

auxiliary music

Ötzi

Roll Call

Akiko (they/them) : vocals, bass

Gina Marie (she/her) : vocals, drums

Dylan (she/her) : guitar

Winter (she/her) : saxophone, synth, guitar

When did the band form and what was the original intention of the band?

Ötzi : The band started in 2014. Gina Marie and Akiko had just recently moved back to the Bay Area from Brooklyn, having known each other as teens over a decade prior. Originally, we wanted to just play music and feel somewhat active in our community. At the time, we called the music “spooky punk” and didn’t take it that seriously. We had no expectations but hoped to play some shows and meet new people. Over time, as more and more people started coming to our shows and as we started touring in different continents, that evolved into something more ambitious. We aspire to help make changes in music culture and to create spaces where women and trans people, in all the intersections we bring, can feel supported and celebrated.

About your name: how does it communicate the sound or vibe of the band?

Ö : Ötzi is an ice mummy that was found high up in the Alps, who died after presumably being chased by a group of hunters. These songs are for the living and the dead, respectively, and Ötzi the mummy represents both. Our songs are written with the hope of preserving an essence and a story despite all odds, and despite the passage of time. They’re about a world that may destroy you, that may leave you cold, but one in which you can still communicate with others who choose to look beneath the surface of the ground they stand on. A recent review of our new album, Storm, said the guitar riffs, “Cut the air like the cold fingers of the titular mummified human,” which we really liked.

How would you describe your music to someone who has not yet heard you?

Ö : We’re a post punk band that is heavily influenced by 80s, 90s, and politically minded bands who weave a web of manifestation, emotion, strength, protection, rebirth, and ascension. Or in plain language, we’ve been described as, “Joy Division meets Bikini Kill.” Although that’s simplistic, it also feels somewhat accurate, and that description made us laugh.

What inspires you to create this style of music?

Ö : Originally, we were inspired to just have fun, but that turned into a passion to tell our own stories. When you fill a room with your sound, you create this kind of temporary bubble in which your world view and your visions for what could be is all that seems to exist. In that way, music can serve as both protection and manifestation. All the anger we feel from how we’re treated as femmes, the dismay we feel at seeing the world destroyed, and the pressure from day to day life gets funneled into creating something that, to us, is beautiful. And all that pent-up energy, once released, becomes freeing. We want to live in a world where hierarchies are eradicated, where everyone is free to reach their true potentials. And for all of us in the band, probably the only time we get to experience anything like that is when we’re playing music.

We’re also increasingly inspired by our amazing fans all over the world, who are doing positive things and really holding it down in their own cities. The best part

of this band is getting to experience these brief moments of fun and meaningful exchange when we get to tour.

What influences in fashion, literature, and culture impact your creativity?

Ö : We’re pretty widely across the board in our cultural influences, and that keeps it fresh. Dylan is inspired by the history of women healers and herbal medicine, and she and Winter are both most interested in DIY fashion, keeping the punk spirit alive by altering thrift store clothes, and moving away from the idea of constantly buying new things. All of us follow social liberation movements avidly. Akiko is also mildly obsessed with pop and R&B divas, whose fashion photography and music videos are created with so much attention to detail. Akiko has always been interested in the cultural intersection of liberation activism, literature, music and fashion, and the ideas and effortlessly iconic styles of activists like Angela Davis, Yuri Kochiyama, and Yoko Ono. They’re also interested in noise and experimental music and decolonial multimedia performance art. Gina Marie is really influenced by the time she spends with her amazing eight year old daughter, who is quite an artist and philosopher in her own right, and is always finding new insight and inspiration from the peace punk and new wave imagery and aesthetics from decades past.

What other bands are inspiring you right now?

Ö : Akiko is feeling The Breathing Light, The Bedroom Witch, and Topographies.

Winter is really digging The Ire, Light Asylum, Lifeless Past, She Past Away, and Malefixio.

Dylan has CCFX, Warm Drag, Magik Markers, Savage, and Neneh Cherry on repeat.

Gina Marie is always inspired by Crass, Xmal Deutschland, Strawberry Switchblade, and Malaria!

How would you describe the current alternative music scene where you live?

Ö : We truly believe the Bay Area, and Oakland particularly, has a very special DIY music scene. We’re lucky to be surrounded by passionate artists, musicians, DJs, promoters, and organizers that keep the music scene thriving. We’ve played and put together benefit shows to raise money for various causes to help support and provide resources for communities when the city officials fail to do so. We all come together to make sure people have a safe space to enjoy music and celebrate each other, and that’s what means the most to us.

What are your favorite tour or stage stories? Share ‘em here.

Ö : When we were touring in Europe in 2018, we all got matching bat tattoos in Spain, because we were headed to the Return to the Batcave festival in Poland. It was a very cool time! That was before Winter joined the band. Winter’s favorite



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Photo by Kevin Brown.

tour memory is playing in Tijuana at an amazing femme fronted venue called the The Black Box, where we opened for She Past Away. It was completely packed with beautiful dancing deathrockers, goths, punks, queers, and postpunk lovers. The stage had a luminescent glow with a lit candelabra that pierced through the fog in the room. We could feel the excitement of the audience, making it a truly wonderful night to remember.

Tell us about your latest release.

Ö : Storm was born from difficult but transformative times for each of us. It’s also a collection of songs that hopefully challenges some of the descriptions of our group, because the songs are each unique and don’t easily fit into genre-molds. During the writing and recording, we went through a lot of ups and downs and really learned about each other and how to communicate, and that helped us to dig deep, to become vulnerable with each other, and finally create an honest and emotional album in which we grew musically, lyrically, and spiritually. The individual hopes and fears we wrote about then now feel like a foreshadowing of all of the collective anger, fear, hopes, and struggles we’re experiencing now as a society, and we’re glad it’s out there this year.

What’s next for your band?

Ö : We won’t be playing any shows until there is a vaccine, but in the meantime, we’re working on making some socially distant music videos! Once it’s safe to travel, we have plans to tour the US, Europe, Mexico, and parts of Central America. We have lots of new songs we can’t wait to play and share with our fans worldwide, and we look forward to seeing all the fans that have become friends during past tours.

Where can people find out more about your band and any other projects members are involved in?

Ö : Akiko plays solo as Yama Uba and runs Psychic Eye Records, which is soon releasing a 44-band anti-fascist, anti-racist compilation that benefits BLM and anti-ICE organizations. Yama Uba and Ötzi will both have tracks featured on the

compilation. Psychic Eye also makes and sells punk and goth masks made of lace, mesh, spikes, glitter, and other fun stuff.

psychiceye.bandcamp.com
facebook.com/psychiceyemusic
instagram.com/psychiceyerecords
facebook.com/YamaUbaCannibalNoise
instagram.com/yama.uba_akiko

Gina Marie is also the singer of dark punk band Adrenochrome and runs Near Dark promotion company. She organizes Near Dark Fest, one of the biggest Bay Area underground music party weekends of the year, as well as organizing shows and DJ events all year round.

adrenochromeoakland.bandcamp.com
neardarkoakland.bandcamp.com
facebook.com/neardarkoakland
instagram.com/neardarkoakland

Dylan drums for a punk band called Warp, who has a new album. <https://thrillingliving.bandcamp.com/album/traffic-control-12>
instagram.com/warpsf

Winter plays in an anarcho-deathrock band called Mystic Priestess. She also makes and sells vegan leather bondage punk accessories, and has a business with her partner called Whipped and Chained.

open.spotify.com/artist/15TTgdFG0aSHXN6tCw9T
facebook.com/MysticPriestess777
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instagram.com/whippedandchained