this point, they're ready to draw, and I can take over... after the class they go back to their cells, in peace..."

Ella B. S. from Columbus, Ohio, USA, 1998: The woman is suffering from the Tourette syndrome, a neuromuscular disorder, causing intense and uncontrollable body movements and sudden muscular reflexes. There is no known effective cure or relief.

"....one evening, I was studying for an exam and I put a tape with Andreas' music into the recorder and, because there was no better place to put it, I placed it on my stomach. The vibrations from the music relaxed my muscles. For the first time in my life, the spasms were gone and I had relaxed muscles! I couldn't believe it! I went to my doctor and wanted to know more about what has happened. While the tape on my stomach was playing, the monitors showed my muscle movements and my heart rate improving.....it has released me from a prison of pain and fear to be with other people.

Fedora M., Copenhagen, Denmark, 1996, psychologist, one of countless reports from therapists from all over the world, working with traumatized children or adults, using Andreas' music:

"....the distinctive peacefulness of Vollenweider's music has always a very strong effect on our patients. Even in very severe cases, the music obviously causes the patients, especially the children, to relax in a such a way that they are more open to accept us working with them..."

Taxi driver in Beijing, China, 2006, the day after AVAF played a major national TV show:

"....when I heard the sound of this music for the first time on TV, my heart started to intensely tremble and I suddenly was incredibly happy...."

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