



Herzberg Festival, July 1968.

with the audience and above all with a wild, original stage show.”

The Petards worked to develop a striking visual image onstage and in their publicity photos, which in the early years were composed, taken and developed by Horst. The band collectively helped to design all of their colorful stage clothes. “On stage we didn’t want uniform clothing like the Beatles, for example,” says Roger. “There was nothing ready to buy that we liked so we got some unusual fabrics and our tailor from the neighboring town had a lot of fun sewing us unusual shirts and jackets from them.” They also built their own psychedelic light system, reportedly the first in Germany.

“1968 was the year of the breakthrough,” says Roger. “270 live appearances (1,188 in total), ‘Golden Glass’ and ‘Pretty Liza’ appeared, television appearances on evening program 4-3-2-1, appearances on ZDF and Austrian television, the first Herzberg Festival and our first tour to the CSSR [Czechoslovak Socialist Republic].”

The Burg Herzberg Festival, which continues to this day, originated with the first gathering of the Petards fan clubs. The outdoor Burg Beat Show was organized for May 1, 1968 in the ruins of Herzberg castle about thirty kilometers from Schrecksbach. Around 1,500 people attended. However, due to bad weather the concert had to be moved to an indoor venue at

the eleventh hour. Feeling they had to make it up to their fans, the band scheduled a second Burg Herzberg Beat Show for July 7. This time the weather was on their side and the festival was a big success. The festival became an annual event, organized from 1968-71 entirely by the Petards (primarily Horst), growing in size every year and featuring some of Germany’s best progressive and underground bands. (Footage of the Petards playing there in 1968 and 1970, perched dramatically on the castle ruins, can be viewed online.)

“We launched the first Herzberg Festival in 1968, one year before Woodstock,” says Roger. “The Herzberg castle ruins, beautifully situated in the Hessian mountain forest, were the right location for this. About 4,000 visitors came. Here are some of the groups that performed: Guru Guru, Can, Frumpy, Kraftwerk, Amon Düül II (with Udo Lindenberg on drums), Klaus Doldinger, Embryo, Birth Control, Achim Reichel, Wolfgang Dauner, Wind, Ihre Kinder and many more. Particularly impressive: never before was there a festival of this kind [in Germany], the competitive thinking that was so pronounced at the time among the groups disappeared, everyone played on one sound system, the visitors were incredibly peaceful—we had no security, at night the sound system was guarded by a single roadie. As the largest hippie festival in Europe, the Herzberg Festival still takes place today in front of the gates of the castle. About 30,000 visitors come. Three years ago I saw Neil Young perform there. A lot has changed, but the spirit of the Herzberg Festival, the peaceful visitors, has remained to this day.”

Meanwhile, back in the summer of 1968, the Petards’ ascent continued. “During a visit to the Lippmann & Rau concert agency, we met Siggie Loch, who signed us to Liberty Records and produced our next records,” remembers Roger.

Siegfried “Siggie” Loch was only 27 at the time, but he had been in the business since the early sixties, racking up an impressive resume of production credits for Phillips, Fontana and Star Club Records before becoming managing director of Liberty/United Artists in Germany in 1967. Unimpressed by

most of the other German acts at the time, he described first hearing the Petards as “meeting a sunbeam in the fog.”

Chapter 5: Flittermouse

The band’s first single for Liberty was recorded on July 20 at Trixi Ton Studios in Munich. As Roger remembers, it took them just thirty minutes to complete the A-side, “Pretty Liza,” a snappy, aggressively-delivered pop number with exceptional blistering guitar work from Klaus. With that out of the way, they spent some time exploring their new playground. “For the B-side, ‘Rainbows and Butterflies,’ we needed fourteen hours,” remembers Roger. “This was simply due to the new technical possibilities in the Munich Trixi Studio. We tried various effects and sounds, in particular a ‘phaser’ that pointed us in the direction of ‘Psychedelic’ for the first time.”

Like many of the best Petards tracks, “Rainbows and Butterflies” juxtaposes contrasting sections to brilliant effect: in this case, tense, ominous verses with ghostly phased voices swirling over a circling bass/piano line countered by colorful bursts of melody on the choruses—then back again. Hidden away as a non-LP B-side, it’s one of the overlooked psychedelic jewels in their catalogue.

Released in September 1968, “Pretty Liza” was another big seller. Now they were aligned with a major record label, their music was reaching more people than ever, and they were



THE PETARDS



BURG - BEAT - SHOW — am Sonntag, dem 7. Juli 1968, von 14.00 bis 22.00 Uhr auf Schloß Herzberg, gelegen an der Bundesstraße 62 zwischen Alsfeld und Bad Hersfeld mit

EINEM GROSSEN BEAT-FESTIVAL

Publikumsentscheid, 1. Preis 500,- DM. Außerdem Engagements mit den Petards. Jede Beatgruppe kann teilnehmen. Anmeldung ist noch am Veranstaltungstag möglich. Teilnahmebedingungen durch The Petards, 3579 Schrecksbach. Bei Regen in Alsfeld - Festhalle - 2000 Sitzplätze - DM 3,50