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A CONVERSATION WITH UTE LEMPER

What inspired you to create *Ute Lemper: Between Yesterday and Tomorrow*?

This CD is a collection of my own songs. It was created over the last 4 years. I already had several songs of my own on several previous albums, but this one just had to be a conceptual story telling from my view. It is a poetic journey through the world and through my life. Visions, events that stayed in my mind and intrigued or fascinated me, that shocked or hurt me. I turned around my own axis and life, cities and years passed by... like a movie. Close ups on to people's faces, places of poetry or doom and close ups into my own heart. This CD is a gift to myself. I did not need to record these songs as they did not necessarily fit into the tradition of my previous recordings (around 17 CDs in over 22 years). It is not chanson or theatrical material but a more contemporary, reflective and poetic voyage through the world and through time. It is groovy, intimate, jazzy and sexy.

I wrote the songs on airplanes, in New York City taxis stuck in traffic, at home at my piano, around midnight, when my kids were asleep and the phone finally stopped ringing, and in backstage dressing rooms.

How did the album come about?

We first performed these songs here in NY in a Jazz club a couple of years ago with my band. My band and I collectively arranged the songs. I have a fantastic group of 4 genius musicians with whom I work and tour for many years. (Vana Gierig on Piano/ Mark Lambert on Guitar/ Todd Turkisher on Drums and Percussion/ Don Falzone and Mo Pleasure on Bass) All of them put their craft and vision into this project.

We had a wonderful success here New York City in THE JAZZ AU BAR and I thought to document these pieces onto an album. My partner in music and life Todd Turkisher suggested to produce the tracks in his studio in Chelsea, we took more than a year to finish the recording, invited some great guest musicians to spread their wings and their colors over the album. In the meantime I had my third child and took a little break from music to just enjoy my little baby boy. Finally we mixed with Kevin Killen and mastered with Bob Ludwig. And voila..... Here is life / here is love and here is *Between Yesterday and Tomorrow*.

What is the relationship of the album cover to the songs on the CD?

The album cover is a collage of graffiti from the Berlin Wall (actually the East Side Gallery, which is still a strip of wall in the former east part of Berlin), several faces taken off my own paintings, and of course some self-portrait.

How would you describe each song?

Some songs tell the story of life and love, chapters and a never ending evolution, doors that open and doors that close only to surprise you with something new or something old, only to make you wake up or lull you into happy or painful feelings, only to continue the

story of your life. The aim and the goal is the journey, not anything material or any status. At least not for me. Every day is packed with responsibilities, challenges and chores and hopefully elements of love and definitely unconditional love for the kids.
(The Greatest Ride/ Stranger Friend/ Wings of Desire/ Here is Love/ Luna/ Blood and Feathers)

Some other songs walk through more cinematic territories. My memories about Berlin during the cold war, Berlin, the little scarred island in the middle of the East Block, Berlin with a wall separating east from west. The images of these times are so concretely frozen in my mind that it was already a poem only to be written down into music and words.
(Ghosts of Berlin)

Then the nuclear bombs blowing off in the desert of Nevada in the 50s and 60s. First in the air, spreading rays of light and death, then underground.... The names given to these bombs were unbelievably strange and ironic.
(Nevada)

A journey through the Middle East. I took an old Arabic poem written by the Islamic teacher Ibn al Arabi in the 12th century about the highest purpose of Religion and faith being love. This religion of love should raise above all the other dogma. I connected this symbolic and political vision with the voyage of those who are beyond all religions and nationalistic identities, the Nomads. The song NOMAD including the Arabic prolog and the Hebrew epilog is one of the centerpieces of the album. It is a poem for humanity and tolerance.

September Mourn brings us back to day of September 11th here in NY. It was the first day after the summer break for my kids to be back in school. It started out as a joyful and exciting normal day only to be turned into the most painful and horrible, shocking day in this beloved city of lights and diversity. And again the horror was so visual in the bright blue sky of that morning..... and the abuse in our souls and our minds was deep, that one could not speak about the pain and later the fear.. Years have gone by..... grass has grown over the scars.... Yet, the song still shivers and resonates in our subconscious.

Where is the album available?

Amazon.com- (European label)

It will be available on itunes.com and amazon.com (digitally) and other music internet stores in the Fall.

WWW.UTELEMPER.COM

What are you planning to do now that the album is completed?

I will continue to perform in Europe through 2008, and already have European concerts booked well into 2009. A United States Tour is planned for 2009 in major market cities.

My U.S. performances in 2008 are all in New York City and include:

The Spiegeltent, August 24, 2008

Carnegie Hall, October 4, 2008

Joes Pub on Nov, 14,15, 21, 22, 28, and 29. I will perform 2 shows each night.