



Happy 25th Birthday, De-Phazz!

In 1997 the sheep Dolly was born, Roman Herzog held his famous `Ruck`-speech, Jan Ulrich was the first German to win the Tour de France, the Titanic was sinking in our cinemas, the Tamagotchi and the Teletubbies were present in every child's bedroom, princess Diana had a fatal accident and the whole world was listening to `Candle in the Wind` by Elton John nonstop for weeks. But what else was going on?

In Heidelberg a rocket named `Destination Future Jazz` was launched. In short: De-Phazz. Founded by Pit Baumgartner as an open band project, each album was to represent a journey to a different musical planet. The rocket, however, was to venture into completely different spheres: De-Phazz is now one of the most successful German bands, selling out world-wide tours, creating scores for movies as well as radio hits such as `Mambo Craze`. And with a song like `No Jive` having been played over 9 million times on Spotify, it is safe to assume that the distinct De-Phazz-Sound is simply timeless. An inseparable element of this sound are the voices of Pat Appleton and Karl Frierson, but ex-Kraan-drummer Jan Fride or Joo Kraus' trumpet are also much-loved regulars in this sound-collective.

The mixture between electronic synthesized sounds and various instruments coined the style of the band from the very beginning. Dub, Jazz, Soul and Latin alternated in sturdy kitsch and club-grooves. `We see these styles as windows through which we can discover the new and rediscover the familiar`, says Pit Baumgartner, who to this day loves to rummage through flea markets in search of old vinyl gems. Even the FAZ praised that the band ties together `the best love-music of the past fifty years`: The tragedy of Blues, the coolness of Jazz, the joy of Swing, the occultism and eroticism of African and Latin-American rhythm, the nostalgia and irony of the good old German `Schlager`.

No scandals are to be found in the 25-year history of the band, no TV's were thrown out of hotel windows. `Not even a transistor radio`, Pit Baumgartner adds with a grin. Instead, there were countless highlights: `When I received the official permission of Bert Kaempfert's daughter to use his material and was therefore able to work with a global hit like `Strangers in The Night`. That just filled me with absolute joy. `Or the unforgettable evening with the Ukrainian Big-Band in Moscow, or the concerts in collaboration with the `Stüba Philharmonie: `Witnessing a symphonic orchestra with 60 musicians suddenly play your little song just gives you goose bumps all over.`

To celebrate the 25th anniversary the sample scientist invited his favourite musicians to the `Jelly Banquet`, title of album number 17. The familiar Pat Appleton, Karl Frierson and Barbara Lahr are part of the get-together, but also new voices such as Ola Onabule, Inga Rumpf, Carol Schuler, Lily Dahab, the band Ganes and Pere Ubu-singer David Thomas.

One last question for Pit Baumgartner: When should fans best listen to his music- while dancing, while relaxing on the sofa or during a dinner party? He laughs.: `A couple of years ago a friend called me and said: I made love to your music yesterday. And I answered: Wonderful! Could you get any closer to your audience than that?