

# ***THE INCREDIBLE MR. SMITH EXTENDED BIO***

I was born in 1970, the year Jimi Hendrix died. If this has a special meaning, you gotta find out for yourself.

I grew up in a small village in Germany with my parents, 2 brothers and one sister. I got interested in music at a very early age, inspired by tapes given as a birthday present to me from my cousin. One of my first records was "Let There Be Rock" from AC/DC, bought for me by my grandmother (thanks, grandma!) At the age of 10 I got a guitar for Christmas and started taking classical guitar lessons at the local music school (not exactly what I had in mind, but it got me started). With 15 I bought my first electric guitar for 50 DM (approximately 25 €), discovered the power chord and distortion and never looked back ...



My first band was a punk band, called **ZNS** and later renamed to **PLEASURE IN PAIN**. I had spiked hair, dressed in black, moved powerchords up and down the neck, drank beer with my bandmates and had a lot of fun. We played 3 shows (you can't call that commercial success, but I wouldn't miss a second of it) and then split up.

With my next band we verged into 80s indie territory. We called ourselves **MARVEL'S ROSARY** and played music inspired by The Cure, The Velvet Underground and a German band called Element Of Crime. We recorded a few tapes (these were the 80s), played local shows (this time more than three) and a few festivals. We also were the support act for the "Fenton Weills", a cool sixties band from Cologne, Germany and I heard surf and sixties instrumentals for the first time in my life. I didn't know how important this night would be for the rest of my life.



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After two years, our singer went different ways to join a “more commercial” project and we continued under a new name **ZIG ZAG WANDERER** with a girl singer.

Our music was now a strange mixture of 60s stuff like The Velvet Underground, Jefferson Airplane and 80s independent a la Hüsker Dü and Dinosaur Jr. We had some surfy instrumentals (Peter Gunn, Hawaii Five O) and Jimi Hendrix songs in the set list. Strange mixture? You bet, but pretty cool. We released several tapes, played the first gigs far from home and split up in 1993.

I finished school in 1989 and it was time to think about what to do with my life...

First I worked in an old people’s home instead of going to the army. The strict schedule and daily grind of doing “real” work” didn’t appeal to me at all and so I decided to become a “professional” musician

I started taking lessons from Jazz guitarists, and finally studied music at the FMW (Frankfurter Musikwerkstatt), a private jazz school in 1991.

I learned a lot about music theory, played jazz and fusion with the bands **BUMPIN ON SUNSET** and **SUBTONE** and practiced every free minute of the day. I earned a degree in 1996.

I also tried to play in two coverbands . **SOULFOOD** and **JOIN THE Q**. Playing other people’s songs for pure entertainment reasons was not my cup of tea and I soon stopped doing it.

To support myself financially, I started teaching guitar in 1991. I enjoyed it much more than being a living juke box and do it until today!





At the end of my jazz study time, I got real interested in blues.

Inspired by Scott Henderson, Johnny Winter, Jimi Hendrix and Stevie Ray Vaughan I founded the band **DR. BLUES & THE HIP REPLACEMENTS** that played straight ahead blues rock.

We recorded a CD and played a lot of shows in Germany from 1995 to 2001. Long hair, a strat and a turned up Fender amp!

In 1997 I also started my own instrumental project, **MARTIN SCHMIDT BAND**, which later turned into **THE INCREDIBLE MR. SMITH**.

We started out as a very improvisation-orientated band, influenced by Jimi Hendrix, The Allman Brothers and Jeff Beck. Our first CD "The Blues & Some Other Stuff" shows this side of my playing. After hearing Dave Wronski and his band Slacktone in 2000, I fell totally in love with surf music and got more interested in sixties/soundtrack stuff. You can hear the result of these influences on our 2002 release "The Incredible Strange Sounds Of Mr. Smith".





