

AFV ALTERNATIVE FEMALE VOICES MAGAZINE

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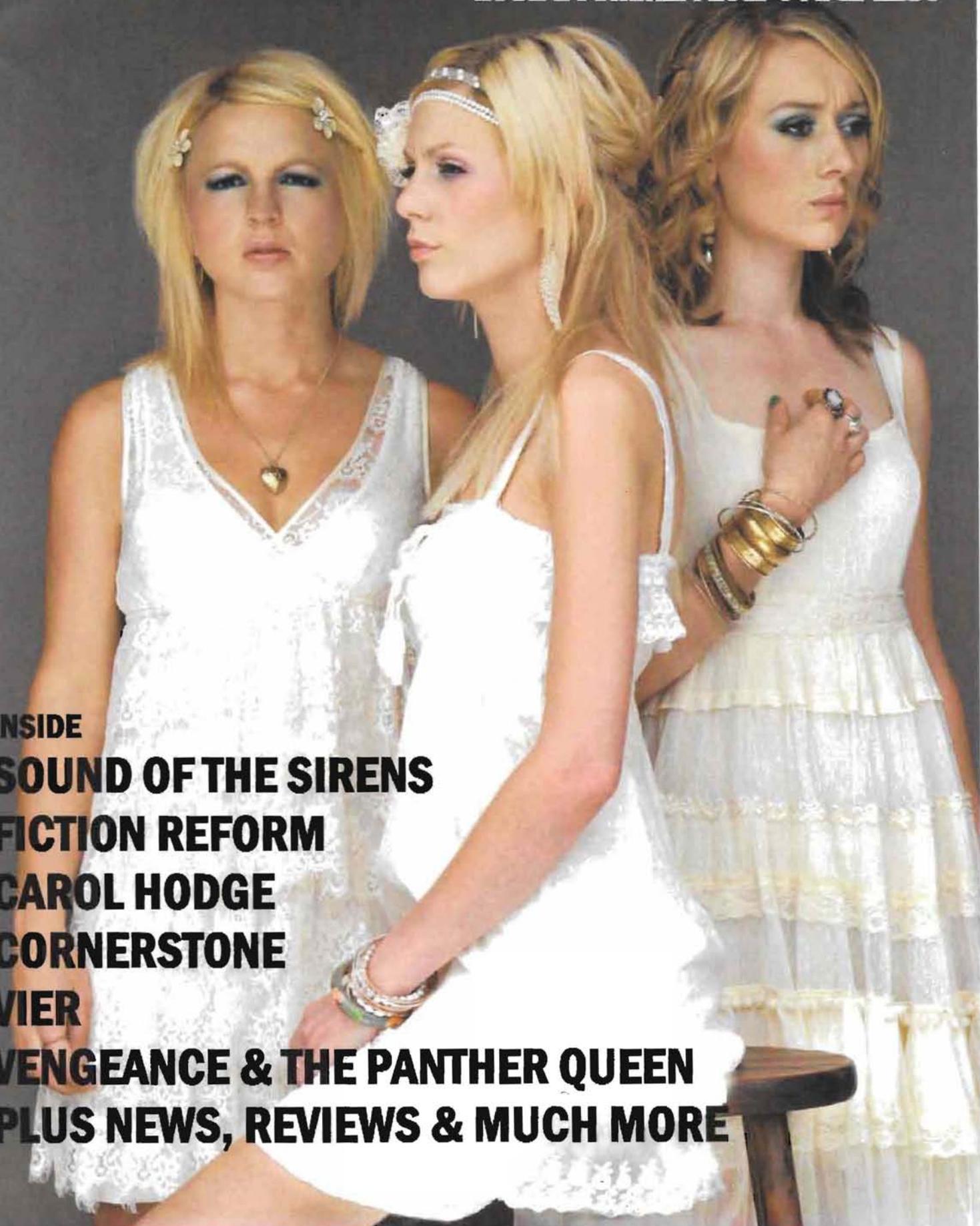
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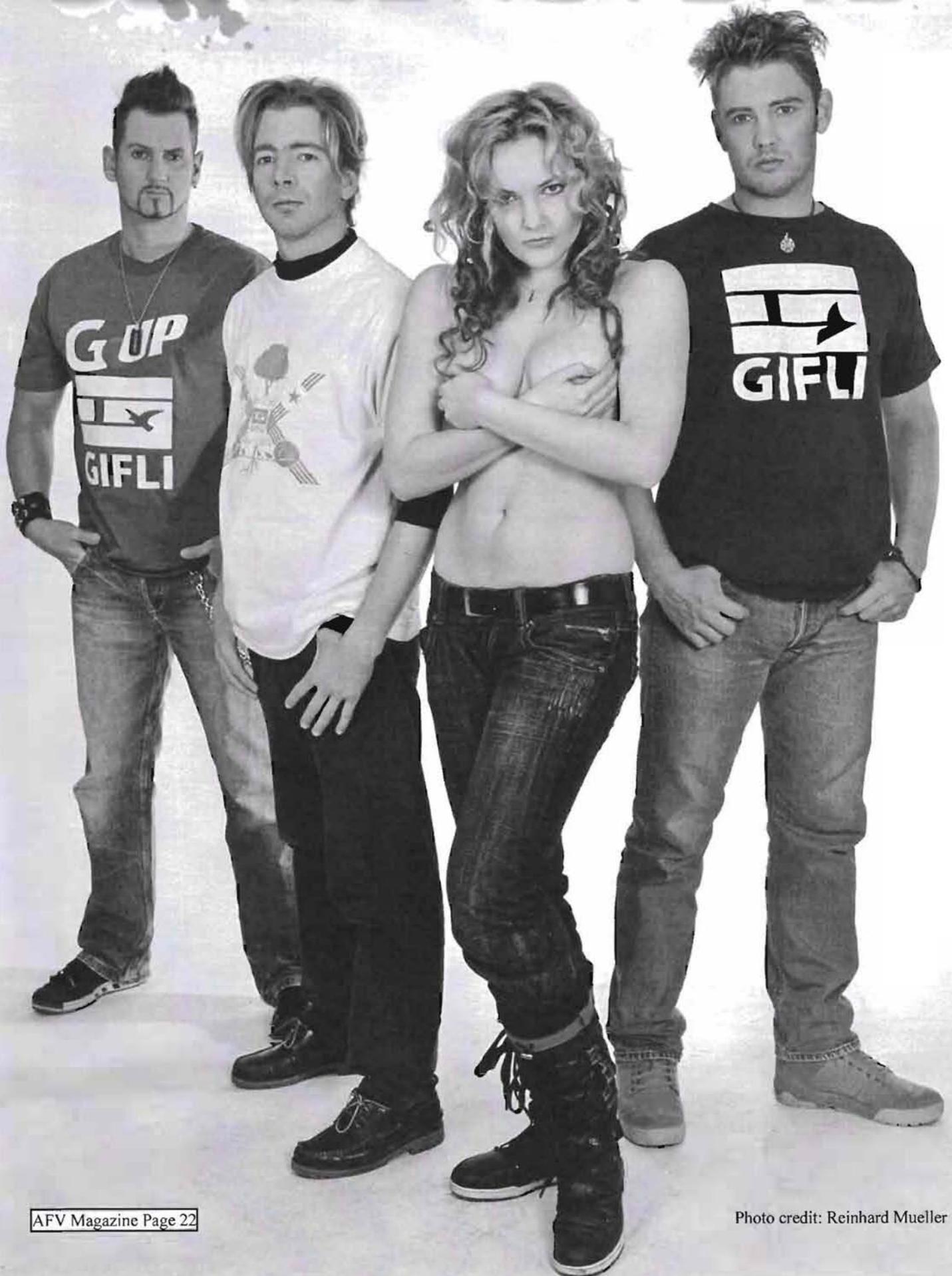
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AFV Magazine interviews Patricia Hillinger and Michael Wachelhofer of Austrian melodic rockers Cornerstone.

