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Jolly and Baffling Stuff

FEATURES

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The Revival of Medieval Traditions in Belarus

related festivals (such as the night of museums and the Earth day), archeological excavations, pagan holidays and summer volunteer activities – that's where you can encounter them. These young people dress according to the chosen century and play their peculiar roles, including dancing, singing, fighting, shooting, playing with fire and teaching the others how to do the same.



Belarus in the last twenty years has been known as a country of strict political regime, poor and crooked people with tightened belts, a country where prohibitions prevail over permissions and a place where one should know how to survive rather than live. "How could there be any revival?", one may wonder. But if you have lived in such a place, you have probably encountered an unwritten rule: *lack fosters creativity*.

Being interested in history and restless myself, I was naturally involved in the creative circles of our city and its surroundings. That is why I can now say that I know the whole matter from the inside with all its difficulties and peculiarities.

To begin with, most of the people involved in the revival are former students. Not earning much money, they have somehow found their ways to express themselves. Somebody chooses music; somebody prefers handicraft and the others are good at organizing. Together they are able to summon even bigger groups of people. But what for?

Showing their sheer interest in the history of Belarus, they express their patriotism in a permitted and inviting way. Organized excursions, event-

Creating their special images, they also accept a certain way of life. Most of them do it only temporarily while the others approach the matter seriously. Their way of life goes back to the past, where people were closer to nature. These people few in number prefer living in the countryside, breeding animals and growing plants. They sew their clothes themselves, decorate their houses with homespun rugs and embroideries, they make soap and candles from natural ingredients, brew alcohol from honey and even give birth to children without obstetricians.

Still, the vast majority of people interested in historical reconstruction are less reserved in their views. Many dresses I have seen were stitched with a sewing machine, many helmets turned out to be tin buckets; a lot of equipment was bought in sports shops. But it does not spoil the whole charming image of revived warriors and their charming ladies. While the former are fighting and cheering, the latter are dancing, singing, weave wreaths and even practice archery! There are also some stands where one can take part in a master class or buy a piece of handicraft. Such motley gatherings can easily be found and joined via the Internet where all the organization routine is

carried out. Of course, they are not using pigeon post anymore!

The most important meetings are closely related to historic events and prominent places. The first biggest events which pop up in my mind are: The Battle of Grunwald, The Battle of Novogrudok and The Battle of Orsha. Of course, there are many other occasions to rejoin the brotherhood. What unites those gatherings is warm weather as they normally camp out in, homely countryside so as not to disturb apathetic citizens and the vicinity of old buildings such as castles, palaces or cathedrals to create an ancient atmosphere.

In dark cold winter evenings the fans and amateurs of medieval culture gather under a roof of rented rotten buildings sharing their experiences and skills. The musicians practice and write new songs, the ladies sew and embroider their dresses, the men are fixing their armor broken in the last battles and the craftsmen teach others how to create original handmade ornaments.

They are not supported by the government. They are not rich. They are not paid for the show. They are all ordinary people having their families and daily routines. But nobody could imagine more devoted and patriotic people of this godforsaken land which they love with all their hearts.

Interested in reading further? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E77NtR1EP9c> – *summer work for volunteers*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KTypovaePeo> – *Cad Goddeau "Wojcech"*

Author: Hanna Makaruk



botanical crossword puzzle

T	H	Y	M	E	G	C	E	D	A	R	F
O	E	E	F	A	R	O	W	A	N	A	I
A	A	W	E	B	X	A	X	N	G	L	R
D	T	Q	R	E	J	K	S	D	E	D	F
S	H	Z	N	E	T	T	L	E	R	E	B
T	E	A	W	C	P	O	P	L	A	R	R
O	R	X	Q	H	L	B	O	I	N	C	A
O	S	I	E	R	A	A	P	O	I	O	M
L	I	L	A	C	N	C	P	N	U	R	B
A	M	A	P	L	E	C	Y	C	M	N	L
S	N	O	W	D	R	O	P	I	N	E	E
H	C	R	O	W	F	O	O	T	E	L	S

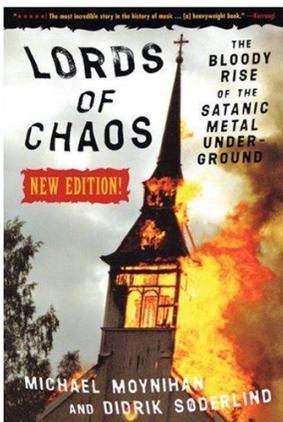
Horizontally: thyme, cedar, rowan, nettle, tea, poplar, osier, lilac, maple, snowdrop, pine, crowfoot

Vertically: toadstool, ash, heather, yew, fern, beech, plane, oak, tobacco, poppy, dandelion, geranium, alder, cornel + corn, fir, brambles.

In early May, news hit the media that Hollywood renowned, Swedish filmmaker Jonas Åkerlund, best known for his work on music videos for Madonna and Beyoncé, is to direct a movie based on the tragedies around the Norwegian 1990's Black Metal underground scene.

An official statement describes the planned movie as follows: "Scott Free London, RSA London and Vice are teaming to produce Swedish film and music video director Jonas Åkerlund's feature **Lords Of Chaos**. The English-language film, based on real events, charts a dream-turned-nightmare scenario for a group of teenagers who spiral out of control."¹

To everyone who read about Black Metal, the title of the movie will be no surprise, since co-authors of the screenplay are no less than American writer Micheal Moynihan and Norwegian writer Didrik Söderlind, the authors of the 1998 published same titled, bestselling book.



While this book, with a scholarly approach, tried to shed light on the events in Norway and their influence on music and youth culture all over the world, a movie on the same topic

America's strange attraction to music's BLACKest history

could easily fuel the mythologization of suicide, homicide, arsons and right-wing extremism, leaving Norway's biggest musical export Black Metal in the shadow (of the horns).

SilvesterAnfang

While most musical genres are rewarded with books, documentaries, picture books and movies because of their outstanding musical quality, Norwegian Black Metal in the 1990's never cared about audio quality, since the music was supposed to be the rawest, most disturbing sound ever.

Yet, the incidents around the band Mayhem seem even more disturbing than any piece of music ever produced in this heavy metal subgenre.

Founded as early as 1984, Mayhem are seen as the pioneers of Norwegian Black Metal, shaping not only the style of music, but also influencing the values of the scene. From fashion to behavior and beliefs, their dismal reputation dominated 1990s metal underground and prevails even today.

Only teenagers, the musicians were fascinated by horror movies, other metal bands and occultism, interests that influenced their song writing and alter-ego band personalities.

Life Eternal

Euronymous (Prince of Death), Necrobutcher, and after changes in the line-up in the year 1988, Hellhammer and the new singer Dead from Stockholm, Sweden entered their rehearsal house with ambitious plans for a full length record and a world tour. Being interested in Transylvania

and its legends and cursed with creativity, Pelle Ohlin, who named himself Dead after a near-death experience, developed a macabre fascination for death while living in Norway, idealizing it in his lyrics for the planned first album *De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas*. On the 8th of April 1991 the 22-year-old Pelle Ohlin, leaving the lyrics to the song *Life Eternal*, shot himself in Mayhem's rehearsal house, where he and band colleague Euronymous were living at the time.

Returning home from a weekend out of town, Euronymous found his friend dead, yet instead of calling the police, decided to take close-up photos of the scene.

