John Mitchell, Kino, in the context of "Radio Voltaire"

»Writing music that is personal to me but that I hope will resonate with people «

These are outtakes of a conversation with *John Mitchell* for Classic Rock Germany, the bulk of this interview dealed with the new album itself and was published – in German, obviously – in CR # 04/2018.



***John*, InsideOut's Infosheet for "Radio Voltaire" cites you as "I was originally planning on doing a third Lonely Robot album. But it was suggested this might be too soon. And then InsideOut suggested the idea of doing this new Kino album." Sounds a bit like Marketing getting into the way of an originally artistic decision?**

(quite a pause, after this a hearty laugh)
Yes, doesn't it? But it isn't as sinister as that. I've spent the last ten years producing other bands – and enjoying this a lot. Then came the second Lonely Robot album and I still wanted to write music. So I was happy when it was suggested that I should hook up with Pete Trewavas again for another Kino release.



Arena went for their own label Verglas Music at an early stage. Kino on the other hand (and Lonely Robot, for that matter) is released via InsideOut Music. What are the PROs and CONs?

To begin with I never had *any* hand in Verglas but I certainly know both worlds. The obvious advantage of releasing via a label which is already established is that the musician can concentrate on his music and kind of stay in "musician mode", without caring about marketing, distribution, without putting the business hat on. It's horses for courses really. InsideOut approached me, as they respect me as a musician.

You really have a *broad* experience, there's Lonely Robot, It Bites, Arena, The Urbane, Frost*, there was *John Wetton*'s band… What of your current activies do you like the most – and which pays off the most if I may ask?

It very much depends. If you're the sole songwriter of an act, I'd guess that would pay more dividends? But I'm not really interested in this kind of things. I'm interested in writing music that is personal to me, but that I hope will resonate with people. Which is exactly why I don't run my own record label – to avoid this conflict of interests.

Which should make it even easier to answer the first part of the question – what is the favourite project right now?

Again, I don't think like that. Every project is completely different and I think and feel about them differently… For example Lonely Robot is the project I'm doing very much on my own. Recording for Lonely Robot I find very much enjoyable while doing gigs with L.R. I find rather stressful, because the pressure is entirely on me.
(thinking pause)
One might think that it is most enjoyable to sit at home writing your own music. But I find as much enjoyability in collaborating with other people on their music. And just playing guitar in Arena is really fun as well!

What do I find MOST enjoyable? To be honest with you, probably going sailing!

»I really don't like the term Neoprog«

**Is it OK to close up with a rather historical question? You had the Seventies and in Progressive Rock you had the Big Five (Yes, Pink Floyd, Genesis, ELP, King Crimson). And then there was Neoprog. Lots of the music you have been involved with, has or could've been labelled "Neoprog". Is that acceptable?
And if so – what were you up to? It's often claimed that the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal (NWOBHM) was a sort of movement of bands determined to do things differently. Does this prove true for "Neoprog" as well?**

Those are just taglines the press invented! For example Def Leppard, Saxon and Iron Maiden have *nothing* in common except for coming up with music with guitars in it at roughly the same time.

In the case of “Neoprog” – you know, Pallas came along and Pendragon came along and they created some Progressive Rock music. And of course Marillion appeared and got likened to Genesis. But I don’t think they are any closer to each other than the “NWOBHM bands” are. I have the same difficulty with this as with people, comparing It Bites to Frost* or comparing Lonely Robot to Kino. I really don’t think that the music I make relates as a whole to the bands associated with Neoprog. If people call my music Pop, I’m not having trouble with it, but I really don’t like the term Neoprog.

Thank you very much for putting this straight!

Surftipps zu Kino:
Facebook Kino
Facebook (John Christian Mitchell)
Rezension zu “Radio Voltaire”
Full interview (German) concentrating on the new album
Twitter Kino
Twitter John Mitchell
Homepage John Mitchell
YouTube
Wikipedia (EN)
All english interviews on BetreutesProggen.de