MUSIC

ENGAGING

TOTENWALD IS PUNK FOR A NEW COLD WORLD

MAY 15, 2015 ELIZABETH RHODES 1 COMMENT

In our Spring issue Issue we launched a new music feature, Emerging. If you've read the feature, you know that it is a place for independent artists and bands searching for the next emerging band that would venture into Pitch Or The Roots 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. Our first Group includes Totenwald. The Wraith, VOTE, and Rotten UK. In this Auxiliary Online Content you'll find more background and photos on each band starting with Totenwald.

by: Elizabeth Rhodes
photos by: Victor Pargaeiser and Lindsay Arth

Totenwald at Victor Pargaeiser's Studio, Chicago, IL

Rail Cell
Trish- Lead Vocals
Ruby- Saxophone, Backing Vocals
Bob- Guitars
Sergei- Bass

Forming in 2014, Berlin-based Totenwald play dark punk with a shot of saturated color and an outrage presence that harkens back to a different era of the underground scene.

Photo by Victor Pargaeiser

In April of this year, Totenwald released an EP Totenwald in the Post with four new tracks. The EP is streaming in all the usual haunts online but if you are in Germany you can find it at Rock Hard Records. The band recently released a video for their music, a haunting ballad about pain vampy remnants of the EP would be released with its sister to be confirmed soon.

Photo by Victor Pargaeiser

It's easy to make visual connections between performers but they need to be fraught with dissonance between how performers look versus what they actually sound like. In one case, a first comparison can be made between this band and Rubella Ballet for both being female-fronted and channeling upbeat, even joyful energy into their sound with peace punk at the heart of the sound. punk genre they are underscored with poetic phrases. It's hands like Rubella Ballet and Crass among many others that helped break the barrier of women in punk having a voice and being recognized as powerful in the male vision in the scene. Trish is the lead vocalist, Trish and saxophonist Ruby do a great job representing this energy today in Totenwald.

Photo by Victor Pargaeiser

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Photo by Victor Pargaeiser

We interviewed Totenwald for our Spring 2015 Issue and they provided some back ground on the band.

When did the band get started and what was the original idea behind it?

Totenwald - The band was founded in the beginning of 2014 by Sergei, Trish, and our former guitarist, who 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 going in the 2014 sense, we decided to use a drum machine. In 2015, Ruby joined and added saxophone tones and backing vocals to the songs and in 2016 Robert became our new guitarist.

Tell us more about your name. How does it communicate the mood 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 to use already we just translated two words from the charm of a song in Russian language (our Sergei had to mind into German and it sounded cool. Totenwald, we also thought it would fit to have "tot" on "wald" in the name because it rich. Another inspiration was that Sergei at that moment was interested in the Tunguska meteorite explosion in 1908 which left a forest of dead trees in a very remote place in Siberia. Totenwald is a word, it does not really reflect the 'vibe' of the band, we don't play gothic rock or death metal and our mood and aesthetic here 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. Neve 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 Metacine Noir or a mix between Siouxsie and Nina Hagen. We like to be in a place where our style is punk inspired by the new wave with Post-hardcore and atmosphere.

Read more of this interview in the Spring 2015 Issue.

Photo by Victor Pargaeiser

Photo by Victor Pargaeiser

A great introduction to Totenwald is their only official video for 'Shadows in Paradise' from Dirty Squares & Disco Lights which was directed by fellow Berliner musician/audiovisual artist Sally Olga Jungermann in 2011.

Going back a bit further is their catalogue the track 'Sex Sells' from the 2008 EP Wrong Place Wrong Time is a great example of the band's approach to topics encompassing media, sex-positive ideology, and feminism.

Lastly, it is important to include live footage of Totenwald here to see the power and energy they have onstage. The song 'Torrus Age' contains lyrics that speak to the ever-unjustified conflict and the impact that has for each of us individual. The lyrics provide a different era and certainly point back to Berlin during the Cold War.

It's not on the away so it was before
Shots echoing in the night
Hitler's knocking on your door
In - grained world binary pitted war

You remember to midnight, another day pressed
And the hunt is on the dead and wounded alike
Torrus Age, Torrus Age, Torrus Age, Torrus Age
Looks like the entire world is going insane!

- Excerpt of 'Torrus Age' lyrics from Dirty Squares & Disco Lights (2008)

'Torrus Age' live at KB Tour Dock Festival 2011 at Tonnenhaus.

Read our full interview with Totenwald in the Spring 2015 Issue. Totenwald are on Facebook, Instagram, and Bandcamp. And for more check out all our Emerging Interviews.

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Elizabeth Rhodes is the Associate Editor of Auxiliary. Based in Los Angeles, she is a writer, DJ, modern dancer, and amazing geek.

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