**Album „7“**

**Release Date: Aug 7th, 2015 (Columbia / Sony)**

**Of a bloodless revolution and an artist who has left the coolness-trap far behind**

**The Repertoire Artist**

Paul Kalkbrenner has worked Germany, Switzerland and Austria enough. ‘Now it is time for something bigger,’ Paul Kalkbrenner says – meaning the rest of the world. And why not? The fact that there is an international EDM craze can only be of advantage to him. Of course, Kalkbrenner doesn’t have any points of contact with the genre, but it is beneficial to him that the mass-raves of the past few years have provided a promising breeding ground for electronic music. “All of that music has opened a lot of doors for other electronic musicians,” he explains. “It is all about listening habits: for example, if an American has been listening to ‘boom boom boom’ for ten years, then maybe now, artists who are much smaller than I am now, might have a chance to become successful.”

His booking agency, William Morris, was smart enough to position him as far away as possible from all of the EDM nonsense five years ago and Sony, the label which Paul Kalkbrenner has signed a global deal with for “7”, knows that it is not about incorporating him into what’s hyped, but about establishing him as an independent repertoire artist.

Yes, repertoire artist. A term that is in line with Kalkbrenner’s self-conception as a “classic album artist”. The album is an art form -anything else makes no sense to him.

If you want to discuss Kalkbrenner’s music with him, then you should avoid throwing around reference names. Not that this would conflict with his ego – this man is so relaxed and easy-going, something like that would never bother him. But focusing on other musicians is somewhat strange to him. Instead, he spends all day working on his own productions. After all, it is his ambition to create his own timeless classics.

**Time and Space**

**Time and space is** Paul Kalkbrenner’s mission on his seventh studio album, simply titled “7”. “The last two albums were just tossed together from what I already had from the previous three and a half years, in the case of “Icke wieder” within two and a half months. With “Guten Tag” it was in between tours,” he confesses in a serious and sullen manner. This was due to the staccato of appearances in the wake of the film “Berlin Calling” and his worldwide hit “Sky and Sand”. “Between 2009 and 2010 I had to play a club gig 150 times a year.” There was no way around it but it was unsatisfying for Paul as an artist, despite all of the commercial success. It was clear that he wouldn’t be producing another album that was good enough, but one that couldn’t meet his own expectations. Essential to reaching this goal was the most valuable of all resources: time.

It was beneficial that Kalkbrenner’s shows had become huge, so he didn’t have to do as many anymore. “There are not as many competitors in this field, so there are also less bookings,” he explains. Thus, he played 32 shows in the summer of 2014, before settling down to just produce 7.

*“It was a great feeling to have more space again. This time I was able to go back to an already finished song after one month and even back once more with a bit more distance. If I really have a lot of time then it turns out really well. My production-skills have improved significantly within the last three years. Today, I have everything much more under control. For a long time my music lived on the charm of tonal inadequacies. Now I know how to do it all. That is what happens when you allow yourself one and a half years to produce an album.”*

Kalkbrenner is not familiar with self-doubt. Why should he be? He never had to face anything in his career that would promote that feeling. “My music was always accepted the way I had come up with it. Actually, not having any setbacks isn’t really good for an artist – and so I have to deal with that”, he notes with a laugh.

Although, due to the birth of his daughter, he has recently come to know the feeling, as he adds: “I wonder if I am strong enough for this. You look at the little one and you feel that you now have all of this responsibility over someone’s life.”

The conviction that Paul Kalkbrenner presents himself as well as his productions is only possible because he has remained completely grounded. He and his wife, Simina Grigoriu, have been together for a very long time now. He is very close to his brother Fritz, who also produces electronic music and who did the vocals for the hit-single “Sky and Sand”. And the professional team he is surrounded by (from his manager all to way to the light and sound men) is very consistent. “Stability is essential,” he concludes.

**Whistling in the Name of Techno**

The theme for the album production was spring, Kalkbrenner tells us. He actually recorded himself whistling the melodies first, which helped convey the happy mood on “7. Yes, you read that correctly: whistling. Caught in the rush of letting go, Kalkbrenner willingly allowed himself to indulge in such production tactics. He even let the whistling stand for itself on the second track of the album “Cylence 412”.

The album in general makes clear that Paul Kalkbrenner wasn’t trying to accomplish the goal of pleasing everyone by adding, as he puts it, “two or three compulsory techno-beasts.”

“Now I’m on a completely different level, anyway, so I don’t have to keep trying to make everyone else happy with some alibi song.” The fact that “Mothertrucker” adds a refreshing old school techno track to the album, doesn’t hurt, though.

In order to get this far, Paul had to free himself from the patronage of his techno socialization. Or as he puts it: he had to get out of the “coolness-trap.” Kalkbrenner has left these matters far behind and “7” is there to prove it with love-story-tracks like “Cloud Rider” (originally by D-Train from 1981 titled “You Are The One For Me”), “Feed Your Head” (originally by Jefferson Airplane from 1967 titled “White Rabbit”) and “A Million Years” (originally by Luther Vandross from 1981 titled “Never Too Much”) – according to him, the latter in particular is “almost too corny to handle.”

