

Karthago „Love Is A Cake“



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Love Is A Cake

1976. After the release of the album *Live At The Roxy* the original band of Karthago split up. I had hoped that the live album would help weld the band together after the tour's big success. However, these hopes had been squashed. The Hudalla brothers had stopped managing the band; hence I was not the producer of this album. Everything virtually vanished into thin air. Still, my friendship with Joey continued.



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When I moved to Übach-Palenberg-Scherpenseel near the Dutch German border I decided not to give up my flat in Berlin as I wanted to go back there one day. That's how Joey took over my flat which had gained cult status in those days - just like the whole area around Sorauer Strasse, Opelner Strasse and Wrangelstrasse situated between the stations Görlitz and Schlesisches Tor.

Joey tried to continue playing with the former band members but all attempts were in vain. Their musical ideas varied just too much. Joey's idea was to focus on composing songs. He was hoping to be commercially successful at long last; something the band had always dreamed of.

So Joey cut his own path and started working on a concept album. Most of the songs were new and some originated from those days when *Rock 'n' Roll Testament* was born. The album's concept was all about love – in the broadest sense. And so Joey created tender ballads as well as ironical and self-critical songs about love affairs or being in a relationship. It was about how to deal with all the women one got to know as a rock musician.

Joey's lyrics had long been inspired by Joni Mitchell. In terms of music he felt connected with great artists like Rick Derringer, Stevie Wonder (the album *In The Key Of Life* in particular) and Edgar Winter. Joey was a real professional. So he recorded a demo tape before he finally started producing the album. The demo was recorded at Uli Weigel's studio. Uli is one of the best lyricists of Intro/Hansa which is a very successful music label and publisher in Grunewald Berlin. Joey and Uli knew each other from Joey's beginnings as a professional musician in Berlin where they had been working together

A concept album meant for Joey that he didn't want to leave nothing to chance. Every tone, every beat and every drum break was arranged like the intervals of chorus voices. He elaborated on every note except for the improvised solo in "I Will Live". It was a musical tour de force.



T. M. Fabian who wrote all the lyrics also designed the album sleeve. It showed a heart as a symbol of love with a part being bitten off. When it came to realising the album Joey couldn't come to an agreement about the budget with his record label. Consequently, they broke up and Joey had to find his own money to produce the album.

For the production of the album he chose Conny Plank's studio where *Live At The Roxy* had been mixed. Topsis Wimmer who had been responsible for mixing on the Karthago tour served as sound engineer. However, due to the fact that the band had split up Joey now had to find new musicians.

It turned out to be quite easy to find a drummer. Ringo Funk, who had been on tour with Joey before, immediately agreed to be part of the project. Then Chico de Los Reyes who is an ingenious pianist from Chile joined the band. Chico had fled Chile to Cologne while touring with his band Santiago just after Salvador Allende had been deposed in a military coup by Pinochet in 1973. For me Santiago was one of the greatest bands I've ever heard before. Their multi-voiced harmonies reminded me a lot of the Beatles, the Hollies and the Beach Boys; instrumentally speaking, they came out on top.

Unfortunately, Joey couldn't find the right bass guitar player even though he was auditioning bassists while he was already producing the album. That's why Joey had to step into the breach. And so he acted exclusively as composer, arranger, singer, guitarist and bass guitar player on *Love Is A Cake*. When the album was completed and a new record label was found it was time for Karthago to perform live again. Apart from Chico de Los Reyes and Ringo who participated in making the album Joey recruited Jochen Roth from Hanover, brother of Scorpions guitar legend Uli Roth, as second guitar player. Chuck Tschechner coming from the Mannheim scene was hired to play bass guitar.

At the end of 1977 and beginning of 1978 a tour through sixty cities in Germany, Austria and Switzerland was booked. For the first half the band had played full



houses but all of a sudden the sub-promoter of the upcoming twenty shows went bust and the rest of the dates were cancelled.

The worldwide record release did not go according to plan neither. Joey had been invited to Los Angeles by one of the major American promotion agencies, and the much longed for tour in the United States seemed near. Unfortunately the expectations of the American record company that was interested in a release and those of the German label did not meet. They could not agree on the terms, and without an album the concert management did not want to take the financial risk of a tour.

After the disaster of the tour and his broken dreams of America, Joey had reached the end of the line and went into seclusion. He had put all of his energy and his money into this project. It was not until 1979 after having founded the Joey Albrecht Band with drummer Bob Howel when he gained new optimism.

An indicator of how much people loved Joey's music was his success in Berlin. Each weekend for two years in a row the renowned Club Quasimodo was fully packed because he and his band were playing – as the Quasimodo resident band. Fans waited in line to buy a ticket - around the block up to the Theater des Westens. "Love is A Cake" remains a milestone of the more recent German rock history, in my personal view the best mainstream album being released outside the US.

The tracks:

"**Rock'n'Roll Man**" is the opener, a great catchy up-tempo tune. I am impressed by the flow and the suppleness that are already integrated in composition and arrangement but are presented totally relaxed. I see this as a sign of good preparation and confident execution. The background choirs are at their best and the polyphonic guitar solo makes a superb bow. The way Joey synchronizes the guitar parts is masterly done.

"**The Friend**" is influenced by John Lennon's "Walls and Bridges", a song about a girl that was disappointed by love and is scared to fall in love again. Again, it is



amazing how relaxed the tune gets across. The modified guitar does not push to the fore and is only used as background.

“**Rosie**” is another song about love and a wonderful story about falling in love for the first time – accompanied by acoustic guitar.

“**Remember**” is a story about breaking up. Through the echoing pains of the split-up, the guy is trying to explain to his ex-lover that he has always been honest with her and that he actually never wanted to hurt her. According to the subject the rhythm changes and the harmonies do not go as easy as before in the songs.

“**I Will Live**“ tells us how much strength love can give. In this tune the album finds back to its original ease, and even the wildest guitar parts are consequently embedded in the whole playback.

In “**Love Is a Cake**”, the actual title song, we must learn to share this “cake” of love. For the guitar sound Joey brings in the same talk box that he used since *Rock’n’Roll Testament*. The musical expression of the song seems insisting as well as inviting. If you want to be lucky in love you will have to learn to give and take.

“**Woman**” brings back up-tempo, and it is a tongue-in-cheek macho song with a superb fast and technically demanding guitar and synth solo.

“**Dreams of Love**” is driven by a fast precisely played rhythm guitar combined with percussion so the track makes the audience feel like they are floating along. This time the guitar solo is not embedded but stands out as technically very sophisticated.

“**Doing the best I Can**”: The break-up – and I am doing my best to make you come back to me. Classy guitar bridges and is another highlight for guitar and voice box. Not by chance the longest track of the album.

“**Crazy Woman**”: The vocals sound like a crazy girl makes us feel. It scratches and tingles at the same time. A wah-wah solo that is typical for Joey Albrecht.



The country blues “**Ira Lee**” sets the end of this concept album that follows a tradition of Karthago’s other productions: For the last tune of the album everyone who is in the studio and able to hit a note joins in as singer.

Accra, Ghana

December 15, 2012

Cornelius Hudalla

Producer, photographer, manager

Tracklisting:

Rock'n Roll Man 2:22

The Friend 3:49

Rosie 3:31

Remember 4:20

I Will Live 4:26

Love Is A Cake 4:54

Woman 4:09

Dreams Of Love 4:01

Doing The Best I Can 4:40

Crazy Woman 3:35

Ira Lee 2:30