

Schöpferische Pause – Creative Break

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The wind chases the ragged clouds across the sky, whistles through roofs and ruffles the hair of the children playing down by the river Ure. Where bends in the river slow down the current, little Andrew and his friends are building castles of stone and holding back the water. It never enters his head that he will long look back to this carefree moment in the North of England.

Today, 35 years later, Andrew is again standing on the bank of the Ure. He can still hear the excited shouts of the children, and the wind is again blowing through his now much thinner hair. Andrew from Leyburn has become in the meantime the well-known children's song writer Andrew Bond of Wädenswil on the Lake of Zürich. He has recorded seven CDs, already sold 200,000 copies of them, and given hundred of concerts in front of countless fans. Very few Swiss musicians can boast of figures like these. Every Swiss-German child knows the songs of Andrew Bond. They are as much a part of Swiss culture as the television penguin Pingu.

Ideas knocking on the door

But success has its price. These have been intensive years, says the 40-year-old singer, and the time has come for a creative break. With his wife Andrea and children Joy and Tim he has been spending the past twelve months here where he grew up, [!] in Leyburn, in the county of Yorkshire in northern England, barely ten minutes' walk from the river Ure. The Bond children are going to school here, and just a few hundred metres from their house lives Andrew's 99-year-old grandmother. "I need these months for myself and my family", he says. Months in which he can get down on paper ideas which have been buzzing round his head for ages and which he had never found the time to get to work on.

In England he has also been able to prepare the recording of the song *Pack a Sunbeam*, the theme song for *Stars Week 2005*, a joint aid project of Unicef and Schweizer Familie. As author and producer he has now recorded this together with other well-known Swiss singers.

Ideas become words and music

In his rented house with the sandstone walls he has fitted up a small recording studio. Here ideas have become words and music. "I am at my most creative when I really have time", says Bond, who loves most to be out in the open, surrounded by nature, taking long walks, jogging, watching birds with camera and binoculars ready.

Andrew Bond loves to be alone. He walks for hours along the banks of the Ure, dabbles his feet in the water or watches the clouds drifting over, just as he did as a child. He is also frequently out and about with his family. The four of them explore the gently rolling hills with their extensive sheep grazing, hikes which weld the family more strongly together. "It is only when we look back later that we will realise just what this year has brought us", says Andrea Bond. She, a teacher, has enjoyed the privilege of "simply having time, and often even a great deal of time". "We are having a great time", Joy and Time back her up, as they skim stones over the smooth surface of the Ure. The children are amazed how rarely English children go swimming, and never in the Ure. Tim feels freer in Leyburn than in Switzerland, despite the homesickness that plagued him at the start. "The year here is almost like holidays". His fascination for English football was also a help in overcoming his initial homesickness.

The idea of taking a big family trip had been in the Bonds' heads for a long time. They often talked about it, and they soon knew their destination: England. One reason, says Andrea, is that she could always sense Andrew's nostalgia for England and the English language. She can express what she wants more quickly than Andrew. "Andrew tends rather to carry an idea around with him for a long time before he says anything about it. That probably makes us an ideal team." And that for nearly twenty years.

Once in England, Andrew came to see that his English was not as good as he thought it was. "It is definitely not my mother tongue." On the other hand, long-forgotten childhood memories resurfaced. Building stone castles in the Ure, for example. Or the tortoise pen on the school playground, something which suddenly sprang to mind as he retraced his old way to school.

Perhaps some of these memories have found their way into one of the many songs that Andrew Bond has composed in England. His fans can be happy: His musical rucksack is packed tight. The first new work is coming out in a few weeks, a CD of Christmas songs, *An Old Star*. This will be followed by the children's novel *Green Pearls from Ulvador*, which Bond wrote specially for his daughter Joy.

Creative slowness.

Soon they will be saying Goodbye. The twelve months in Leyburn are nearly over. But the Bond family know: "We'll be back, again and again". In England they have not just learnt a new creative slowness, says Andrea, they have also learnt to let go. So now they are greatly looking forward to their home in Wädenswil, to relations and friends. Andrew Bond is going home with good feelings inside him. "I had been thinking, I can't go on for ever being the Children's Bond. Now I can say, I want to do the thing that I have done successfully, write songs for children".

In the future however he will more often say NO to a project and allow himself more time with the family. "I have made up my mind to let myself drift more", he says. In 2007, if not before, he wants to spend time alone again. He would like to have at least a few weeks on his own, away from the world, to produce a CD. The ideas are already floating round in his head, like the clouds in the sky in the north of England.