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CHICAGOLAND'S MUSIC MONTHLY
SEPTEMBER 2017
FREE

WARBRINGER ★ MUDDY WATERS ★ MIDNIGHT OIL
NECK DEEP ★ SHOKKER ★ KATIE ELLEN

Hello... My name is
ALISON MOYET

RIOT FEST
The Undercard Preview



Driving Fast

SCORPIONS

22 on the cover

COVER STORY: SCORPIONS

They say you should always err on the side of caution. And *Scorpions* handleader Klaus Meine wholeheartedly agrees. So he isn't taking anything for granted as his band celebrates its 50th anniversary, backing its recent *Return to Forever* album, a compendium of mostly unreleased, unfinished demos from the *Blackout* and *Love at First Sting*-era music upon which the band put modern finishing touches. But at 69, the gale-force barshee is knocking wood that it all goes off without a hitch. "Growing older and doing this, there are only a few bands in our generation out there doing this," he noted in a call last month from his home outside of Hanover, Germany, with Tom Lanham (who is not in Germany, currently - Ed).

Photo by Ian Lairlaw



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HELLO MY NAME IS...ALISON

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America first fell head over heels for Alison Moyet as the front woman of syndpop sensations Yaz (or Yazoo to the rest of the world), her short-lived but immensely influential collaboration with a post-Depeche Mode/pre-Erasure Vince Clarke. From there, the soulful singer launched a solo career, amassing a just handful of hits in the States yet selling more than 23 million albums in the UK right on up through 2017's *Other*. Besides being her first original recording in four years and second consecutive collection to tap back into her electronic beginnings, the singer/songwriter is also stopping by Chicago, which outside of the group's 2008 reunion, marks her first solo performance in town thus far this century. Andy Argyrakis spoke to the legendary vocalist.

RIOT FEST UNDERCARD PREVIEW

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Riot Fest returns to Douglas Park for its 13th year this September. Based on that number, palm-readers may think it'll be an unlucky year for the festival. But this year's lineup is arguably the best ever. With so many great bands and artists performing you might feel overwhelmed. That's where IE comes in. Read Michael Obrecki's 2017 Riot Fest undercard preview:



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SCORPIONS



By Tom Lanham
photo by Ian Laidlaw

They say you should always err on the side of caution. And Scorpions bandleader Klaus Meine wholeheartedly agrees. So he isn't taking anything for granted as his band celebrates its 50th anniversary with its umpteenth world juggernaut, backing its recent *Return to Forever* album, a compendium of mostly unearthed, unfinished demos from the *Blackout* and *Love at First Sting* era upon which the band put modern finishing touches. But at 69, the gale-force banshee is knocking wood that it all goes off without a hitch. "Growing older and doing this, there are only a few bands in our generation out there doing this," he noted in a call last month from his home outside of Hanover, Germany. "But it's only fun when you can deliver every night, and when you still enjoy it. And going back to the United States again, playing Madison Square Garden in New York, coming back to the Bay Area, hitting the Forum in L.A. — so many places that are connected so much with our lives — you do want to enjoy it. And nobody knows how long we can do it, you know? We should have called this tour the Unknown Territory Tour, because year after year you don't really know how long you can pull this off. Because all of us, at this kind of age, rocking out like crazy every night? Hopefully we can still do it for a while." Mention slightly older Rolling Stones, and he snorts. "But The Stones are a blues band, you know? Jagger playing the harmonica and Richards playing his guitar — they could sit on stools and do that, and still everybody would be thrilled to hear their wonderful music." New, especially with former Motorhead drummer Mikkey Dee

providing a thunder-hoofed backbeat, Scorpions members don't stand there idly in concert — they really move, pinballing across the stage like the classic arena-pleasing rock outfit they are. But they'll keep doing it, Meine swears. "As long as young kids keep coming to see us, going, 'Oh, Scorpions — you were great tonight! When are you coming back? I just saw you for the first time!' That's just a great compliment, you know?"