Sparing the reader from more gruesome details in this article, I will just quickly summarize the years 1991 to 1993. Churches were ablaze in the northern sky one after the other, a homosexual man was murdered and in a fight over money from record sales Euronymous was stabbed 23 times by the infamous VargVikernes of Burzum, who became a Norwegian celebrity for his charismatic murderer looks.

Now, isn't that Hollywood movie material?

While the movie is still in progress, Norwegian Black Metal has been in the focus of American artists before. While the book *Lords of Chaos* searched for sociological explanations, American documentary

¹ Andreas Wiseman. *Scott Free, RSA, Vice team on Jonas Akerlund's 'Lords Of Chaos'*. ScreenDaily.com. 4 May, 2015. web.

photographer Peter Beste paid homage to the scene with a photo book titled *True Norwegian Black Metal*.

In 2008 an American documentary film titled *Until the Light Takes Us* dealt with the subject, focussing on the history of Norwegian Black Metal, highlighting the ghastly events around Mayhem, the aftermaths for the Norwegian music scene and grotesquely sympathizing with the



Satanist-turned-Nazi VargVikernes.

All this attention towards the topic kept one question reoccurring in my mind: Why are Americans so eager to explore the true Norwegian Black Metal crimes?

Taking a look at classic American literature, one is able to see that from the beginning of the American writing tradition, authors like Edgar Allan Poe, Hawthorne or Melville were inspired by true crime stories that were printed in Penny Papers. Murder stories, monstrosities and Satanism were part of the Victorian age sensationalism that sold well in America. While the lust for blood has been visible in all societies at all times, North American Culture, being the first modern Democracy, was able to satisfy the

people's thirst for taboo stories, due to the freedom of the press².

In more contemporary culture, American society has always kept its interest in mass murderers, real, unsolved crimes and anti-democratic behavior. Spreading the world with slasher horror movies, mostly involving a psychopathic killer with a big knife, or splatter and snuff movies, focusing on all the gore that follows murder and death, America has become the biggest exporter of ostensibly realistic depictions of violence.

Nevertheless, all the movies, TV shows and documentaries from la-la land share one important feature: they mostly include successful crime solving detectives, forensic specialists, or victims-turned-heroes, taking law into their own hands.

Sometimes life writes the most horrific stories, yet true events, most of the time, lack the classic hero.

Judging from the press release about the movie, *Lords of Chaos* will focus on the coming-of-age story around Euronymous and Mayhem, and the fatal encounter with VargVikernes. In a story about teenagers and young adults committing suicide, arson and murder it will be interesting, whom the film makers will choose as their hero.

However, one must consider that some adolescents, in a phase of finding themselves, are able to identify with one or another of the tragic characters.

Dawn of the Black Hearts

Being idols for many young children and young adults, who are interested in music, the Norwegian Black Metal musicians are not the best role models. Inspired by the crimes in

Norway, churches were burned and graves desecrated in many European countries throughout the 1990s.

A new wave of interest in the last few years, promoted by magazines, books and documentaries, should be watched with a critical eye, in a time of growing dissatisfaction with the political system and society, and manic-depression being seemingly as often diagnosed among young people as a cold.

Unreflected comments on the events and irreverent handling of Pelle Ohlin's suicide are posted by many, mostly American, teenagers on the social media websites.

I was shocked to see how many young boys and girls are obsessed with the cover picture of the Mayhem bootleg *Dawn of the Black Hearts*. For anyone with a strong stomach, see for yourselves by searching [#dead](#) [#dawnoftheblackhearts](#) [#mayhem](#), for example on Instagram.

Sadly, the musicians are first and foremost legends because of their tragic lives and deaths, to most 'fans' their innovative musical legacy comes second.

Author: Marie-Kristin Kaiser

Books and documentaries

referred to:

- Moynihan/Søderlind. *Lords of Chaos, the bloody rise of the satanic metal underground*. Feral House. 2nd Ed. 2003.
- Beste, Peter. *True Norwegian Black Metal*. Vice Books. 2008

² cf. David. S. Raynolds. *Beneath the American Renaissance*. Harvard University Press. 1988. p. 169. print.

Music from garbage...



What do we usually do with garbage? Recycling, throwing it away... Have you ever thought about making art with a bottle or an oil can? This idea might not be extraordinary if we were planning to have a creative garden, but what about music?

"The Recycled Instrument Orchestra of Cateura" is showing the world that it is possible to create art from trash, literally. With the slogan of "The world sends rubbish, we give music back", they are spreading a message about the absence of limits by establishing the fact that no obstacle is big enough to stop us when we follow our dreams, even if we are under the most difficult conditions and with insufficient resources.

This peculiar orchestra is composed of a group of children and teenagers who live in a community near the rubbish dump called "Cateura", located in the city of Asuncion, the capital of Paraguay. What makes this musical team so distinctive is the way they have their instruments made, which are made out of residential solid waste. As a result of the recycling process, the musicians are able to play instruments that imitate violins, cellos, basses, guitars, flutes, saxophones, trumpets, trombones and percussions. During the performances, the Recycled Orchestra plays pieces of classical, folk, Paraguayan and Latin-American music, as well as famous songs of The Beatles and Frank Sinatra.

The project was born in 2006, when the initiator Fabio Chavez started to be involved with the community of Cateura as a part of his job as an environmental technician. The program initially consisted of implementing a process of selective collection of rubbish, in order to facilitate the work of the collectors. In addition, as Chavez has been an amateur musician since his childhood, music allowed him to have an especial connection with the community he was working with.

After a presentation that his students from Carapegua (arural village of Paraguay) had in Cateura, the collectors or "gancheros" also asked Fabio Chavez to impart music classes for their kids; he accepted the proposal and began to do extra hours in the community, teaching music.

"From ten to twenty children who used to attend classes, only two or three were really interested in learning music and the rest of them only wanted to spend some time there or stay away from home", Chavez reminds us. This situation created risky conditions for having expensive musical instruments that could be damaged at any moment, so it was necessary to look for alternatives. Besides, having a musical instrument whose monetary value is higher than that of his or her house would have been an unnecessary responsibility for a child, he adds.

In "Bañado Sur", the district located around the rubbish dump of "Cateura", garbage is a component of the routine, of working, building houses, finding resources, etcetera. "Collecting litter is an inherent part of these people's ordinary lives; over time, they develop knowledge, abilities and creativity. Therefore, the idea of producing an imitation of musical instruments with recycled materials has naturally emerged", Fabio Chavez claims.

To make this idea come true, the first violins were created with the contribution of the "ganchero"

Nicolas Gomez, after having proved the efficiency of the materials found in the landfill site. Later, other instruments were also manufactured and the techniques and procedures were developed to optimize this imitation of musical instruments, which nowadays can be considered almost formal instruments, according to Chavez explanation.

"The Recycled Instrument Orchestra of Cateura" became famous in 2012, when the documentary

"Landfill Harmonic" (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXynrsrTKbl>) started to be publicized. Since that moment, the group has been called to visit and performance in countries like The United States, Canada, Norway, Germany, France, The Netherlands, Palestine, Japan, Spain, Colombia, Brazil, Chile, Argentina and Panama. In 2014, the orchestra was invited by the rock band Metallica to open its performances during the Latin-American tour.

"In all of these countries, the orchestra has transmitted a message about considering culture as a basic necessity and that music, particularly, transforms people, even in the most basic level and under the most precarious conditions that you can imagine. Having nothing is not an excuse to do nothing", the founder of the orchestra concludes.

