



ihr wollt in the Darmstadt State Theater from November '71 to February '72, but that wasn't the Petards."

As well as participating in a new run of *Tut was ihr wollt*, this lineup also recorded a single, "Free" backed with "Hand of Fortune"—both songs written by King—which was released by United Artists in early 1972. They fired Ray soon afterwards and Bernd Wippich rejoined.

"From March '72 there was a second attempt with Bernd," remembers Roger. "It was like a second spring. I got along really well with Bernd on stage. We sometimes 'played' each other, and I was lucky enough to include a bass solo in the program. Nevertheless: the really big breakthrough did not materialize. So stop!"

Horst sent out a letter to the remaining fan clubs with the news:

Dear Friends!

Unfortunately, we have to give you unfortunate news. Our last show as the Petards will be on September 3rd, 1972 in Wiesbaden.

We now have been making music for five years without managing to have the big breakthrough we had hoped for. And our hope that this could come in the next few years has become quite small. Therefore—and due to the dissatisfaction with the current situation of the German pop market—we have split up.

Bernd will start a new group, Arno will probably join another band, Roger will design his future as a record producer, and Horst will study mathematics.

There won't be any new records, and the finished new LP will also no longer appear, and circulars such as this one will no longer be sent.

We want to thank you for the work with the fan club, and we would be happy to still stay in touch.

All the best, your Petards

"The last performance in Wiesbaden, we let it rip again," remembers Roger. "After that came a hole, melancholy, it's over now, five years of Petards. Bernd would have liked to take me with him as a bass player in a new group [Randy Pie], but for me there was only the Petards, from day one to the last gig in Wiesbaden.

"After that I was a producer and supervisor



at CBS for three and a half years," he continues. "My studio experience and my contacts were actually very helpful, but were not always used in the company. For example, the band Kraftwerk offered me their LP "Wir fahren fahren auf der Autobahn" [*Autobahn*], but CBS Germany and CBS USA turned it down. So I followed my five semesters of economics and four years later became a tax consultant."

As for the other Petards: Arno Dittrich continued to be in-demand as a drummer. Reportedly he turned down an offer to join the Scorpions, but he has continued to play with various other bands, including backing schlager stars such as Howard Carpendale, Ireen Sheer and Mary Roos. In 2002 he formed a new edition of the Petards, also featuring Bernd Wippich; they lasted until at least 2008. Wippich died in 2014.

Klaus Ebert went on to a long and successful career as a label manager and producer at WEA Europa, Elektra, Metronome, Polygram, and EastWest, working with, among others, the Greek songwriter/composer/author Mikis Theodorakis and the Italian chanteuse Milva.

Horst Ebert never did get to realize his goal of making the Petards the Number 1 band in Germany, but he came close—and from a vegetarian sausage he fashioned a mythical king holding onto the golden grains of time against the roaring tide of a mighty ocean. Horst put down his guitar, completed his studies in mathematics at Philipps University in Marburg, and went on to work as a computer specialist in Kassel. He died on October 12, 2014.

"After the band broke up, we naturally stayed in touch," says Roger. "Five years living together like in a commune, these diverse ex-

periences, ups and downs. It was a wonderful time, five years of my life that I wouldn't want to miss. Arno says we were far ahead of our time and to this day it's "Petards, the cult band from Schrecksbach." •

THANKS to Rüdiger Waldmann for answering my innumerable interview questions and for sharing some of the photos. A debt of gratitude is also due to Anja, who handled the translations from German to English and vice versa. Big thanks also to Syd Kreft for providing expert advice, information, photos and ephemera.

Florian Tennstedt's 1979 study *Rockmusik und Gruppenprozesse: Aufstieg und Abstieg der Petards* was a useful resource for researching this article, as were Werner Pieper's liner notes for Bear Family's Petards box set. All of the original Petards albums were given deluxe vinyl reissues by Bear Family a few years ago, and are still in print.

My attempts to contact Klaus Ebert and Arno Dittrich for interviews were unsuccessful. I would love to hear from them if they'd like to add to this story.

