

## DATEBOOK

### Herbert Gronemeyer tries his luck in the U.S.

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#### WHAT'S ALL THIS Herbert Gronemeyer (SPK Records) \*\*\*

In his native Germany, Herbert Gronemeyer is a big success. In the U.S., however, he's not well known. Gronemeyer is attempting to translate his success to the U.S. but only time will tell.

"What's All This" is Gronemeyer's first all-English LP. It contains nine Gronemeyer originals and a tenth track, "Alcohol," co-written by band members Gaggy Mrozeck and **Norbert Hamm**. The English lyrics were written by Peter Hammill, the English progressive rock veteran who began his career with Van Der Graaf Generator.

"What's All This" serves as a collection of Gronemeyer's best songs from his three best-selling German LPs. Gronemeyer's first release, "Bochum" sold nearly two million copies, the most popular recording by a native rock artist in Germany. His second release, "Sprunge (Jumps)" approached the double platinum mark. And his third release, "OE", No. 1 in Germany for 14 weeks, went double platinum in half a year.

#### Clutter and Questions

The album opens with the title track, "What's All This," a catchy song filled with vivid images of clutter and questions. Gronemeyer has a keen eye for detail - nothing seems to escape his gaze. He transforms these images into complete scenarios emphasized by the intensity in his voice, capturing and preserving the moment.

"Full Moon," with its guitar solos and drums pounding, works on a rock 'n' roll level. Gronemeyer's pleas to the moon, in a last attempt at love, are captured in such lyrics as "full moon, shine down your light on me/full moon, make me her lunacy." He also cries out with passion in "Airplanes In My Head" heightened through the song's soulful chorus "give me my heart back now/It's half broken anyway/give me my heart back now/I beg you to go away."

A metaphor-enriched description of man's addiction to drink is strongly perceived in the track entitled "Alcohol." The images are highlighted through such lyrics as "alcohol is an ambulance, a fighting ship/alcohol gives the hand that shakes a steady grip/ alcohol is the scorpion in a lucky dip/alcohol, alcohol."

"White Arrogance" deals with racism, in particular the South African system of apartheid. The song, not overly political, is basic with its point of view in the lyrics "all men are equal/but the whites are somehow better/their lives down in the mud/we too, are to blame." Also, effective is the affectionate song to his hometown entitled "Bochum." "You don't like wearing make-up/ you're an honest place/where the human race/isn't always in competition. . ." explains Gronemeyer.

There's a nice development and structure in the lyrics through which Gronemeyer expresses his thoughts. And the many textures in his voice are refreshing.

Gronemeyer speaks the universal language of music in such a way that one can't help but listen.

PHOTO; Herbert Gronemeyer: a big success in West Germany.

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