



Germany's Whistling Orangutan Releases CD

German Zoo's Whistling Orangutan Releases CD; Proceeds Will Renovate His Ape House

May 11, 2009 —

An [orangutan](#) in Heidelberg Zoo has attracted attention after teaching himself to whistle. Now the 14-year-old ape has recorded his first CD.

Although somewhat underrated as a musical technique, a spot of whistling can often add a [certain something to a song](#). Who can forget Otis Redding's poignant whistling on the soul classic "(Sittin' on) the Dock of the Bay" or the haunting whistle refrain on the [fall-of-the-Wall](#) rock anthem "Wind of Change" by Germany's Scorpions?

Now a whistling orangutan at Heidelberg Zoo in Germany is set to release his first CD. Entitled "Ich Bin Ujian" ("I Am Ujian"), the CD single by Ujian, a 14-year-old orangutan, will go on sale at the zoo in June. Proceeds will go toward the extension and renovation of the zoo's ape house.

The song, a jaunty pop-rock number with reggae elements, features Ujian's melodic whistling as a background element. The lyrics, sung by Tobias Kämmerer, follow a similarly self-aggrandizing stance as the classic "I Wan'na Be Like You" sung by the orangutan King Louie in the animated movie "The Jungle Book," with the chorus including the lines: "I am Ujian the orangutan, I am so cool, man, I'm a star."

Local musician Christian Wolf, who was one of the producers of the song, was passing Ujian's enclosure one day during a visit to the zoo with his son. He stopped in amazement in front of Ujian's cage when he heard the animal whistling.

He returned with a digital recording device. With the help of Bernd Kowalsky, who is responsible for apes at the zoo, they recorded five hours' worth of audio, from which they gathered enough of Ujian's whistling for the song.

Ujian apparently taught himself to whistle last summer. According to the newspaper Stuttgarter Nachrichten, Ujian was inspired to start whistling after a vegetable delivery man was late coming to his cage. Ujian let out an exasperated whistle in a bid to get him to hurry up. From simple notes, the gifted ape soon graduated to melodic phrases.

He Whistles, He Paints: Is There Anything Ujian Can't Do?

But Ujian is not only talented musically. Along with fellow Heidelberg Zoo orangutans Puan and Grisella, he paints and has produced a number of abstract works. The zoo has been holding an auction of their paintings to raise money, with Thursday marking the closing date for bids.

[Orangutans](#) are highly intelligent creatures and many zoos around the world have animals who paint or draw. However [only a handful of orangutans](#) have been known to whistle. Bonnie, an [orangutan in the National Zoo in Washington, D.C.](#), recently attracted attention when she taught herself to

whistle. Researchers believe she was trying to imitate the sounds of whistling zookeepers.

The song "Ich Bin Ujian" can be heard on the Stuttgarter Nachrichten Web site.

With wire reports

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