

TIM VANTOL

BURNING DESIRES

„I'm a simple man“, says Tim Vantol. How would he know? „Because I'm neither the best musician nor the best songwriter on the planet. There are a million people on earth who can play guitar or control their voice way better than I do. But really it's like with abstract paintings: You can always find somebody who says: ‚I could have done that.‘ Yeah – but they didn't!“

This pretty much sums up the attitude Tim Vantol has been known to stand for – and which is all but abstract. For years, the Amsterdam-born rock troubadour has been wowing an ever-increasing audience with the sort of music that makes you want to grab a motorcycle, throw away the helmet and then drive at a speed that makes you feel alive for once. There are lots of „roads“ and „homes“ in his songs, but really they're all about the excitement of the distance inbetween. If you feel you have to hang on to something you might as well look to Tim's voice which is sturdy and trustworthy in the same way your favourite sun-warmed towel is after a swim in a cool mountain lake.

If you ask Tim Vantol what his new record „Burning Desires“ is about, he's bound to tell you a story that starts with moving house and ends with a near-fatal crisis on an alpine mountaintop. The story goes like this: When the singer recently took stock of all his earthly belongings he found it could be pretty liberating to do away with a lot of the stuff you feel you have to accumulate but really don't. „It's fun to sell things and just own less bullshit“ is the way he puts it. This new disposition went along with a new-found wanderlust that didn't take Vantol to the flatlands of his Dutch home but rather into the German Alps. On tour, he has already found out that there are few things in life more liberating than taking a trip through the mountains and letting all that green, white and blue colour your soul. Plus: In theory, the remoteness also informs your songwriting.

Then it got a little bit too remote. You can probably put it down to a lack of experience, but on one excursion Tim and a companion suddenly found themselves trapped on a steep mountainside, involuntarily watching the night falling in. Professional mountaineers probably wouldn't have gone for T-shirts and short pants to begin with, but even they would have favoured a makeshift camp between the rocks as opposed to a hazardous climb down in the pitch-dark. In the end it was one night of shivering and tooth-rattling Vantol can laugh about now, but in the light of day he has to admit: „If that had happened two weeks closer to autumn I might not be alive now to tell the tale.“



Respect for the craggy side of nature is one thing that came out of that episode, the other being a changed perspective on life as a whole. „Sometimes you have to take a step back in order to realize what you really have“, says Tim Vantol. This is true for deceptively unassuming things like the European passport that allows you to travel the world while at the same time others have a hard time finding a safe haven from civil war. It's also true for the sort of lifestyle that deviates from your parents' in most every way and that doesn't



look at the security of an office job, a sensible car and a semi-detached house as something to be desired. And it is certainly true for a life on the road that the singer knows way better than, say, a safe route back down into the valley.

„I’m restless – but I’m satisfied“ is a prominent line on „Burning Desires“, a record that doesn’t only talk about open horizons and its appropriate yearnings but also about the dirt under your boots as you’re trying to get there. As with every Tim Vantol album, before the mix of rugged songwriting power and flannel-clad rock’n’roll, it finds the delicate balance between love of freedom and the clear-eyed self-awareness the singer prizes in a grown-up life. But while a line like „Follow your heart/ Wherever it goes/ It’ll be alright /It’ll be fine“ seems to suggest he has arrived at some sort of inner equilibrium, there are still miles to go. „Not to sound like a total hippie“, he says, „but like a lot of things in life following your heart effectively boils down to: If you don’t try it, you won’t find out. And to me, trying is already some sort of victory.“

If there’s something to be taken away from that idea, it’s that the passionate willingness to try and try again is paramount to what this collection of songs stands for. „Burning Desires“ might be polite enough not to immediately scare your pets to death, but at the same time it’s a straightforward reminder of its author’s sincerity. For technical detail: The album itself and its lead single „Till The End“ were produced by Adam Grahn (of Royal Republic) in the city of Malmö, and the shared vocals on the title track are courteously by Ingo Knollmann of Germany’s punk’n’roll stalwarts Donots.

Back to the abstract painting parable from the beginning: Sometimes he feels like he cannot understand what people take away from his songs or them being performed, a humbled Tim Vantol says. At the end of the day, they are very much about himself. „You can put a soap box into an empty room and call it art“, he muses. „I don’t get it, but a lot of people do. It means something to them. Maybe that’s the idea of being creative and putting yourself out there. You don’t have to be the greatest artist in the world, but in the end, it’s your story. And you are the best person to tell it.“

Now that’s a worthwhile thought for a supposedly simple man.

www.timvantol.com - www.facebook.com/timvantol - www.instagram.com/timvantol - www.youtube.com/user/timvantolty

General requests: info@timvantol.com