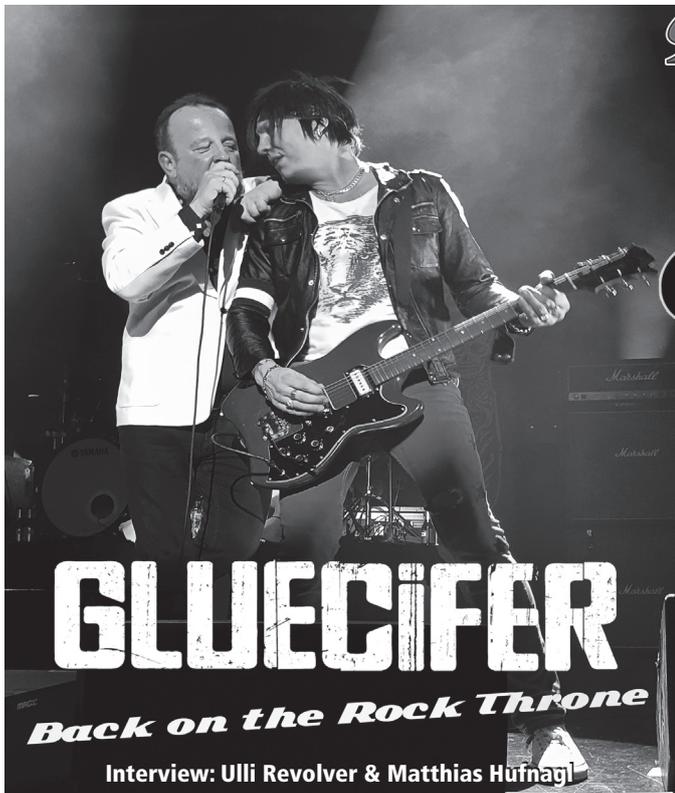


Sjock
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free

The Flying Revolverblatt

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

2005 was the end of it. After Gluecifer together with other bands of the Scandinavian wave had given Rock its bitterly necessary rejuvenation, the self-proclaimed 'Kings of Rock' had a meltdown at the height of their creativity. Not only fans reacted bewildered, but also within the band they split up in a seemingly hopeless quarrel. Singer Biff Malibu and guitarist Captain Poon told us why they found together again more than a decade later. TFRB also learned what it felt like to be back on stage and why Gluecifer still claim the Rockthrone for themselves.

TFRB: Giving up the band back then was more of your decision than from other members. Did you have regrets the time after or was it the only right thing to do?

Biff Malibu (BM): Rolf and I wanted to quit, the others wanted to go on. It was a tough decision, but I never regretted it.

TFRB: (@ Captain Poon) Back then you were not amused when Biff and Baldo quit the band – how is your relationship now? Are you getting along well?

Captain Poon (CP): Yeah. We are getting along really well. I think time just did us right to find back to what we once had.

TFRB: Looking back after all these years - what went wrong the time before?

BM: I just felt that I wanted to do something else. Gluecifer had existed for ten years and been a full time thing for six of them. We had great times, and I think we did a lot of great stuff, but after 2004 I was done. Needed change.

TFRB: What let to the reunion of Gluecifer?

CP: I honestly have no fucking idea. It sort of came out of nowhere. There were a couple of festivals which have been asking for us for a few years already - in particular the Azkena Festival where we did the first reunion show. Our drummer wanted everyone to meet and just talk about the band. I didn't expect anything to come up about a reunion. We gathered for the first time in fucking twelve years. The chemistry when we had this meeting just led to the fact that we wanted to go to the rehearsal room to hear what it sounded like after all these years. We tried 'I Got a War' and 'Automatic Thrill' and quickly realized that this seems to stick in our DNA. It was kind of easy to find the right vibe again.

TFRB: If the old Gluecifer songs are part of your DNA, what does it do with you and your personality to have these songs as part of your life?

BM: When we played together again last year, I was a bit shocked to learn that I still had all these songs kind of printed inside my memory. Thirteen years is a long time, but they were stuck in my DNA, as Poon said.



TFRB: Did you have all the lyrics ready instantly?

BM: Had to cheat a little bit at the start, I'll admit that.

TFRB: How did the spirit come back at the first rehearsals? How did it affect your relationships?

BM: It felt like reuniting with family members that you haven't seen in a long time. That was touching. The rehearsals were pretty serious but had a great vibe. One of the cool things about this is that we are in touch again.

TFRB: Are we talking about live exclusive here – or are there any plans for a new album or new songs?

