

Recorded during the *Pet Arts* sessions, but unreleased at the time was "M.A.N.," a grooving, wah-wah guitar-driven instrumental with sweeping Mellotron and some wordless vocal harmonies. "My favorite from [the] *Pet Arts* [sessions] is 'M.A.N.,'" says Roger. "We recorded this short instrumental piece for an advertisement for the truck manufacturer M.A.N., but unfortunately it wasn't used there." ("M.A.N." was eventually released on Bear Family's Petards box set.)

Also recorded during this period was a solo album by Horst with the other Petards backing him on 14 original compositions, ranging from romantic pop to introspective singer-songwriter material. In his letter to Liberty, Horst had floated the idea of them releasing and marketing these recordings under the name Johannes. "I am convinced that that such music and the image of a 'modern troubadour' are on the rise," he wrote. Liberty passed on the idea so Horst did a limited pressing of the record himself as *Johannes: First Album*. "With the solo LP *Johannes*, Horst fulfilled a dream," reflects Roger. "A songwriter LP, inspired for example by Tim Hardin or Leonard Cohen. The LP was released in a white sleeve without any labeling in an edition of 600 copies. A four-digit amount was paid for the record on eBay."

Liberty went ahead with the release of *Pet Arts* in March 1971, but their commitment to the Petards was waning along with the band's popularity. By 1971 many of the fan clubs had dissolved as their members grew older and moved on with their lives. Although they had continued to evolve with the times and create interesting, accomplished, even challenging music, many people now regarded the Petards as passé. Although still in their late twenties (Klaus in fact was only 25), the band members were occasionally referred to as "Beatopas": "Beat Granddads." "Today that is completely unthinkable," says Roger. "There is no age limit for musicians today."

All of these factors must have weighed on Klaus's mind when he made the decision to leave at the end of 1970.

"The really big breakthrough didn't materialize for us," reflects Roger. "There were probably several reasons, such as the lack of commitment from the record company and the fact that we had to handle management, press work, etc., ourselves. So the offer for Klaus to build up the German Warner Brothers with Siggie Loch in Munich came at just the right time. Even after this step, Klaus was there for us, not on stage, but with advice and action in the studio. For us, the search for a replacement for Klaus began."

Klaus's departure also meant the end of communal living in Shrecksbach. Horst had moved to Kassel earlier in 1970, so living at the Ebert family was no longer an option for Roger, Arno and their roadie, Hansi, so they moved into a rented house in Berghheim near Cologne.

Chapter 8: Burning Rainbows

The Petards now faced an uphill struggle. Klaus had been the dominant creative force in the band from the start: lead singer, main songwriter, lead guitarist, keyboard player,



musical arranger and, more recently, producer. "Replacing Klaus was of course very difficult," remembers Roger, "guitarist, singer, composer..." Reportedly they auditioned sixty singer/guitarists before finding Bernd Wippich, who was recommended during a conversation with another band at a roadside rest stop. At 21 years old, Wippich was no "Beatopa," but he'd been playing in bands since he was 16 and, like his idol Jimi Hendrix, played left-handed. "For me, he was an exceptional guitarist," says Roger. "It was not only important to play something 'right,' but also to have the talent for the right 'feeling.'"

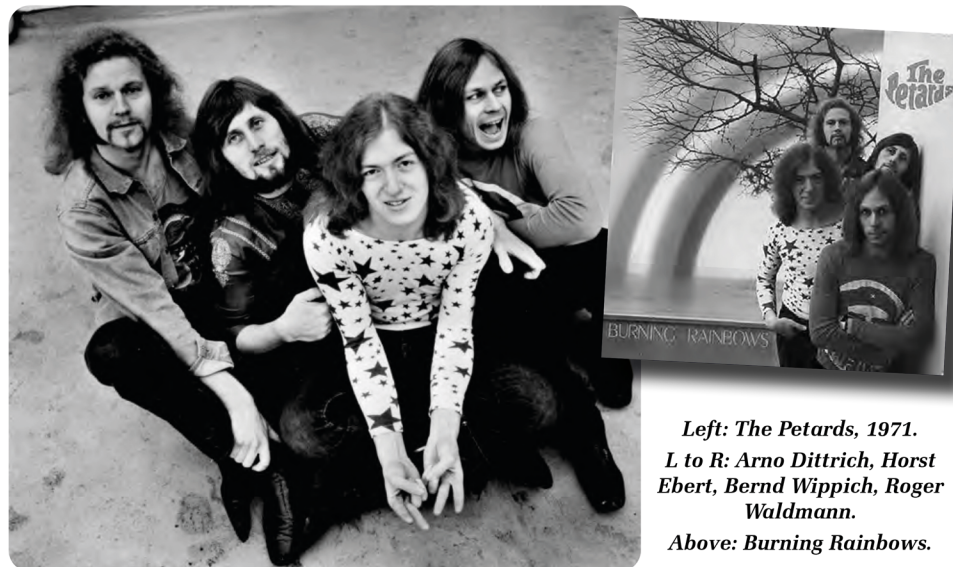
On the weekend of July 3-4, 1971, the Herzberg Festival, organized and presented by the Petards went ahead as usual. Advertised as II, Deutsches Rock Fest, the bill included Can, Xhol, Frumpy, Embryo, Guru Guru, Improved Sound Ltd, and of course the Petards—with their new singer and guitarist Bernd Wippich.

It would be the last Herzberg Festival organized by the Petards, in fact the last until 1991 when it began to be staged annually again.

The Petards were still under contract to Liberty so that autumn they returned to Dierks studios to record tracks for a new album. Klaus was there to co-produce the sessions with the band and to pitch in where needed on keyboards and backing vocals. "In October 1971 we were together with Klaus and Bernd in the Dierks Studios," remembers Roger. "Because of the uncertainties in the lineup and the continued existence of the group, Liberty was hesitant at first, but in December we finished the LP *Burning Rainbows*, an interesting mixture of Petards and Bernd Wippich."

To their disappointment, Liberty turned the record down and the tapes were shelved. It was finally released in 1981 on Bear Family. *Burning Rainbows* is a fairly solid early '70s hard rock album, but the songwriting isn't especially distinctive and Wippich's overwrought vocalizing is somewhat grating. However, there are some enjoyable moments: the harmony-driven West Coast-flavored "One More Chance to Be Blue (Burning Rainbows)," "Who Will Sell His Dreams," a Hendrix/Moody Blues hybrid with some effective Mellotron touches, and "Roses," a Humble Pie-like soul ballad. Ultimately, without Klaus Ebert's lead vocals it just doesn't sound like the Petards.

Wippich parted company with the group after only a few months (returning only for the *Burning Rainbows* sessions). "Unfortunately, we had personality differences," explains Roger. His replacement was Ray King, an Englishman whose band the Sonics had made three singles and an album for Ariola. "Ray was the 'good' guitarist from England who got stuck in Kassel with his dance band the Sonics," says Roger. "In terms of style, taste and his performance on stage, he didn't really suit us and our progressive and idiosyncratic way. Musically it was a descent for us; we lost our originality and the special thing that made us special. We were only successful with the musical *Tut* was



Left: The Petards, 1971.

L to R: Arno Dittrich, Horst Ebert, Bernd Wippich, Roger Waldmann.

Above: *Burning Rainbows*.