In Paraguay, the 23.8% of the population lives in poverty. This percentage has been reduced in the last few years, from 35% registered in 2009, according to statistics shared by the World Bank. On the other hand, the investment in education represents only 5% of the national GDP (Gross Domestic Product)

Interested in reading further? <http://www.recycledorchestracateura.com/>



LIVING WITHOUT MONEY

Our whole life is dominated by one thing: money. Can I find a well-paid job? Can I afford a good life for my family? Can I afford a new car? Can I afford college? We make a big effort to be able to answer these questions with yes. Yet there are some people breaking out of the circle.

One of them is HeidemarieSchwermer. She is one of the founders of an organization called "gib und nimmZentrale" (give and take) in Dortmund. It is a place for bartering goods, skills and services. She has been living without money for 19 years, only offering psychotherapy, cooking, cleaning etc. to others.

Why did you choose a life without money?

It deals with the economic situation of the world, the division between rich and poor, the waste of our society and the famine in other countries. First I only wanted to find out whether another life is possible. After living one year without money, but with barter and sharing, I noticed that this life was more intense and rich in content.

What did you learn in those 19 years?

One very important thing in my new life is cooperation. I had to learn a lot: On the one hand adapting but on the other also being self-confident. Not feeling like a beggar but bringing in my own talents and appreciating them.

What experiences have you gained that you otherwise would not have been able to gain?

I had to fully get involved with others. I did not want to do a runner when it was getting difficult. Thus I learned to take things as they are. I gained a lot of recognition for my former jobs. To compensate this loss of recognition by myself was not always easy. But especially this value shift is necessary for everyone. The perception of everyone being important apart from his possessions is one that I love to spread.

Would a society work in which everyone leads a life like yours?

I do not want everyone to live a life like mine. They should find out for themselves what life they could live. However, I imagine a world without money as fairer and more meaningful than the one we have now. In a world without money everyone would still have to find out what they want to focus on. For me it is about personal responsibility, new structures, different values, more justice, love, good will and cooperation. The road will not be easy but possible and wonderful.

Another thing we cannot usually imagine when saying the phrase "without money" is traveling. But there is for instance Daniel Suelo, who lives half of the time in the caves outside Moab, Utah, and spends the other half traveling. He has lived without money for over ten years. There is also IbbyOkinyi, who walked from Norway to Africa without money or passport. Maria Grusauskas, a writer on the central coast of California met them both. She wrote the article "The Ultimate Guide to Traveling without Money" which she published on shareable.net. She talks about what she learned when talking to these people in an interview:

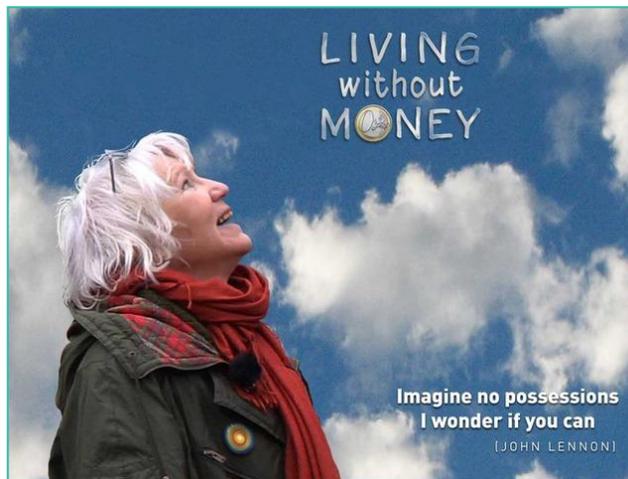
After speaking to people who are living without money I realized the importance of the gift economy. The idea of giving and receiving freely, without guilt by the taker, and

without regrets or attachment from the giver. In fact, the whole exchange is fuelled by positive emotions: graciousness for the gift, joy for the gift, and in turn, and maybe even most important, joy on the giver's part. When is the last time you gave something away to somebody, something they really needed but you didn't need? It feels really good to do that. It's a heart expansion for both parties involved, to help someone else out. (be it a tool you're not using, a sleeping bag, lemons on the ground under your lemon tree, a ride from point a to

point b, directions in the street, a place to sleep, or even just a warm smile).

What recommendations do you have for traveling without money?

The most profound thing I remember from what Ibby had to say about traveling without money was not to fear people. And I would say that humankind is generally kind, and that is something he pointed out to me. Important because when you're traveling without money, you're relying on the kindness of others, your connections with friends, friends of friends, absolute strangers, and basically everyone you come across. Another invaluable tool: the internet. Ibby used the internet (to connect with people and network and plan his steps forward) at libraries and peoples' houses. couchsurfing.net, can be used without money.



So tools are: internet, kindness, sleeping bag, tent, pretty crucial and you'll be glad you have them. Ibbotson traded, too. If staying with friends and he was hungry and they fed him, he would clean the kitchen, do the dishes, maybe help them with something around the house, a project, cleaning, etc. This is basic common sense, too.

What was your intention for writing the article?

My intention for writing this article, and I understand the irony of this was in part, for money. I was a freelance writer, supporting myself from story to story. This story helped me pay my rent! But I also wrote it because I believed that the ideas underlying the act of traveling and/or living without money would be an eye-opening train of thought, not only for myself, but also for the people who would read it. What I did not expect when investigating these stories, was to come away with a greater sense of understanding about the vast waste yard left behind by modern society. Of just how abundant the waste is, and how tragic the consequences of consumer culture. I believe that the voracity of buying, of throwing away, of failing to give or share, is bad both for our hearts as human beings, 'spiritual' beings, if you will, but also for the living, breathing environment around us. The earth, after all is our life support system. The oceans and trees.

I mentioned the gift economy earlier and I also learned about the importance of the shareable economy. They overlap in many ways, and some speak of them interchangeably. The shareable economy seems more organized than spontaneous. Tool libraries, for example. Ride shares, for another example. It is the execution of resourcefulness among communities... For the purpose of buying less and sharing more. Getting to know neighbours. Making positive exchanges and reducing our carbon footprint at the same time. Looking forward with the vision of a sustainable future.

When you really think about how much we all really have, and take stock of how many of our possessions we can share with our neighbours and friends, it brings to our attention just how thoughtlessly unsustainable the consumer culture can be.

Author: Caroline Fischer

SOME PEOPLE ARE SO POOR;
ALL THEY HAVE IS MONEY

Brave feminist or 'Pretty Little Liar'?

#CarryThatWeight - the story of Emma Sulkowicz and Paul Nungeßer

"I was raped in my own dorm bed and since then that space has become fraught for me. I feel like I've carried the weight of what happened there everywhere since then. My name is Emma Sulkowicz. I'm a senior in college. I'm a visual arts major. For my senior thesis I will be doing a piece called mattress performance or carry that weight. I will be carrying this dorm room mattress with me everywhere I go for as long as I attend the same school as my rapist. The piece could potentially take a day or it could go on until I graduate."



248.101 shares on tumblr. Emma Sulkowicz's story is only one of many examples of the current development in feminism, which on the Internet found a great way of spreading its message. But it is also dangerous. Profound and thought-provoking quotes, colorful charts and retouched pictures can be misleading, as in Emma's case.

