

Epitaph „Rockpalast: Krautrock Legends Vol.1“



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Rockpalast was a WDR (Cologne) show produced between 1974 and 1986, and revived again in 1995. The show was produced by Peter Rüchel and directed by Christan Wagner. Peter Rüchel left in 2003, and was replaced by Peter Sommer, who also produced the 2004 *Krautrockpalast* gigs in Bonn.

These two German music shows were definitely more *Old Grey Whistle Test* than *Top of the Pops*.



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Rockpalast 1

At the time of this first appearance in 1977, the band was between albums. This was after *Outside the Law*, and after the post-USA split. Cliff had returned from his road trip to Kathmandu, and it was time to get back to work. It was the original line up again, but there was a big bust up, and Jim McGillivray left. Then came the phone call from Rockpalast, and Fritz Randow was pulled in to do drums. With just two weeks for Fritz to become the new Epitaph drummer, the band hired a studio and practised daily. While Jim had a massive drum kit, Fritz had a very small, Phil Collins style kit, because he was a great Phil Collins fan, with an 18-inch bass drum the size of Jim's stand tom.

With such a small kit, Fritz lacked Jim's wall-to-wall sound, but he played well and also fitted in well in the fluorescent green painted former school in Graue that was home to Epitaph at the time.

The Rockpalast gig was also a life-saver, because they were paid 2,500 Deutschmarks, quite a lot of money in those days.

Cliff remembers that "it was recorded in the studio with a small audience of about 30 people. Because of the cameras, the audience was about 30 to 40 metres away and it was very hard to play like that."

This appearance was part of a series that included bands like Ted Nugent, Nils Lofgren, and Tom Petty. Epitaph was the only German band included, fitted in between all the American bands.

Rockpalast 2

In 1979 Epitaph was on the Brain Tour, organised by the record company Metronom.

The tour included Uli Roth (who had split from the Scorpions to form his own band the year before), Accept, Epitaph and a couple of other bands, all on the Brain label.

One night when they were playing in Essen, the band came off stage to find Peter Rüchel from Rockpalast waiting in the wings. He was actually there to book Uli Roth, who was going on next, but Epitaph had played so well that night that Peter turned to Cliff and said "Want to do Rockpalast again?"

Just prior to the Rockpalast recording, Epitaph had been on tour for six days, and Cliff had been singing all the lead vocals. The night they arrived, Cliff had lost his voice completely. He went to the hospital, where the casualty department was full of accidents and failed suicides, so Cliff was quite embarrassed to admit he was in casualty due to voice loss. But the night before a Rockpalast gig, this was an emergency.

"They gave me something to drink, and my voice nearly held out. I made it through to almost the end of the concert before it started going again," recalls Cliff.



The line up for this second gig was Harvey Janssen on bass, Fritz Randow on drums, Heinz Glass on guitar, Michael Karch on Hammond organ, and Cliff doing vocals and lead guitar.

Return to Reality had just come out, and the band was working on the new album which was going to be *See You in Alaska*, and some of the tracks from this Rockpalast gig hadn't been recorded by then.

When I Lose Your Love has got vocals on it here, but the album just has the instrumental version – and still nobody can remember why.

Enjoy time travelling through the history of Epitaph, with what is considered by many to be the best English language rock ever made in Germany. And they're still at it today.

Alistair A. Tarwid

Tracklisting:

CD 1

EPITAPH - WDR Studio-L Köln 02.02.1977

- 01 She's Burning
- 02 Woman
- 03 Tequila Shuffle
- 04 Crossroads
- 05 Outside The Law
- 06 Fresh Air
- 07 Who Do You Love
- 08 Going To Chicago
- 09 Stop, Look And Listen

CD 2

EPITAPH - WDR Studio-L Köln 03.09.1979

- 01 Tonight
- 02 When I Lose Your Love
- 03 Return To Reality
- 04 Strangers
- 05 On The Road
- 06 Hold On
- 07 Mick's Boogie
- 08 Spread Your Wings
- 09 Going To Chiacgo