

## Flying Circus: Political Prophets?

It's been about a year since we conducted an interview with the progressive (hard) rockers FLYING CIRCUS in "Legacy". A year marked by the corona pandemic. The gentlemen with singer Michael Dorp at their helm did not let themselves be held up by this, however, but are releasing a self-titled best-of these days, for which old songs have been re-recorded with the current line-up.

Because nothing was going on live in the last twelve months, FLYING CIRCUS decided to spend more time in the studio instead. In addition, the concept album "1968", which was released last year, gave the band a certain boost in awareness, and following newcomers wanted to familiarize themselves with songs from the group's 30-year history. Due to the Corona circumstances, however, the best-of could not be recorded together in one studio as usual. "We have band members who either come from a risk group themselves or who live with people from risk groups, so we have actually not been together in a closed room for over a year now." That is why the recordings were largely made individually in the musicians' respective home studios.

FLYING CIRCUS unite the most diverse forms of music, from Prog Rock to Psychedelic to Hard Rock and the Beatles. Influences from other cultures such as North Africa / Arabia or India are also an important element. "Our debut album already contained two or three pieces in this category," remembers Michael, "which was certainly related to our Led Zeppelin influences. Songs like the oriental-themed 'Kashmir' have left an extreme mark on us, and little by little it became clear to us that something like this doesn't happen in a vacuum, of course. Our guitarist Michael Rick spent time studying his influences starting from Jimmy Page, and then through British folk and fingerpicking guitarists you inevitably end up with someone who is unfortunately completely underrated today: the guitarist Davey Graham, who was the first to have the theory that Celtic folk and Arabic music are very closely related. Acts like Loreena McKennitt later proved that this is true again and again, of course. Especially with me and Michael Rick there also was an additional big soft spot for the Canadian rockers from The Tea Party, whose definition it is, to combine rock music with the elements mentioned. And also in this case, we looked for the influences of our influences and discovered such great acts as Dead Can Dance. When you connect supposedly separate worlds in such a way, there will always be something exciting coming out inevitably. One can of course also think of Ravi Shankar's encounter with George Harrison, and in that sense this strand of world music has been an undercurrent in rock and pop since the Beatles. And if you are a band like us, where everyone finds it exciting when scales sometimes work differently than the classic western ones, then of course you inevitably take up something like that."

The lyrics of the single 'Pride Of Creation' deal with the deeply rooted search for a scapegoat, especially in times of crisis. A reference to the pandemic situation? "The song is already over ten years old, and as a lyricist I really don't want to assume that I had that much foresight. But that's the nice thing about music, its lyrics, and art in general, that it can always be placed in a new framework, and then its meaning gets updated this way. That's why a play by Shakespeare can still mean something to us today, and if that also works with some of our songs, then of course it's a great feeling for us. So: the current references to the song have not escaped us, and that was one of the reasons for the decision to record this song specifically. "

On "1968", the lyrics already inevitably protruded into the political area. "That album had another one of these tracks with 'Memphis' which was about the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, and as the 'Black Lives Matter' movement got so much traction in 2020, the situation got a bit uncanny as well with our song feeling so current suddenly. Something like that cannot be planned, and we never consciously write a political or an emotional-personal piece, but we are certainly not an esoteric band as Yes, for example. I have nothing against escapist fantasy lyrics and enjoy it as a listener, but as a lyricist and musician, I've apparently lost interest in something like this over the years. "

The most important thing for Michael after a year of Corona is to accept the current situation as it is. "Wherever people with a high infection rate come together in closed rooms for a long time, it is more likely that infections will occur. Full stop. But that is exactly what many people seem to find difficult to accept. For me, the people who deny that Covid is dangerous are primarily people who are unable or unwilling to accept reality. Of course it's annoying that we still can't perform as

musicians, but we have to accept that at the moment. It is of no use to call for opening things up if we endanger people by doing so - also in our personal environment. I know two restaurateurs in whose venues I have played who both died as a result of a corona infection. What better symbol is there of the dilemma in which we find ourselves?"

Christian Wachter (Legacy Magazine #132, May 2021)