

Far East Russia Part II

Hello again and yes I have survived the second leg of our Russian invasion. I must admit that the title of this blog is wrong. We didn't visit the far east this time. We went from Krashnodar by the Black Sea north to Volgograd and then Vladimir. So this time it wasn't as much traveling as last week, but still a lot, - mind you!

Day One! Straight flight from Oslo to Moscow (no Torp Airport disaster). We had to change airports in Moscow, and if someone thinks that this should be an easy task, well think again.! We had seven hours to do this and still we nearly missed our flight to Krashnodar. In the middle of the day the traffic in Moscow is just undescrivable. Well one word should do it really - STILL. We were basically stuck and as the hours passed by our Russian guide decided that we would have to find the nearest trainstation to reach the airport in time. And so we did (pheuh!).

This wise decision of our "dear" guide turned out to be the only thing he did right during the whole tour. I will spare him mentioning his name,- but his misery started already while taking a quick bite of something as we were waiting for the plane to leave. I was sitting quite at ease just minding my own thoughts and my cold beer when I heard this strange noise (tra-ti-klirr crash-kru) as something bounced across the table and landed on the floor beside me. As I looked down I faced a set of teeth grinning back at me. I looked up to our guy who sat there with his eyes wide open and his lips all turned inwards. His eyes were begging me to do something to avoid scandal. And as noone else had been a witness to this comedy I moved my bag to cover up and secretly reached down, picked up the pair of teeth and handed them over wrapped up in a napkin. Obviously he was very thankful for this and I have to say that noone deserves to be a laughing-stock at any time or anywhere (not even the worlds worst tour-guide). Our dear guide hardly spoke a word in English and his German was worse than mine. We soon learned that we were best off by simply ignoring him.

Day Two! After spending the night in what probably is the worst pig-sty (oh sorry - hotel) I have ever seen or experienced we went to do what we do best,- soundcheck - and then showtime! The concert-hall was fine. We had a full house and everybody was happy. Finally something positiv,- Yeah!!! After the show we had to drive for about three hours in a bus to catch the Night-train to Volgograd. No my friends... not because of heavy traffic. The Russian promoter (also the worst in world-history) had delayed getting our tickets, and as a result there was no space for us from Krashnodar. We actually had to race with the train and beat it by few minutes couple of stops ahead. What a disaster... And as always I had trouble sleeping.

Day three! We made the decision to take a quick check in at our hotel and then go straight to the "venue" for a sound-check, and then we could rest at the hotel before the show. In most cases we do our checks as close to the gig as possible. I guess some higher authority whispered in our ears to do this, because without it, there would have been no show. The "venue" turned out to be a restaurant with a tiny-tiny stage 30 cm high. With five meters across the room to the bar and the crowd of 100 (wich was the capacity) spread out on the sides. We came to this place in three cars and Mr Hensley came in the last one. I said to our crew that I would take a step outside, sort of to avoid witnessing his outburst as he faced the "venue". We all believed that he would cancel, but what do you know... We decided to make what we could out of the situation and do a restaurant gig for these 100 persons who had paid 150 euros each (Mafia-gig again).

There is a saying that goes,- If it doesn't kill you - it will only make you stronger. Wich was most certainly the case for this gig. As always we managed to get through it, and by thus - yes we get stronger every day. But give us the benefit of a doubt my friends. We are quite happy to do small gigs like this, but we must be prepared for it. Our "dear" Russian promoter had said to the club owner that Hensley had accepted the locations after seeing pictures by mail. But he was just lying of course and that was not his first lie, nor his last

Day four! Took a flight to Moscow and then a 4-5 hours drive by bus (a good one) to Vladimir. We had a day off and boy did we deserve what we got... A real - Grand High-Class Hotel on the outskirts of town. It was like coming to heaven after a too long visit to Hell. We came in late that evening. Had some drinks at the bar and had a good nights sleep.

Day five! The venue was great (and we needed that after our last fiasco!). Good stage - big theater hall and a good crowd as well. And whoops - again we enjoy ourselves and deliver a good show. We had our little farewell seremoni at our residence before going to sleep. Ken would leave early next morning so we hugged each other and agreed that this tour was perhaps a case of the worst organisation ever! But that we had once again conquered and that we should be proud of that!

Day six! (the long awaited journey home). Not often have I seen a bunch of musicians so eager to get off the road and head straight home as soon as... yesterday?. Flight home was perfect and once again - not one bad word about Airoflot,- just as good as any. Cheerz to that !!!

In general! I really didn't mean to complain as much as I see I have done. Well what the hell. this was a bad tour in the sence that the organizing and guidance were like shit. The gigs are always fun and we deliver just as we should, each

and every time and sometimes under misterious circumstances.

Rarities! Russians can not make Irish Coffee - Russians do not know what scrambled egggs are and their fried eggs are not fried at all. And how little they do smile...what is that all about. But... the Russians do know how to keep things clean! Streets - Railway stations Public places...you name it. And we did not see one single tagging anywhere. Now there is a big lesson to be learned. This only proves to me that Non-Tolerance can work. I do not want to go back to the middle ages but seriously...the way we here in the West let violence and crimes rule our daily lifes is beyond my understanding. I mean Shit! A murderer has more comfort and in some cases more rights then an elderly staying at an institution, after having served the community for all his grown-up life. Obs !!! Sorry 'bout that. I should keep my mind focused on music not politics. But sometimes I do get carried away. There is just so much unjustice in this world - isn't it ?

More before Christmas - I promise...