

DIE ÄRZTE

Bela B. (drums, vocals)

Farin Urlaub (guitar, vocals)

Rodrigo González (bass, guitar, piano, vocals)

Die Ärzte is a three-piece band from Berlin, who got together in 1982 (the exact same year when punk rock was struggling to survive in Germany) and immediately had no success whatsoever. At least their live performances in those early years were famous and notorious for the sheer chaos in which they usually ended. The band was either unable to end their songs properly (having forgotten the lyrics, music or both) or they were rolling about on stage laughing their heads off about their own jokes – with the audience remaining partly amused, but mostly rather mystified.

Even though their musical skills did actually improve in the course of time, **Die Ärzte** mainly got into trouble with the German censorship authorities because of their rather idiosyncratic humour (alongside plenty other scandals). Eventually, this got them the dubious title of being the “band most often put on the index in Germany“ – at least during the 1980s.

When they had reached what they thought was the zenith of their career, in 1987, **Die Ärzte** decided to split up. This is how they were first sorely missed and eventually even – involuntarily – became punk-rock legends. Their farewell album and their farewell tour, which lasted three months, went really good, gooder, goodest. Even more so, their triple live album "Nach uns die Sintflut" (après moi, le déluge), which they released shortly after their break-up, totally unintentionally sold better than any of their previous long players, which, admittedly, was not a major feat. The live VHS which came along with the triple album stayed in the German video charts for the following eight years – which is either proof of the unequalled live qualities of the band or goes to show that there was hardly any other band that actually released live VHS tapes.

During the very long and very boring summer of 1993, guitar player Farin Urlaub eventually capitulated in view of the constantly growing piles of fan mails he was receiving. He and drummer Bela B. hired Rod – a guitarist (and, yes!, a friend) to play the bass and then they recorded their comeback album “Die Bestie in Menschengestalt” (the beast in human shape) – not knowing that obviously very many people had been waiting for exactly this to happen.

In the year 1994 alone **Die Ärzte** had five different albums in the German charts, played more than a hundred gigs and sold a big stack of tickets for these shows (quite a lot of tickets, actually).

With their “Schrei nach Liebe” (cry for love) the band released an outspokenly political song with a much tougher rock sound and took many, many hearts by storm with the way they addressed the German Nazi problem and the way they called Nazis by their right name: “Arschloch!” (asshole!).

Two more albums followed, one of which exclusively dealt with all kinds of hair.

Gene Simmons himself invited **Die Ärzte** in December 1996 to play as special guests for KISS at their shows in Germany and Switzerland. **Die Ärzte** played in six sold-out stadiums and proved to more than 100,000 die-hard KISS fans that there really were only three

people in this band. The two bands got on so well together that they played further gigs together in spring 1997 – the two bands also co-headlined the famous festival “Rock am Ring” with an audience of 80,000. This is very likely the most rain-soaked Open Air venue in all of Germany, though it has to be said that the sun did come out during the Ärzte set, which made everyone feel good though it gravely impaired the light show.

The band (we’re talking of **Die Ärzte**, not KISS) then released one more live album and two studio albums, one of which bore the memorable title “Runter mit den Spendierhosen, Unsichtbarer!” (Stop feeling so generous, Invisible Man!).

Two years later, **Die Ärzte** made another one of their dreams come true and played three shows in Japan – performing in front of two paying guests. Since then, Eastern Asia counts as another one of the band’s strongholds.

In 2002, the band was the third German act ever to play an MTV-Unplugged show. They recorded a six-hour session in a school auditorium, accompanied by an entire school orchestra and choir. It has to be admitted, though, that the result – CD and DVD “Rock’n’Roll Realschule” – was a bit of a fake as the school was not actually a secondary school (Realschule) but a German grammar school (Gymnasium). But in spite of this flaw MTV decided nonetheless to play nothing but this acoustic set for an entire year, a situation which Die Ärzte had to apologise for later to the global community of musicians.

In the autumn of 2003, the double album “Geräusch” (noise) was released, and in the consecutive year a double live DVD followed – and yet (or maybe because of this?) **Die Ärzte** stubbornly remained a trio.

New Years Eve of 2006 was celebrated by **Die Ärzte** with 45,000 fans – an unforgettable open-air party in the sold-out football stadium of Cologne. (Yes, it was freezing! And no, this time they did not release a live DVD.)

2007 saw the release of their album “Jazz ist anders” (Jazz is something else), which was delivered in pizza boxes. The first single release, “Junge” (boy) was almost played as often in the wireless as other songs. In the meantime, the most memorable verses of this ironic song on parent-child conflicts have become part of the German idiomatic language and are very frequently quoted – at least in band circles. The triple-A-side single “HimmelblauPerfektBreit” (skyblueperfectstoned) is equally worthy of notice – it goes without saying that this came with a triple video and an elaborately aged band.

The album “auch” (also) from 2012 offered no less than thirty-two videos – two per track. The ensuing tour, in 2013, was recorded and released as DVD and album (surprise!). “Die Nacht der Dämonen” (the night of the demons) is an impressive document to prove why **Die Ärzte** are sometimes described as “**Die beste Band der Welt**” – and it isn’t always meant as a joke.

The band then took their leave for a six-year-long recess with a handful of spectacular “Ärztivals“. This creative sabbatical was only interrupted in 2016 by a short performance at a small festival in the garden of the Lohmeyer family, where they once more called Nazis by their right name.

And now ...