Please introduce Cornerstone to AFV readers?

Michael: "Cornerstone are a Rock-Pop-AOR band from Austria, Patricia Hillinger (vocals), me (bass, keyboards and vocals), Steve Wachelhofer (guitar and vocals) and Mike Pawlowitsch (drums and percussion). Musically the band is hard to compare but some people especially in the UK see some similarities to Fleetwood Mac or Journey, which is of course a big honour for us. We are back from our fifth UK tour now, and it's defo always a pleasure to come back every time!"

Could you give us a bio of the band?

Michael: "Cornerstone was founded in 1998 by me and my brother Steve. In the beginning we did some cover tunes... R.E.M., Cure, Soul Asylum and similar. But as times go by we slowly worked some originals into our set and in 2008 we released our debut 'Head Over Heels'. Signed by American label ATOM Records, the album did reasonably well. We did a tour through the US in 2009 and had some very good press response to the album. In 2011 we did 'Somewhere in America', which is a very matured and fine album in my eyes. We shared stages with the likes of John Waite, Iron Maiden's Dennis Stratton, New Model Army, Dan Reed and many more. It's funny to share the stage with the musicians that you have listened to when you're a kid (laughing). In 2008 the band won the Next Big Thing Contest in the United States, and meanwhile radios like BBC played our tunes, which is a big honour too!"

Patricia: "I joined the band in August 2009. This was a lucky coincidence. One evening I was sitting in front of my computer and read an announcement on the internet which said that 'Cornerstone' is looking for a female singer. After a call and an audition I got the part. This was the best thing that could ever happen to me."

How did you pick the name and what's the meaning behind it?

