

With the release of their newest EP "Ruck Zuck", a companion to their album "Hau Ruck", KMFDm-Sascha Konietzko aka Kap'n K. (vocals, lyrics, bass, synths, programming & percussion), Lucia Cifarelli (vocals, lyrics, sounds), Jules Hodgson (guitar, bass, keyboards), Steve White (guitar), and Andy Selway (drums and cymbals), have intensified, revitalized and utterly revamped a collection of their already heavy and tightly knit material. Embarking on their Hau Ruck Zuck tour of North America, they have played extensively with Combichrist by their side and a variety of other acts, such as Helltrash, Snow Black, Abby Travis, and Black Japan. During the tour, Sascha Konietzko took the time to speak about the Hau Ruck Zuck tour, album "Hau Ruck" and EP "Ruck Zuck", re-issues of previous albums and a few random things that fans might want to know.

VIRUS!: So how is the tour going?

Sascha: It goes well. We started in Salt Lake City, Utah and worked our way through the Midwest up to Buffalo, NY and then started to head south. The New York show did not happen because the venue was closed by the state for tax issues and then it was moved to another venue and then that venue was closed for tax issues. Then two days before the actual show date they couldn't find another venue. So, we're out of a lot of cash right now. Sucks pretty bad.

VIRUS!: Are there any places on the tour that you have loved playing?

Sascha: Well, Chicago is always a good place. It's kind of my second home pretty much. The whole Midwest is usually very good. I can say we have not had a bad gig so far.

VIRUS!: Where are you guys living at these days?

Sascha: The whole band is in Seattle, WA.

VIRUS!: Why did you move to Seattle?

Sascha: I moved to Seattle initially, because I wanted to get away from Chicago. I basically just spun the globe and it landed on Seattle. I made sure my hand would stay above the equator.

VIRUS!: How long have you been there?

Sascha: I have been there on and off since 1993. Meanwhile I moved back to Chicago once and lived in New York for a while, but always back to Seattle.

VIRUS!: So you have a variety of opening acts on this tour. How do you decide who you are going to let tour with you? What qualities do you look for?

Sascha: Well, the main factor on this tour was as far as possible a frictionless kind of combination of bands. Combichrist works really well. We figured for a couple select dates, we'd give third party bands a chance to share the stage and get some exposure. A couple of bands we picked and a couple of bands Combichrist picked. It was a very easy kind of process really. If they suck, they get kicked off. It's really simple. This band Caustic was supposed to be on five or six shows on the tour, but at the first show in Chicago they threw flyers from the balcony on our stage while we were playing. That was a short cut to getting fired from the tour.

VIRUS!: I want to talk a bit about "Ruck Zuck", your newest EP. What remix are you most proud of on the album and why?

Sascha: I would say Jules' mix of "Mini Mini Mini" (J. Hogstorm and The Rain City Swingin' Samples mix) is my favorite. It gets me going every time. I think all the mixes are great, except for one and that is the "Real Thing" remix. It doesn't really do it for me. To me it feels like the vocal is grafted onto a track that doesn't really complement it. It could have been worked

out really easily, a half an hour more on the vocals to fit them in a little bit better, would have done the trick.

VIRUS!: How do you and Lucia decide who is going to sing what?

Sascha: It happens pretty much naturally, as we develop the tracks they get passed around and Lucia sort of gets to spend time with the tracks and some of them she gets warm with and some of them she doesn't.

VIRUS!: I haven't translated "Hau Ruck" yet. What is the song about?

Sascha: It means Heave-Ho. It's about not being whiney all the time and sort of complaining, but taking things in your own hand; not waiting for someone to make it better, make it better yourself.

VIRUS!: Why did you decide to put "WWIII" and "Ansage" on the new EP?

Sascha: Because they were there and they were nice additions to it. A nine track EP is better than a seven track EP.

VIRUS!: I was curious why Raymond Watts was not on the last album?

Sascha: That's his choice.

VIRUS!: Do you guys still communicate?

Sascha: No.

VIRUS!: November 21st you are having re-issues of "Naïve", "Money", and "Angst"?

Sascha: Everything is remastered. The first batch of three came out in September: "What Do You Know, Deutschland?", "Don't Blow Your Top", "UAIOE". They are all remastered, massively enhanced with photos, linear notes, and a biography part of KMFDm. So every album has linear notes that describe everything that went on the time of the making of that album. We did not put bonus tracks on because it is not necessary. The material is just as is and stands strong enough. The whole catalog will be released in the next few months and by the middle of next year, everything should be back out. Everything was out of print for four years and it took me a long time to reobtain the rights to my catalog. The catalog became collateral in a money lending transaction between a record label and a bank. Then the bank acquired the rights to the catalog and I had to wrestle it away from them. It was a headache and a half.

VIRUS!: So with the making of "Hau Ruck", were there any new techniques you used?

Sascha: Yes and no. The thing that was remarkably different was that I got rid of all my midi gear. I got rid of all that, because it really bugged the hell out of me and I dug up all my old gear that is pre-midi, 70s/80s keyboard stuff, that in my mind made better sounds.

It was a process of simplification that led to more intuition, more spontaneity. Other than that it was sort of the same thing. We were working in a very modular fashion. Jules has his own studio, Steve and Andy have a studio and Lucia and I have a studio, so things just get passed around, added and subtracted, until it feels and sounds right.

VIRUS!: What have you all been reading and listening to on the bus?

Sascha: I've been reading The Magus, by John Fowles. I don't listen to music because I make music everyday and I need to rest.

VIRUS!: Is there anything you'd like to tell me that you have never told another journalist?

Sascha: My toe nails currently are so long they poke holes in my socks. Good thing you said tell, not show.

VIRUS!: What are your future plans?

Sascha: We will start to make a new record. It usually takes us somewhere between 6 and 8 months to make a record. So the more we tour in the meantime, the longer it will take.

Interview & live photos:
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Keeping the intensity