Her side of the story in short: Paul Nungeßer, a friend and fellow student at Columbia University, raped her in her dorm room. She did not report it to the officials immediately: she never stated why. It was not until a few months later that Emma went to the principal. The traditional institution pressed charges against Paul, but he was found not guilty, since there was no evidence to be found. Emma, frustrated, took action and set out on her own crusade: she started the mattress performance. All around the world people applauded and supported her without even stopping and thinking for a second about the fact that the charges against Paul had been dropped, and if maybe there was a good reason. But since women in our society have a difficult stand and gender studies as well as feminism is a huge issue right now, people were led to believe that it was just another of those injustices. I myself believed in that, too.

But then Paul appeared before the public and told his version of the story. He said he had not raped Emma, they had had consensual sex. Soon after she wrote him messages on

Facebook, saying that they should hang out again, that they did not have some 'Emma-Paul-Quality-Time' in a while. Those messages were not allowed as evidence before the university's court, but Paul showed them to the press and thus made them public. Additionally, there were no signs of a rape to be found since Emma did not go to the doctor. The way she described the incident, as very violent, she must have had bruises all over her body and face for weeks and would have been in need of medical treatment.

The fact that Emma reported the alleged rape to the officials months after and exploited the story to use it as a senior thesis corroborated Paul's version of the story even more. But then two other girls who knew Emma stepped forward and said they were sexually harassed and raped, respectively, by Paul, too. This made the confusion perfect and caused doubts to arise on both versions of the story. But since the girls did not have any evidence for the rape, either, charges were dropped.

In the end, Paul won the case and was allowed to stay on campus, but henceforth was a marked man. He could not go anywhere without being insulted and sometimes even assaulted. He was excluded from the community and his friends largely abandoned him. Emma went on carrying the mattress all over the campus and even took it to her graduation ceremony, despite the university having interdicted it. If his story were true, and all the evidence supports his version of the truth, then he is the victim, not Emma. Paul will never be able to have a successful career and his name will forever be connected to being a rapist. With social networks and chats being the new means of communication, things can get out of control easily. What we should learn from this is not to believe in everything we find on the Internet, but the next time ask ourselves critically whether the story is true or a 'pretty little' lie.

Author: Anne Hiecke

How good are language trips?

Due to globalization, foreign languages and intercultural competences have become more and more important during the last decades. Besides an increasing worldwide market, affluent people from all over the planet have long since discovered travelling and discovering different cultures as their big hobby. International is in – and the number of those wanting to become global players is constantly rising.

Both travel companies and the private education sector have discovered that they can attract customers by blending language learning with the joy of travelling. As a result, we have nowadays a variety of businesses offering so-called language trips, the combination of lessons in a language school, accommodation, usually in a host family, and a travel programme. These trips are offered for adults, teenagers as well as entire school classes and in combination with sightseeing, intern-ships, sports camps or adventure tours. All offerers advertise how much you will get in touch with the culture and that you will naturally learn the language as you are surrounded by it all day.

But how good are language trips? Do they really give you the opportunity to speak the language all the time and will you really increase your knowledge of that language? To what extent do you get involved with the country and its culture? And as a third point: How good are the services offered by the school and the tour operator?

I have talked to three ladies from Dresden who went on language trips to English-speaking countries, asking them about these and other important aspects. In the following article I want to share their experiences with you as well as deduce tips for planning your own language trip.

which city did you stay and how old were you at the time?

*Brenda**

I was in Weymouth in the south-west of England. It is a nice little city at the sea. I was a student and fifteen years old at the time.

*Lisa**

I was in Bristol, which lies west of London and I was eighteen.

*Maritta**

I was in Edinburgh in Scotland and I was nineteen years old at the time.

Why did you decide to go on a language trip? What were your aims?

Brenda

First of all, I wanted to learn the language and get to know the culture of England. I also wanted to meet new people and spend a nice time with other youngsters.

Lisa

I did it in preparation for the entry test at TU Dresden. I could express myself in everyday English but wanted to reach a higher level of the language.

Maritta

Same with me. After I had not been abroad for one year, I wanted to brush up and enhance my English so that I was fit for the teacher programme at TU Dresden.

What did you expect from your language trip? How did you envisage your perfect stay?

Brenda

I expected to be warmly welcomed by my host family, who are interested in having someone from another country and wants to get to know me. Then, of course, lessons in the morning and some activities with other teenagers in the afternoons and evenings, where we also get in touch with locals and have the chance to speak English.

Lisa

I expected to get to know the British and their cultural background better and to acquire language competences that I could not have got without special classes.

Maritta

Like the others, I expected good language lessons, which would help me enhance my English as well as a nice and friendly host family, where I would learn a lot about the country and the people.

How well was your holiday organised by the travel company? Were there any organisational problems or did everything always go well? Did the lessons always take place as planned?

Brenda

I found the long journey from Germany to England by bus very stressful, but there were not any organisational problems. I only had to walk five minutes from my host family to the school, which was perfect.

We were taken to the places we visited by bus. It went well most of the times, but sometimes there were delays due to organisational problems. The youth leaders then whispered secretly but never let us know why we had to wait and just said: "The bus is coming twenty minutes later," or something. Once or twice an item on the programme was skipped completely and we were sent to the beach instead. However, we did not find that problematic, since we found the schedule too tight anyway.

The lessons always took place. However, there was one change of teacher, but this was not a problem.

Lisa

I went there completely by myself by plane, bus as well as taxi and arrived at my host family at 1am. It would have been very expensive to be transferred by the travel company. The way from my accommodation to the school was fifteen minutes on foot,

which was OK. The school and the host family were situated near the city centre.

The social programmes were very well organised. You had to register for the trips one week in advance and they all went well without any changes.

The lessons always took place. Sometimes teachers were ill, but they were covered.

Maritta

Actually there were no organisational problems. However, we had a couple of teacher changes and sometimes social activities were cancelled or the price was changed at the last minute.

The lessons always took place. It was the time of the world cup in South Africa and they even changed the times of the lessons so that we could watch the games.

Was there someone on site who would help you when there were any problems? How friendly and helpful were these people?

Brenda

Absolutely not. The school was not really interested in our problems. They only saw the money behind us teenagers and did not care for our problems. The headmaster's attitude was: "In a couple of days you'll be gone anyway", "I am not interested", "I do not have time for that".

Lisa

In my case there was always someone on site that we could address with our problems. The head-master came out of his office during the breaks so that the students could talk to him directly if they had any problems or questions. He even asked each student once a week whether everything was fine. Everybody was friendly when we needed help.

Maritta

In my school we could always go to the headmaster or the secretary or phone them if there was a problem or anything we wanted to talk about. Sometimes they wrote text messages and asked if everything was going well in our classes. They were not extremely friendly, like in Lisa's case, but always correct.

How good was the quality of the lessons? Were your teachers qualified and pedagogically as well as didactically competent? Did they show commitment with their job?

Brenda

The teachers were OK and we only had native speakers. One teacher was really enthusiastic and put a lot of fun into his lessons, but the other one mainly put his transparencies on the OHP, told us to do the tasks and went around to check what we were doing.

In both cases the level was not very high. Even though I was in the highest course, there was no real communication in English. Instead, we practised individual phrases or read words from flash-cards.

Lisa

All teachers were native speakers and seemed to be qualified. They were didactically very able, structured the lessons well and taught in an interesting way and always seemed to be well-prepared. Sometimes, they even changed their programme to include things that were especially interesting for our class. Only the vocabulary instructor was a bit boring. However, we talked to her and together we found a way in which she could make the lessons more interesting for us.

