



The secrets of success

In the past month I had the chance to read three interesting biographies. The first was on London mayor – *Just Boris: Boris Johnson: The Irresistible Rise of a Political Celebrity* by Sonia Purnell (Aurum, 2011); the second, eponymously titled, was about rock legend Michael Monroe by Ari Vantänen (Like, 2011); and the third was on Nobel Peace laureate and former Finnish president Martti Ahtisaari, *Matkalla: Martti Ahtisaaren tarina* by Katri Merikallio and Tapani Ruokanen (Otava, 2011).

I thought of writing a column on the similarities between the three gentlemen, but quickly noticed that it wouldn't work. They might all be bright blondes on top of the world, but haircolour – be it real, ruffled or combed – just won't provide the content for a column.

Everyone knows about Boris Johnson and Martti Ahtisaari. Therefore, I'll focus on Michael Monroe, probably one of the most respected, yet least-known rockstars of the past 30 years.

MONROE, a multi-instrumentalist and role model for many rockstars around the world, was the lead singer of cult band Hanoi Rocks in the 1980s. The band was big (not only in Japan), yet it never achieved the same level of fame as Aerosmith or Guns N' Roses.

The creation of two Finnish rockers, Monroe and Andy McCoy, Hanoi Rocks was rock 'n' roll – pure, raw and simple. The band quickly became a household name on the British, American and Japanese rock scenes. Hits such as "Taxi Driver" and cover song "Up Around the Bend" hit the charts around the world.

The Hanoi Rocks story came to an abrupt and premature end in 1985 with the tragic death of its drummer, Razzle. The band members split up and pursued alternative careers. Monroe has had countless bands and a few stabs at a solo career ever since. It has not been easy.

ROCKSTAR MIKE
MONROE IS ENJOYING
A COMEBACK,
A REBIRTH OF SORTS.

IF YOU THINK that the life of a rockstar is all about fame and fortune, think again. Monroe has lived most of his life from hand to mouth: sleeping rough in Stockholm, scraping by in London and New York, or staying in a modest log cabin in the Finnish countryside. All are far from glitzy Hollywood glamour.

Monroe was no exception to the rock scene of the '80s and '90s. He makes no secret of his previous drug use. But it would be a mistake to think that his energy on stage these days comes from illegal substances. Monroe has always stayed fit, after all, you can't run around the stage and do splits at the age of 48 without being in good shape.

Monroe is known for his hard work ethic. In the studio he is a perfectionist, on stage he is an animal. Quite simply, Monroe puts out 150 per cent. Go to one of his concerts and you'll see what I mean.

THE THING about Monroe is that he's genuine.

What you see is what you get. He remains enthusiastic, energetic and positive, despite all the hits he has taken during his career. The guy has raw talent and knows how to use it. He loves his job, and he's good at it. On top of that, he is a decent, kind person.

Monroe is enjoying a successful comeback, a rebirth of sorts, with his award-winning solo album *Sensory Overdrive*. He's also currently involved in coaching talented singers in a TV show called the *Voice of Finland*.

The secret Monroe's success is a combination of talent, perseverance and hard work: the same recipe for success that has been used by many who have achieved greatness – including Boris Johnson and Martti Ahtisaari. ●

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