

# **EXPANDING THE GROUP OF COMPANIES: MOBILE 2, ACCEPT & MORE**

Based on continuous expansion, constant diversification and increasing in-house networking between its individual divisions in 2001,

Dierks' group of companies consisted of :

- the Breeze TV GmbH being the biggest division of the group with its 50 employees covering the areas POS TV, direct marketing, e-commerce and online sales
- the video mobile division with its video mobile units 1 to 4, the »film like« and »slomo« van
- the recording division with then seven studios, whereby Studio 3 was at the time equipped for super audio (SACD) mixes in 5 channel dolby surround sound
- the Breeze Dance Division which succeeded to secure continuous chart entries as well as to constantly increase their artist roster
- the production and music publishing companies Breeze Music and
- the record label Venus Records which by means of continuous repertoire exploitation and the production of new compilations succeeded in establishing itself firmly among major record labels in Germany



# THE SCORPIONS 1973 – 1988

The 1984 album *Love At First Sting*, featuring the hit single ballad »Still Loving You«, catapulted »the Scorps« to the then zenith of their career: 2,5 million copies (double platinum) sold in the US, gold and platinum status almost everywhere in Europe as well as in Japan and South East Asia, territories where the band had advanced to become the most popular rock band of all. In France »Still Loving You« with more than two million copies sold is the most successful single of all times. However, at the beginning, there were a few problems getting the production running: In the spring of 1983, Dieter Dierks had rented ABBA's renowned Polar Studios. Just before production was due to start Herman Rarebell and Francis Buchholz had both fallen ill. Herman brought along Jimmy Bain (b) as substitute and Rudolf got Bobby Rondonelli (dr) involved. But the results were not convincing. The groove and charisma, typical for the Scorpions, were missing. As a result the entire album was re-recorded and mixed one more time at Dierks Studios – this time featuring the original line-up. It was worth the effort. This album contains most of their hits and it became the best-selling Scorpions album of all times and the second best-selling live album ever. The live album *Worldwide Live*, released in 1985 was a compilation of highlights of their shows during their world tour.



# THE SCORPIONS 1973 – 1988

The eight Scorpions albums of the Dierks era can justifiably be considered the essence of the band's oeuvre. For Dierks, too, these albums were the most successful ones in his career as a producer.

While working together on *Savage Amusement* – the last album that was produced by Dieter Dierks – differences in opinion between the band and the producer emerged. As a consequence the production contract was not renewed and the collaboration ended in November 1988 by mutual consent. Drummer Herman Rarebell reflected in 2011: »For the Scorpions Dieter was the right man in the right place.

The more his influence within the band grew the more our record sales increased. This intimacy however also caused contempt because with his growing influence discrepancies between the band members were flaring up. At the end of the day, though, he did manage to soothe all the egos and succeeded in steering the band into one direction.«

It will forever remain Dieter Dierks' credit to have turned an unknown newcomer band into a world-famous brand. At the time they parted, the Scorpions were a musical institution.



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Thanks to the success with the Scorpions the company Breeze Music was able to secure long-term contracts with major American and European record labels and music publishing companies. So, the expansion plans were apt to be continued. In 1985 Studio 3, the biggest studio complex so far, was built. Not only did this studio with its vast space offer enough room for orchestras, choirs and big bands, but right from the start it was also designed for film and video recordings thanks to its mobile camera and lighting rigs as well as its highly efficient air conditioning system. Studio 3 conformed to American mega studio standards. Since all facilities were connected via a subterranean corridor it was possible to switch around and use the entire technical equipment range of all three studios. At the same time the canteen located between Studio 1 and the studio kitchen was enlarged further.



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**In 1986 the Dierks Studios Mobile 1 – which had been put into action all around Europe to record concerts of renowned artists as well as having proved to be of good use for live broadcasts of the WDR shows Rock Palast and Rocknächte – was replaced with Mobile 2. This mobile unit had a computerised mixing console, a state-of-the-art auditory system as well as featuring analogue and digital recording devices and, a big lounge area. In 1991 this mobile studio was used to record a Rolling Stones live album in Moscow and other European cities.**

**Meanwhile big US record companies started knocking on Dierks' door asking him to produce their artists. Among them were Geffen Records' glam metal band Black'n Blue, heavy metal rockers Twisted Sister who Dierks produced in New York and Los Angeles for Atlantic Records, and Capitol Records' New York punk avant-garde group Plasmatics featuring a strident eye-catcher, singer Wendy Williams. US band Mother's Finest recorded a live album with Dieter Dierks as well, using the audio and video mobile with the mixing being done afterwards at Studio 3. The number of internationally acclaimed artists who came to Stommeln kept increasing steadily.**



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Eventually the studio hotel couldn't host that many international long-term residents anymore. Too many wanted to check in. So, in 1986 Dierks bought a mansion with abundant gardens, about two kilometres away from the studios. This was a relaxing retreat for musicians where they were able to »feel at home« during long-term stays and creative breaks. The mansion was also available for rent for studio or hotel guests. Many celebrities stayed there over the years, for example Frank DiLeo, who later became Michael Jackson's personal manager.



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**In 1987, after having finished the Studio 3 expansion, Dierks decided to consolidate the base of his group of companies on a long-term basis by concentrating further on the moving picture side, a division of the company, which had been growing steadily. So far only Studio 3 offered facilities for film and video recording. In order to expand in this field, a video recording mobile was acquired to meet the growing demands. With the help of experts an outside broadcasting unit was bought from Westdeutscher Rundfunk (radio and TV channel), equipped with the latest »state of the art«-gear and transformed it into a giant mobile. Dierks Studios' first video unit, Mobile 1, was ready for action in 1988. In 1991 Studio 1 and Studio 2 were completely refurbished and the technical equipment was brought up to date, which enabled simultaneous production processes of equal rank in Studio 3 and Studio 1. 1992 the temporarily disbanded group Accept got back together and produced three more albums through Breeze Music.**



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In early 1995, quite a few innovations were in store for the group of companies. Rock music gradually had lost its attraction. New genres like techno and dance music became more and more popular.