ILLINOIS ENTERTAINER: *One of the most-used songs in metal has got to be your old chestnut "Rock You Like a Hurricane," which is still getting placements in "Brooklyn 99," "Let's Be Cops," the "Angry Birds" movie, and "Nut Job 2: Nutty By Nature."*

Klaus Meine: Yeah, I know. It's cool. We know that in America and in many other parts of the world, this song is a big rock classic. And it feels really good that it's played in so many big movies. Even when Tom Cruise did the *Rock of Ages* project, I think he was even singing it, you know? But it's wonderful for any band, after a long career, to have one or two or maybe more big songs on your list, in your catalog, with tons of use. Especially for a whole new young audience that's watching movies or listening to their soundtrack. That's really cool. Those are the high points in the life of a musician, and fortunately, we have a few of them.

IE: *And you have kids yourself, right?*

KM: Yeah. But of course my son is 31 now, and he works in Berlin for a big record company, Universal Music. He's our guy in the music business, just working from

the other point of view. Which is wonderful, because he's also very much into music and he really loves his job. And Berlin is a great, fascinating city, and it's also not too far away from here where we live. So life is good, after all these years. We're a happy family, and at the same time, we're still out there with our rock and roll family still touring around the world. We still play this global stage, which after so many years I think is a privilege to play in front of so many generations. I think it's wonderful when a lot of young kids are picking up on your music. To reach them with our music is great, whether it's a song like "Rock You Like a Hurricane," "Blackout," or "Wind of Change" — they certainly understand the message of that song, about a more peaceful world, hopefully, in the future.

IE: *You have seen so much in your lifetime. I mean, you were there when the Berlin Wall came down, something you probably never thought you'd witness back then.*

KM: Absolutely. We grew up in the shadow of the Berlin Wall, and it was like, "Okay — this was the price that the Germans had to pay for WWII." It was the way we grew up, and we were lucky we grew up in the West. So visiting East Berlin — which (Scorpions guitarist) Rudolf Schenker and myself did once, when we played a club there in the early days — was a really strange experience. And to see that wall, where so many people lost their lives, where people were shot, just trying to reach out and live in a free world, it was really very emotional for all of us here in Germany when the wall came down. We saw people dancing on top of the wall, and it was a revolution without one shot, with-

out a gunshot being heard. It was a peaceful revolution that came from the people on the street in East Germany. And it was a wonderful moment in history, to be part of it and live through this moment in time.

IE: *What winds of change do you see blowing through Germany today? And are you pro-Angela Merkel?*

KM: I think she's doing a great job. Not only for Germany, but also for being a great European politician. She's doing a great job, but I think the world is going through some rough times, and she is one of the key politicians — the Germans feel about her that, "This is a person we can trust." And hopefully, she'll be carrying us through these rough waters, and hopefully it will be good for a united Europe. I mean, with Brexit, it was quite something, and we feel like these days, when we play "Wind of Change" live — which we just did last week in Auschwitz, which was also a very emotional moment for us, to be up onstage there — we say, "Take a look at the world today. We could use another wind of change right now — what do you think?" And the people go, "Yeeesssss!" And I think Angela Merkel has the right heart for that job.

IE: *While America is stuck with this bellicose, infantile, reality show hos.*

KM: It feels like the world is going upside down, you know? When I wrote "Wind of Change," coming back from Moscow, before the Berlin Wall came down, my heart was full of hope, seeing 200,000 kids in Moscow going crazy for rock music. It was like, "Wow — this is quite something!"

