

Extrablatt # 5  
Oct. 2019  
free

# The Flying Revolverblatt

*The Mystery and Madness of Old-fashioned R'n'R*

**KING  
KHAN**

**Family Affairs**  
The Maharajah Of Soul is a busy man. Currently on tour with The Incredible Shrines, he's running a bunch of different projects apart from that, including Louder Than Death, The King Khan Experience, and his own label Khannibalism - but his daughters are his pride and joy. The main thing is that everything is a family affair, he told Ulli Revolver.

**TFRB:** You're starting to tour now and meet the Shrines in Kassel before to practice a little bit. How do ya manage anyway with the band when everyone's all over the shop?

**KK:** The Shrines have always been like a family, but meanwhile everyone has babies, they're at least ten children now around 5 or 6, so most of 'em are busy now with their kids. It's not so easy.

**TFRB:** How about new Shrines stuff? Is there something in the pipeline?

**KK:** It usually takes 5 years before we make an album. It's difficult to come together. I mean Simon is livin' in Miami, two members in France, the rest is in Kassel and Cologne. But we have about 9 or 10 songs. Don't worry about the Shrines. I hope we have recorded it next year. Merge Records still wants to do it, so it will work.

**TFRB:** Louder Than Dead is going on for many years now. Aren't some of the songs you have on the In The Red-EP a few years old now?

**KK:** Oh yeah, some of 'em are really old, from 2005. What happened is: I was teaching Saba Lou how to write a song when she was 5 or 6 years old by using numbers. You could choose two numbers like 1 or 7, that's your verse, and then you have a chorus with other numbers, like painting by numbers, but as song-writing. She wrote the 1st song basically. It's called "Broken Heart", and she hopefully hadn't a broken heart already when she was 5. It's really important for me to teach my children this stuff and let them completely create their own stuff and not guide them in everything. It's much better when they do it on their own instead of copying something. I've sent the song to Erin from The Spits, and he loved it and recorded music on top of it. That was the 1st LTD song that is on the EP. Later on, when Saba Lou was 15 she put out her debut album "Planet Enigma", and Erin joined in one song. That's all really cool collaborations inside the family and basically the music I'm involved in is part of a big family. I don't do stuff just to make money, and I don't do stuff with people I don't love. And I don't wanna do stuff with people I don't like. These family relations are really important to me. The Black Lips, for example, have seen my children in the last 15 years more than my mother did. I'm really proud of that Rock'n'Roll family. I'm proud that R'n'R fed my children and made my belly big.

**TFRB:** The opposite thing could have been that they'd say 'my dad is completely crazy and I want to do something completely different'.

**KK:** Oh yeah, that's also around. It happened that Saba Lou was on the internet and ordered a book about how to join the Bundeswehr. That's the biggest rebellion she could ever do. I told Jared from the Black Lips, who told her she should definitely do that. I'm glad she didn't. When the girls grew up, they saw all the time how much fun I had with making music, touring and all that stuff: the crazy costumes, crazy people and all that. And the music itself. I feel like I play R'n'R in a way to help people to feel good, to forget their pain. It's the best opiate there is, it's the safest drug.

**TFRB:** I was impressed seeing you at the Sjock Festival with Amabelle singing "Darkness", that was awesome.

**KK:** Yeah, I'm really proud. When the girls were a little younger, I told 'em 'don't tell your teachers that your dad is King Khan'. I didn't want their teachers to google me and find some pictures half-naked, dressed up like a woman or stuff

like that. I remember when Bella was 5-6 years old, she was walking around with a leather jacket and a leather hat. I was saying 'hey you're dressing up like a rocker!' and she was saying 'no! I'm dressing up like a superstar!' When they were older some of their teachers were fans of my music. I remember Bella was dancing, and one of their teachers was at the show, and when she saw him, she tried to hide behind the horn players. After the show, he said he really liked it, and if Amabelle would be late the next day, he wouldn't mind.

**TFRB:** Have you been in school like a normal daddy does at a parents meeting or so?

**KK:** Yes, I did! To be honest, my German is so bad that my wife is the one who goes to that more often. But when I'm there, I don't really know what they're talking about, and I'm afraid someone could ask me something. So I try to be very quiet in the corner, not too visible. Both finished school meanwhile. Amabelle is very much into touring and stuff, while Saba Lou is pretty much into science. She's a good songwriter, but probably it will stay more like a hobby for her. But she's also writing books. When you have kids, you have to teach them how to tell stories. I was telling them bedtime stories all the time, but she interrupted me and changed the story.

