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The Big Interview: Katja Rieckermann



Talented, attractive and sexy, Katja Rieckermann truly has leveraged her assets into an amazing career working with the likes of Rod Stewart, Brooks and Dunn, Arturo Sandoval and Joe Bonamassa. Most recently she appeared with Lady Gaga, Nile Rogers and Raphael Saadiq on the 58th Grammy Awards.

Katja has been on countless tours, concerts, TV performances, award shows and recordings with big stars like Al Green, Carol King, Rue Paul, Jeff Goldblum, and Branscombe Richmond, to name a few. Katja has performed in front of musicians, VIP's and music fans from all over the world, including the Queen of England!

Recently, we had a chance to catch up with Katja.

Localista Magazine (LM): What are you up to?

Katja Rieckermann (KR): I just performed at the 58th Grammys with Lady Gaga, Nile Rogers and Raphael Saadiq doing a Tribute to David Bowie. We rehearsed for 2 weeks straight almost every day. It was a huge production. That was pretty epic!!! Now I am resting for a couple of days and then I am starting to prepare for a gig with my own band here in LA at [Herb Alpert's Vibrato Grill Jazz on March 10th](#). We will be performing mostly songs from my 3rd solo CD "Never Stand Still" – all originals in the style of 70s soul/Motown written by myself and Grammy nominated producer Jeffrey Carruthers. On the record I had the honor of having some amazing musicians like Arturo Sandoval and Joe Bonamassa play, just to name a few.

LM: What are your current passions?

KR: I have been working so hard on my music that there wasn't much time for anything else in my life.... But besides music I like to cook, exercise, play ping pong and hang out with my dog.

LM: Why do you live where you do?



KR: I live in Los Angeles. I moved here from Germany in 1997. I think, Los Angeles is the place to be for networking.

LM: What's been your most memorable/inspirational gig (either one you played or attended)? Why?

KR: There have been a few: the first one was "United We Stand" 9/11 Benefit Concert at RFK Stadium in Washington DC. I had just joined Rod Stewart's band and had never played in front of that many people before. We also ended up backing up some other artists like Al Green and Carole King during the event. Everybody performed there, all the big names in the industry: Michael Jackson, James Brown Backstreet Boys, Pink, Aerosmith.... the list goes on and on!!! The second one was the Concert for Diana at Wembley Stadium in London on July 1, 2007



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That one was pretty nerve-racking for me because I knew it was being broadcast in 140 countries with an estimated audience of 500 million. We performed Rod Stewart's "Baby Jane" in which I had an alto solo and I was extremely nervous to play a wrong note... ha-ha... it was live TV, so if that happens... you can't take it back!!! It all went well until the last note of my solo where it squeaked a little.... oh well! I wasn't too happy about that one but eventually got over it. 😊

The third one was to perform at the 58th Grammys with Lady Gaga doing a tribute to David Bowie. I was always a big Bowie fan and to be part of that was a huge honor!

LM: What have been your career highs and lows?

KR: After I moved to Los Angeles and I had struggled for about 4 years and paid my dues.... meaning that I had networked as much as possible and went out almost every night to live clubs and asked if I could sit in and give people my card, things weren't really going well. I had no gigs, no money and I was in a bad relationship with somebody that just took advantage of me. I was thinking of giving up and moving back to Germany. Then 9/11 happened and I was even more devastated! All I wanted was to go back home. Then the unexpected happened: I met Rod Stewart's musical director and I got to audition for his band because they were looking for a female saxophonist and... I got the job! That changed my life! I was going to tour with one of the biggest rock icons and make some money! Two weeks into the tour I called my (ex)boyfriend and got rid of him! So, there you have it: from hitting rock bottom straight to the top of the world!!!



LM: What's the biggest mistake you've ever made professionally and personally?

KR: When I first joined Rod Stewart's band and we were about to do a show in Hyde park, this lovely, older lady that had a lot of resemblance with Rod walked up to me in the backstage area and said, "So, you are the new saxophonist? Very nice to meet you", and I said to her, "Oh, thank you!!! And you must be... Rod's mom!", and her reply was, "No, I am his sister!" Oops!!! Faux pas!!!

LM: What's the meanest thing anyone has ever said to you, before, during or after a show?

KR: Another saxophonist said to me once:" You only got that gig because of your legs!"

LM: What's the best thing anyone has ever said to you, before, during or after a show?

KR: The first time my dad said that he was proud of me!

LM: What topic annoys you the most?

KR: When people constantly talk about themselves.

LM: What's your idea of a perfect day?

KR: Exercise, play saxophone, get a massage, take a walk in the nature, have a great meal with good company, play with the dog, maybe a good movie.

LM: Are you a beach, mountain, city or country person? Why?

KR: Well, I like living in the city and be close to some action if I desire some. I love the water (I am Pisces) and was raised near the Baltic Sea, so having the beach nearby is very nice. But mountains fascinate me! So, living in LA is perfect, because I have all of the above kind of close by.

LM: What skill do you wish you had? What's stopping you?



KR: I like helping people and I do it whenever it I can.

LM: What advice should you have taken but didn't?

KR: I can't think of any right now, actually.

LM: What would make you kick someone out of your band or out of your bed, and have you?

KR: Oh yes! I can't stand people that lie to my face! My last boyfriend was a cheater and I kicked him out! Professionally speaking I try to surround myself only with nice people that have a great attitude and are reliable.

LM: What was the first album you ever bought with your own money?

KR: That was "Quadrophenia" by "The Who".

LM: What was the first movie you ever saw at the theater?

KR: Oh my... Honestly, I do not remember.... it's too long ago!!!



LM: What's been your most memorable day job?

