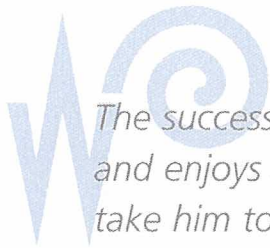


«Das Glück findet immer
in Sekunden statt»



„Happiness always happens in a few seconds“



The successful German singer and actor, Herbert Grönemeyer, lives in London and enjoys staying at the Widder Hotel when in Zurich. His travels not only take him to holding concerts in Switzerland but also to Africa and the fight against poverty.



You are one of the regular guests of the Widder Hotel. What do you like about it?

Herbert Grönemeyer: The hospitality. It is very apparent, open and gracious. And the Widder is a splendid hotel! I like the association of old and new. You feel as though someone... I don't know... perhaps, that someone has made a dream come true? There is a great deal of love here

Do you like Zurich?

Herbert Grönemeyer: Yes! I have come to know Zurich very well over the years and I'm not just a tourist here anymore. The Swiss have an enormous ease about them, a great deal of calm and self-irony. In Germany there is a great respect for the Swiss with regard to their education and politeness. And there is also a humour that lurks behind the scenes and which you become familiar with over time.

You were born under the sign of Aries („Widder“ in German, ed.). Do you have an affinity with it or do you think it is a lot of nonsense?

Herbert Grönemeyer: I come from a very mathematical family. My father was an engineer and my brother is a doctor. So we tend to be a scientific bunch. My father always said that astrology is rubbish. But in 1983 I got to know an astrologer on a TV

programme, who said to me: „Next year you will be very successful, and you will always find success in Berlin and Vienna“. In 1983 I was still completely unsuccessful! It was not going well in the theatre and my record company even dropped me. A year later I made the record „Bochum“ (with the song „Männer“, which was a worldwide success, ed.). And when I play in Berlin and Vienna, it has been unbelievable so far. We held the biggest concert ever staged in Berlin in front of over 100,000 people. And in Vienna we played at the Prater Stadium to a crowd of more than 50,000 people, and in front of the town hall. We had to close the whole city to do this.

Do you like being an Aries?

Herbert Grönemeyer: What I like about astrology, which psychology cannot tell you, is that it can predict when it may be a bad time for you to do something, whereas psychology always seeks to make you try to find the good in yourself no matter what. Astrology helps you to be self-critical at times without reaching a crisis. I like the idea that each person is an individual and is something quite special based on particular mathematical calculations to do with that person. The Aries is impetuous, straightforward, motivational, cheerful and sometimes a bit rough of course – as well as being powerful. Astrology is not really that simple, but if I can relate these statements to the Widder Hotel then that is o.k.

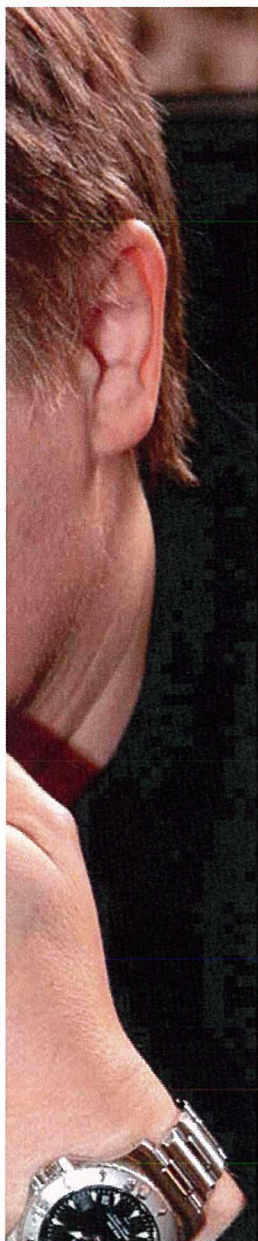
You have experienced and achieved a great deal. What is important to you today? What do you think about?

