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Emerging

If you've been wondering **what to listen** to lately or perused Spotify and social media searching for the **next emerging band** that would restore your faith in The State of Music, this new feature is for you. We checked in with a few of the bands we think have a unique voice in the musical landscape to **inspire a new generation** of concert-goers and record-buyers alike.

featuring **Totenwald · The Wraith · OVER · Rotten UK**

interviews by **Elizabeth Rhodes**

Totenwald

Roll Call

Trish : Lead Vocals
Ruby : Saxophone, Backing Vocals
Rob : Guitars
Sergej : Bass

When did the band get started and what was the original intention of the band?

Totenwald : The band was founded in the beginning of 2014 by Sergej, Trish, and our former guitarist, so in the beginning it was just guitar, bass and vocals. The intention was to play a mix between punk rock, post-punk and goth, but to make it dancey and giving it the little extra, we decided to use a drum machine. In 2016, Ruby joined and added saxophone notes and backing vocals to the songs and in 2018 Robert became our new guitarist.

Tell us more about your name. How does it communicate the sound or vibe of the band?

T : "Totenwald" is German but it does not exist as a real word. It is a made-up word that means something between "dead forest" or "forest of the dead". As it is really difficult to find a name in English which is not in use already we just translated two words from the chorus of a song in Russian language that Sergej had in mind into German and it sounded cool. Totenwald... we also thought it would fit to have "tot", so "dead", in the name because it's dark. Another inspiration was that Sergej at that moment was interested in the Tunguska meteorite explosion in 1908 which left behind hundreds of kilometers of dead trees. As morbid and goth as it sounds, it does not really reflect the "vibe" of the band, we don't play gothic rock nor death metal and our sound and aesthetics have something glamorous and sometimes even joyful, so the name doesn't have to be taken too seriously.

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

T : We all hang around the punk scene as well as in the gothic scene and our music is a mix between both, but in an unconventional way. We're often told it's difficult to put a label on it but here's some examples of how other people were describing us: Joy Division on speed, children of Nina Hagen and Bérurier Noir or a mix between Neue Deutsche Welle, X-Ray Spex, and Crass. We describe our style as punk inspired by 80s new wave with drum machine and saxophone.

What inspires you to create this style of music?

T : Each member in the band likes something else but what we have in common is our love for 80s music, anarcho punk, goth and new wave so we're creating something out of those inspirations.

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

Sergej : It can be anything from the news on TV to the boring ride on the train to work; everyday life basically with its ups and downs.
Rob : A lot of my creative and lyrical themes center around dystopian fiction and film.

What other bands are inspiring you right now?

Rob : Lately on the turntable: New Model Army, And Also the Trees, Kino, The

Gun Club, Nick Cave and Warren Ellis, The Sound, Blitz. I'm also really into movie soundtracks, Hans Zimmer, Morricone, etc.

Ruby : Apart from goth and punk I also listen to and play a lot of other genres, from Jazz or Latin to classical music and choral, so for me for sure that has an impact as well.

Sergej : Not much from the modern bands because too often they all sound the same or they are trying to copy one particular band. We like to get inspired by many bands/styles and mix it all up to something "new".

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

T : We all come from different countries, Italy, Lithuania, the USA and Germany, but we all live in Berlin. Berlin has always had a great, diverse alternative scene since punk and goth was born and the scenes there are still big and vivid, from crust punk gigs at squats to 80s dance parties at the same squats... There are millions of bands and millions of parties 24/7, sometimes there are nights with 6 different punk shows and other good parties at the same night. Sadly, also in Berlin gentrification is a big topic and makes it more and more difficult for subcultures to keep their place in the city, but overall, we still can't complain, I guess.

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

T : When we once arrived at the venue we were supposed to play at and realized that we were one day too early... we had accidentally confirmed the show a day later which we could not play because it was a Sunday and we had to work on Monday. So we just hung out with the promoter, went to his place, drank some beers and watched YouTube videos. Since that time we played there some other times and one of our next shows will be the birthday party of that same promoter.

Tell us about your latest release.

Rob : Forward to the Past is a four-song EP we recorded to help promote our recent US West Coast tour in September 2019, and was released as a limited cassette tape for the tour. It is now currently at the vinyl pressing plant, and will be released by us in conjunction with Plastic Bomb Records in Germany this coming April. It represents the first of the Totenwald songs recorded since I joined in 2018. The title of the EP is a sarcastic reference to the current 80s revival, which comes not only with fashion and music styles, but also with the return of Cold War-era politics. We've also recently recorded a live in-studio session for the Part Time Punks radio series on KXLU FM while we were in Los Angeles.

What's next for your band?

T : That vinyl release, playing, playing, playing...

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

T : totenwald.com, thisistotenwald.bandcamp.com, facebook.com/totenwaldberlin, instagram.com/totenwald_