KR: Right after I finished school in Germany I moved to Paris for a year to study French. After that I went to school to become a foreign language secretary in French, English, Spanish and obviously German. In order to support myself and be able to practice the saxophone average 4 hours a day I was working part time for a small jazz record label (ACT MUSIC AND VISION) in Hamburg, Germany. During that time, I learned a lot about the industry.

LM: How do you spoil yourself?

KR: A good massage is always great! Or a nice long walk at the beach relaxes me.

LM: What do you fear the most?

KR: I am afraid of heights. One sunny afternoon me and my friends were having an “outing” one of us suggested the Ferris Wheel on the Santa Monica pier. So, we went up there and it was really nice. All of a sudden I got an anxiety attack, my whole body started shaking and I was crying. That really hit me by surprise. I had never been afraid of heights before. I was in a pretty bad car accident not long before that and I think for some strange and unexplainable reason I developed acrophobia after that.



LM: What’s been your strangest celebrity encounter?

KR: I had just lived in LA for a couple of years but had already been playing with Rod Stewart I was invited to a small dinner party at somebody’s house in Santa Monica. There were only maybe 12 people. I was sitting next to a guy in his late 50s or early 60s and we started talking about music. He asked me what I was doing and I told him that I was playing the sax for Rod. So, this guy then started to make all kinds of comments about Rod’s music and we had a couple of differences in opinion. He told me that he also was a singer.... Blah, blah, blah... I had no idea!!!

Anyhow, the night went on and on and when we all got up and I could really take a good look at the guy I thought to myself, “Wow... he kind of looks a lot like Roger

Daltrey!!!”

So, I turned around and asked my friend who took me to the party, “Hey, you might think I am crazy but he really looks like the lead singer from ‘The Who’, doesn’t he?” And my friend looked at me and said, “Because it is him!” OMG!!!

I couldn't believe it! I felt so stupid!!!! I then told Roger that I didn't recognize him and that the first record I ever bought was "Quadrophenia" and that I was a huge fan. Of course, he was very pleased and amused by me!!! I was embarrassed!

LM: What living person would you most like to meet? Why?

KR: Keanu Reeves. I have heard that he is a super nice person plus I think he is gorgeous... in other words I have a crush on him!



LM: Who would be your ideal dinner guest, living or dead, and what would you serve them?

KR: Albert Einstein! I'd love to pick his brain! I think I would make my signature dish... a ground beef/vegetable casserole.

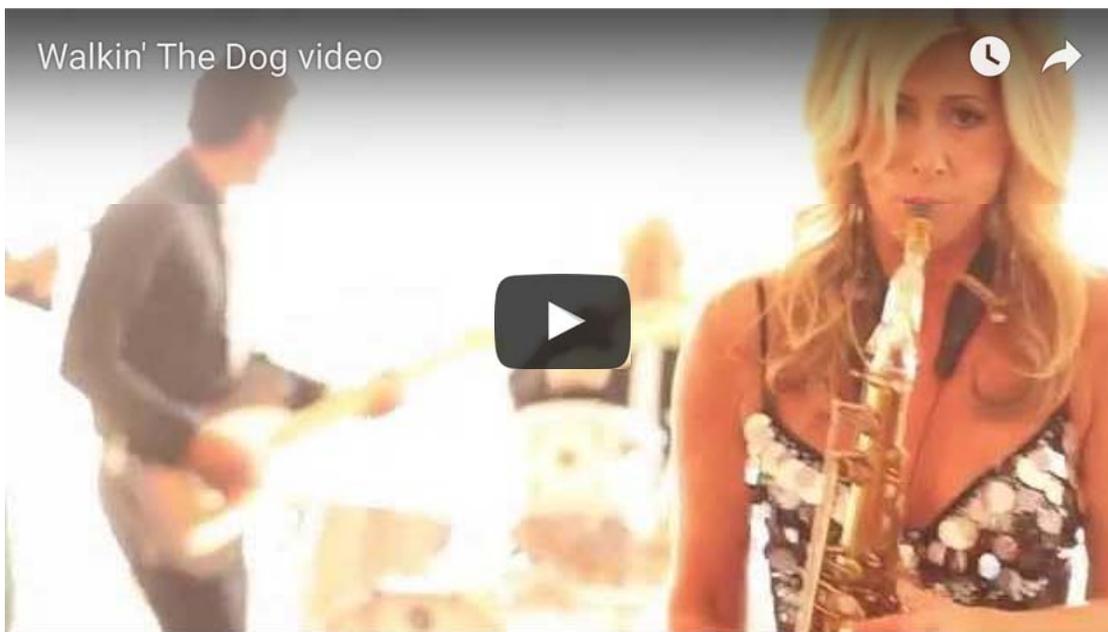
LM: What song would you like to have played at your funeral?

KR: The title song from my last CD called “Never Stand Still”

LM: Is there anything else you’d like to mention?

KR: Yes! I am extremely grateful for my life so far. I toured with Rod Stewart for 14 years and got to go places where other people have to pay a lot of money to go. I won’t tour with him anymore and now I am open for new adventures. Let’s see who else needs a saxophonist. 😊

Also, I will focus on my solo career. I have a great album “Never Stand Still” and a wonderful live band. Please check out the video to the single “Walkin’ the Dog” from my CD “Never Stand Still”



I’d like to do more shows with them, playing festivals or opening up for somebody like Trombone Shorty. I am currently looking for representation (manager/agent).

To find out more information about upcoming tour schedule and release dates see:

- Website: <http://www.KatjaRieckermann.com>
- German Site: <http://www.KatjaRieckermann.de>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/katja.rieckermann.7>
- Fan Page: <https://www.facebook.com/Katja-Rieckermann-260369247331543/>

- Music available both on [CD Baby](#) and [iTunes](#)

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