**TFRB:** Did Amabelle herself choose "Darkness" to sing?

**KK:** Yes, she did. She always loved the song. Actually, it was the favourite song of a very good friend who passed away, and Bella was very close to her. So it was kind of a tribute to the memory of someone really important to us. I never sang that song live. It had to do with the experience that I had to go to a psychiatric emergency where they gave me all these different drugs. I was really afraid I could lose my ability to write music and to be creative. When I took all this medicine, I felt like my brain was reprogrammed. For months I wasn't able to do any kind of creative shit, and when I suddenly wrote "Darkness" it was the first kind of light in the tunnel. That song is very special on many levels, and it would bring back a lot of weird memories when I sing it. For me, it's really refreshing to see that my daughter carries the song to the next level.

**TFRB:** How does she deal with all the dirty stuff you say and do on stage?

**KK:** Oh, when I was young I watched all that Eddy Murphy / Richard Pryor stuff with my daddy. There were lots of sex jokes and dirty stuff, and it was never hidden from me. It's a really important experience for a child that not everything is hidden from you. I met once Sophie Crump, the daughter of Robert Crump, whose works were a big influence on me. He was like the hero of all of the losers, and it was crazy stuff. She told me it was never hidden from her when she was young. It was everywhere in the house. She was very smart and into good music, a nice person. I'm lucky that our girls can enjoy the dirty jokes and it shows me to raise the kids in an open place where they can share the humor without worries they could get crazy or fucked up.

**TFRB:** Are you still doing crazy shit on stage?

**KK:** We played in London lately (w/ Louder Than Death), and there's a chorus in one song like 'suck my ass' and a girl from the audience pulled down my underwear and licked my bottom!

**TFRB:** Do you remember situations naked with a donkey head on, pissing around...?

**KK:** Were you at the show in Dresden with the Black Lips? That was a wild show!! Haha. Yeah, naked with a donkey head, pissin' everywhere! With political correctness, art has suffered so much, in comedy, shows and elsewhere. People used to do crazy shit, but now with the cellphones, everyone is under surveillance. So they don't do that shit anymore. I'm happy we don't have that kind of people that pull up their phones, on the last tour we never had the problem idiot people were holding up their camera. It's better to enjoy the moment. I'm a pretty optimistic person, and this war on art and comedy and this pc-bullshit stuff will go away someday, and if it doesn't, there will be a community of people who still think the way we do. The best way to break barriers is to laugh about stuff.

**TFRB:** You still have crazy costumes. Who designs 'em for you?

**KK:** That's my wife. She has always been into that. Everything is pretty much a family affair. We have a lot of fun making these things together. Do you remember the nipple-shirt me and BBQ had? That brings the family together.

# Blood Red Shoes

## A true story of being worried

Sticking together for over 14 years can be quite annoying. That's what Laura-Mary Carter and Steven Ansell had to experience. The stress of continually touring and dealing with all the business stuff took its toll. In 2014 one of the most exciting bands in recent rock collapsed when the duo walked off from each other not knowing if they will ever perform together again. To the surprise of all the group released 'Get Tragic', their fifth studio output earlier this year. In the wake of upcoming live dates, Matthias Hufnagl talked to Steven about a hard time after the quarrel, new rules and weird gothic clubs in Los Angeles.

**TFRB:** Please tell me about the moment when you knew this would be it for quite some time or maybe even for good?

**Steven:** Somewhere in December of 2014 we played one last show in Brighton at a little festival. I think even though we didn't say it out loud, we both had a feeling as we went away from it that we will not be going to speak or doing things for quite some time.

**TFRB:** You played together since you were teenagers. How did you personally feel?

**Steven:** It fucks you up, man. When you are doing something for that long, you are primarily focused and then it goes you are losing a sense of yourself. If I'm not doing this, who am I? What do I do with my time? Suddenly it's not there, and you don't know if it will be there ever again. It's a real kind of identity crisis. Quite distressing - a pretty shitty time.

**TFRB:** There's a song on the current record called 'Anxiety'. It contains the line: 'I feel the future slip away from me'. Does this describe the transformational time when everything seemed unsure?

