

Number 1 FAN

Dietmar Kuester is without doubt The Wedding Present and Cinerama's Number One fan. Dietmar, who hails from Hamburg in Germany, has spent thousands of pounds over the years travelling around the world to follow both bands including trips across Europe, the USA and even Japan.

On a recent visit to England to see Cinerama play their debut home-town gig in Leeds, Darren Bugg caught-up with him for a chat...

DB: Well, to begin with, tell our readers something about yourself.

I'm nearly 37 years old, single with...no children! I worked for eight years in the social office for homeless people in Hamburg and changed four years ago to the department for old and disabled people living in public institutions.

Apart from following Cinerama around the world, my main interests are music, travelling, photography and going to concerts. I live with my little rabbit in a flat in Hamburg.



DB: Sounds like you're very similar to me... apart from the rabbit !!! So what was the first Wedding Present concert you ever attended?

DK: The first concert was on December 4th 1989 in Munich at the "Nachtwerk" - I still have memories of it! I was waiting at the venue and met David there before the show to have some records signed by him - he was very nice and friendly even though he was in a hurry! During the concert I stood at the front of the stage and I was absolutely fascinated by the energy of the band - it was extremely loud but I liked it that much, that they became my live-favourites!

DB: How many gigs have you been to in total?

DK: I stopped counting to be honest... I've lost my list, so I don't know for sure... but in total... Wedding Present AND Cinerama... it must be something between 220 and 230 concerts so far!

DB: What interesting places have you visited over the years? What have been your favourite gigs?

DK: It depends how you define "Interesting"... In the first place it's important for me that you can go to a place easily by train or by coach (I don't have a car!) and that it's easy to find a place to stay for the night - which is not very funny at places like Buckley, Norwich or Gosport - or Cleveland/Ohio... which was a hell of a trip by Greyhound coach overnight - and the venue - 'Peabody's Down Under' - was very funny as well. The most interesting was definitely Japan! No doubt about this!

I would say my favourite TWP shows were the Reading Festival in 1990 where they played the main stage. It was the first three-day festival I ever attended. And the Christmas show at the Warehouse in Leeds on 17th December 1990. And not to forget every concert in my hometown Hamburg - these concerts are always very special for me!

The best Cinerama show so far was at the Leadmill Sheffield in March 1999, followed by the show in Hannover where they played the support for The Beautiful South.

DB: What do you think to Cinerama...and what's your favourite song by them?

Not an easy question. But I would say my favourite is 'Hard, Fast and Beautiful' - definitely the best song I've heard for years! It could have been a big hit if it were available as a single, because it really has potential for radio play.

Favourite album? I do like both of them. "Va Va Voom" is great! I like it because it was something new compared to The Wedding Present and completely different - 'Disco Volante' is even better, but I can't tell you exactly why.

DB: What about your favourite Wedding Present songs and your favourite album?

My favourite Wedding Present song is definitely 'Don't talk just kiss' - it's especially my live favourite! Other favourites are 'Come Play with Me' and 'Crawl' - no special reason for this choice! Favourite album? I would say 'Seamonsters' - with the release of this album I discovered the band a second time for myself!

DB: You must have spent loads of money over the years on this obsession of yours!?

DK: I have absolutely no idea how much! I can't even tell you roughly how much money it is. Sometimes I think it's better not to know how much it is in total, but I guess it would have been enough to buy a nice flat or a little house instead!

It's getting more expensive every year, because unfortunately the times are over where you were able to find B+B rooms for ten pounds per night. Years ago I'd have done a complete three week tour in England. I couldn't afford that nowadays. But whatever I spend, although it's a lot, but it's worth every single penny!

DB: You must have loads of interesting stories about your travels around the world?

DK: The worst thing ever was a trip to Grenoble/France - TWP were on a tour through France and I decided my first concert of the tour should be at Grenoble on my birthday! After a long journey by train I arrived there, checked-in at the hotel where the band was supposed to stay as well. After retiring for some sleep, I went to the venue where they should play that night and had a look around in the town centre... Grenoble is a really beautiful place surrounded by snow-covered mountains.