This type of music doesn't need to be produced in huge studios, but instead small »living-room-style« studios suffice. The Dierks group of companies embraced this new trend by adding two new hard-disc recording studios, namely Studio 4 and Studio 5, in 1995. With its new cutting-edge computer technology, this investment provided an ideal work environment for dance, house and techno music projects.

In order to cater to such new music styles the Breeze Dance Division was founded. Thanks to its sub labels Bionic Beat, Reformhouse and Neuform, Breeze Dance Division was able to cover the entire range of dance music.



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1996 and 1997 the recording studio fleet was additionally equipped with two new digital video mobile broadcasting units. They were 18, respectively 21 meters long, transported on elaborate trucks, extensible in width and equipped with the latest digital equipment, picture direction monitors and mixing consoles. With up to 12 cameras on board they were able to record huge events. They were used for example to record the two Michael Jackson shows at the Munich Olympiahalle. After this, the units came into action to tape The Dome shows for RTL II TV, the Bravo Supershow, the Sabine Christiansen Talkshow as well as the Pope John Paul II trip to Austria in June 1998. In 1997 Dieter Dierks went one step further in modernising his video technology. He bought several mobile units featuring HDTV technology. This technology in short called HD (high definition) produced extremely high-resolution images by using special cameras. This was particularly popular with the technology-affined customers from the US and Japan who tended to order numerous classical recordings. The Kirch Group for example, booked these units for the recording of the Wagner Festival in Bayreuth.



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In 1997 the former engineering lab and the lobby of Studio 3 were turned into a new video-editing studio (avid room) in order to be capable of handling the numerous mixing and cutting jobs that came in. With its avid editing suite, recorded images could be edited, mixed and enhanced with anything the client desired.

During the same year Dieter Dierks launched the company Breeze TV GmbH, which with its so-called P.O.S. (point of sale) TV was set to promote consumer goods via TV screens installed in retail outlets. In cooperation with much acclaimed economist Professor Dr. Hagen Backhaus, Dierks succeeded in securing a long-term contract with the Schlecker drugstore chain, which at the time had more than 8,000 affiliates in Germany, Austria and other countries. The deal involved the constant broadcasting of TV commercials in continuous loops on three screens installed in each outlet. This way the commercials could reach more than two million consumers in Germany alone. For the Dierks group of companies this meant they had come full circle from the production of sound and image carriers to the sale of such, by means of an advanced sales strategy.



# THE POSITIONING OF DIERKS STUDIOS TODAY

Having undergone several stages of restructuring, the Dierks Studios group of company is currently positioned as follows:

- The »Edit-Suite« is used for editing and screening purposes, colour grading, colour matching and colour corrections as well as the restoring of movies... all this can be done in 4K and HD.
- Studio 1 will be turned into a 4K screening room sized 100 square meters with a seating capacity of 30 people. This studio, too, provides facilities for restoration work, colour correction and colour grading.
- Studio 3 combines analogue and digital recording technology. For sound analogue recording, it is used however with a digital surface – solid-state console meets D command, analogue warmth and digital speed go hand in hand.
- Studio 4 and 5 are used for dubbing, pre-production respectively song writing and composing. In these studios ideas can be garnered, notes can be outlined, and the results can subsequently get their finishing touches in Studio 3.
- Studio 6 and 7 will be made into picture editing and conversion facilities, where for example, 2D can be converted into 3D.



# THE POSITIONING OF DIERKS STUDIOS TODAY

Currently Dieter Dierks is working on various film and video projects. However, he never loses sight of his main passion: music.



# THE ACCLAIM

During his career Dieter Dierks produced more than 70 albums, which reached gold or platinum status. Apart from his commercial success this »creative tinkerer« is also prominent thanks to his willingness to try out new things and his knack for technological innovation. In 2013 Christoph Wagner wrote: »Dieter Dierks as well as Conny Plank both made substantial contributions in establishing and consolidating an independent German rock music market. Thanks to the power of their imagination and their creativity these very new sounds were able to emerge. These sounds gave German rock music its own identity. At the same time both their studios served as an »artistic medium«. US music magazine Rolling Stone described Dierks as »the best heavy metal producer of the world« and as far back as 1974 for the magazine Der Spiegel he was already then considered to be »the leading German rock music producer.«

Dierks owns the music publishing company Breeze Music and the record label Venus Records.



# THE PERSONAL LIFE

Dieter Dierks was married twice and has four children with four different women. His second wife Corina Fortmann is the sister of Swiss composer Thomas Fortmann. For many years she was an instrumental part in building the »Dierks Empire«. Their daughter Dominique Schilling lives and works in Los Angeles as a film director and screenwriter. His eldest son, Michael Dierks is an actor who is known for his appearances in several TV movies and TV series (such as »TV Kaiser«, »Schöne Witwen küssen besser«, »Hausmeister Krause« among others). His eldest daughter from his first marriage, Michaela Dierks, works as a TV and music promoter in Cologne. His youngest son, Julien Freundt, works at his father's company as sound engineer, composer, producer, and also as a management assistant. Dierks' mother Ursula who helped shape the cosy atmosphere at Dierks Studios with her heartiness died in 1991.