CP: It would be stupid of me to say no to anything. I've been saying no for years and never expected anything to happen with this band again. We just have to see what comes along. If we like to do a new song than we are going to do a new song. If that leads to an album, it leads to an album. The only plan right now is to do whatever seems to be fun for us. We don't wanna go on a forty days European tour, but where people are enthusiastic about seeing us and venues, we wanna play.

TFRB: How does it feel after all these years to perform these songs now? Do they still represent your personality / your life? How do you sense the energy they brought back (what they should have done thankfully)?

BM: Feels great. I think the songs are holding up pretty good. They are part of my life, but I guess some of the lyrical topics lay a bit back in time. Hehe.

TFRB: Let's briefly talk about the Bloodlights: do fans or bandmates worry that the band could come to an end because of the Gluecifer reunion?

CP: I have decided to put the band on ice. Last summer we had to cancel 16

shows because of our guitar player. He just sent us an email a couple of days before the first of these shows telling us that he quits. When you are having fun doing the one thing and having a lot of difficulties doing the other, you try to put the problematic part on hold. That's what I did.

TFRB: What happened to the Rock Throne over all these years? According to your website, you seem to claim it again?

BM: It stood empty. In some derelict palace with an overgrown garden and an empty swimming pool.

TFRB: An even more special relationship you might have to Spain, which was the reason to play Azkena as your first show after years. Please describe the feeling there.

BM: Azkena was great. A late night show in front of a crowd that made us feel welcome. I can't think of a better way to finally come back. And we got to meet the great Ian Hunter, hang out with Turbonegro and have a good time in general.

TFRB: Another great festival you're going to play is Sjock. What do you expect? It seems like a trip back to the glory days...

BM: Really looking forward to Sjock, and sharing the stage with Hellcopters. Glory days revisited indeed.

TFRB: If you're not going to do new songs like you stated - ain't you afraid to become a retro or oldie band? Or could this just be the preferred way today?

BM: I prefer to look upon this as a celebration of rock. And we're not retro or oldie, let's say we're timeless. 



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Everything is good now

The Hellcopters are back with a bang! In spring they rocked Denmark, Spain and Germany, now they are at Sjock. We talked to drummer Robert Eriksson about new songs, old mistakes and the tragic death of guitarist Robert 'Strings' Dahlqvist.

Interview: Matthias Hufnagl

TFRB: What were your thoughts when a Hellcopters split came up for the first time?

Robert: I remember it pretty clearly.

I just split with my wife at the time. We had a band meeting in the apartment I've therefore just moved in. The plan was to discuss what to do and what not to do. It came up that everybody was not into it 100 percent anymore. That changed the whole atmosphere of the meeting. In the end, everybody agreed on the last tour, putting out 'Head Off' as our last record and not telling anybody that it will be a cover record. I didn't want the band to quit but couldn't force anything. Tough times: no wife, no band, no income. Anyway: the band is back together, and my wife and I got back together as well. Everything is good now.

TFRB: Fast Forward: when did it become clear that The Hellcopters will reunite?

Robert: Back in the Nineties, there was a french guy who wanted to release a 10" on a small label in France. We've then recorded it like a bootleg during the 'Payin' the Dues' tour having two mikes in the audience. That was when Dregen was still in the band. Then that guy just disappeared, and we never heard of anything. Years later, I got in contact with him via Facebook. He said he was clean now and finally wants to release the record.

TFRB: How did you react?

Robert: Surprised. It was 20 years later. I contacted the others in the band, asking what they think about it. After all, this was a deal we made in 1997. Back in those days, the deal was that we get maybe ten/fifteen percent of the pressing being able to sell it at the shows. That wouldn't have helped us as we did not have any shows to play at this point so we can't sell the records. The idea came up to release the record and do one show. The same time it was almost the twentieth anniversary of 'Supershitty to the Max'. Universal bought everything from White Jazz fifteen years ago and now wanted to do a rerelease for record store day. At the same time, Nicke suggested playing Sweden Rock Festival as we got some offers to play there pretty much every year. The idea grew to play the first record and became clear quite quickly that Dregen should be involved. It sounded more and more fun, and we finally agreed on doing it.

TFRB: How did Dregen react back then when you've asked him?

Robert: I can't remember his exact words, but in interviews and his book, he always said how much he would regret leaving The Hellcopters. We kinda knew he was going to say yes.

TFRB: What has changed today compared to back then?