Maritta

I do not think all of my teachers were qualified on that level. Still the lessons were fine. The teachers took our interests into account and planned their lessons that way. So they always seemed to be well-prepared. Only the

grammar classes were a little bit boring.

Did the lessons help you make progress with the target language? Were you allocated to a class that had the right level for you?

Brenda

Maybe a little bit. But as I said, the level of the lessons was not very high, even though I was in the highest course. So I did not make the progress I could have made with adequate training. I told the school that I was unchallenged, but they did not have a higher level at their school and were not willing to open a new class.

Lisa

Thanks to an extensive entry test at the beginning of our stay, covering reading, writing, listening and speaking, I was allocated to a class where I was perfectly challenged. Consequently, I gained a lot of knowledge. I practised the language in my free time too, since I spoke English with the other students all the time.

Maritta

I also took an entry test and was allocated to a class that perfectly met my level of English. Since I learned a lot there, it became too easy for me after two weeks. I talked to the school and my teacher and they agreed that I could change to a higher level, where I was challenged again.

What were your supervisors like? Were they pedagogically competent and friendly?

Brenda

Our youth leaders were the most problematic part of my stay. If at all, they were in their early twenties and they had no pedagogical competence at all. As a result, the group did not show any respect to them and it was hard for these people to handle the teenagers.

To make it even worse, in one case, they violated their duty of supervision and behaved like immature kids themselves. While we were having a disco-evening in the school premises, they went to a real disco themselves and returned drunk and on drugs. While they were still supposed to be looking after us, they were wearing sunglasses and moved waveringly from side to side.

Lisa

I did not have youth leaders, since I was already eighteen.

Maritta

Me neither. I was already nineteen.

Did your host family meet your expectations? Did they integrate you or did you have the feeling that they just did it for the money?

Brenda

I think they only did it for the money. They had guest rooms with two beds and even a little sink in their house, which was nice. But they did not show any interest in us, i.e. they did not talk to us, they just gave us our food but did not sit at the table with us etc. I had brought them a present from Germany, Spätzle, and wanted to make them for them, but they refused it by saying: "We do not eat anything like this".

Lisa

My host family was super. I do not think they did it for the money but were actually interested in people from other countries. We ate together at the same table and watched TV together in the evening. They even invited me to family celebrations as well as barbecues and introduced me to their family and friends.

Maritta

My host family was super friendly. We always ate together and watched TV in the evening with them. They even considered my room mate's and my preferences when it came to food.

How much did you speak in the target language during your stay? Did your language trip deserve its name?

Brenda

Unfortunately not as much as I had expected. We only spoke English during the lessons but not much in our free time. I had expected to be speaking English with people from all over the world but found myself in a group which only consisted of other German teenagers – not a very useful approach when you want to be forced to speak in another language.

Lisa

I only spoke German when I was talking with my family on the phone. The rest of the time I only spoke English, even in my free time, despite the fact that I was surrounded by people from Switzerland.

Maritta

Me too. I only spoke in the target language. Because of the world cup, we often went to a pub in the evening, where we had to communicate in English. Also, I was accommodated with a Spanish girl. So I spoke English with her all the time.

As you can see, booking a language course abroad does not automatically mean that you will experience all the fancy things the tour operators advertise. The realities differ most dramatically when it comes to the service on the side of the schools, the quality of the lessons and, if you travel as a teenager, the youth leaders.

The host family and the other students in your group are your gate into the target language, since they are the ones you will be talking to (or not) during your stay. If your hosts are not interested in you and treat you like a hotel guest, you will not have the chance of communicating with them and if your fellow students all come from the same country as you do, you will not be likely to speak in the target language with them.

Here I have some tips for you that you should consider if you want a good language trip:

TIPS FOR A PLEASANT LANGUAGE TRIP

Before you book your journey, make sure that the programme includes as many positive aspects as possible. Read (various) experience reports from former students to find out about the quality of the school, if necessary, the youth leaders, the service provided by the operator and the host families. If possible, ask your family and friends about their former language trips.

It may be a good thing to pick a school that is very international and does not only concentrate on the German market, since then you will probably have classmates that are from all over the world and you will be forced to speak the foreign language with them.

If others from your group are Germans, try to encourage them to speak in the target language with you as much as possible. Maybe agree upon an English-only policy in the school premises and the host family, meet for pub-nights where you only communicate in English etc.

Author: Carl Richter

Where have all the protest songs gone?

Jimi Hendrix is not only an icon of the 1960's Hippy-era but is also said to be one of the best guitarists of all time - however when he introduced the song "Star-Spangled Banner" at the notorious 1969 Woodstock Festival, the versatile guitar-god initially seemed to be unable to hit the right strings on his guitar. It caused a disturbing, roaring sound that accompanied the melody of the US anthem. Although most of the listeners were drunk, lying either low on the ground or being very high, they did understand the message: It was not Jimi Hendrix being unable to play properly, but rather a deliberate act of musical expression. The randomly hit strings that ruined any musical harmony were mimicking the airplanes strafing above the villages of Vietnam whilst dropping napalm bombs. It was a silent-loud protest against an unpopular war that nobody could identify with. Hendrix' Star-Spangled Banner performance would not stay the only pro-test song but rather just one



piece of an entire pro-test-song-culture.

Jimi Hendrix at Woodstock 1969

Today, the world is yet again at war. The civil war in Syria has caused havoc and left thousands of people no choice but to become refugees. The Ukraine faces a similar proxy war that Vietnam once had to endure. The eerie resemblance of 1969 and 2015, however, misses on aspect:

There is weed, but no Woodstock.

Has the hippy spirit vanished and the protest song gone unsung? Harvard University Professor Stephen Walt has drawn a dark picture in his Foreign Policy magazine blog:

"I'm ... struck by the apolitical nature of modern popular music ... especially given the contemporary context of two lost wars, persistent economic problems, and widespread contempt for politicians of all kinds. You'd think this would be a moment where at least one or two artists would be writing political songs and attracting a huge audience, and maybe even using their art to inspire political change. But I get little sense that contemporary musicians are shaping political attitudes or behavior as they might have in earlier eras."

Despite the possible demise of the protest song, one has to acknowledge the obvious differences of 1969 and 2015. Although several wars are raging, no draft has been introduced. The Vietnam War was not a far-away battlefield. Unlike the war in Damascus that we may watch on a newsreel today, the Vietnam War was literally at your doorstep when a police officer suddenly asked for your draft card. The Vietnam War did not only directly affect the young; it also killed quite a few of them. It was not uncommon for young men to return home both physically and mentally scarred. At worst one could only return in a body bag. The obvious conclusion: Protesting against a life-threatening war is a natural reaction and does not necessarily require the special zeitgeist of Woodstock.

What is more, ever since 1969 music has created tons of different subgenres. During the Woodstock era everybody listened to more or less the same music. It was "The Rolling Stones" or "The Beat-les", but in the long run it was the music of the youth. The loud "Rock and roll music" parents would complain about. Nowadays, modern music has had several "children" and "grandchildren". The offspring of the 1960's contemporary music of today bears different names, be they "Norwegian Black Metal" or "Jamaican Reggae". This extreme specialization hinders a second Woodstock. The Hippy Festival of 1969 was a concert for every-body, since there was only one genre for the young.

