

Entertainment

Paul Janz: one of rock's nice guys

the interview

by Don Teplyske

Contrary to popular opinion, there is room in the rock and roll world for nice guys. Among the glam of pouty, bad boy metal monsters and the flags of patriotic, blue collar singer/songwriters, nice guys are carving their names on the rock charts. Katrina and the Waves, Corey Hart, Paul Janz.

Paul Janz is a 32-year old Canadian who has spent most of his life in Germany. After studying some opera in Europe, and experiencing success in Germany with his band Deliverance, Janz returned to Canada in 1981.

Earlier this year Janz released a solid debut album, scored a hit single and has been nominated for a Juno award for 'most promising male vocalist'. He appears this Saturday at a Dinwoodie cabaret.

Does Janz notice a difference between European and Canadian audiences?

"Definitely", Janz answers without hesitation. "There are smaller venues in Europe that feature only original music. There is no top forty bar circuit in Europe. People come out (to shows) either to specifically see you or to see an original band."

And Canadians?

"Here, in Canada, you (as a musician) have to overcome the initial barrier created by people wanting to hear only the material they are familiar with — which I think we have done", Janz continues, speaking of his touring band.

We is a word Janz uses often when referring to himself, and his band. Is the band a democracy?

"Well, it's not me in the solo spotlight, with the band way in the background — ours is a real band," Janz explains.

But —



Paul Janz: music not the sum and substance of life.

"I do like being in control of what I am doing," Janz openly states. "It is my butt on the line, my thing. My relationship with the band is good and I listen to their musical opinions. Yet, if I feel strongly about something, then that's the way it will go."

Paul Janz's debut solo album *High Strung* has seen some success in Canada.

"It hasn't gone gold or platinum but has sold steadily — particularly in Alberta where it really broke out. I think "Go To Pieces" will be a top ten song in the States when it is released there," predicts Janz.

High Strung, as an album, is based very much in nineteen eighties technology. It is also a very percussive album, notably on the song "Suggestions of Love." Does his knowledge of synthesized keyboards and emulators influence the way Paul Janz writes a song?

"I don't think so," Janz says. "Go To Pieces" was written without any reference to the digital equipment. I write songs so that they stand up as songs — on their own — without the gimmicks".

During the course of our conversation, several other artists were mentioned, including Bryan Adams and Hall and Oates. Janz takes comparisons with other performers with a grain of salt.

"In pop music, everything sounds like something else," Janz explains. "That is part of pop music. I write songs subjectively but not in a vacuum — I have to write songs for the eighties."

Paul Janz, throughout the interview, displayed sincerity and respect towards music and other individuals. He revealed more of himself than many pop singers would.

"Music is not the sum and substance of my life — there are more important things than music," Janz honestly revealed, concluding the interview. "I see music as expression of those deeper things. I'm on leave from Simon Fraser University (third year philosophy) and after my degree, I want to study theology on the graduate level. Life is full and can be so diverse that I don't believe in limiting myself to one part of the world. Pop music is not the world and musicians who think that it is are really missing out on a lot of what life has to offer."

the album review

Paul Janz
High Strung
A&M Records

by Hans Beckers

High Strung is an impressive solo debut by experienced Canadian/German musician Paul Janz. Once a member of the popular German group Deliverance, Janz has returned to his native shores and delivered a powerful pop album. Generally, the first song that comes to mind when Janz's name is mentioned is his best seller "Go To Pieces". There is more to this album, however, than just one hit song.

What Janz makes use of most effectively (besides his very versatile voice) is his ability to create memorable musical 'hooks'. This he does by combining rhythmic drumming and highly infectious keyboard lines. This is especially so on "Suggestions of Love", "All I Have", "Cover to Cover", and "Go to Pieces" — four superior tracks on this album.

If Janz has one weakness it is his lyrics. All ten songs on this LP deal with relationships. Unfortunately he doesn't probe into this topic and come up with anything new. Lyrics such as "Right from the start/it was you right from the start/right from the start/I could tell I lost my heart..." are not too deep and somewhat cliché.

Fortunately he does a lot more right than he does wrong. As his first solo effort Janz has provided his audience with a very fine product. His songs are musically and vocally strong — keyboard and drum influenced (although two guitar solos can also be heard) — and ranging from sincerely sung ballads ("Close My Eyes", and "Right From the Start") to powerful up tempo dance songs such as "Go to Pieces" and "Cover to Cover".

As it stands, Janz has the potential of becoming a household name in Canada. A few more albums, such as this one combined with stronger lyrics and the dream could very well become a reality.



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The Album Playlist is based on Airplay — a combination of programmer preference and listeners' requests. Tune in every Sunday at 12:00 for the Alternative Countdown — the favorite albums, FP's singles and tapes.

TOP 10 ALBUMS

1. Various Artists — Shinoig! (Zulubird (Canada))
2. Wynton Marsalis — Black Codes (From The Underground) (Columbia/CBS)
3. Soul Asylum — Say What You Will... (Twin Tone (US))
4. The Fall — This Nation's Saving Grace (Beggars Banquet (UK))
5. The Lucy Show — ...Undone (A&M)
6. Oregon — Crossing (ECM/Warner Bros. (US))
7. Kate Bush — Hounds of Love (EMI)
8. Jane Siberry — The Speckless Sky (Duke Street (Canada))
9. NEQ4 — The Warmer Side Of You (A4 (Canada))
10. Various Artists — Everybody In The Whole Cell Block (Hybrid/Australi)

Singles, EP's & Tapes

1. Singing Fools — Call Me Lucky (Independent (Canada))
2. The Clash — This Is England (CBS)
3. Waterboys — Don't Bang The Drum/The Whole Of The Moon (Island/MCA)
4. Bronski Beat — Hundreds And Thousands (Forbidden Fruit/London)
5. Another Kind Of Blues (A.K.O.B.) — Explosion (Undergrowth (Canada))
6. The Jazz Butcher — The Human Jungle (Glass/The Cartel (UK))
7. The Not — Kids Survive (Not Records (US))
8. The Adult Net — Incentive And Peppermints (Beffar's Banquet/WEA)
9. Big Audio Dynamite — The Bottom Line (CBS)
10. Flesh For Lulu — Blue Sisters Swing (Hybrid (UK))