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SWERVEDRIVER
 PERFORMING RAISE AND MEZCAL HEAD
 THU SEPTEMBER 7 / 9PM / 13+

WIRE
 SAT SEPTEMBER 16
 8PM / 18+ WITH NOVELLER

STIFF LITTLE FINGERS 40TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR
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MASTODON
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MIKE SOLOMONOV + STEVE COOK
 OF FEDERAL DONUTS
 PRESENTED BY BILL OF FARE | 6PM | 21+
 THU SEPT 21

afghanwhigs
 WITH HAR MAR SUPERSTAR
 FRI SEPTEMBER 22 / 9PM / 18+

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 29 / 6:30PM / 16-
 CRACKNATION PRESENTS
COLD WAVES VI:
STABBING WESTWARD
 COLD CAVE / DRAB MAJESTY / ACOMEN
 NATION / ΔAIMON / REPLICANT

THURSDAY OCTOBER 5 / 8:30PM / 13-
 SEAN HEALY PRESENTS
CURRENSY

FRIDAY OCTOBER 6 / 8PM / 18-
 AN EVENING WITH
MIKE GORDON

SATURDAY OCTOBER 7 / 8PM / 18-
 [6- / 8] Life 15 Year Tour
MEWITHOUTYOU
 PIANOS BECOME THE TEETH
 STRAWBERRY GIRLS

SUNDAY OCTOBER 8 / 7PM / ALL AGES
 1633 PRESENTS
GOLDLINK
 MASEGO

TUESDAY OCTOBER 10 / 9PM / 18+
TOADIES / LOCAL H

FRIDAY OCTOBER 13 / 8PM / 18-
RAC
 LPX

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 10 / 11PM / ALL AGES
 The "As You Please" Tour
CITIZEN
 SORORITY NOISE / GREAT GRANDPA

FRIDAY OCTOBER 20 / 7:30PM / ALL AGES
BAD SUNS
 QTY / HUNNY

SATURDAY OCTOBER 21 / 8:30PM / 18-
 TWICE IS NICE: AN EVENING WITH
DEER TICK

THURSDAY OCTOBER 24 / 8PM / 18-
CHELSEA WOLFE
 YOUTH CODE / DJ SCARY LADY SARA H

THURSDAY OCTOBER 26 / 7PM / ALL AGES
THE FRONT BOTTOMS
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SCORPIONS

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Hopefully we can all go together into a peaceful future with this new generation." And the Russians back then, the young kids, said, "Ah, come on Klaus - the Cold War will be over soon. There's a whole new generation with Mikhail Gorbachev being in power. And it's going to all be different - it will be a different world." Their outlook on the future was so positive. But to see this turn around almost 30 years later, it's like, "Whoa. I didn't expect to see that in my lifetime!" I mean, we live in a global, modern world today, but we grew up with a wall. So we cannot understand how anybody - wherever it is in the world - can think about putting up walls, dividing the world again. It's like we've turned the clock backwards - it's just crazy.

Award that night for "Wind of Change," which was a wonderful moment for us. And in my Thank You speech, I said something like, "Music is the shining light on a dark cloud, and music is what brings us together tonight. And we should take this into a peaceful future without ever forgetting what happened here in the past. We should always remember what happened here, and never [let] it happen again."

IE: You seem grateful, in general. Are grateful is a good way to go through life. I mean, you actually lost your voice years ago, and potentially your career along with it before you recovered.

KM: I am grateful. I'm really very grateful. Every time I go out there, and I'm still playing the longest encore, like back in the '80s when I did lose my voice. But I was lucky. After undergoing surgery twice, I was serious. And even back then, I tried to

IE: And meanwhile, climate change - a scientifically-proven threat to the survival of



photo by Jovan Nenadic

our species - is being ignored in favor of corporate greed. It's sickening and criminal.