Another point that logically explains the vanishing of Woodstock and its protest culture is the wide range of media platforms on the internet. People came to Woodstock for two reasons: Get high and, if still possible, listen to the music. In 2015 we just turn on the computer and listen to whatever music we desire on Spotify. The hippies of Woodstock had to sleep in mud and dirt, whereas the only thing we have to bear is a 30-second commercial every now and then.

So, Woodstock is a thing of the past, but has the protest song really passed away for good? After all there is the MTV Music Award for a song with the best social message. One of the nominated songs in 2014 was "All About That Bass" a pop song that advocates a positive body image.



In 1969 and thereafter, protest songs mainly addressed the ongoing war and criticized social issues such as the Kent State Shooting. 45 years later, the focus of attention has shifted dramatically. Protest songs like "All About That Bass" fight an unrealistic body image - Ironically, this harmful 90-60-90 body worship was partially created by the music industry itself. Music Videos like "Anaconda" by Nicki Minaj show young viewers a utopian image of the female body by promoting an extremely slim figure and, at the same time, a rather huge backside.

Even though the (song)culture of revolting against certain issues has prevailed, Professor Stephen Walt still explicitly expressed his shock about the lack of contemporary political protest songs. However, there are, in fact, even today songs that address political issues. The crucial difference is that no-body cares about these protest songs.

Neil Young was one of the artists who stood on stage in Woodstock. Two years later, in 1971, he released together with the band "Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young" the song "Ohio" – a passionate reaction to the Kent State Shooting and one of the best-known protest songs. In 2006, during the Bush era, Young published another protest song: "Let's Impeach The President". This time, however, no-body cared. How is that possible?



Neil Young in 1972

The actual reason is the transformation the protest song has gone through ever since Woodstock. There was neither MTV nor any music awards in 1969. The artists wrote protest songs out of their hearts, because they felt they were doing something for a just cause. Nowadays a social or political message in a song is rather a nice-to-have aspect. It is rewarded with acknowledgement by a small audience during the MTV awards ceremony plus the award itself, a small objet d'art the artist can put on their shelf. Rioting and protesting is simply no longer sincere.

The music industry also had its share in this particular development. Having a social message is like charity work: It

is good PR, and has therefore become a mechanical component of a song. It turned into nothing but a checklist, Refrain, chorus and some social message.

During the Woodstock festival, the very same Neil Young who wrote the Ohio protest song allegedly threatened to hit the cameramen with his guitar, because they were distracting him. Consequently, Young cannot be seen on any Woodstock video – in 2015 this would be a promotional catastrophe, but back in 1969 there was no promotion and the music industry as we know it today was yet to be founded. Artists were artists and not parts of an institution that has only profit and thus positive PR on its mind.

Despite the emergence of a powerful music industry, not everything that was invented during the Woodstock era has died off. The chances are, you'll hear Neil Young singing about a "Heart Of Gold" when you turn on the radio. Not only the sound but also the look has survived; people are rediscovering the flower power fashion. However, the rioting note has completely disappeared. People wear hippy-clothes but they listen to happy-go-lucky songs by Helene Fischer.

Listening to 60's music or going on an anti-PEGIDA rally have become two different worlds. Modern ways of protesting differ from the Woodstock '69 version. It is now hip to put on little "refugees welcome-stickers" on pencil cases or share links on Facebook while reminding everybody of the horrific deaths of boatpeople in the Mediterranean.

The protest song still exists – however, over the years it has been reduced to a mere compulsory aspect of songwriting, void of any sincerity and as long-lasting as the ice bucket challenge.

Autor: Andreas Borschke



Emoji - the fastest growing language

Does the rise of emoji spell out the end of written language?

There is no doubt: Language is evolving – we continually look for better ways to communicate and express our thoughts and feelings. As technology advances, traditional ways of connecting with each other have changed throughout time. Personal visits gave rise to letters, letter gave rise to phone calls, phone calls gave rise to text messages and, lately, text messages have given rise to emoji. So far, emoji has become one of the fastest growing forms of communication in history. However, not everybody is in favour of this newly generated language. People are also worried that their written language could possibly die out. Witnessing the continuous growth of pictorial icons. Others argue that these colourful, little symbols enhance our digital communication. They allow us to communicate with each other without saying anything and they support us in expressing any kind of sentiment. Therefore, it is not a surprise that millions of people have embraced emoji and their older cousins, the emoticons. Ambiguous, superficial and cute – in this way, they perfectly suit to the modern 21st century generation. So the questions arise: What exactly is driving us to use emoji? Which impact does this new way of communicating have on our ability to connect with each other, and to what extent can emoji be seen as a creative medium of meaning-making?

For all of you who still stick to letters: a short definition

Emoji is the Japanese style of smiley and stands for “picture character”. Similar to an emoticon, an emoji is an iconic, visual representation of an idea, feeling, status or event that is used alongside or instead of words in digital text messaging and social media. Often it refers to a representation of a facial expression. Some also call them “today’s modern hieroglyphics”. Could the rise of emoji therefore mean that we are going backwards?

The comeback of hieroglyphs - a short history

Our earliest examples of writing come from the pictorial hieroglyphs in Mesopotamia that date back to 3000 years BC. Emoji’s ancient precursor took ages to develop. Travelling through time, we next stop in the middle of the 20th century, when the smiley was created by Harvey Ross Ball, an American graphic artist. He was employed by the State Mutual Life Assurance Company of Worcester, Massachusetts to create a happy face in order to raise the mood of

Brits’ Top Ten most popular emoji:

1. Smiley Face (62%) 
2. Crying with laughter (36%) 
3. Love heart (29%) 
4. Beaming red cheeks (26%) 
5. Thumbs up (25%) 
6. Tongue out (22%) 
7. Blow kiss (20%) 
8. Wink face (20%) 
9. Confused (19%) 
10. See no evil monkey (13%) 

their employees. Some years later then, Scott Fahlman was the first documented person to use the emoticons :-) and :- (. After that, emoji were invented in the late 1990s in Japan for use in early mobile internet platforms, starting with approximately 176 emoji. In 2010, emoji were introduced to the Unicode standard. This is a system designed to support the worldwide interchange, processing and display of written texts of the diverse languages. However, the actual rapid growth can be traced back to late 2012, when smartphones and tablets began to incorporate emojis in their digital keyboards.

But is emoji actually a language?

Whatever the medium is, there are a couple of aspects that make something count as a language. First, there needs to be a wide set of expressions like words that can either be pronounced, signed or represented in some other form. While the English Oxford Dictionary contains, for example, more than 600,000 words, emoji lacks vocabulary with only having about 800 existing symbols and, consequently, cannot express the same semantic range

as a usual language.

The other feature of language is grammar – the ability to combine words and expressions into chunks of a larger unit.

Although emoji can be placed next to one another and therefore provide a simple form of syntax, they can only communicate an impoverished message. So, on these measures, emoji is not, strictly speaking, a language. But still, some enthusiasts believe that emoji have a literary potential (data engineer Fred Benenson set out to translate every line of *Moby Dick* into emoji) and speak of an “descriptive grammar” of emoji by identifying recurring sequences and combinations of them. They consider it to be an organic language as people are making up the rules as they go. Furthermore, it is said that the use can vary by geography, age, gender and social class – just like dialects and regional accents.

