

# **Two Natural Boys**

Interview by Sergio Vilar, Nucleus Magazine

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## **S.V.: How did Fading Haze begin? Was there some previous project?**

*Klaus:* Fading Haze started in early 2001, when I was kind of disillusioned with my job and my life situation, looking for a new challenge. Frank, my sister's husband, also a long term hobby musician, had some vague musical visions and handed me a CD with his demo songs. We began to jam regularly, I fished out some of my older songs and fragments, some new songs were written together, and so it all began. Fading Haze started at point zero, there was no previous project. I've only had a few jams with no further potential and a very unsatisfactory membership in an orchestra about 25 years ago.

*Frank:* I played keyboards in *STAINLESS STEEL* in the late seventies, who had a pretty good reputation in Kulmbach/Bavaria. The Songs "Really you?" and "My keyboards" are relics from these days as well as "Down the Forest", but the latter has never been played with *STAINLESS STEEL*. After that I spent my time with writing instrumentals on my own, waiting for the guitar hero.

*Klaus:* Oh, thank you. But I'm so unworthy, Ludwig van.

## **S.V.: Which bands do you recognize as a musical influence?**

*Klaus:* Bands that influenced me: Rush, Deep Purple, Y&T, Thin Lizzy, a lot of NWOBHM-Bands such as Saxon, Maiden, Vardis or Demon, Southern Rockers like Molly Hatchet or Georgia Satellites, and maybe Rose Tattoo and AC/DC. My favourite guitarists are Ritchie Blackmore, Steve Morse, Michael Schenker, Rory Gallagher, and Dave Meniketti.

*Frank:* Isn't it a little too exaggerated? Influences? It rather sounds like Pink Floyd, Dire Straits or so. Your metal influences are only subtle!

*Klaus:* Anyway, I think my riffs, licks or melodies are nevertheless influenced by these bands. Gilmour or Knopfler were never a real influence to me; I'd say it's rather the result of the "fusion". And besides: You have never heard my original version of "Driven"!

*Frank:* My favourite bands are Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple and Genesis. Musicians who influenced me? Jon Lord, Keith Emerson, Bill Evans and, of course, Ludwig van Beethoven.

**S.V.: What is the musical essence of Fading Haze?**

*Klaus:* Trying to write audible songs with fairly sensible lyrics without being a clone of any existing band.

*Frank:* Just like a catalyst: Transforming our influences into something typical of Fading Haze.

**S.V.: When and how was "NBMCG" recorded?**

*Frank:* It was recorded during winter 2001/2002 in our Circles Studio which is a hybrid MIDI/Hard-Disk-recording setup based on emagic/Logic Software. We also did all the mixing and mastering for ourselves in this studio, it took nights and weekends of work.

Not to forget all the listening sessions in the soundlab at Fraunhofer Institute where I am working to check the quality of the mixing results.

**S.V.: What does the title of the CD refer to?**

*Klaus:* It refers to the meeting of Frank (country dwelling Nature's Boy) and me (town cast City Gnome) and thus to the encounter of Seventies Art Rock, Jazz and Classical Music on the one hand and Eighties based Hard Rock, Metal and Southern Rock on the other hand.

**S.V.: Could you give some statements to each of the songs? Have you developed the lyrics based on a general concept?**

*Klaus:* First of all, there is no general concept. The first album perhaps can be summed up under "Foundations", the forthcoming second under "Ways of life"... It's mainly about trying to stay human in a complicated world.

*Frank:* Love to my wife, my daughter, my keyboards, nature, and wine, in this sequence.

*Klaus:* And these are the songs of "Nature's Boy meets City Gnome":

1. Down the Forest: A slow, atmospheric tune about true and false friendship.
2. Nature's Voice: A traditional, melodic rock track. Message: Mankind's alienation from mother nature. We have no more eyes for the genuine beauty of nature, we have lost our roots...

3. Circles: Frank's composition for his wife, and it has become our trademark number one. I interpret his lyrics the following: Life goes on in permanent circles. But how can you become the ruler of your destiny? Or what power can break these circles? I guess love has such power...

4. Really you?: Originally a poem by Dietrich Bonhoeffer who was a vicar and a member of Resistance during Hitler's pandemonic Third Reich; he died for his convictions although he was given the chance to escape. It is a desperate cry for humanity and spirituality in treacherous times, performed as a slightly atmospheric midtempo tune.

5. The Question Song: A grooving Honky Tonk-/Southern Rocker. Most decisions in life can't be made by brooding. Listen to your guts and act the way you have to act.

6. Flight of the Swans: A fragile guitar and cello ballad about the circumstances of love: Timing & mutuality, longing & hoping. Inspired by a couple of swans floating by very majestic along the river during a fishing day (and of course by a very special lady).

7. Julia: Frank's song for his daughter. Originally without any guitars, but for my niece I had to rouse myself to contribute at least some rhythm parts.

8. Miles & Miles: It describes the restless search for salvation & enlightenment. Slow and melancholic. The lyrics were written by Fred Stumpf who recently died surprisingly and who was a former fellow musician of Frank's.

9. Crazy Summer: A sad ballad about a broken relationship and a suicide. Love is not a game, and actions resulting from untrue feelings may ruin lives.

10. Driven: An epic about idealism and what is both essential and illusive in life: Love, freedom and truth. The guitar solo, like a few others too, was a first take.

11. My Keyboards: "I'm in love with my instrument because it enables me to express my sensations and moods." Just a short melodic insertion, lost in a loosened key...

12. NBMCG `01: An instrumental describing the encounter of ours and the fusion of our styles.

It gives a wink to the direction Fading Haze will be moving along in the future.

**S.V.: Was the independent release the first option you had or did you try to publish it through some label?**

*Klaus:* Finding a record company was never - and I guess it will never be - a matter of concern to Fading Haze who are conceived an independent band in the original meaning of the word. Our personal and artistic freedom simply is incompatible with

the spoon-feeding of any label. The only contract we are working towards is a distribution deal, whether nationwide, whether in countries where people like to listen to us.

**S.V.: How do you think your musical development will continue in the future?**

*Klaus:* I hope that we will always have the means and possibilities to produce heart-felt, original music away from all common drawers and categories (besides "Autumn Haze" another early suggestion for the band's name was "Original Wort"). So I think the stylistic range will always be a fusion of Prog/Rock/Epics. But if the general touch will be Pop, Rock, classical, jazzy, or whatever else... none of us can say by now.

**S.V.: What are your plans for the rest of the year?**

*Klaus:* We're going to finish the recordings for our second album by Whitsun, the artwork and the new website design will be done just before the indispensable summer break about June, and then we will start the same procedure as for the debut: Promos for press, radio stations and distributors... We'll see.

**S.V.: Finally, some message to the readers of Nucleus?**

*Klaus:* Try to believe in the beauty and usefulness of the world spirit and always be suspicious about the excesses of human wheelings & dealings. Stay humble, fair and incorruptible, and even if life seems a complete mess: Don't lose your confidence; it's all a matter of patience.

*Frank:* Music starts when you switch off your brain!