Herbert Grönemeyer: To come back to Aries once more – they like to be busy and are fast and dynamic. With age perhaps you learn not to let humility overwhelm you but to allow it to slow you down. Things go as well and as intensively even when you put the brakes on a bit. That is vital, and also to grasp what is really important in life – friendships, family and enjoying the moment. The capacity to live in the moment is important. Life passes by and this remains. Happiness always happens in seconds, split seconds. I had a very fun-loving father, and I am lucky to have inherited some of this. And I also try to pass this on to my children – to embrace life and to enjoy the little moments. That is about it and there is not much else to it.

Has becoming older helped you?

Herbert Grönemeyer: Yes, sure. Oh yes. I view it as positive. It is a wonderful organic development. An old tree has its very own quality, its very own dignity and its own power. A young tree may be lighter green and slimmer and has more tender roots. I have no problem with age. My father taught me that. He just kept going and then he died. I always thought that was wonderful. Your children grow up by your side and you can protect them as long as you are there, and then one day they leave and then it is your turn to go.

Continued on page 11



As we are talking, the WEF (World Economic Forum) is taking place in Davos. Would you be happy to go there and say what you have to say? And if so, what would that be?

Herbert Grönemeyer: I would say – we are working on a campaign to make the G8 countries keep their promise to halve world poverty by 2015. The next G8 summit takes place in Scotland in summer 2005. Many performers around the world are committed to the project, from Brad Pitt to Bono, from U2 to Bob Geldof. We want to remind the G8 countries of their promise so that they cannot wriggle out of it.

How did you become involved with this?

Herbert Grönemeyer: In Germany I took part in the campaign „All Together for Africa“. I have also travelled to Africa and have been to Rwanda, Tanzania and the Congo to drum up support for this action.

And what do you get out of it?

Herbert Grönemeyer: That is a wonderful story! I have a desire to experience easier humanity and interaction between people. It is easy to become lost in your own troubles if you want. On the other hand, when you are involved with Africa you experience an unspoiled openness that we no longer have here. Suddenly you experience another way of being – people who look at others differently, laugh and relate to you differently! That shocks you in a positive way. We were with an old lady who had just had an operation for cataracts. She had lost six children in the genocide in Rwanda and lived in a mud hut. She sat down on a stool and sang us a song. And we stood there like fools, we westerners all dressed in khaki. We were blinded by our own inability to accept something like this in a relaxed way and to simply respond to it. Not that the people there laugh all the time. But they can nevertheless take what life offers. And we are just the opposite – we need ever increasing excitement, or we only find life perfect when success comes our way or our vanity is satisfied. We are often no longer in a position to accept something simple and enjoy it. On the other hand, the circumstances in Africa were also shocking – we were in a church in Rwanda where 5,000 people had been murdered in one day. We had the sense that those 5,000 were all still there.

Are you able to switch between these worlds?

Herbert Grönemeyer: I was very nervous about going back there. The experience of Africa has a direct effect on you, but it also takes away your fear. And you return home with a real sense of melancholy, not only because you are so affected by the terrible state of affairs but also by the joy of life and humanity.

Do you like travelling?

Herbert Grönemeyer: Yes, but I also enjoy being at home in London. I am a home-lover and I like sitting at home watching the world go by from my window.



Herbert Grönemeyer

Der Sänger und Schauspieler Herbert Grönemeyer ist mit über zehn Millionen verkauften CDs einer der erfolgreichsten deutschen Rockstars. Und einer der vielseitigsten: Er war musikalischer Leiter des Schauspielhauses Bochum. 1984 gelang ihm mit dem Song «Männer» und der Platte «Bochum» ein Hit und damit der grosse Durchbruch. Sein jüngster Erfolg war die CD «Mensch» (2002). In Zürich hat er seine ersten Konzerte in den Achtziger Jahren im Volkshaus gespielt. Heute füllt Herbert Grönemeyer Fussballstadien.

Herbert Grönemeyer

With sales of over ten million CDs, the singer and actor, Herbert Grönemeyer, is one of the most successful German rock stars, and one of the most versatile – he was musical director of the Bochum Schauspielhaus. In 1984 he had a hit with the song „Männer“ and the album „Bochum“ and this was his big breakthrough. His latest success was the „Mensch“ album (2002). He played his first concerts in Zurich at the Volkshaus in the 1980s. Nowadays Herbert Grönemeyer fills football stadiums to capacity.