

## NRC Magazine Article: English Translation

His old carbon microphone is his time capsule. He becomes transported towards times back then. For a moment he takes the listeners along with his in nostalgia drenched romanticism melodies. Gregory Page is a musical time traveler, who shoots back a century with almost the largest freedom.

His music is a mixture of jazz, music from the twenties, heavy French romantic, blues and folk music - all translated into today. „I owe it to live a bit in the past. It's somehow appeasing. Whereas the future is still uncertain, he says. „I frequently think: how can I turn my show more into b/w? That has to be possible nevertheless, with slightly correcting or 3D-glasses?

The American singer Gregory Page (London, 1963) is true of recent developments. The distinctive song writer looks as a minstrel. Shabby chic outfit - second-hand package, tie, cap, thick glasses and a gentlemanly beard, guitar case in his hand. And a significant visiting card: `songwriter, astronaut, full-time dreamer'. A mild poser he is, he is eccentric, his open attitude is authentic.

Those old times return in everything: in old looking cd and Lp-covers (designed following the example of Eric Dolphy's jazz record: Out To Lunch), the old-fashioned small films on Mr. Page's internet side of his adventures („I love the smell of vinyl in the morning")

On the cd Promise Of A Dream he sings with a gently raspy voice about fire works that bursts in his heart. About the dog of his ex, who chases balls in his dreams. The silver dollar in the sky. Deep psychology, home observations, daily scenes get a place in his lyrics. "My old neighbor man sometimes says things and they go right into my lyrics" says Page. „Sentences as `don't dream your life, live your dreams'. I still hear him saying that."

Page gives little pieces of wisdom with a wink. He plants them in carefully built numbers with sleepjes (?) to the tone. The singer cherishes music in which the melody leads, the simplicity of a traditional American song, but also pre-war singers such as Jelly Roll Morton, Rudy Vallee, Fats Waller and Al Bowlly. His mission: to keep their music alive, singing with guitar, piano, accordion, contrabass and a single wind or string instrument player.

Gregory Page lives in San Diego, at the west coast of America. Now he stays on holiday park in Schoorl (NH). Not far from the sea, but exactly even differently in Dutch winter cold. But, Page says, the light falls splendidly on the landscape. There's music in it. And also the grey sea,

trifling in the rural surroundings and even the cold pleases him.

Page is here thanks to a small Dutch label (AG Music) for a mini tour, a continuation of an earlier promotion visit. He definitely seems to find his audience with its acoustic music. And that touches him, he says. Because in spite of fierce attempts - „I even go with my music from door to door - in America he still has no record label that wants bring out his songs. After a single concert he himself sells the records he made. As long as someone listens. „At a gig in Los Angeles no one was interested in us standing there playing. Also a recent show was a letdown. „We wanted to collect money and attract attention on our overseas travel. There sat exactly 23 people in the room.

The interest for Page's music here grows, especially after a performance at VPRO "Vrije Geluiden", he contemplates with light amazement. „After that tv-show got I two hundred cd- orders. I did not know what happened to. With the money I immediately took a new album, dedicated to the Dutch listeners. All seems to go so much more easily, says he enthusiastically. „I am able to establish something here. As a sort of gypsy I linked only with few spots on the world. With the Netherlands I feel a connection. You have open ears, an eclectic taste of music and you are open-minded.

Looking back at his youth he remembers colorful folk music evenings full of contagious music by his Irish grandparents. But at home there was also jazz, by his mother, once singer of The Beatchicks, and her brothers Page learned to play traditional guitar as a child. When he was fourteen the family moved to America. „We followed my grandparents to California. I was told that we went on a long holiday. For six months I still thought that we would return". It makes him a rebellious teenager. He had no interest in education. Page will work. All kinds of jobs, from cook to taxi driver. Music no longer played a role. „Confused time. I felt myself caught between nationalities, no American, a bit British, a bit Irish.

A turning point in his 'meaningless existence' was his in his thirties. The man he considered as his father wasn't his real Dad. „My real father was an Armenian musician that my mother had met as an artist on tour," says Page. „A incident of one beautiful night together. With two musicians as parents I began to reflect. Shouldn't I prove to be an musician? He found his father in Paris. He sent him a one-way a ticket to catch up with his loss. The fire to write songs blazed further on. „I wrote myself crazy, I felt inspired by music of Django Reinhardt and Edith Piaf, and went to their last spots. Those French influences went into numbers as "Bon Voyage Mon Cheri" or `Caviar et Étrangers' where the accordion leads. They are pieces of Once & For All, in the upcoming, again exemplary album that successful singer- songwriter Jason Mraz produced. How bitter: Page once helped Mraz in the saddle, his debut was recorded in Pages sleep chamber. There were more music friends that eventually got a larger audience.

Page let go of a breakthrough in America. Almost idiot given - Gregory Page a star of a caliber like Madeleine Peyroux on the jazz label Verve is possible. But after almost two dozens of albums his new path is clear to him: „I become world-famous in the Netherlands."

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