

An Interview with a label manager (a.k.a. music loving man who has gone through all the fame and hard work thing, which every section of the music business contains...well, perhaps except the fame part):

I: Heiko, tell us something about Dandyland in general.

Heiko: Dandyland is a label for all sorts of music I am somehow personally related to. Similar to life relationships may change and so does the label. The profile and artist roster may change from time to time. Slow but steadily...

I: Sounds good, personal relationship is a good base for nearly everything in life. Tell us something about your way into this business? You already had some other experiences, didn't you?

Heiko: Like others, too, I have done all sorts of jobs around music: Stage hand, roadie, driving the van, studio, pa, producing, managing...and last but not least performing. I played in a band for a couple of years. For those who like to look, listen and get afraid of me ;-), search the web for 44XES and feel free to comment (The Editor: Be warned!).

I: So, how did you start with Dandyland? It's not your main business.

Heiko: I run a PR & Promotion company. The label Dandyland was founded to release Monkeeman who had been rejected by bigger labels. I liked his first album quite a lot. Unfortunately Monkeeman left after his first album got released due to several reasons. That's life...

I: So everything began, more or less, to release one single artist. How did it develop from that singular occurrence to the point where you are now?

Heiko: The first artist left but other artists signed to the label. The contact was made via the internet and some active searching. I got introduced to Toby Field by a music wizard named Glenn Williams. Thanks Glenn!

I: Ok, that was pretty short. What about the details?

Heiko: Well, we changed from indie power pop tunes with Monkeeman in the beginning to artists like Steve Westaway, Louis Philippe and Roger Tarry. Please do not ask me why... Kind of changing moods, the weather, a ride on my bicycle or market analysis ;-), telling me to sign them. I am sorry, I really cannot remember.

The beginning was by chance, somehow similar to that: "Somebody called". Toby Field has been sending in a beautiful CD of an artist called "Roger Tarry" I had a listen to. A few weeks later I got myself on a plane and me and my girlfriend found ourselves meeting and chatting the night away with new found friends in Bristol and Weymouth. Believe me, live can be easy sometimes...I haven't had a clue where this would lead us. But I am happy how it is today. By the way: "She" is important for decisions to be made. So it is not only my taste, very often it is her, telling me if she likes things I listen to.

I: So Dandyland's roster is like the roster of many small labels based on the personal taste of the label owner (and of course the taste of his girlfriend, too). I think we agree both, that this is not the worst thing to give great, but still unknown and non-mainstream artists, a chance to raise their profile.

So, you never followed a conceptual outline or a label philosophy? You know it's modern to have a philosophy for every business today?

Heiko: Looked at in that light, no. And I never cared too much about what's modern or what other people do. These days I am facing the fact that my taste of music changes a bit more towards some kind of mellow or darker tunes. I would not call it depression or sadness that would be too strong, but I am not heading for "BubbleGum - Pop" that much anymore, even if some of these hooklines are really brilliant. There has to be "something" in the tracks or albums I release. Featuring an artist as a label results in little changes of the label, release by release, too. Bit by bit and artist by artist. Every new artist brings in his style and his type of music and changes the roster a little. It is a kind of thin line you are walking on as a label trying to keep your identity. Call it a concept or result of a market analysis and clever thinking, whatever. At the end of the day the roster of the label reflects the music I like to a specific time of my life...

I: So what are your plans for the future?

Heiko: We are heading for millions of sold CD or tracks on the web, fame and wealth. I gonna get myself a Mercedes Benz (Janis Joplin) and a f..... Jumbo jet (AC/DC). What else do you expect today of a label manager. To be honest: There is no bigger idea or master plan behind it all. It is more like many tiny little ideas, some trying, some mistakes and another trying again to work out your own way.

As long as you do not loose your head or too much money, I think that this way cold work quite well as a kind of strategy in life...To cut the whole story short:

"The future is unwritten!" (Joe Strummer)

I: Heiko, many thanks for the interview, it was nice to talk with you. I wish you and your friends all the best for the future. And please call me when you get your Jumbo jet. Always remember the people who helped you on your stairway to heaven :).