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Mario Mantese – They call him Master M

A conversation with the man from Biel, Switzerland, who was a well-known musician before a dramatic event re-directed his life onto a completely different path. His new spiritual novel is entitled *The Taoist*.

Biel Bienne: Mr. Mantese, you refer to yourself as a spiritual teacher and a cosmic master. What do you have to say to people?

Mario Mantese: That is a difficult question. I see myself as a spiritual atheist, and as a researcher of spiritual science. Those designations you refer to indicate a distinction from my personal life. Just as a doctor has a title, my public presence is Master M. Through my words I create order within and without, and clarify what is unclear in people's lives. As a spiritual teacher I offer assistance in generating self-awareness.

*Biel Bienne: In the 1970's you were the bassist of the successful band **Heatwave**, before a knife-attack radically changed your life.*

Mario Mantese: At the peak of our success we played in New York to a sold out Madison Square Garden. But the life of a rock star was unsatisfying for me. The turning-point came when I had two heart operations in the hospital. During the second operation, which took place on the 24th and 25th of December, 1978, I fell into a month-long coma. Today, I call this my Christmas gift (laughing)!

Biel Bienne: Why?

Mario Mantese: Because I went through heaven and hell in this state, and undertook a journey to the other world. The experience that the infinite universe is within myself changed me completely. Since that experience, which felt like a thousand-year journey, I am satisfied with what I have, and with what I don't have.

Biel Bienne: You often speak about 'dis-illusion'. What do you mean by that?

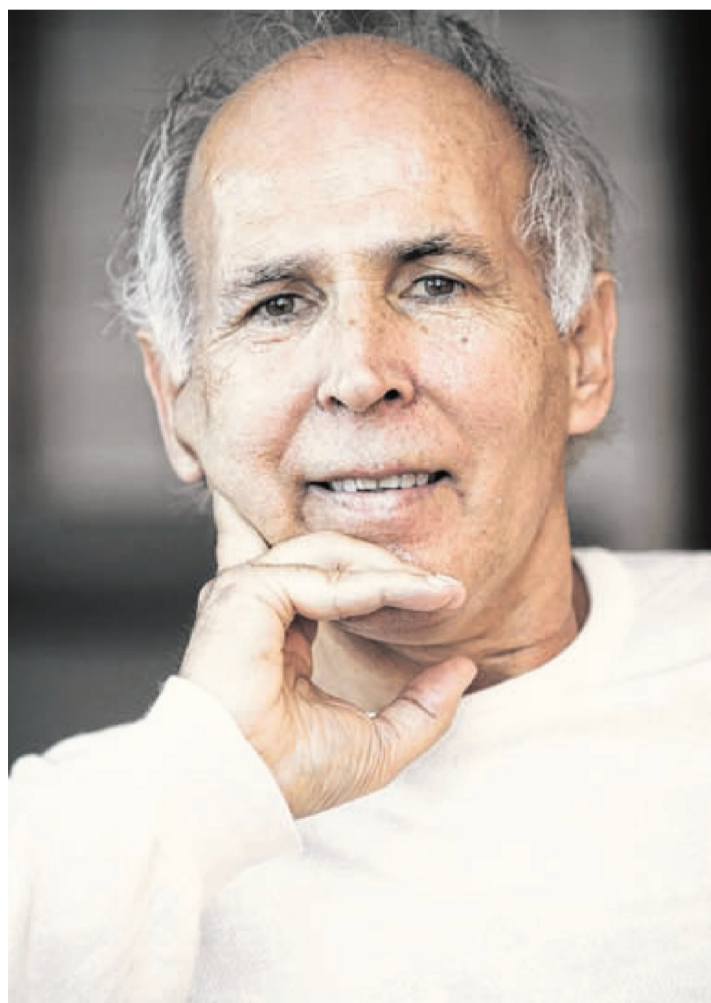
Mario Mantese: I am disillusioned when something doesn't go as I wanted it to go. But instead of getting upset, one can dis-illusion oneself and see such situations as opportunities. I set down the illusions that weigh upon me like taking off a coat. I reach the end of self-delusion. At my events I insist that people 'dis-cover' themselves and see the beauty that is so close to them. One could say that people get quite disillusioned (laughs loudly)!

Biel Bienne: How does a person live a happy life?

Mario Mantese: By not being unhappy. The concept of 'happiness' is problematic, because it is usually limited to something external. I would rather put it like this: I am content without cause and internally silent and serene. Ultimately each person assigns a meaning to his life and each has to find that meaning for himself. I support people in asking the right questions and ridding themselves of what has no meaning. The highest goal is the ending of meaningless disorder.

*Biel Bienne: Your 16th book was published recently, the novel, **The Taoist**. The story is set in ancient China. It tells of a young woman who by chance comes across an aged Taoist master living as a recluse in the forest. The master takes the woman as his pupil. What moves you to write?*

Mario Mantese: I love the investigation of myself. For me, writing is magic, because the letters and words come without me forcing anything. Behind the words is the Unnamable. As a writer I see myself as a guide and communicator of this power which flows through me. And since I am often working on several projects at the same time, and I'm at it seven days a week, I describe it this way: I am constantly pregnant (laughs)!



Mario Mantese: I love the investigation of myself.