



*The Petards, 1966. L to R: Horst, Roger, Hans-Jürgen, Klaus.  
Left and below: Fan club promo postcards, early 1967.*

television for the first time," remember Roger. "It was an evening magazine show on ZDF called *Drehscheibe* [Turntable]. On the same day our local newspaper headlined: 'Petards today on Drehscheibe.' It was like a bomb, the streets were empty like in a [Francis] Durbridge crime thriller. We played our second single 'Right Time.' The nationwide broadcast gave us a strong boost in popularity."

In Schrecksbach, a restaurant/dancehall called Mylord was renamed the Petardsclub in their honor. "We often rehearsed there, the fair was held there and later music events and a disco," remembers Roger. "About 500 to 800 people fit into the hall." A live recording of the Petards playing there in 1967 gives us an aural snapshot of this period. Their set is an even mixture of original songs and well-chosen cover versions, including terrific renderings of "Papa's Got A Brand New Bag," the notoriously tricky "Friday on My Mind," "I'm A Believer," "Ruby Tuesday" (with Klaus note-perfect on recorder), "Matthew and Son," "Painter Man" (complete with bowed guitar—Klaus again—but with the same verse repeated three times) and "Stone Free." But it's on their own material that the Petards really shine with energetic versions their recent single releases "Baby Run, Run, Run," "She Didn't" and "Right Time" and three songs that would later appear on their debut album, "My Little Heart," "A Deeper Blue" and "Drive." The accelerated live version of "Drive" is actually superior to the slightly lethargic album version, and "A Deeper Blue" also packs a little more excitement. (The Petardsclub live recording was released in 1997 on Bear Family's box set. "When the release party for the CD box took place there in the '90s, about 500 people had to stay outside because of overcrowding," remembers Roger.)

Meanwhile in the spring of 1967, with two well-received single releases and a national

television appearance to their name, things were starting to happen. "And now it got exciting," remembers Roger. "The record company had given us a long checklist: addresses of radio stations, agencies and organizers, wholesalers, jukebox displays and lots of tips for press work, fan clubs and much more. Horst began to expand the management, Klaus composed, I took care of fan clubs and publicity. There were increasing requests for concerts, interviews, an immense rise and each of us had to make a very difficult decision: study or music!"

For three of the four Petards, the decision was easy. "In 1967, the trend-setting decision was made: for Horst, studying photography as

a future career had been exhausted. Klaus did not make the transition from studying veterinary medicine to human medicine. I was still three semesters away from my degree in economics and what then? Only Hans-Jürgen, who grew up as an orphan, decided to continue his medical studies. He later became a successful doctor, a gastrointestinal specialist."

Franz Binder stepped in on drums for a short time before leaving to join the Kettels, a band from Kassel who had a record contract with Ariola. Binder recommended another drummer, also from Kassel, to replace him: Arno Dittrich (born February 12, 1944). Arno at the time was playing with the Ducks, and had previously been with Cliff Cenneth & the Lights, drumming on their raving beat single "I Like the Shake" / "Come On Shake," which had been released on the Storz label in 1964.

"Horst and Klaus were looking for a new drummer," remembers Roger. "In Kassel they found Arno with a regionally known band, the Ducks. They invited him to Schrecksbach to audition. We only played one song with him: 'In the Midnight Hour' by Wilson Pickett. That was so amazing! For us it was the start of a professional career."

Arno was a skilled and powerful drummer and his playing took the band to a new level. Recognizing that the Petards had something special, he threw in his lot with them, quitting his day job and moving to Schrecksbach.

"Arno originally started commercial training in Hanover," says Roger. "However, the contract was canceled because Arno was mainly committed to playing the drums. We got along very well with Arno right from the start. All four of us now lived in Schrecksbach in Horst and Klaus' parents' house. Mother Ebert took over the household chores. This allowed us to focus fully on our careers. How were the tasks distributed? Arno bought a new set of drums