**Steven:** This is the first record where we've written songs separately. I was writing those lyrics because I didn't know if our band will be together ever again. A true story of being worried.

**TFRB:** For 'Get Tragic' you've then worked together with producer Nick Launay: Is it true that your first meeting took place in some private gothic club?

**Steven:** It's called 'Cloak and Dagger' in Los Angeles. A goth bar where you have to wear black to get in. Despite wearing all black, you are only allowed in if you are a member or you are a guest of a member. So I was like allowed in because I was a guest of Nick Launay. It was bananas. I've never met him before and didn't know what he looked like. So I've been going to that club where you can't see anything, and everybody is wearing black. I had to figure out who the fuck he was so I could talk to him.

**TFRB:** You also had to wait for him quite some time?

**Steven:** Yeah - he was late. I was stuck there, ordered some drinks and waited until he came and found me. I wondered if it was some test to see if I can cope with it.



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**TFRB:** What is his contribution to the new record?

**Steven:** A lot of it was about encouragement. He liked what we've come up with already - the songs, the ideas and that we were changing. He made us even go further with things - more keyboards, a bit more electronic. Nick has a really good way of hearing your song and then telling you: this is the best bit, do more of that. Then you change some of it and realize that he was right.

**TFRB:** Do you have new rules so that it doesn't get that bad anymore like it used to be?

**Steven:** Having time away to think and reflect the things we've learned and understood a lot. When you are in the middle of something, you can't make any sense of it. We've asked ourselves what makes us unhappy and what changes would do us better. We didn't want a record label and therefore decided to have our own record label. We changed management, booking agents and a lot of things around us because we've realized many issues weren't coming from us but also the outside.

**TFRB:** Sounds like pushing the reset button.

**Steven:** Yeah. We also tour as a four-piece band now, hired people to come up with us on stage. It's a different dynamic. Everything feels different.

**TFRB:** Tell me about the story of fleeing a village in Wales.

**Steven:** It was insane. We wanted to go somewhere isolated because we've never tried that. We found this rural town in Wales straight off everything. We've arrived there, set everything up, and the next morning we got up to start playing. Then suddenly all of these people gathered. They were staring at us wanting to know why we were there. They told us that we couldn't play our music next to their church. There were kids in the streets staring at us like we were from another planet. We felt like we are going to get killed by the locals. We've immediately made some phone calls to get us out of there.

**TFRB:** Then you went to the place of your friends 'Pulled Apart by Horses'?

**Steven:** They had a recording studio space in Leeds. So we went up there, and Laura broke her arm. It felt like a curse. She fell off a motorbike and could only use one hand. You can't play the guitar with one hand but do pretty cool stuff with the keyboard. At least we ended up writing songs. In Wales, we didn't write a single note because we got the whole community hating us before we could do it.

**TFRB:** Brighton band 'The Wytches' are featured on the record. Friends of yours?

**Steven:** Very good friends. Actually, for the fourth album, we toured together in Germany. We wanted to make this record more open for collaboratives.

**TFRB:** As a local: do you like how Brighton changed?

**Steven:** Brighton is constantly changing, but somehow it has not changed at all. It's still a very weird town attracting weird people that don't fit in in other places. A haven for the odd. I hope it stays weird. It got more expensive, but fundamentally the undercurrent weirdness is still there. It's also still a very arty, very left-wing and a very young town. A great place for people to create music and share their ideas - usually stuff outside the mainstream.

**TFRB:** Back in the days in London, you've pissed in the drink of another band - true story?

**Steven:** That's a really old story, but it's true.

**TFRB:** What happened?

**Steven:** Sometimes people are fucking assholes and you have to stand up to them. That was the first thing that came into my mind. Most of the time I'm just the good guy and its other people that aren't. So I pissed in their drinks, they came on stage, and I watched them drink it. Cool.

**TFRB:** Over the years: what was the most annoying comparison during interviews?

**Steven:** The White Stripes. I don't care about anymore but early on this used to piss me off. Not because I have a problem with them. It's just completely lazy and always based on the fact that it's one girl and one guy. They are about the blues and that kind of traditional American music. That's not what we ever sounded like.

**TFRB:** If you could travel the time - which band would you like to support?

**Steven:** Joy Division. 