



The Lucky Punch



Jacek Dworock (guitar and backing vocals), Marco Knarco (guitar and vocals), Raff Sister (drums and percussions) and Ude Popa (bass and backing vocals) met me (Azchael - rockinchina.com) on Thursday evening (May 11th 2006) in their rehearsal room in the basement of a run down social worker's class building somewhere in the industrial outskirts of Munich.

They not only answered questions, but also provided me with background information about the tour and their new album, which is - after the initial China release - going to be released also in Germany in the near future: "Join our cruise"

(When I arrived only Marco and Jacek were present)

Azchael: Hi Marco, Hi Jacek. I've already heard quite a lot about your band and Patrick Fleischer of Alev has told me that... before you were playing rock'n'roll, you'd been active in a metal band, but then suddenly changed? How come?

Marco: You know, we were getting older. (smiles and laughs) Now actually it's true, all four of us had been playing in a metal band, some even in death metal. But around 1997 (Lucky Punch forming year), Jacek and me got the inspiration from Entombed and their drummers side project "The Hellcopters". We know they quite well, one of them had been just in Munich a few years ago with his girl friend for the October Fest.

And so we decided to also start a side project, which we called The Lucky Punch. And when we had some trouble with our old (metal) band, we decided to do the rock'n'roll band as our

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main project.

Jacek: It's not that we just liked metal, we all grew up under the influence of our parents' music, such as AC/DC, Rolling Stones and many more. It's a music we all like and so we play it.

Azrael: I see. Now, coming to speak of your China tour last year. How did it happen?

Marco: That was pure chance! The girlfriend (YuanChun Lin) of one of our friends' is Chinese and living in Munich. She organized the contacts to China and during one of her mails or calls the name Mai Dian was mentioned. So she contacted him and he was quite optimistic about it, so he said "Yeah, let's do it" and we said: "Hell yeah, let's do it!". So they organized the tour and everything.

Azrael: How did you prepare for the tour or did you do anything in advance?

Marco: Most of the things were arranged by YuanChun Lin, and we also send Mai Dian a package with photos, our CDs and information material. We even did a video with a short interview and one of our music clips, but I think they didn't use it.

Jacek: But one of the guys we've met told us that he'd seen us in a local TV show, so it seems that somewhere they have used the video.

Azrael: So, looking at one our tour T-Shirts I can see a lot of cities and a tight tour schedule. What is your general impression, how was Beijing? How Shanghai, how Xi'an?

Marco: Beijing was really disappointing. I mean it started quite cool. When we were at the airport in Beijing one employee of Starbucks came to us and asked us whether we are the German band "The Lucky Punch". That was cool, however he said that he wouldn't be coming to our show.

Jacek: I think he said he'd been living to far away, on the wrong side of the city.

Marco: But when we were playing in the Yu Gong Yi Shan club not too many people showed up. First, Vialka played and then for an hour or so some DJs played techno or trance and in the end only 30 or 40 people watched our show. Who is putting DJs at a rock concert? Therefore we were quite disappointed in the beginning.

Azrael: Had it been like this for the whole tour or was it an exception? Where was it the best?

Jacek: In Nanjing! That was amazing! There was real festival with several local bands and one of them was really cool...

Marco: That was a punk band, but what's the name?

Jacek: Something with... A? They had a female bassist.



Marco: Angry Jerks! That's the name, they were cool! The whole concert was successful, enough people, crazy crowds and rockon' music.

Azrael: And how about Xi'an?

Marco: Didn't they steal your purse during the concert? (looks to Jacek)

Jacek (looks down, gets slightly angry): Yes!

Marco: In Xi'an we played in the YoYo club, nice location and cool people, but you know, in most bars and clubs there is no back stage area to put all the instruments and our belongings, so we decided on a corner and stacked up our things. Then later I saw a strange guy that was looking around our staff. I told him to go away a little further and suddenly he ran out and we after him, but it was too late: he was already gone.

Jacek: And just the same day I had exchanged quite a lot of money and everything gone!

Marco: But that was the only time we had bad experience with pocket thieves in China, luckily. Coming back to our tour, I think the 5 shows after Shanghai were quite good. In Shanghai itself it was... strange. The Live Bar was ok, but The Ark... I mean it was so expensive. A beer did cost, how much?

Jacek: I think about 5 or 6 euro? And that's just too much for a local rock fan, so not too many showed up.

Marco: There had been just rich guys eating at tables and looking up in shock, "what the hell is this?". But thereafter it was better.

Jacek: Except for Chongqing, the cave. That was not so good.

Marco: But the Speak Easy Bar in Kunming was cool and the audience just crazy! You were playing a song and already all cables and monitors had been crashed in and pulled out and you had to stop after one song, just to rearrange everything. The people just showed their energy and what energy! Only Guangzhou was a disappointment again. The bar owner told us that Mai Dian had forgotten to tell him that we were coming, so there had been no preparation and no advertisement. Therefore we decided to cancel the gig and get to Hongkong for sightseeing.

Jacek: The bar owner said if we wait one day he could do some advertisement in the radio, but...

Marco: ...we were tired of the tour, it was the last gig and we only had one more day, so we said, let's give it a rest and try to see at least a little of Hongkong.

(Raph enters the room and sits down)



Azrael: You'd told me before that you are making a DVD at the moment?

Marco: Yeah! That's true! A friend of ours, Martin, accompanied us during the first week and shot film for us and in the last week we did it ourselves. Now he has the material and the DVD will be finished about in August.

Azrael: And how do you want to distribute the DVD?

Marco: Via our homepage, ourselves, concerts... we have no company for it.

(Ude enters the room)

Azrael: Coming now to a different aspect: What is your opinion about "Underground"?

Jacek: What? What is underground?

Raph: I think in China, everything is still pretty young and I can understand if many people do not know about rock or metal. Here it is the same sometimes: If people do not know the music they label it underground.

Jacek: I think they do not know too many bands in China.

Marco: But when we talked to some fans, they knew a lot! It's just that the history of rock is missing. They had no Deep Purple, no AC/DC, so many people do not know the music.

Raph: I think a lot of Chinese people have no connection to music.

Marco: But in every city there are some insiders, who know music, who know the scenes, who know the locations and who like to rock.

Jacek: They are more enthusiastic about music in China.

Raph: They are starved, because they have not too many rock bands. When 50 or 100 people like this kind of music in a city, then they will certainly come.

Marco: In Germany there are for sure big companies, such as "Visions" or "Metalhammer"...

Raph: ... but that is no underground!

Marco: Here a young band is happy if they are published with demo record of the month in the metal hammer. In the internet there are many small fan communities, that's underground.

Jacek: All underground bands in Germany have a tough life. It's not easy for them. If you're not touring with other big bands, such as "Burning Sideflames" then you get not accepted for bookings or record deals.



Big bands would be also good for us to reach more people, also those that haven't heard of your music yet and which you can fascinate.

Azrael: A last question: Did you ever have problems because of your music taste? Did you get trouble with your parents the day you decided "I'm metal" or "I'm rock"?

Marco: No.

Jacek: No.

Ude: No.

Raph: Well, at our high school it was only "Rapper against Metalheads", but otherwise... my parents were quite shocked the day I brought home my first death metal cd. But that's ok meanwhile.

Azrael: Thanks a lot for your time and the interview!

Thereafter The Lucky Punch and me dived into a longer discussion about touring in China, the organisation behind and traditions & behaviours in China.

The Lucky Punch are quite enthusiastic to return to China and do another tour, but this time with more time in advance, to organize and prepare.

Stay heavy and tuned and check out the tour diary!