



*The Petards, 1967. L to R: Horst Ebert, Roger Waldmann, Arno Dittrich, Klaus Ebert.*

*Right: Europa promo card, 1967. Below: A Deeper Blue LP, 1967.*



and, following the example of Ginger Baker, he was the first in Germany to play with two bass drums. Klaus concentrated on composing, and we usually worked out the arrangements together. With his organizational skills, Horst took care of management in the broadest sense. He organized the performances and maintained contact with the press. His goals and visions were impressive: 'We'll be Number 1 in Germany!' And please remember, back then there were no cell phones and no internet. So everyone had their area of responsibility. It was different on stage: it wasn't about showing off or the special virtuosity of an individual. It was about the total work of art: the compactness, the sound, the stage show and our joy in playing to the audience.

"In the next few years we wrote and played more and more of our own titles," he continues. "That was the only right way to develop our group and give it its own profile. In the summer of that year [1967], we had the opportunity to take part in a preliminary round for the TV show *Talentschuppen* in Baden-Baden. Today they are calling this 'casting'; it was hot that day, we had to wait forever. Some 'talents' sang like Roy Black or Tom Jones, there were magicians, and we felt kind of out of place. The jury, consisting of people from the press, record industry and celebrities, looked a bit bored, tired and then amused when Arno came on stage and set up his huge drum kit. Finally we let it rip and the jury and the other artists were thrilled. A record producer and member of the jury, Mr Bert Varell, immediately engaged us to record an LP with him as producer. Six weeks later we spent three days with him in the well-known studio in Maschen, near Hamburg, and recorded our first long-playing record *A Deeper Blue*. Musically, the LP shows a wide range, ballads, pop, psychedelic titles, recorded 1 to 1, just as we played the titles live."

The band and their producer worked quickly and efficiently, knocking out at least twelve songs between August 15 and 17, 1967, mostly in one or two takes with minimal overdubs and embellishments. The songs—all composed by Klaus and Horst—are concise and memorable (all under three minutes long), and show an impressive range of styles. "Sun Came Out at Seven" is a smart, syncopated psychedelic rocker, "Firetree" and "I Won't Come Back" are strong Beatleseqe numbers, "If You Want to Go Away" an exotic raga rock piece, "A Deeper Blue" a soulful pop song, "Summerwind" (sung by Horst), "Roses for Kathy" and the artfully constructed "My Little Heart" are appealing romantic ballads, and "Confusion All Day" is a thrilling, Hendrix-inspired groover highlighted by Klaus' searing fuzz guitar and Arno's dynamic drumming. The Petards always seemed to hide one or two sneaky time-release capsules on their albums, too, songs that don't grab you on the first few listens but insinuate themselves more gradually. For me, on *A Deeper*

*Blue*, it's "Baby" a pensive slow burner with a great, heartfelt vocal, brittle blue-shaded guitar lines and lithe, subtle drumming.

### Chapter 3: Fan Clubs

*A Deeper Blue* was released in November on the budget label, Europa. Priced at just 5 Deutschmarks, the record flew off the shelves, quickly selling 100,000 copies and establishing the Petards as one of the top groups in the country. In another unconventional move, the band's address and phone number were printed on the back cover so people could contact Horst directly for bookings.

Writing in the third person, Horst explained the band's strategy in a press release he wrote in May 1968: "One special quality of the Petards is that they want to do everything themselves: Not only do they write their own songs, but they also manage themselves and organize many events independently. The designs for the Petards logo and the posters are of their own production, as are the record covers and all the photos of the Petards. With a lot of cunning tricks and a remote trigger, they photograph themselves. When it comes to their success, the Petards state: 'The main thing is that the audience has fun! The money will then sort itself out. We know our fans and know that they are our best capital. Every Petards fan should be a little Petard—no difference between us and our fans! That's our motto. And we do well with that!'"

Even before their national TV appearance on *Talentschuppen* and the release of the album, the band had 58 registered fan clubs in Germany. That number quickly started rising, eventually reaching 380 at its peak, some with as many as 80-100 members. This grassroots network of fan clubs, administered by Roger,

