

GETTING TO KNOW... FANTOMACS

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His new album 'Harmonious Fusion' is out now

by Chris Bound: November 30, 2023



After the rousing response to his much-loved LP 'Miss You!' earlier this year, fast-rising artist and producer Joerg Peters aka Fantomacs is now back once again to deliver his vibrant new album 'Harmonious Fusion'.

Channelling more of that smooth and alluring jazz-inspired aesthetic he is known for, this new eight-track collection makes for an incredibly rich and dynamic listen. With its riveting textures, sweeping atmosphere, and stellar hooks layered throughout, 'Harmonious Fusion' continues his rise as one of the more passionate names doing the rounds right now.

So with the new album available to stream now, we sat down with him to find out more about his origins and what has been inspiring him most over the years.

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What was the first instrument you fell in love with?

First, I got a classical piano education for about six years. After this my interests further developed to Jazz & Blues / Improvisation, training of making music by ear rather than stick to music printed on sheets. I still continued playing piano while I was also learning to play organ with my two hands and the feet.

What kind of music did you love when you were younger?

When I was young, I was deeply influenced by numerous bands like Supertramp, Pink Floyd, Joe Cocker Rod Stewart, Steely Dan, Fleetwood Max and later Mezzoforte, Level 42, Al Jarreau, Anita Baker and Gloria Estefan, just to mention a few.

What was the first album you remember owning?

I think the first album I was purchasing on my own was "Dark side of the moon" from Pink Floyd, followed by "Crime of the Century" from Supertramp and "Even in the quietest moments".

What is the one song you wished you could have written yourself?

Oh, I mean there are plenty, I must admit! But, when I should point to a single song, I would choose 'Dark Flame' from Klaus Doldinger / Passport, certainly. The live version is exceptional to me.

Do you have any habits or rituals you go through when trying to write new music?

From an early age, I was drawn to the world of music. Growing up in a big city like Berlin known for its thriving music scene, I was immersed in a rich tapestry of diverse genres and styles. Influenced by the electronic music movement that emanated from Berlin, I developed a deep appreciation for experimental sounds, driving beats, and captivating melodies.

I think my teachers, most prominent Svetozar Radic, influenced me quite much in the early days. After some years of classical piano playing, I learned from him playing organ with both hands and both feet (!) at the same time. He was so enthusiastic and inspiring, doing everything himself from sheet music production with his Mac and publishing software (Ragtime) to running music schools at three different locations and being on stage as well - wow, he got so much energy (and still has it).

Armed with this inspiration, I embarked on a musical journey, honing my skills as a producer and composer. Drawing influence from electronic music pioneers like Doldinger's Passport, Mezzoforte, Four80East and Steely Dan, I began crafting my own sonic identity, blending elements of ambient & chillout, electronic music, fusion jazz, funk and rock elements into my compositions.

Who are your favourite artists you have found yourself listening to at the moment?

Actually, I have many to choose from, I guess. It's again Germany's most-famous jazz musician Klaus Doldinger, Candy Dulfer from Netherlands, Mezzoforte from Island, Steely Dan from the U.S., the Canadian electro-jazz band Four80East and Elderbrook (EDM) from the UK. Their music is so inspiring and interesting, going straight to my heart triggering deep emotions.

Jazzrock, Rock, Soul and Funk music deeply influenced my development as an artist, and I still like these genres, hear those bands and constantly expand to current bands as well. I like melting together different styles of music and combining them in a unique way with modern electronic music.

If you could open a show for anyone in the world, who would it be?

Certainly, this is my loved partner Heidi, who is fully supporting everything I do and for which I'm really overly grateful.

What do you find is the most rewarding part about being a musician?

Being creative and interacting with other musicians and artists is certainly to be mentioned at first. I like to be independent and productive in all aspects of making and producing music such as:

composing

playing different musical instruments, creating beats and sounds

mixing & mastering of music

creating cover art

engage in releasing, promotion & marketing

cooperate with other musicians on stage or in the studio

I do think this whole package of possibilities to express myself, realizing ideas, putting them into musical pieces, and finally, finding those on music stores and platforms and people worldwide listening to it - this is a truly rewarding part of being a musician.

And what is the most frustrating part?

As an independent artist and producer, it is a big challenge to establish a fanbase and continuously grow this fanbase - and this is especially true since I'm not touring around performing on stage. The internet, however, is providing some interesting opportunities and since 4 years or so, I'm growing my fanbase even on a global scale. How could this be possible with performances on stage as an indie? One major challenge though is still getting into touch with fans, building up a connection. Most of the platforms and tools are not yet made for it and quite anonymous. But - times change quickly and this drawback will (hopefully) be overcome sooner or later.

Another challenge is marketing and promotion - this is consuming a lot of time which I would love to spend for creative work. The other time consuming area is mastering, but here AI-based tools are already offering a huge benefit and speed up the process significantly providing excellent results. This, I hope, will also become a reality for music marketing and promotion sooner or later.




The biggest challenge, however, is that the revenues of the streaming platforms constantly decrease over the past years. It is nearly impossible to make a living based on this approach. The music industry has overcome its crisis but the creatives suffer more than in the old days with vinyl and CDs, I guess.

And what is the best piece of advice you have received as a musician?

My music teacher gave me the following advice that I found valuable as a kind of north star: "Be always authentic and always try your very best, grow and stay curious throughout your life".

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Fantomacs' new album 'Harmonious Fusion' is available to stream now. Check it out in the player below.


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