

UWE GRONAU

FLIGHT 14

When composer and keyboardist Uwe Gronau creates a new recording, it's as if he is taking an adventurous flight. His musical journeys sometimes have the feeling of blasting off in a spaceship, or soaring above the clouds in an airplane, or hang-gliding alone a few hundred feet above the earth, or free-falling like a bungee-jumper. And so he titled his latest musical excursion *Flight 14*.

Uwe Gronau (pronounced ooo-vuh grow-now) is a German musician, a master of many styles with numerous eclectic recordings. His musical enthusiasm and boundless creativity cannot be contained. *Flight 14*, for example, contains solo piano ("Magic Tree," "Father, I Miss You," "The Cleaning," "Elegy" and "What I Forgot To Say"), piano-and-synthesizer ("Lend Me Your Heart"), all-synth ("Flight 14"), electric-piano and drums ("The Other Way"), rhythmic-ambient ("Market"), a groove tune with a little vocoder ("Longing For"), spacey-and-soaring synth with drums ("Heaven"), progressive-rocking-new-age ("At The Beginning," "The Ghost Behind You"), an uptempo vocal tune ("Prince of the Darkness") and much more.

Flight 14 and his other most-recent albums are available worldwide online from CDbaby.com and Amazon.com, and from various digital download locations such as iTunes. For more about Gronau, you can visit his English-language website at myspace.com/uwegronaumusic or his German-language website at uwe-gronau.de.

Gronau has numerous previous CDs (some primarily available in Europe). Several are mostly instrumental music -- *Midsummer*, *Seven Paintings*, *Sonnentempel*, *Nightwalker* and *Intuition*. Others feature Uwe singing on many selections -- *Children*, *The Beauty of the Sea*, *Someday*, *Ciel*, *Time is a Sound*, *Full Moon Forest* and *Time Rider*. His latest albums -- *Midsummer*, *Time Rider* and *Visions* -- have been marketed internationally and all have climbed into the Top 5 on the monthly international Zone Music Reporter Top 100 airplay chart.

Additionally Gronau has played on recordings by other artists including Luna Blanca, and Angelique Damschen. Gronau also is an author who wrote the acclaimed novel *Senor Morales*, a fantasy journey through Europe with a search for a special Spanish musical instrument. The novel led to an audio-book version with music and speaking by Gronau. He also has published a book of short stories, *The Snowman from Wagenitz*.

Flight 14 was produced by Gronau with his longtime musical associate Clemens Paskert. Gronau created all the music on the album except for special guest Matthias Keidel playing saxophone on "Night Train." The words to "Prince of the Darkness" are by Gronau's longtime friend and lyricist Michael Hoeing. The cover artwork, showing an old prop-plane taking off over the ocean pulling a grand piano behind it, is by MB Spektral. Gronau's parents died last year and he dedicates this album to them.

"The first song on the album is called 'At The Beginning' because after my parents died I decided I needed to leave my sorrow behind, try for a new life, start a new chapter," explains Gronau. "I wrote 'Elegy' because sometimes I feel lonely in the middle of a crowd, and the next tune, 'Heaven,' is the music I would like to take with me when I have to go someday and I would receive my friends from eternity with this song."

Flight 14 is balanced between softer material (solo piano numbers and tunes with spacey or sparse arrangements) and ensemble-sounding compositions (featuring either percussion, a snapping snare drum or a full drum kit sound). The CD includes beautiful melodies ("Lend Me Your Heart," "The Cleaning") and both slow, sparse solo piano ("Elegy") and pretty solo piano played either fairly rapidly ("Magic Tree - Part 2") or forcefully ("Father, I Miss You").

"I miss my father a great deal," says Gronau. "He taught me to play piano. I remember growing up hearing the beautiful singing and piano playing by my parents. So the music on this album comes from the bottom of my heart."

Regarding his tune "Can't Explain," Gronau says, "Mysterious things can happen. Be prepared and write it down like a poet or lyricist or composer. That is the task of an artist, to combine reality and the dream-world. My composition 'Night Train' came from a strange experience I had on a journey from Berlin to Dusseldorf. I was sitting all alone in a train car and a mystical feeling came over me and I felt like I was the last and only human being in the world. The feeling was so strong I had to get off the train, calm myself down and find a hotel for the night to try to relax."

"Magic Tree" and "Magic Tree - Part 2" were inspired by a tree that "stands at the front of my house. It's called 'Ginko' and I illuminate it with many little violet lights in the evening. When I look out through the big window of my studio, I feel like there is a friend standing there giving me a good feeling and helping me think up new ideas," Gronau relates.

Some of the music on *Flight 14* was inspired by a trip Gronau took ("Holiday" and "Celebration"). He flew in a small six-seat plane from the United States to the Bahamas which influenced the composition "The Ghost Behind You."

Gronau was born and raised in the Rhineland in northwest Germany, and grew up in Dusseldorf and Bocholt (where he currently resides) which is only a couple of miles from the Dutch border. "In the '70s and '80s the Netherlands were more involved in the evolution of jazz, pop, rock and soul than Germany, so I profited from this situation and heard much great music." Uwe began playing piano at age six and grew up immersed in music as the son of a choir-leader, orchestra-conductor, music-school teacher and piano instructor.

In his early years Uwe studied classical music, but soon became passionate about jazz and rock artists such as Brian Auger, Keith Emerson, Patrick Moraz and Refugee, and Joe Zawinul and Weather Report. As Gronau got older, his musical tastes expanded to include Supertramp, Jethro Tull, Gilbert 'O Sullivan, Keith Jarrett, Sting, Peter Gabriel and Dream Theater. When Uwe was 14 he began to play in a series of bands and built a reputation in the area for his musicianship and professionalism. One thing that always set Gronau apart from many other musicians is that from the beginning and continuing to today, Gronau has always played original material and has never covered compositions by others. In college, Gronau majored in music, German and theater-science.

Gronau's band Sternberg recorded two albums, performed concerts frequently, won a regional music contest, was broadcast on Germany's main radio channel (WDR), and also won a film music award (for the soundtrack of "Don't Destroy the Rainbow Above Us") at the International Santander Film Festival in Spain. Gronau's next group was the synth-pop trio Fabrique. They performed the music for the German science-fiction TV-series "Orion Space Patrol," made recordings and videos, appeared on TV shows, and wrote the song "Secret Land" which became a Top 10 global hit for the singer Sandra. Gronau moved on to the funky rock band Pont Neuf and recorded an album with them before going solo.

"My friends have often said they feel like they are flying when they listen to my music," explains Gronau. "Others talk about feeling like they are being lifted by the sounds. When I record the music in my studio, I am concentrating on what I want to say. But when I listen to it later with 'new ears,' I often start to fly with it. Sometimes it is like falling into the music and you fall and fall and fall. Or, as my music professor at the University of Cologne said one day, 'Think about a bass note, and go deeper and deeper with it, but below there is a big meadow waiting.' I like that picture, that feeling."

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