Incredible adoption rate and speed of evolution

Emoji is being adopted at a faster rate than any other language. A new British study by TalkTalkMobile reveals that 8 out of 10 Brits are now using the colourful symbols to communicate. 62 percent of the people claim that they are using the new language more than they did the year before and almost three quarters of the younger generation admit that find it easier to express their emotion with these pictorial symbols than with words.

What impact does the growth of emoji have on us?

Researchers have found out that when emoticons and emoji are available, people almost always choose to use them. It is said that the use gave the participants a greater feeling of satisfaction. Apart from this, emoji also influence our mood when we simply look at them. What happens then is that we change our facial expressions in order to match the emotion of the emoji. Consequently, we often end up mimicking the emoji without even knowing it.

However, emoji do not only influence our brains, but also our social behaviour. People are moving away from intimacy and real-life connection as we begin to mediate our communication through more abstract and reduced forms of electronic communication. Another factor affecting the changing relationship is that we live in a culture where digital technology is changing the way we communicate. People are resorting more and more to text-based communications than to face-to-face conversations. Sitting in a café, train or park, you see for the greater part young people constantly dropping out of a conversation in order to check their devices and then entering back in by saying “Wait, what?”

What is to conclude?

Each new electronic technology, from Morse to the mobile phone, allowed us to move further away from our physical spoken and written communication rather than engaging in a face-to-face encounter. Emoji have undoubtedly changed the way we text, but are they changing language itself?

Emoji has become the most popular way to quickly express how we are feeling. With a little creativity, there is no limit to what we can express. The pictorial symbols are expected to increase exponentially across all age and cultural groups. This future tendency is reducible to the great advantage of being universally recognizable because it exploits the visual representation system. Its focus on symbols as a meaning making medium explores the possibilities of iconic imagery across languages.

Emoji should be seen rather as an enrichment to written language than just condemning it as a threat. We have got the question mark and the exclamation mark, which are not very effective when expressing things like irony or sarcasm in the written form. The ability to convey tone and emotion



through text is one of the key challenges of writing. In spoken language, intonation and gesture provide additional information. As a result, emoji fulfil a similar function in digital communication by providing us with a “lingua franca” that is independent of speaker’s native language. And though emoticons may make it easier to convey different moods without much effort and help us to reduce ambiguity, they have limitations to what they can communicate. That is true! Apart from all these seemingly positive features, the rapid growth of emoji might also let us become more lazy: Why type words when it is easier to use a colourful symbol?

I, personally, think that it is not lazy to seek more efficient ways of communicating with each other. In addition, I am convinced that emoji will not replace traditional languages but it will more likely be a tool to enhance interpersonal communication. In short: Emoticons and emoji make us better communicators by enabling us to express ourselves in a fuller, more dynamic spectrum.

Autor: Maria Eichler

Interested in reading further?

<http://www.newrepublic.com/article/118562/emoticons-effect-way-we-communicate-linguists-study-effects>

<https://theconversation.com/no-the-rise-of-the-emoji-doesnt-spell-the-end-of-language-42208>

<http://blog.pickcrew.com/emoji-love-the-science-behind-emoticons/>

<http://www.bangor.ac.uk/news/latest/emoji-fastest-growing-new-language-2283>

URBEXING -

How young photographers and urban explorers rediscover lost places in their cities

Broken windows, rusty pipes, rotten walls - the world of Urban Explorers or Urbexers, as they call themselves. Social media and photography platforms are full of pictures and stories about abandoned factories, derelict bunkers, ghost underground stations and many other decaying places across the globe. Urbexing is the exploration of structures that have been abandoned by humans and left to decay, in order to seek adventure, document the place's decline or in search of the aesthetic of decay itself. It's a fascinating combination of danger and excitement, adventure and discovery. Many Urbexers use videos and photography to share their impressions. Almost every medium-sized city has an online community of Urban Explorers who connect on numerous websites where they spread information about coordinates, safety and ways to get in and out. I talked to Chris, a 23 year-old Urbexer who is a member of a Facebook page called "Urbexer Dresden".

How did you first get into the Urbex community?

It was few years ago when I created my flickr account. I saw all these amazing photos by incredibly talented photographers and I wondered where all those shots had been taken but none of them ever published any of the locations and most even refused to tell people who were not part of the Urbex community when they asked about it so I decided to go find and capture abandoned places on film myself.

Why wouldn't they tell the locations?

Urbexers are very cautious about that. Our philosophy is to be respectful with the place. We don't damage anything, we don't break and enter violently, we don't tag or steal anything. If we publish the locations of the places, it won't take a long time before there are vandals and sprayers in these buildings. We try to preserve them for other people to explore. Besides, if you do your research, you will almost always find out more information about the place in the picture. It's just not for everyone.

Sneaking into derelict places is not only dangerous but in most cases also illegal. What is your motivation in running the risk of getting injured or caught by the police?

It's kind of hard to say. What's people's motivation in practicing the piano everyday or learning how to draw? It's a hobby and something I find a balance to my normal life in. It is an amazing feeling when you enter a building and everything looks as if it has been left untouched for years or even decades. You can virtually grip the scenes and stories that took place there. It's as if the place has a soul and you can feel it as you walk around. I still get that feeling a lot and the pictures I take remind me of the vibe the place had. If that includes the risk of getting bruises and scratches, I am happy to take that risk. I have never had any serious injuries or been caught urbexing, except by other urbexers.

What places do you and other Urbexers typically explore?

Basically, any abandoned building is interesting for us. Actually, an urban exploration could just be a stroll through the park but of course, we are especially interested in structures that are in decay. Factories are always a good start because many have old machines or other equipment left in them that no one bothered to remove. Derelict hospitals are also great because everyone probably has thoughts of creepy horror movie scenes in their mind. But generally, anything goes. I've been inside old residential homes, a hotel, a church and a lot of industrial buildings.

Are there many places like this in and around Dresden?

Yes, there are quite a few actually. There are some really nice old factories, some of which have been secured recently though, so you can't get in anymore. There are also very interesting places in Pirna and other smaller towns nearby. I would say Dresden is a good start for anyone interested in exploring lost places.

Where do you share your photos and who gets to see them?

I started off using flickr but I also use instagram a lot now. Both platforms have great communities with people from all over Germany and the entire world that are very positive and respectful towards each other and all share the same passion. A few Urbexers actually managed to become famous enough to live off their photography. It's really inspiring to see new pictures in the community every day. I also sometimes post pictures on facebook but people there don't seem to like them too much for some reason, I guess because you don't have that much of a community spirit there.

Thanks for the interview!

Author: Toni Stadler

The Life of Tammie norie

Hello everybody, my name is Tammie norie.

Or as other may know me, I am a *Fratercula arctica*. You still have no idea who I am, correct? Well, let's carry on with our guessing. I have told you my name as I am known in the Orkney and Shetland Islands and then the name given to me by ornithologists in the scientific language of Latin. I belong to a family of 22 species of seabirds widely known as auks. I am of a compact, pigeon-sized figure and love to feed on small fish and crustaceans. I weigh about 400g. I am the smallest among a group of 4 species. My three cousins live in the North Pacific, whereas I like to straddle the North Atlantic. You can find me in New England as well as in Russia and in many places in the UK and continental Europe. My coat is white and black like a penguin, a white breast contrasted with black upperwings, back and tail as if I was wearing a 'friar's cowl'. That is why I got the Latin 'fratercula'. It stands for 'little brother' and the 'arctica' because of my home region where I like to stay and live. I have not told you the most important features of my appearance, yet. I am having a striking face. It is remarkable. "The centrepiece is a conical beak of brick-red, blue and cream, much deeper than it is wide and featuring curved, vertical grooves. [...] On either corner of the base of the beak nestles a fleshy saffron-yellow rosette, its wrinkling making it look a bit like a walnut kernel. Each dark eye is encircled by a crimson ring, above and below which are small, bluish plates." (Dunn 2014: 10) For this beak I am also known as 'sea parrot'.

