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Toxic Water

Interview by Elizabeth Rhodes

Roll Call

Richard Smith: guitars, percussion, backing vocals, synths, engineer

Jessica Sopolis: leading vocals, bass, alt percussion, backing vocals, producer, synths

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

TW: Toxic Water began around July of 2014 and was born as a natural progression after moving on from our last band, Bipolar Gentlemen. The original intention of the band was to elevate our music and to bring multi-media into the equation.

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

TW: Well, funny story! We were discussing the horrible state of things in Flint, MI, and drought conditions in TX and CA. While we were discussing these issues, the water in our apartment complex completely went off for about a week and when it came back, it

smelled of roach spray. I think around that time, while we were scrambling to different places to take showers and find water to flush our toilet, one of us threw the name out there and immediately, the other had the "Eureka!" response to said suggestion. Needless to say, we had been struggling to find a name for our new musical/multimedia duo at the time. It was a good day.

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

TW: Well, we have a hard time pigeonholing ourselves into a specific genre. We've been called, "Avant Cold-Wave" and "Theatrical Moodswing" by reviewers before. Those sound

nice. We'd say we are more: avant-experimental, art post punk, multi/non-genre. It's pretty hard to describe, but it's strange and loud most of the time.

What inspires you to create this style of music?

TW: Our music tends to come from the events of our lives. We tend to recreate past events that we have experienced into music and video in a surrealist, fantastical way. The style of music comes naturally and is evolving as we continue to elevate our creations.

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

TW: In the age of Zoom, fashion

only matters from the waist up. We've gone pants-less on a livestream or two because if you're wearing pants during the pandemic, you're doing it wrong. Typically, fashion just comes to us with whatever project we are working on at the time. Sometimes, we wear no pants. Sometimes, we go a little weird with it. It just depends. As far as literature goes, Jess enjoys books on the occult and the weirdest fiction she can find. She also loves old medical books and books about cults, real-life cannibals, etc. Culture has the biggest impact on our art. We create strange, off kilter depictions of what we see and experience in society. We enjoy skewing reality just so, in order to create a multi-dimensional and immersive experience.

What other bands are inspiring you right now?

TW: Mr. Marcellie does Heavy Freak Cello from France. Brainbombs are out of Sweden and do pure, droning noise rock. The Residents are gearing

photo by Ricardo Acevedo
Pinterest.com/lifeofra



many are sticking to livestreams and webcasts, like us for the time being, 'cause that's how we do it in the cities.

ER: What are your favorite tour or stage stories?

TW: Our favorite performance in Austin was at the now defunct Off Center Theater. It was the last show before they closed it down, sadly. The venue was amazing! The people were amazing. The energy was electric when we played. The show was called "Blind Sight" and was put together by our dear friend, Hung Nguyen who is a fantastic creative soul. The idea was for the other two bands to play in complete darkness to simulate

for the audience the affliction of blindness. The other two bands were "Dark Whorenet" (Brown Whorenet) and the headliner was Blind Sight who were actually two incredible musicians who have been blind from birth. We opened the show with a light show that provided a hell of a ride to its viewers and ended the set with one of our noisiest pieces by using a flood light and leaving audience members in pitch blackness. There's none so blind as those who do not listen. We also met Paul Soileau who has since become art family to us. It was a special night.

Tell us about your latest release.

TW: That would be our Toxic Water Variety Hour featuring guests, Hey Jellie (formerly Erase Errata) and Christeene! There are new music and musical performances, new music videos, sketches, jokes and all the psychedelic weird you could ever want in a Variety Hour! We worked very hard on

this miracle of doom and glory, well over five months. We did the work that a team of people would do but there are only two of us. It became tedious and arduous at times, but the finished result is a masterpiece. It was a labor of love and our guests worked with us like a well-oiled machine. We utilized green screen and digital effects as well as Foley throughout the show to really give the illusion of the viewer being transported somewhere else. We highly recommend everyone give it a watch!

What's next for your band?

TW: Well, we kind of fly by the seat of our asses. We are perpetually creating regardless of what is going on in our lives. Currently, we are in a holding pattern due to Jess's failing health. She's had three surgeries in the past three years and since then, her health has tanked even more. We are currently waiting to schedule a temporary ileostomy for her so she will be wearing a bag for a while. Jess is hell bent on forging onwards with the evolution of Toxic Water, her creativity is what gives her the strength to go on. **|| A**

Check out toxicwater.xyz and the Toxic Water Variety Hour youtu.be/mvd4MSbTUDY and follow on Instagram @toxicwatermusic and Facebook facebook.com/ToxicWater