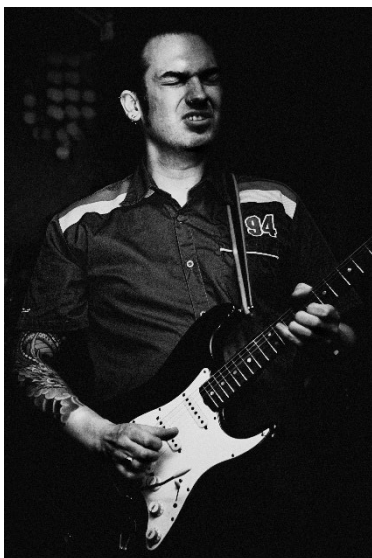


In 2000, I got into writing and started working for guitar and music magazines. After doing some stuff for free or very little money in 2001, I started working for the SOUNDCHECK magazine in 2002 and finally made money as a music-journalist. Wonderful! Since then I contributed to a lot of magazines (see THE JOURNALIST for details) and could reduce my guitar students to a reasonable amount.

But playing and recording music was still my main focus. My fascination with Surf music grew into a real obsession. I learned surf classics, bought a Jaguar and a reverb tank and never looked back. In 2002 I founded **THE RAZORBLADES** with my little brother Stefan on rhythm guitar.

The original lineup didn't last for long, but THE RAZORBLADES are still going strong till today. So far we released 9 albums, and toured in Germany, Europe and the USA. We were featured on tons of compilations and have fans all over the world. Ain't that cool?

My most successful band and my main focus till today. We don't noodle around too much, so now we manage to play 25 songs in 70 minutes. Seems like I've come a long way ...



More things were happening...

- Between 2001 and 2007 I worked as a sideman for the bands **LILY OF THE VALLEY**, **DOUG ADKINS & ONE MORE RIDE**, **SARAH BRENDEL** and **ELECTA WINTER**. I played shows at the "Internationaler Frauentag", in fake Western Cities and even at Christian festivals. A lot of interesting experiences, but I finally decided that I'm better off doing my own thing along MY lines of thinking...
- 2006 I talked my favorite drummer and friend Dusty Watson (who played with Dick Dale, Agent Orange, The Supersuckers and Slacktone among others) into flying over to Germany and record my album "Adventures In The Land Of Twang" with me. It was released in 2007 and got good reviews in Germany, Europe and the USA. Among all the albums I did, it's probably my favorite.
- **THE RAZORBLADES** tour schedule got more intense. In 2013 we played 70 shows all over Europe and the band is my main focus till today.
- I also got interested in jazz again and founded a little trio called **MR. SMITH & THE JAZZ POLICE** and experimented with a band that played only movie and TV themes called **THE HOLLYWOOD GANGSTERS**.
- I started writing books in 2007. The first one was an encyclopedia of surf music called „Surf Beat“, followed by some guitar books called **DER GITARRENHELD** in 2014 and **DER KLEINE GITARRENHELD** in 2021. In 2020 I managed to finish an idea I had for more than 10 years: **THE SURF GUITAR BOOK**; a guide to surf guitar playing became reality, followed by a second volume in 2024.
- Magazines kept coming and going, but in 2015 I started working for **GITARRE & BASS**, Germany's leading guitar mag. I couldn't get enough of it in my 20s and now I filled pages in it myself...cool!
- I contributed songs to music libraries, TV shows, movies and the youtube channel **DER KULTURKIOSK**
- I always liked doing things my way. In 2016 I decided to quit all music schools and open up my own. **GUITAR SCHOOL** Wiesbaden was born and I teach there two days a week without any compromises.
- I also run my own label **GENERAL SCHALLPLATTEN**, book all my shows myself, self publish the books I write and sell them myself. Yes, every order is sent out by yours truly. I build my own recording studio, called **TWANGMEISTER STUDIO**, where I write and record music on my own, playing and programming all instruments.



I guess it's

**DIY TILL I DIE!**

**SOMETIMES EVEN I DON'T PLAY, TEACH OR WRITE ABOUT MUSIC. WHAT I DO THEN?**

- I get tattooed...
- I enjoy reading crime novels or biographies of rock musicians.
- I collect vinyl records.
- I like cooking meals and drinking Espresso (Alfonso Bialetti is one of my heroes...).
- I ride my mountain bike, push some weights at the gym or go for a run in the park.
- I read the paper or watch a movie... The Godfather, The Streets Of San Francisco or stuff by Jim Jarmusch and David Lynch are my all time favorites
- I like gardening.....yes, don't laugh, very relaxing!
- If you still need to know more, do an interview with me ☺
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## ***ROCK' N' ROLL RULES!***