And do not forget my feet and legs which are in an eye-catching orange colour. I might look wistful at times and at others more quizzical. Whatever mood I am in, I might be curious to have a look in another burrow at the cliff where I tend to live. One of these cliffs that hold one of our colonies - because we really do not like to live without each other during the time of wooing a mate, breeding and taking care of the chick until it leaves our home and is gone forever - is near the lighthouse of Sumburgh Head.



That is the place I met her the first time. She had never been to the Shetland Isles before and did not even have any idea that I would be around at all. It came as a shock, as a beautiful and wonderful surprise. She had taken over that tour because she is competent in her work as a tour leader for Scotland. She had a small group with her and a small coach carrying her from Germany via the night ferries up to these Northern Isles nowadays belonging to Scotland. During her career she had acquired not only historical knowledge of Great Britain and fluency in the English language but was able to answer any question that was thrown towards her regardless of the topic. Whether it be a signpost, a special kind of ale, a flower or a tree, she was never short of an answer. Where did she learn and hear about these things? She would reply that she had attended quite a number of courses during her studies which she was using to back-up her knowledge. It did not matter that she could not finish one of her studies due to the work as tour leader during summer terms and then the love towards the work but that she received so much input by these university courses that she started to gain interest in other unknown areas, too. The Industrial revolution, for instance, is not only about the invention of the steam-engine or manufacturing. This revolution also changed the shipbuilding, the jute industry or the various types of mining. There would be a long list to carry on. Putting much effort in her work, she started to explore the flora and fauna.

And here I am. The unknown bird with a clown's face is facing her at the other side of the lighthouse station's wall. Her accompanying guests have the same facial expression as she has; wonder, joy and an open mouth. When she regains her strength, she knows who I am, I am the 'Papagei(en)taucher' as described with the old name as a sea parrot in the German language everyone had already talked about and wished to see while being on this special trip to the Eastern Scottish coast and the Shetland Isles. To make my name complete, in Great Britain I am widely known as the 'puffin'.

Here in my colony we almost interact with the visitors although I need to care for my chick most importantly. After a few weeks of breeding in turns with my mate, this little one asks for oily fish to gain enough weight from 40g to around 320g.

Nevertheless, let us come back to my encounter with this tour leader. When she knew we and especially I were here, her whole prepared timetable would crumble to pieces. It was a warm and sunny day. Nothing was more important to me than having a look around who was visiting the southern end of the Shetland mainland today. I walked out of my burrow, opened my beak, had a look to see if my coat was gleaming and put up one leg and the other. She seemed to like it. So I went on with my movements; now even holding my head a bit to the side. She started to laugh. Now I knew I had caught her full attention. That is what I thought but she turned around and talked to her group. In the end I guessed what she had decided. They would spend as much time as possible just watching us. When she took her camera, I knew from that instant that I would have a photo-shooting session. Normally I tend to carry on with my work: flying off to catch

some fish, but this time I thought it might be useful to stay, too. And that was true. I got her hooked.

She admired my appearance, the cuteness, and seemed to know that I have great hardship surviving in this world. It can be great to keep a distance from human beings as some use our kind for their own nutrition but this time I knew I had found a new friend, one that would start to ask questions about my life, my appearance and my whole upbringing altogether. Our meeting was the starting point in her career to dig deeper into the life of birds. Her love for seabirds was born on that day when we met first and has carried on since then.

And when we, dear reader, meet the next time, I will tell you more about my winter coat and how to find a mate for life. Today I have introduced you to my name and I am sure my tour leader has supplied you with a number of pictures about my summer coat during the breeding season. Nevertheless, I thank you much for your time you have taken, to listen to me and hope you are looking forward to hearing more about my life and encounters with this special tour leader. Her story about how to combine work and studies might give you an insight you might not expect. Her name will stay anonymous for some time.

Your Tammie norie

By the way, if you are interested in further reading, have a look for the book by Euan Dunn. This is a remarkable and detailed piece of work on just us, the puffins. It was published in 2014.

Dunn, Euan: *RSPB Spotlight: Puffins*. London/ New York 2014.

Author:

Simone

Kaufmann

A revelation to today's Indie Pop - K a f k a T a m u r a

From in between ethereal guitar tunes, softly pounding beats and electronic piano fragments emerges a fragile, yet powerful female voice. A particular sound that defines Kafka Tamura's music, an English – German Indie pop trio that has gained widespread recognition all around Europe after having toured with the internationally known Folktronica duo Milky Chance.

Their peculiar story begins in 2012 and is one that would not have been possible without the means of the internet. It all started when Patrick and Gabriel from Leipzig happened to discover Emma's uploads on the audio platform Soundcloud. Intrigued by her voice, they started to send audio files back and forth between Leipzig and Southampton, the singers' hometown. However, only in early 2013

the trio met for the first time in person on the southern coast of England to record more tunes and shoot the music video for their single "Somewhere Else", a video, which as of today has over 150.000 views on YouTube.

Upon being asked about the plans for their lives that have obviously been radically changed by their sudden rise to fame, Patrick who studied music said: "Music was it. Music was always the plan, as much as it can be one." For Emma, who did not really have a plan when the trio first got together, "[...] it just kind of turned into one." Now that everything has gotten more serious, their sole focus has become Kafka Tamura. According to Patrick, there is no time left for other bands or musical activities.



Producing more music and constantly switching locations between England and Germany, playing all sorts of different festivals and shows, the group has started to become more and more established all throughout Europe and gained a broad audience on social platforms as well. Their signing to the prestigious German label Lichtdicht Records in 2014 marked even bigger breakthroughs. With them came the release of Kafka Tamura's single "No Hope" and the planning of their debut album "Nothing To Everyone", which is to be released in the summer of 2015. After touring through Europe alongside Milky Chance earlier this year, they even began to play their own headliner tour through Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Their exciting journey continues after having been signed to 100% Records for the UK. Additionally they will be playing shows throughout Germany, including one in Dresden on the 13th of June 2015.

The bands' name has little to do with the Austrian author Franz Kafka, but borrows its inspiration from the Japanese novel "Kafka on the Shore" by Haruki Murakami, or better from one of the protagonists. Just like the novel, their music transports the listener into a surrealist atmosphere and one is taken deep into the layers of plucked guitar chords and melancholic vocals. The lead singer describes her way of writing the lyrics as wanting to "[...] transport the idea of surrealism into [her] words." Patrick describes their genre as "[...] a form of minimal dream pop. We definitely wanted this surreal aspect to be part of our style." The courage to reduce their music to simple structures and their new approach to a minimalist style drives anyone, who is open to new musical experiences, into an almost trance like state. Kafka Tamura is a revelation to nowadays' electronic Indie Pop scene and, if given a chance, could easily become anyone's favourite band of the year.

Their album will be available on iTunes and their homepage www.kafka-tamura-music.com on the 14th of August. A big thank you to Kafka Tamura for their interview.

Author: RahelWährer