

## **E-mail-Interview with Neal Morse (on May, 2007) by Friedemann Schmidt, a5-magazine**

*Hi Neal! My name is Friedemann (in English you can spell it 'Peaceman') and I am a writer for a German Christian Musicmagasin called "a5".*

*At first: Congratulation to your newest output "Sola Scriptura", which is a great kind of music.*

Thank you.

*Why do you take Martin Luther as the story behind "Sola Scriptura"? What's so important for you, that you spend him 80 minutes of great music?*

Well, a friend of mine (the same friend who suggested to me that I make an album about the Tabernacle of Moses that became the 'Question Mark' album) came by my house last year and suggested I do an album on Luther and, of course, I immediately thought "I'm not doing another concept album, no way" but, after a few months and many prayers I felt it was a good idea. I don't really tell the whole story of Luther; I just focus in on the main events of nailing the thesis on the door in Wittenberg and his speech at Worms and a few other things. I think what he did is fascinating. It's a great study of courage and conviction of one man bringing a great change in the whole world.

I think it's got everything that a great story should have. You know, courage from one lone guy and corruption in high places...the whole David and Goliath thing always makes for a lot of material.

*Every year a new CD! From where do you take all this great ideas in songwriting and composing?*

Not just one a year! I also do a worship album or something as well. This year, I've also made a Christian Folk album called "Songs from the Highway" which is my sort of "Dylan" record. You should check it out! Anyway, I don't tour all that much so I have a lot of time to write. Praise God, I am thankful for it. I find that if you are devoting most of your time to music you can produce quite a bit. Really all I'm doing is just following the leading of the Lord, so if you like what I am doing, to God be the glory!

*Beside your great progrock-outputs, you also create Worship-CDs, which shows your deepest love to our God. It's been different to that what you are doing with Mike Portnoy. As you are going inside the studio to create "Send the fire", you've said, that you just have ideas for four songs, but after the beginning of the recordings you remarked, that God is on work. Is He always the motivation for you to create songs or just for this worship-sessions? And since when is this so?*

No, always. I always pray before I do just about anything. I'm not saying that I'm some major holy guy, I just want to make sure that God is motivating whatever I'm doing, 'cause that's the only way it will be good! Yes, I became a Christian around the year 2000. I say "around" because I was seeking for many years and there was a process going on. I quit my bands "Spock's Beard" and "Transatlantic" in 2002.

*Would you tell us something about your change in life to become a Christian? What was the crucial experience?*

At first I was just being a good husband coming to the church that my wife was raised in. I was a 'Creaster'. That's someone who only comes to church at Christmas and Easter. But, after a while of being around the people and coming to church every so often, I began to feel something. I actually felt something in my body! This was the Holy Ghost! Wow. The words of Jesus began to make sense to me. So, slowly over several years I started coming more and more and praying more and more and soon I was having experiences in the Holy Ghost on a regular basis. It was amazing! God began to take things out of my life little by little that were displeasing to him. Then, my daughter was born with a large hole in her heart and it was very serious. To make a long story really short, God healed her and that drew me nearer as well. I suddenly WANTED to do whatever God was calling for. Then, in 2000 I received the gift of the Holy Ghost full on! It was incredible! So, although there were many crucial experiences, that would be the biggest!

*Everytime when you publish a new CD, the main-critics in Germany say: Forget the message, listen to the music. Is this a problem just in Germany or do you remark it all over the countries where you publish your CDs? And is this problematical for you or do you think, if they hear the music, they will catch the message?*

I sure hope so! There are a lot of people who have received the Lord through these albums kind of an indirect way. I feel that Jesus wants to get His message to people and he'll use whatever he can to talk to them. Even on a prog-rock CD! Some will hear. Some won't, but that's God's job, to draw them nearer. Mine is to deliver the message.

*The Beatles, Genesis, The Who, Yes, all these bands have great influence to your music. About which actual bands do you think, that they have a great influence maybe to the following songwriters or indeed to your songs?*

Yes, all these bands have influenced me musically, that's for sure. The Beatles are like my musical parents. I just open my mouth and that sound comes out. I guess they are probably the greatest influence on my music if I was forced to pick one.

*When will we see you back on German stage?*

I will be playing at Colossaal in Aschaffenburg on May 28th. I hope you can make it. We will be doing a lot of the Sola Scriptura album as well as my other prog albums.

*Thanks for this interview and may God bless your life and your music.*

Thanks and God bless you! - Neal

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