

Back to the Beginning

The band FLYING CIRCUS has been active for 25 years now. For the anniversary, the band, whose line-up has changed a lot over the years, looks back on the beginnings and practically reinvents them. A fascinating experiment, also and especially for long-time fans.

The new album came about for one simple reason. A reason that has affected all of us in some way in recent years. "Ultimately, that has to do with the corona virus," says Michael Dorp, singer of FLYING CIRCUS. "We decided during the first lockdown that, because of our usual way of writing songs with all five musicians in one room, it wouldn't really make sense to write completely new tracks. That's why we produced a best-of album in 2020/2021, where we re-recorded all the older tracks and adapted them to the current line-up." The response to it was very positive, which is why the band members thought that they could even go one step further. "With the 25th anniversary of our debut album approaching, the idea of rehashing the band's history for new fans, while also giving old fans a new perspective on one of our most popular albums, the re-recordings were an obvious choice." Of course, the album is also a commentary on all the changes that have taken place over the course of a quarter of a century. Michael Dorp: "The line-up of the band has changed. With drummer Ande Roderigo and keyboarder and violinist Rüdiger Blömer we have two musicians in our ranks who are massively expanding our spectrum: in the case of Rüdiger, through the violin with an instrument that we simply didn't have available before, and in the case of Ande, also with his sensationally good voice, which is a great addition to my own. When I hear the old version of the album, I hear a lot of energy and a naïve charm, and that definitely has its appeal, but with the new version of 'Seasons 25', the energy is complemented by a great deal of maturity in the arrangements. I think you're hearing a band that has a huge arsenal of resources at their disposal, but hasn't lost their enthusiasm for making music - on the contrary."

The singer and lyricist was faced with the temptation to change things. But that was already part of the DNA of this project. "When we started the project, it was clear from the start that we didn't want to resist this temptation at all. We definitely WANTED to change the tracks and bring them into the present, but of course not by hook or by crook. In fact, we listened to the old versions as if they were demos of tracks that hadn't been fully composed and still needed some refinement." While the arrangements changed, the lyrics stayed mostly the same. "I hardly changed the lyrics at all and if so, then mostly to adapt them to the new, mostly somewhat shorter lengths of the pieces and parts. Otherwise I exchanged maybe two or three words and was amazed at how imaginatively the young Michael Dorp dealt with the English language." With a mature man's gaze, the old songs were revisited. "It's always a bit like having your own children with your own tracks. Especially on the debut I always really liked all of the compositions - maybe also for nostalgic reasons. And now I really stand here in amazement in front of every single re-recording and I'm proud of what we've made of it. But if I had to single out a particular piece, it's 'Evening Solace': an instrumental in which the three instruments acoustic guitar, mandolin and violin intertwine so compellingly that a very unique flow is created that simply wasn't there on the original. "

But this project was also interesting because the band members who joined later had the chance to practically return to the beginning. "Yes, I think you could look at it in a way of them retroactively becoming founding members. Ande and Rüdiger now had the chance to make the very old numbers their own as well, and of course they have a different relationship to the tracks now compared to before the project. These are also their tracks now and no longer just those of the initial line-up." After such an experiment, basically only one question remains open. What will happen in 25 years in view of the 50th anniversary? Michael Dorp laughs briefly and explains: "Hmmm, let me do the math... Roger will then be 96, myself 78 and Michael Rick as the youngest 77 - so the two of us would still be in the best Rolling Stones farewell tour age. Then we'll do it like Mick and Keith and the two of us will hold up the FLYING CIRCUS flag and play "Seasons 50" on what will really be the very last tour."

Peter Osterried