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Lina Holzrichter

Born 1997
Singer of post-punk band "Lyschko"
from Solingen
Band formation: 2011
Role: singer, lyricist, guitarist

"Out with the Negative Stuff – and Convert It into Beauty"

CB Lina, were you politically active when you were young?

LH I was a member of Greenpeace, took part in camps and demonstrations as an environmental activist. In North Rhine-Westphalia it was mostly about coal, for example occupying all those coal mines. Aged 18 I started running a cultural association in Solingen. I have a "now-more-than-ever" kind of mindset and I used to have no time for people who don't have a similar mindset.

Have you ever perceived men as a threat?

I think I did notice that, but for a very, very long time I myself perpetuated a kind of internalised misogyny because I always had male-dominated hobbies.

Can you remember at what point you, well, to me it is a huge red flag if men are only friends with other men. Gangs of males, that is awful. I also find it terrible when men immediately cast doubt in whatever it is I am saying or when they need the need to check it first.

Do you come across a lot of guys like that in the music business?

We managed quite well and quite early on not to surround ourselves with that kind of men very much. Of course, there are always situations where you do meet a band like that at a festival.

But within our team no-one is like that. I don't like it when people give off that particular male sense of confidence. When you feel that they possess a fundamental, underlying self-assuredness that women can never have – nor other people who are the target of patriarchal violence. And I think you notice like fools in front of the others.

What was it about your chosen style of music that attracted you?

The letting out of negative emotions and turning them into something beautiful. I generally prefer to listen to sad music, rather than happy music. That appeals

Being in a band, having the time of your life

to me. In addition there is the shouting. I have always found that interesting.

What role did your body play for you?

During puberty I didn't want to be perceived as female at all. So I always wore really baggy clothes on stage.

To be one of the boys?

Not really. I absolutely didn't want to be perceived in any sexualised way.

Do you have red flags when it comes to guys?

Well, to me it is a huge red flag if men are only friends with other men. Gangs of males, that is awful. I also find it terrible when men immediately cast doubt in whatever it is I am saying or when they need the need to check it first.

As an undercurrent that was present quite early on. We started when we were children still, around 10. When we got older and I was seen as a woman, I started noticing it more. But my friend Kiki, who played guitar back then, and I always used to have fun with the fact that whenever we went backstage all the guys were trying to chat us up. We treated them like shit, made them look like fools in front of the others.

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René Janssen

about being homesick for Amsterdam," René confirms. Furthermore, 90 per cent of the songs are cover versions, of Sonny & Cher for instance, or Udo Jürgens, the Austrian schlager star. But people dive into it, they empathise. They are part of the whole and make the songs their own, René explains.

Also, adds Cees, who has been listening for a long while, the songs are not easy to sing at all. "There are a lot of long, drawn-out notes that are more influenced by operetta or opera than classic pop music," he says. "Being a pop singer is easy," René concurs, "but for the Levensliederen you have to master the long notes." That is what makes the suffering even more tangible.

Before René has to leave, he briefly considers his audience. They are young as well as old people, and he has even played gigs in front of teenagers only. "The older people know the songs, that is easy to understand. With the younger ones, I think, it is sometimes about the fact that they have always heard the songs in the background and therefore they can sing along," René says. He doesn't agree with the idea that young people are having ironic fun with the music – along the lines of "that's so trashy it's almost good" – at least he has never noticed that vibe coming off the audience. He describes the music and the mood it creates as "cuddly". Then he says goodbye and takes Cees with him.

Mummy at the DJ Desk

Thijs and I are back at the campsite, eating Vietnamese food in the restaurant as a food truck was there for the guests. We talk about Levensliederen. "I had never listened to that music, at least not voluntarily," he says. When Thijs' mother Saskia enters, she asks us about our day. We give her a report about a few songs we got to know through Cees and René. Saskia walks over to the music player, looks for the songs we named, picks a few of her own and plays them. And at times Thijs sings along, quietly and with a grin on his face. "So you do know them," I say, and he tells me that from the age of 15 he had worked behind the campsite bar, often on Klaverjassen evening. Klaverjassen is one of the best-known card games in the Netherlands, and especially the older residents of the

Beautiful Sadness

campsite came together to play a few rounds. "And then the old songs were playing, which the guests sang along to. I had to listen to them so often that I will never ever forget them." They are in his head, though involuntarily.

Thijs found that "weird" at the time, as he says now – yet these days he also understands what the music meant to people back then. "It was a way for people to feel at home." His mother, too, who keeps serving up more and more songs to try, likes this music. Born in Amsterdam, she grew up in the Nieuwmarkt quarter, knows the songs and sings along, just for herself and no-one else, wrapped up in herself and her past. Can songs be a home? Now that's another question that is worth pondering.

The Confession

Thijs is laughing. "I sometimes sang the songs for fun with friends, I do remember that now. Singing them was not at all easy." The intonation is special, quite elaborate, to the point, and as René said more like you find in opera than in pop music. "You've got to practise that," Thijs says. Some of the Levensliederen that we listen to are more complex, and those pieces awaken something even in me, even though being German I understand written Dutch rather better than spoken Dutch – especially if it is sung in this peculiar style.

I ask Thijs whether the melancholy of the music has influenced him, at least the singing about personal matters. His immediate answer: "Definitely not!" His influences were Neil

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