

De-Phazz: Luck You!

The cover speaks for itself: this is a protest album. It protests against discord, narrow-mindedness and bad moods. 'Luck You!', De-Phazz's 20th studio album, encapsulates the essence of Germany's most important export in terms of intelligent lounge entertainment music. There is no division or separation here, but rather everything is brought together in a groovy coexistence: soul and jazz, dub and pop, hip hop and operetta, profundity and profundity. Relax for a moment, be kind to each other, is the message. In short: Luck You! Make yourselves happy!

As befits a protest record, De-Phazz has reinvented itself to a certain extent. The album could actually have been called 'Bandmade', reveals chief conceptualist Pit Baumgartner. 'This is the De-Phazz studio album with the greatest band influence,' explains the sample specialist and sound montage virtuoso. Most of the tracks on 'Luck You!' were created in close collaboration between Baumgartner and his long-time instrumental accomplices Ulf Kleiner (piano, Rhodes), Marcus Bartelt (saxophone, bass clarinet) and Oli Rubow (drums). The motto was: fewer collages like on the 2024 masterpiece 'Pit Sounds', but more handmade music.

However, De-Phazz loses none of its playfulness and wit. Quite the contrary. Luck You! also features catchy tunes that, like the million-streamed global hit Mambo Craze, will stick in your head. Take 'My Turntable Is Unable,' sung by Sandie Wollasch, which, contrary to rumours, does not deal with any work-related trauma from Pit Baumgartner's time as a DJ. Or the track 'Available for Headlines,' which is about lost ideals and the dark side of the attention economy.

As casually light as the numbers may seem, they are full of allusive depth. Jazz is always the trump card here. For example, in the elegant low-pitched lines that Marcus Bartelt plays on baritone saxophone and bass clarinet in 'Serenade to Go' and the title track 'Luck You!'. Or in 'Sketches of Rain,' in which Joo Kraus lets his muted trumpet wail melancholically over a web of Iberian-style melody snippets, just as Miles Davis once did on his album 'Sketches of Spain.' But you don't have to be familiar with these references to feel a sense of bliss when listening to 'Luck You!'

'I wanted to open the window and let in some fresh air,' says Baumgartner, describing the philosophy behind the recording. This also includes a refreshment of personnel. Trombonist Antonia Hausmann and singer Lotti Benischka, two promising new voices, make their debut in the De Phazz universe. Benischka is reserved the honour of providing an atmospheric conclusion to the album alongside her father Joo Kraus in the yacht-pop-style 'Trenched in Colours'. A beautiful demonstration of how harmoniously baby boomers and Generation Z can work together.

When asked what happiness means to him, Pit Baumgartner says: 'Happiness is something very simple. You can't strive for it, it just comes to you. You just have to recognise it when it's there.' De-Phazz makes it easy for listeners in this regard. In this sense: 'Luck You!'