

INTERVIEW KAYAK with TON SCHERPENZEEL

For Highlands Magazine, France

Questions by Marie Mesmer

1. Hello, TON SCHERPENZEEL, tell us about the particular inspiration of your new album OUT OF THIS WORLD.

Hi Marie.

Behind every new album or new music is the drive to create something new, and trying to improve ourselves. And it's great for me to be able to work with such great musicians. When you know as a composer that, when you write something, you have good performers that will do justice to the songs- and vice versa- that's a luxury. We hope that the joy and inspiration we felt while making this album will come across to the listener.

2. Could you tell us about the main theme of this album?

There is no main theme. It is a collection of the best songs I wrote in the past two years that were suitable for this band. Every song has a different theme, different inspiration and a different idea. It's not one theme, it is 15 themes. It can be love, or the lack thereof in relationships, or worries about the future of the world, or a classic myth that we like to put to music. There are no boundaries. Together they make one album.

3. Tell us about your team of musicians and how did you approach this new project together.

First, we have lead singer Bart. He has grown so much since he became a member of the band in 2017. He had a difficult task, replacing so many good vocalists that were in the band before. Then we have guitarist Marcel Singor. He is one of the most underrated guitar players I know. He never ceases to surprise me and make his solos very special. He also has a very good voice, which can be heard on three songs on the new album. Then we have bass guitarist Kristoffer Gildenlöv, who is from Sweden. He's also amazing, and does exactly what bass player should do: make a strong foundation in the song. He is fantastic on fretless bass. He also sings lead on one song. And of course drummer Hans Eijkenaar, and I am so glad he returned after 6 years of absence. Hans is one the most asked drummers in Holland, can play anything you like and brings energy and new life to the band.

Then of course there's me. I have been in the band since the beginning (1972) and so far it has been an incredible journey, that to my surprise still continues.

Due to COVID it was more difficult to organize recordings this time. But we all have home studios, and internet, so it is always possible. Guitars and bass can easily be done without me being present. I send everyone the demo's with only me playing everything, and then the other Kayak members listen to that and send back their ideas and input. Sometimes they send me several takes and I can choose which one I like best. It's only with drums and lead vocals that I need to be there in person. Make suggestions, do some coaching. That's hard doing with Zoom or e-mail. But I am glad this possibility of working online exists.

4. In your opinion, what are the differences appearing on this album OUT OF THIS WORLD compared to your previous creations?

I think you can hear that we have grown as a band since the previous album, Seventeen. That album was a new start, with new people that still had to find each other. With this line up we have played and toured together, and it sounds more tight and together than ever.. We know each other better, and have learned about each other strong points. That can only make a better album.

5. What could you say about the concept of this album; how did the idea for the theme come to you?

Ehrm.....as I said, there is no concept, no theme. If there is a theme, it would be that the music gives you a chance to escape everyday life with all its problems for 70 minutes. Out Of This World could be a launching platform to another world, an alternative universe.

We have done three concept albums in the past (the rock opera's Merlin, Nostradamus and Cleopatra). Out Of This World is a collection of songs, written by me and played and sung by Kayak. Kayak has always been a band with different inspirations, different styles that merge into one. This album is like that too: it is eclectic, and varied. I don't want to make an album where you know what to expect. There's prog rock on this album, there's ballads, epics, and pop songs...

6. Tell us about the specific arrangements for the album?

It all starts with my demo's. While I am writing I am also arranging, doing the keyboards and playing the guitar, drums and bass parts for the general idea. Then everything except my keyboards is replaced by the real musicians, they bring their personalities and life into the arrangement and the songs. Sometimes they play what I thought they would, and sometimes they surprise me with original ideas. I always give everyone the chance to come up with their own ideas.

7. What next musical material do you plan to work on and in how long?

On a personal level I am working on a solo album as the successor of 2013's The Lion's Dream, which will be released in the autumn of this year. It is quite different from Kayak, it is a mix of folk, medieval and baroque music combined with a bit of pop and prog. More acoustical instruments, no electric guitars and I am the singer. As for Kayak, there are no definite plans for another album yet because we have just finished this one!

8. A foreword for our readers?

Hello readers of Highlands Magazine, pleased to meet you all at a distance.

For those who are new to Kayak: I hope you like the new album, and if you do, why not try and listen to our other seventeen albums since 1973. There must be something there that you also like.

For those who already know Kayak and have been fans for a long time: thank you for your support throughout the years, hopefully we will meet at a concert one day!