

Artist: gerdband  
Album: Nevertheless  
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## **gerdband - Nevertheless**

45 years ago, Cat Stevens song "Peace Train" entered the stage, revealing the feel of the early seventies, which had been heavily affected by the anti-war movement against the threats of the ongoing Vietnam war as well as by the hippie culture with their ideals of love and peace. Nowadays, this seems to be a perished time. But, of course, the song is as relevant today as it has ever been. German pianist and composer Gerd Baier, who refers to Stevens song as an "imprint of my personal music history", and who authors all songs of the new album "Nevertheless" by his trio formation gerdband aims for a similar call. Triggered by the terror attacks in the European capitals of Paris and Brussels in 2015 and 2016, killing more than hundred innocent people, Baier's motivation for the album "Nevertheless" rests upon his reflections about the present-day status of our communities. An increasing number of wars, urging people to flee out of their countries, seems to enhance racism and xenophobia in the shadow of a constantly growing right-wing populism. All this, Baier says, adds up to a growing fragility of peace and freedom. It was in 1967, when Cat Stevens came up with the lyrics of "Peace Train", including the phrases: "Oh, I've been smilin' lately / Dreamin' about the world as one / And I believe it could be / Some day it's going to come." It's today, that Gerd Baier labels his album with the subtitle: "This album stand for humanity, peace and freedom." According to him, we should retain companionship and tolerance, committing us to more humanity.

Every single song of the album "Nevertheless" is substantially linked to these ideas. Baier's compositions come out as the elaborated end of his thinking, his memories and his experiences. The album starts with the same-named song "Nevertheless", a response to the terrorist attempt on Charly Hebdo, a Paris based satire magazine, in 2015. The track's character lies in a form of positive aggression, which is intended to be set out against the blind anger gaining ground. Two other songs, "Humanity" and "Lied", follow the same concept. While "Humanity" is a hymn to the theme, "Lied" combines musical motifs of two different cultures, attempting to bridge the gap between those who view each other with mistrust. Other songs mirror Baiers profound respect for different ways of living due to varying cultural backgrounds, his being curios about the world out there, and his attempt to understand others by looking at the world through their eyes. This holds true for the song "Malecon", a reminder of a recent trip to Cuba, where the ongoing rigorous changes are forcing Cuban people to fight an everyday struggle between hope and poverty. Similarly, "La route ancienne" opens up to Baier's second home, a place in southern France, where Europe meets the Maghreb, the latter being the destination of a bygone journey. The song "Wieder und



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Wieder" takes us to the theaters of Russia's Saint Petersburg, where Baier got to know his performing colleagues. "What impressed me most was their stunning dedication to their artistry, while facing tremendous trouble" he says. With "Puppets" we follow Baier to New York City, home to both the most famous and the unknown Jazz artists. However, many of the small communal jazz places are struggling to survive or, even worse, are closing down. Same happened to the Puppets Jazz Club that gave the title its name who had to shut the doors lately. Finally, two tracks point out into the future. "2041" traces Baier's personal vision of the life to come. "The little Robot" deals with the achievements of twenty-first century's technical development, hoping for a beneficial collaboration between humans and machines. The "Outro", a solo piano track, takes us out of the album.

"Nevertheless" is the third album of the gerdband. Once you put the record on, you will want to cling to it, letting the flooding sounds fill in ears, heart and brain. Things starting in silence will bring up a storm. Driving grooves turn into balladic forms. Anthems, made out of poetry, are facing rock related tracks. Melodies, that seem to drop out of dreams combine with seductive rhythms. While being thrilled by the enthusiasm of the band, you adore the intelligent arrangements of the songs. Baier, the storyteller, and his two allies Mario Fadani (double bass) and Dirik Schilgen (drums) share the same perception of what they do in music, and, furthermore, they succeeded in putting it down in recording a fabulous album, that witnesses the vivid spirit of a modern jazz, embracing classical as well as pop related sounds with no need of any electronic helpers. The album's essence is captured by catchy themes and complex improvisations, steady characteristics of Gerd Baier's compositions as we could already learn from his other releases. Coming together with Fadani and Schilgen both experts on their own the trio enables them to draw on their skills, revealing their musical potentials. Another clue to the trios special attraction lies in knowing and trusting each other, turning the average cooperation on stage to a precious, even rare thing like close friendship, an exceptional base to creativity and exploration. As they go, they follow their musical ideas, letting euphoria take over while being simultaneously focused on what is on demand. In sum, the album "Nevertheless" is a joy-spreading piece of music, which will be, quite likely, a long lasting companion for the most of us. Music at its best.

Tracklist:

1. Nevertheless (4.35)
2. Puppets (10.43)
3. Malecón (2.38)
4. 2041(6.26)
5. The Little Robot (6.00)
6. Humanity (11.01)
7. La Route Ancienne (9.17)
8. Wieder Und Wieder (8.22)
9. Lied (6.55)
10. Outro (2.19)

Band:

- |                                                         |         |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Gerd Baier                                              | - Piano |
| Dirik Schilgen                                          | - Drums |
| Mario Fadani                                            | - Bass  |
| All compositions by Gerd Baier                          |         |
| All arrangements by Gerd Baier and gerdband             |         |
| Recorded live at Samplepark Sandhausen by Winfried Leyh |         |

