

Questions to Mr. Gary Lucas from Horacke noviny daily paper

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Thank you for answering!

For how long have you been searching your European roots?

Since I was a little boy I have been fascinated with this question, and I still haven't found all the answers so I continue to keep searching.

How do you perceive Jewish tradition and community in the Czech Republic?

I think it is still existing but certainly not as prominent since the depredations of World War II. The memorial tours in Josefov and the standing memorial of Terezin help preserve the legacy for sure for tourists Jewish and otherwise from all over the world but whether there is as active and thriving Jewish population as before seems open to question—I hope so! I would guess the numbers are greatly reduced. One waits for the Golem to spring back to life
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Do you know about the existence of Jewish quarter in Trebice which is listed on UNESCO world heritage list?

I have only read about it—I would certainly like to visit there.

What is your opinion on Czech Republic, Czechs, and their relationship towards social and cultural minorities?

Well I love the Czech Republic and consider myself connected to it obviously because my father's father was born in Bohemia and the family's name was Lichtenstein. I find Czech people incredibly warm, friendly and I love their sense of humor. I love the Czech cultural heritage of art music literature and film. Regarding their relation to cultural minorities, I think it is a pretty open and tolerant attitude, although in truth I heard some anti-Romany sentiment on my first trip here, but I have heard prejudicial remarks about various different groups in every country I have visited and played in in the world, so I don't think this is specifically a Czech trait. It's just one of the follies of humankind.

Where is your musical avantgarde philosophy heading?

To make music as free and wild as the natural elements. To amaze and astonish people and leave them with a sense of wonder.

Your life was closely connected to the the personality of Captain Beefhart. What are your feelings now, after his death?

I am incredibly sad that he has passed, I thought he would outlive us all. I think he was one of the most brilliant artists I have ever known. I never met anyone anywhere remotely like him, and I think the world is a much sadder and poorer place without him.

When and how did you first meet with Czech underground? Which of its many personalities are closest to you?

I first encountered the music of the Plastic People in the 80's and participated in a concert in NYC with local musicians plus their saxophonist Vrat Brabenec, and their friends Pavel Zajicek , Bovi and David Nemeč. Shortly afterwards I jammed with Pulnoc, also DG 307, and eventually the full Plastic People band. I love all these musicians, I think they are really special, I loved Mala. I am still close with Pavel, David, and Vrat (and Eva their beautiful bass player!).

How do you met Pavel Zajicek?

He came to NYC to perform at the Tribute to the Plastic People put together by Giorgio Gomelsky the former Yardbirds producer at The Kitchen in 1989. He later organized a tv interview with me at the Zelesna Club on an early solo tour of the Czech Republic I made in 1995, and I jammed with him and his band subsequently.

What do you think about his visual art, poetry, and music?

It's great—he's a real mystic and word and sound alchemist, very modern but with a torrid Romantic sensibility. I think DG 307 were one of the best bands ever especially when they had 2 female cellists . Very dark and psychedelic, I like this magical sensibility as it really takes audiences on a trip.

Why do you take part in the project „American Dream – Escape from Old Europe“?

To further strengthen my relation to Czech and European avant-garde music and art traditions. Plus it's fun to collaborate with Pavel and create something new under the sun with him . I aim to dazzle the public with my guitar so that when they leave the concert they know they will never hear guitar played that way again

What has America and Europe have in common and what divides them?

Well Europe still has somewhat of a café culture sensibility and intellectual tradition that manifests itself in a real curiosity about non-mainstream art. I find this pretty much lacking in America—that's a big big difference. What they have in common is unfortunately the same as most industrialized societies which is an unfortunate growing obeisance to the machinations and manipulations of huge multinational corporations resulting more and more in a cookie cutter uniformity of thought which beats down and bleeds most of the art and poetry and natural inquisitiveness out of people, under the sway of what Guy Debord called the „society of the spectacle“

What exactly will be your role in the performance „American Dream“?

I will be a cultural catalyst, a sonic rabble-rouser, and a cultural provocateur.