KM: Yeah. But I'm still optimistic. And I count on the young generation, you know, to find a way out of this global mess and make the right moves. And there's a whole new generation of politicians, like Macron in France, that gives us a very good feeling that there is a whole new group of leaders in charge who will make the right decisions for a better, more peaceful world, joining us together instead of dividing. You want to see your children grow up in a peaceful world, and this can be our future. This is all that matters. And it's so important, you see. We may be talking more about politics than music, but as a musician, it's all about coming together, singing together, and being united in the world of emotions and music. And no matter if we lay in the Middle East, in America, or in Russia, it's amazing when you see our fans - fans of music - react to the same songs. Wherever they come from, they react very much the same, because music speaks to their emotions. So it's wonderful to be a musician, and to see people truly united, at least in the world of music. When we played Auschwitz, we received a Peacemaker

make my peace with it, and said, "Okay - even until '82, I had a great run, and it was wonderful. But if this is it? This is it. What can you do?" But I was lucky, and I was carried through by being surrounded with friends. And in the band with Rudolf when I said to look for a new singer, he said, "No, come on Klaus - we'll wait for you in the studio. You do whatever you have to do - your voice will be back at the end of the day." And my voice was back. And when *Blackout* was released, it was a huge success. But for me, with all our platinum records, the best thing for me was my voice was there. I could go out there and sing in front of an audience again, and my instrument - my vocal cords - were working, and have been up until today. So performing for fans around the world: This is the fuel that keeps me going. If you could see it through my eyes, what I see when I walk out onstage when we start the show, and you see all these kids going crazy, there's so much positive energy it's like a huge shot of it. And you just have to appreciate that, you know? Especially after all these years and growing older, but staying young in your heart. It's really a privilege, and you're grateful that you can still live your dream.

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gear



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The new Fusion Guitar is now available online at www.fusionguitars.com for \$1,399.00 US.

SCORPIONS

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IE: What gives you peace on a daily basis? Do you have any rituals, hobbies?

KM: Well, coming home, you want to be with your family and friends, and have a nice dinner. I used to play tennis, but I gave it up a couple of years ago - I had to make a decision. Do I want to run around onstage, or do I want to run around on a tennis court? So what can I say? After surgery on my knee, fortunately everything was good again, but I decided to stop tennis. It's a wonderful sport, but at the same time, it's the most brutal on your bones. Plus, Rudolf was onstage and passing me by, zoom, zoom, running back and forth. So I had the surgery, and everything was good again.

IE: Was it strange, digging into old Scorpions archives for Return to Forever?

KM: There was a lot there, a lot of good songs. And some needed a strong chorus, or a better chorus and better lyrics. And at the same time, everybody came up with new material, new songs, so it's a great mix. And in the end, you couldn't say this one is from the '80s, and this one we just wrote a month ago. And some of the material found its way into the live set - we kick off the show with "Going Out With a Bang," and "Rock 'N' Roll Band" is in the set, and a few others. And at the same time, we go back to the '70s and play songs like "Steam Rock Fever," "Catch a Train," "Speedy's Coming" and all those. And all those - with all the classics - really makes a great set.

IE: One "Return" anthem is "Rock My Car." Are you into automobiles?

KM: I'm into driving fast. When you're in Germany, you can hit the Autobahn and really drive fast. It's one of the few countries where you can go as fast as you want. Not everywhere, of course. But when we come back from tour, we take our Mercedes cars out of the garage and really hit the road, really push the pedal to the metal. It's a lot of fun, especially when you come back from America, where you're all the time in the tour bus, and you drive sooo slow. When you come back to Germany after touring the US, it's like a shock. Everybody's driving so fast.

IE: What credo do you live by?

KM: Well, believe in yourself. And follow your dreams, follow your heart.

IE: Mine is Everybody has an agenda, and it rarely includes you. Get used to it.

KM: That's absolutely true. At the end of the day, you're on your own. And you ride into the sunset on your own. But you're very lucky when you're surrounded by family and friends. And playing in a rock band is also very much like a family kind of thing, because with the band and the crew, you spend so much time together. So being a musician and having a chance to travel all over the world - and really see the world, from Sao Paulo to Los Angeles to Tokyo - you feel really blessed. When you write a song, it's unbelievable how much positive energy you get back. And that's your life, at the end of the day. It's what you're all about.

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