Producing these songs was made possible because Kalkbrenner had the permission to use the archive of his new label to pick out vocal tracks. A particularly fortunate opportunity considering Kalkbrenner doesn’t like to work with other artists in the studio. This is where he values the state of isolation.

Kalkbrenner talks about being an “old soul” and about having had thoughts about “death and everything we do here, what humans just happen to do so they don’t constantly have to face the truth of the fact that we won’t be around forever” ever since he was twenty years old. However, he doesn’t strive for immortality, either. “That would be the very worst,” he states. “But it could all last a little bit longer, especially the strength. Weary of life, the term is appropriate: it is enough, more would simply be too much. There is nothing else to experience. Just imagine, you were doomed to eternal life.”

**Techno for People from 8 to 88**

“My concerts are filled with fathers, mothers and teenagers standing side by side. That is so great, it’s crazy.” Kalkbrenner just prefers to create techno for people from 8 to 88. Everyone is welcome to him.

At the very beginning of his career this was different. For a short while he thought it was cool if only very few people understood him. But soon he came to notice that his music actually worked better in larger venues, rather “than in smaller ones, where you are eye to eye with the people standing in front of the booth.”

It is true, Paul Kalkbrenner’s music has that certain celebration-of-a-nation momentum, calling to mind Westbam and the very first techno wave that swept through Europe.

The versatility of the audience is mirrored in their different reactions, he explains – and that is a good thing. “How did the songwriter Rainald Grebe put it? The best thing is when in an audience one man can’t stop laughing and right next to him there is a woman sobbing, who then smacks the man for laughing so much. If there is a raver down there smiling with tears running down his or her face, then you’ve made it.”

**Between Rummelsburg, the Brandenburg Gate and the Rest of the World**

As international as the overall aim of “7” may be, the album was produced in the deepest parts of East-Berlin, to be specific, in Rummelsburg, which is even further behind the neighborhood of Kalkbrenner’s youth, Lichtenberg. Rummelsburg is where he has been running a studio ever since 2011 and where he has enough peace to work on his music. He never felt tempted to work internationally. “It’s all humbug. Going to one place for one song and to Rio for the next. Those are the kind of people who go there and wait for production teams to finish their work for them. I produce on my own, I don’t even allow anyone to sit next to me.”

Accordingly, the search for impulses from the contemporary club-scene in Berlin on “7” is in vain – Kalkbrenner is a full-blown Berlin artist and you can find the city imprinted all over his music, but it is an individual inspiration and not part of the current collective farm of the “party city”. He hasn’t gone to the city’s clubs for a long time now – why should he, he embodied them sufficiently during the formative years. He is in a different place now.

While another school of techno celebrated the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall in Berghain with a Detroit-Berlin-Night, he was playing in front of the Brandenburg Gate. “That was the only place that day and I wouldn’t have performed anywhere else,” he remarks matter-of-factly.

Kalkbrenner is from East Germany. He comes from Lichtenberg – one of the deepest parts of East Berlin. He knows what it was like to be in front of the wall and not be able to go any further. For Kalkbrenner personally, the wall fell just at the right time. “Sure, if you were over 30 and were positioned within the GDR, then it sucked. But if you were younger, you still had every opportunity. We still could go to school for the first half of the nineties. I didn’t have to appear on the scene until I was twenty at the end of the nineties and had had enough time to adapt to the new world.”

What does success even mean to such an accomplished musician like Paul Kalkbrenner? Are numbers still important, if you have already sold hundreds of thousands of albums and have played in front of crowds of audiences? When millions of fans follow your social media and your salary for one night is as high as another person’s annual income? “At some point it doesn’t mean much anymore,” he answers. “It is not that you have double as much fun with 5 million instead of 2.5 million fans.”

Paul Kalkbrenner Live – Summer 2015

June 13th Russia | Moskau - Space

June 19th Germany | Neuhausen ob Eck - Southside

June 20th Netherlands | Eindhoven - We Are Electric

June 21st Germany | Scheeßel - Hurricane

June 26th France | Paris - Solidays

June 28th France | Marmande - Garorock

July 10th Belgium | Liège - Les Ardentes

July 26th Belgium | Boom - Tomorrowland

Aug. 2nd France | Argeles Sur Mer - Platja Festival

Aug. 8th  Spain | Almeria - Dreambeach Villaricos

Aug. 9th Italy | Gallipoli - Parco Gondar (SHOW)

Aug. 20th France | Charleville - Cabaret Vert

Aug. 21st France | Marseille - Positiv Festival

Aug. 27th Portugal | Montermo-o-Velho- Festival Forte

Aug. 29th Switzerland | Zurich - Zurich Open Air

Sept. 5th Italy | Treviso - Home Festival

Sept. 6th Ireland | Stradbally, Co. Laois Electric Picnic Festival

*7* can be pre-ordered here: <http://hyperurl.co/PK7>

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