At the venue nobody could tell me anything about the concert, there was no van, no band, nothing - just a guy cleaning the floor! I don't speak any french... and he wasn't into english... not even german... I just got an answer like "concert? here? No!" - thank you very much! So I went to a shop back into town selling tickets and records and I got the answer "No concert - cancelled!" Brilliant! So I had a nice birthday in Grenoble, nice dinner at a chinese restaurant I went to the cinema and saw the Madonna film "Body of evidence" - dubbed in french! Of course I didn't understand ONE single word! What a day!

The next day I continued my journey to the next place where TWP were supposed to play. When we got there, everybody was asking the band "where were you yesterday?" Apparently, the concert on the day before was moved to a place about 20 or 30 miles from Grenoble - and not even a ticket seller was given notice of this !!!

A very bad thing happened after a concert in Hoboken/New Jersey - after the concert I went to catch a train back to Central New York, where my hotel was and on the way it happened: I had a sudden need to get rid off all the drinks I'd had - on the whole way there was no bar open with a toilet. Not even a burger-bar - nothing! So I passed a parking lot with a few trees on it and I decided to have a pee behind the trees.

Seconds later a police car stopped and picked me up and took me to the nearest police station and they accused me of "peeing in public" - it took hours to answer many ridiculous questions, filling out forms and stuff - and during all this I was handcuffed to a bench.

They wanted to keep my passport to make me stay in the USA until the date at court - four days late. But I didn't have it with me. My return flight to Germany was supposed to be for the following day, so they released me and I returned to Hamburg. BUT... a few weeks later I got a letter from the "State of New Jersey Court" and they fined me 500 US Dollars for this! I had to pay this, otherwise there wouldn't have been any chance of entering America again in the future.

But there were nice experiences as well (believe it or not!) - again in America we planned to see TWP in Philadelphia and New York. We arrived quite early in New York and decided to go by Greyhound coach overnight to the concert in Cleveland/Ohio as well and spend the following day off for a trip to Niagara Falls!

So we arrived there, found a motel and went out for a bit of sightseeing. We arrived at the venue with lots of shopping bags and nobody in the band expected us to be coming to that concert.

At first we met Simon and he offered to let us leave our bags in the dressing room where David had a radio-interview! So we rushed into the dressing room with a loud "hello" - and David was totally speechless! Be honest Darren - have you ever seen David so speechless that he looked like he'd seen a ghost? I would pay a fortune for a tape of this interview. His first words of the gig were "Good evening Cleveland and Guten Abend Hamburg!" And I do have THIS on tape !



And another interesting journey was the trip to Japan - absolutely nobody was surprised to see me there in Nagoya for the first gig! I didn't see David until after the show when I entered the dressing room. He obviously didn't believe it before the gig when he was told I was there. His reaction was quite similar to our appearance in Cleveland, but this time not as speechless - just a "I can't believe it" look. I don't think I can shock him anymore!

DB: What's the most expensive trip you've made to see The Wedding Present play live?

DK: Again no doubt: Japan! At that time flights were incredibly expensive, train prices in Japan are ridiculous (two or three times higher than in the UK) and they have a strange system for selling tickets - you can't buy a "round-trip ticket" like from Tokyo to Nagoya and on the way back via Osaka - you have to buy three single tickets for this! Not very funny if you don't know this beforehand. On my first day there, more than half of my money was already spent !!!

DB: What other bands do you like apart from TWP and Cinerama?

DK: I do have a wide range of musical taste and interest. Apart from The Wedding Present/Cinerama I'm very into bands like Underworld, The Chemical Brothers - I also like Moby very much and bands like Sisters of Mercy, Marilyn Manson - even bands like Bush, Live or Fury in the Slaughterhouse (German band). And on top of all these I'm been a devoted Depeche Mode Fan for over 20 years... not to forget Frankie goes to Hollywood... the only band apart from TWP and Cinerama where I'm still some sort of hardcore-collector!

Dietmar would like to hear from fans who want to swap tapes, records, CDs, souvenirs, etc. You can get in touch with him via Orange Slices.