

Ben Galliers

„Life, you sweaty little devil,
always keen to meddle where you're not allowed.“
(„Life, you sneaky little rascal“)

Ben Galliers is British, and you can tell; not only because of the elaborate lyrics and wide-ranging vocabulary in his songs, but also because of his endearing accent when he talks German – fluently, mind you. „When I first came to Germany in 1999 I wanted to get rid of my accent“ he recounts smiling as he takes a walk through Hamburg. „But nowadays I'm happy I've kept a bit of back home with me“

Home for Ben is Coventry, his place of birth, an industrial city with a population relative to Mannheim or Belin-Mitte, about an hours drive from Birmingham. Today, at the age of 34, his roots are an important part of his life. 15 years ago, when he left England for Germany, he just wanted to get away. His ticket to a new life however, wasn't music (at least not yet) but rather sport. To be specific, football. „I was a half decent player and played for Rot-Weiß Essen and then Dynamo Dresden. “. But his professional career in the German 3rd Division only lasted 3 years. „I reached my limit, that was as good as I was going to get“ Ben laughs – especially as his football career indirectly paved his way to music. He used his free time away from the training pitch to teach himself guitar and began composing his first songs. This continued as the end of his footballing career saw him move to Bochum, where he began studying. Music wasn't a serious career-option for Ben back then, but that promptly changed in 2010, when he met his current band members and for all involved it was clear: this could be something special. Consequently, the guys moved their lives up to the city of Hamburg and in 2011 started spreading the word and their music.

Up till now, this has meant playing live, wherever and whenever they can. Consequently, the five friends have graced many a German stage, capturing crowds with their mix of Folk and Pop. And it's not just due to the excellent songs they've created over the last months, but also due to their unique live performance. „We're not a standard rockband, playing guitar, bass and drums“ Ben emphasises. „We like to mix it up and use different sounds in our music“. Alongside the usual rock-equipment there are instruments such as banjo, lap-steel-guitar and double-bass, as well as clarinet, glockenspiel and violin; instruments that help create an eclectic, multi-dimensional sound. „Communication with the crowd is also important for us. We're not introverted, hip indie-types. We like to engage and involve the people listening, especially since the songs are often very personal stories“

„I will teach you all I can,
fables of an aging man.“
(„Harmony“)

And you can certainly hear this in the new songs; Not only on the 5 Track EP released in November, but also on the debut-album planned for 2015. Just the fact that the songs aren't limited to the usual worn-out themes of love and heartache, but are much more about the little uncertainties we all face in life, makes for a refreshing change and sets Ben Galliers apart from similar artists. A sensibility for the little things in life and a talent to capture these in words and music creates a collection of really great songs.

The best example of this is the track „Love Isn't All We Need“, outstanding both musically and lyrically. Based on a simple and catchy guitar riff, within 3 minutes the song spirals into a multi-instrumental artwork, presenting the musical prowess of the band. The theme of the song is a counter to the Beatles' claim that love alone is enough to ensure happiness („All You Need Is Love“). „Sometimes love just isn't enough. There are a lot of

things in a relationship that can get in the way and blind us; obstacles that can destroy even the most loving relationship”.

Another similarly personal song is “Counterweight”, a fragile piece of music, written for a good friend, a very special person always able to straighten things out when needed; a counterweight pulling the world back into balance when everything starts to sway out of control.

But it is difficult to pick out a single song, as each piece has been given its own unique texture – be it the irascible “Calm Seas Don’t Make Good Sailors”, the loving confrontation with his not yet existent roll as a father in the heartwarming “Harmony” or the moving “Doldrum”. “I wrote that song at a time when I was very down. It’s basically about depression. I describe depression as a person, or creature, which comes to visit now and again.” What a wonderful way to make such a painful subject understandable for outsiders.

There are no two ways about it: With their musical mix of catchy and sophisticated folk-pop, the lyrical confrontation with themes outside of the norm, as well as their qualities live on stage, there is no way around Ben Galliers and his band. These guys are going to get people talking. Without a doubt. Live, on EP and in album length.

„Life, you freaky little lover,
living undercover of your weighted dice.“
(„Life, You Sneaky Little Rascal“)