

VOICE IN THE ATTIC

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COMING ALL THE WAY FROM GERMANY, VOICE IN THE ATTIC IS THE PERFECT BAND FOR THOSE WHO LOVE SMOOTH ROCK N' ROLL TRACKS. JAMMING WITH HIS GUITAR, YOU WOULD NOT WANT TO MISS THIS GUY.

By RJ FROMETA

Where does VOICE IN THE ATTIC's name come from?

It was inspired by Patrick McGrath's novel *Spider*. The protagonist hears voices allegedly coming from the attic of the boarding house he is staying at. Only later does the reader realize that this guy, Spider, suffers from schizophrenia. The voices are in fact created by Spider's disturbed mind and can only be heard by him. To me, this is also an image of all sorts of creative processes, such as music. You can only be an artist by way of introspection, that is, if you listen closely to what your 'inner voice' tells you. But if you wish to stay sane, the voice in the attic must enter into a fruitful dialogue with the outside world. That's one part of the explanation. Besides, I'm a singer and I own a recording studio in the attic of an old house. So I think the name fits perfectly.

How did you get started in music?

My family is a very open-minded one, so I was never forced to practise an instrument as a child. I was encouraged to discover the sounds of the objects and instruments surrounding me, though. When I was an adolescent, I started writing my own lyrics and began recording songs on tape and playing and singing in bands. The feedback was always good, so I guessed that I was a musical person. When I was in my early twenties, I studied opera at a prestigious conservatory. But I didn't want to end up merely interpreting what others had thought, felt and written. I must express my own thoughts and feelings. Also, I missed the down-to-earth feel playing rock music gave me, which is why I dropped out and focused on my own songwriting instead.

What's your method at the time of writing a song?

I once said that I'm a singing poet rather than a poetic singer, meaning there's usually a story behind a song written by me that connects to my life, my way of looking at things. One thing I remind myself of when trying a new song and it doesn't come out right is this, I tell myself: "BC, if you've got nothing to say, just shut up." So normally, I have a concept first – a line or perhaps a topic I wish to write about, something that bothers me or which has recently happened to me, etc. Once I know what the song will be about, the music comes naturally. To give you an example: "Wrong" came into existence when I was at a post office early one morning. Upon leaving, I couldn't open the bloody door. I looked up and saw this large sign saying "PULL" just in front of my face. I had been pushing at the door all the time. Leaving the building I said to myself, "What the hell is wrong with you, man?" Getting on my bike and riding back home, the melody for the chorus popped up in my head. As soon as I got home, I grabbed a guitar and a mic and recorded it. It's still the same as the one you can hear in the song.

How has the acceptance of your music been so far?

Great. I mean, we haven't got thousands of fans yet, but I believe that's just a matter of networking and distribution. VOICE IN THE ATTIC is still in its first year, and I'm the band's only permanent member at the moment. What I'm really proud of is the fact that the feedback especially from those people who have been inside the music business for many, many years is so great. I have fans among people whose music I adore, which makes me really proud. And then I'm in touch with musicians and sound engineers who've worked with legends – and they too dig my sound!

Your funniest experience in the music biz so far?

There isn't a single moment I could pick but when you're in the music industry you meet all sorts of weird people and lots of bizarre things happen. One example might be that I know people who've worked behind the scenes with people such as Motörhead's Lemmy or the AC/DC drummer. If only 10 per cent of the anecdotes they're telling me is true then this biz really is a freak show.

What plans do you have for the future?

VOICE IN THE ATTIC's second EP, "Shark Rider", will come out this year and I hope to garner a good record deal and get lots of airplay. I really believe in the new songs. Next I wish to create a permanent line-up for the band and play as many live shows as possible, both in Germany and abroad. The next step is to support a headliner. Ah yes, and there are more music videos coming soon.

Which bands or artists have had the greatest influence on your music?

Among those bands that have influenced VOICE IN THE ATTIC I would count King's X and The Tea Party or singer-songwriters like Tori Amos and Tracy Chapman. What many people say I sound like when I hit the lower register, though, is Barry White. I must concede I didn't even know who that was, so obviously he was not a direct influence. Apart from the latter comparison I have been told my voice was recognizably my own, which I think is good in terms of "unique selling point".

What has been the greatest moment as musician?

Having been accepted as an opera singer at Robert Schumann conservatory certainly was a defining moment for me. From then on, I knew I could achieve anything I wanted in terms of music. I was always self-taught and I had been practising opera for less than a year before I went to the audition. Many people thought I'd make a fool of myself because other than in talent shows on TV anybody who applies at a conservatory is able to hit the right notes and normally they've been practising for years on end. The audition is as raw as it gets: It's just you, a pianist and a panel of judges who are renowned singers. No technology, no room for cheating. When I was singled out I knew I must be a natural, and that I can trust my intuition regardless of what others may say.

Do you feel you are moving in the right direction?

Yes, absolutely. I'm particularly proud of the fact that although VOICE IN THE ATTIC's music is diverse the feedback is so good. That is to say, although I'm not 'only' writing rock songs but also singer-songwriter tunes that feature strings or even rap beats occasionally, people accept this diversity, I think, because my voice and my way of writing songs serves as a unifying element, as a kind of trademark. Life, after all, is multifaceted. I like to mirror that fact in my music.

Thank you for the interview!

My pleasure.