Michael: "We found the name in 1998 before this time the bands name was 'Faith', but this was a bit boring to us, so we decided that each band member should find 10 band-names, and the plan was to choose the best out of these 40 names. I brought in 10 names, Steve 5 names, and the singer has brought one name - all of these names were really, really ugly (laughs). So I checked out my CD collection and found STYX' 79

album 'Cornerstone'... It sounds like something solid, down-to-earth and like Rock. Easy choice!"

Describe the bands sound...

Patricia: "I'd describe our style of music as a mixture of classic and melodic rock. (Michael prefers the expression AOR)."

Although you're based in Austria you're actually signed to an American record label in ATOM Records, so how did that come about?

Michael: "Honest answer... I really don't know (laughing). I was in contact with Dennis DeYoung (Ex-Styx) via mail, and two weeks later we've got an offer from a US label, so I guess he had something to do with that... although we were signed by another label from Arizona first, but the cooperation hasn't worked out, so we moved over to ATOM. We're feeling a big loyalty to this label who has supported us from the very first moment on."

You have a new album out at the moment entitled 'Somewhere in America' can you tell us all about the album?

Patricia: "Michael and Steve, who wrote the songs together did a great job in my opinion concerning lyrics and melody. They are the perfect creative team. After they provided a basis for the album we all came together and rehearsed till midnight to make the songs unique. I am very satisfied and proud of what we achieved with our music. So far peoples reactions to the new songs are always positive.. My personal favourite song on the album is 'Strut'. Not only because of the catchy chorus and the harmony of the voices, but also because of Steve's great guitar solo and the fact that it was created and finished in the studio. It's a slow number and arranged very musically. In short words, simple and unique to listen to."

Michael: "The album is pretty much a reflection of our 2009 US tour. Some things happened there, positive and negative, so this was enough material for a new album. I have to say it's a kind of concept album, we described our feelings, impressions in this big country."

And is it available here in the UK?

Michael: "Of course! It's available at amazon.co.uk, HMV and in all good CD stores. I-tunes, Play, too. So come and grab your copy." (laughing)!

Any plans to tour the UK in the near future?

Patricia: "Hope so!!! We are even considering to move to the UK one day because we like the people and the landscape@!!!"

Michael: "I guess, in July 2013 we'll probably come back for two or three

weeks. I'm really looking forward to this!"

Do you think that the music scene is much different in Austria to what it is in the UK?

Patricia: "Yes! In Austria music styles like classic and folk are very popular."

Michael: "Honestly, I have to say in Austria there is no place for our kind of music. There are some silly German singing pop artists, who sing about their last date, hand-holding with their boyfriend and buy some ice cream. Then there are Austrian Folk music, you know, the guys with the leather-trousers and the yodels, and a quite small heavy scene. But the Austrian heavy scene is REALLY Heavy... Death Metal, Black Metal, and in my opinion most of the bands are really weak. That's one of the reasons why we want to make it in the States and in UK: for the pop-scene we are too heavy, for the HM scene we are too poppy. In UK and US are big AOR-scenes in which our music fits in perfectly."

What would you say has been the highlight of your career so far?

Patricia: "I'd say the Pop Overthrow Festival in Liverpool... We performed in the same club 'The Cavern Club' as the famous and legendary Beatles did. This was a huge honour for me and my band. When we were on stage I felt like being on holy floor."

Michael: "I guess, the US tour 2009 was a highlight musically! Gigwise I'd say the Ravenheart Rock Night in Birmingham 2011 was our best and funniest gig ever. Great crowd, great stage, great sound... perfect! But of course the Pop Overthrow festival was fine, too."

What does the rest of the year hold for Cornerstone?

Patricia: "We'll play concerts in Austria and Germany, for example the famous Austrian Donauinselfest and the Winestock Festival in Neustadt (Germany). In fall we'll do a few gigs as well, and then we'll start working on our new album!"

Finally, is there anything you would like to add?

Patricia: "Yes of course!!! Thanks for having us and thanks to all readers of AFV. Hope you like our music and that you'll join us at our next concerts in the UK!!!"

Michael: "Check out our website www.cornerstone.co.at and our Facebook at www.facebook.com/cornerstoneaustria ...more fans are always welcome. And don't forget to grab your copy of 'Somewhere in America'." (laughing)

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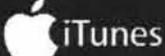
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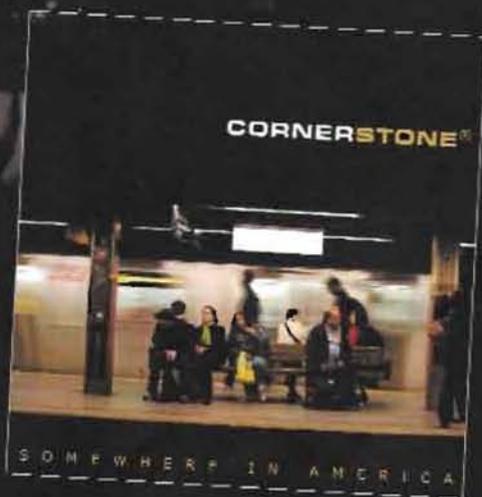
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