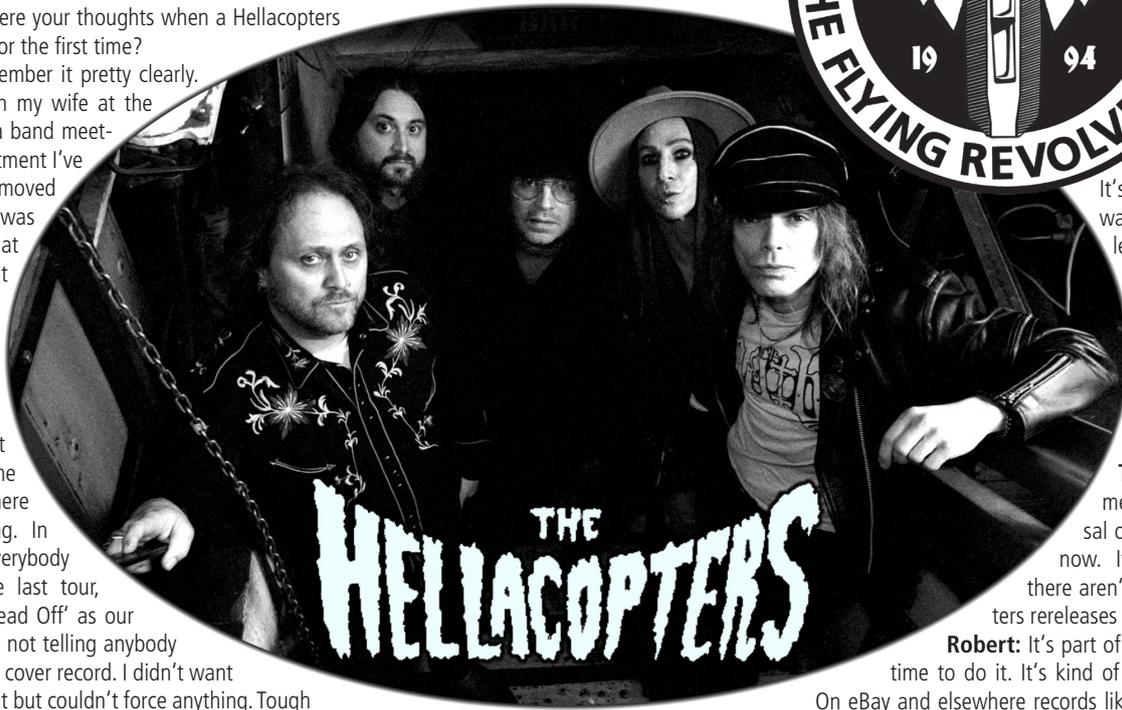
Robert: We don't do a hundred shows a year anymore – that would mean hitting the wall again. In the long run, it's about caring for the band. So everybody feels good instead of ten tours booked. Everybody has obligations back home – families, other bands.

TFRB: Will there be new songs?

Robert: Hopefully. I'm not guaranteeing it, but we've actually been in the studio already. We are nowhere near anything. It's fun to play the older songs, but you just can't go around and play all the same songs. We already change the setlist regularly mainly because we do not want to play the same every night, too.

TFRB: Let's talk about Strings' death: rock bottom of the band's history?

Robert: Yes – by far. Strings had epilepsy and died of a seizure in the bathtub at home. He was alone and drowned. There were no drugs or alcohol involved.



It's no secret he was having problems with alcohol. He was drinking a lot. But at the time he was clean and was working on his next record. Super tragic.

TFRB: You've mentioned Universal owns the masters now. It's striking that there aren't more Hellcopters rereleases to buy?

Robert: It's part of us taking a long time to do it. It's kind of stupid situation.

On eBay and elsewhere records like 'High Visibility' or 'By the Grace of God' are offered totally overpriced. I go to record stores a lot and see all these other bands beautiful reissues. With us, there is a gap. So it's something we really wanna do, but it takes time to get things going.

TFRB: Which label are you on right now?

Robert: At the time, we don't have a label. If we decide to do a new album, we need like somebody to put it out. We then need to sit down and discuss where and with whom. Preferably – if Universal wants to do it I wanna do it. It's about waiting until everybody met to discuss what to do with the band.

TFRB: In a previous interview we've talked about when suddenly everything became Rock or rocked – even Britney Spears surfed on the Rock'n'Roll wave. What is your opinion upon nowadays state of popular music culture?

Robert: You are asking the wrong person, but I have the feeling that it's gone down the drain since then. I remember talking about Britney Spears back then. Nowadays it's all about DJing – the big technical era of music. Just to have an electric guitar is like a novelty, almost a joke. This has been going on for a while. There are no new big bands that are based on drums, bass, guitar or follow an analogue vintage sound. All you have left in the mainstream are maybe bands like Foo Fighters or the Rival Sons. We are going to play the Lollapalooza here in Stockholm this year. It's gonna be great fun, but when I see the posters, I don't know half the artists. I feel really old. 🤖

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Robert ready to rock