

MASSIES SPECTRES OTZI DRAB MAJESTY SHE PAST AWAY QUADRILLE TOTENWALD



HORROR VACUI SHADOWHOUSE ZIGENDEMONIC OLD CATS DRAMA OUTCRY RTTB FEST

# TOTENWALD

Totenwald are:  
 Trish (vocals)  
 Ruby (saxophone/vocals)  
 Janis (guitar/programming)  
 Sergej (bass/drum machine)

The band started in the begging of 2014. In March 2016 the debut EP "Wrong Place Wrong Time" was released in collaboration between Mass Media Records (USA) and the band. In summer 2016 Ruby joined Totenwald. In Winter 2017 the LP "Dirty Squats and Disco Lights" was recorded and was released at the beginning of 2018 by Plastic Bomb Records, Bat-Cave Productions Pl. and Sierpien Records.

Let's start with band history. How and when did everything start?

Sergej: I was organizing a concert for Metro Cult and Dystopian Society and as the club sometimes added touring bands to the shows as a warm-up I asked if my new band could open for them in order to minimize the costs. But at that time I didn't have any band actually. I asked Janis who once proposed to play the guitar if I ever wanted to make a new project and Trish who wanted to have a go at singing. We started rehearsing in January 2014 keeping in mind that we must have a whole set ready for the gig until April.

Do you remember the first gig you've played? How was it like?

Sergej: Our first gig was in Hamburg just one day before our official debut gig supporting Metro Cult. It went alright but just after a few songs my guitar effect suddenly stopped working so I had to check all the cables. In the end I kept playing without it. After the show I checked it again and the solution was very simple - the volume button had gone down, in all the stress of the concert I just had just forgotten to check it. Anyway, it was good to have played that show before, so at the gig in Berlin afterwards we were more relaxed.

Trish: I remember I was extremely stressed and made a lot of mistakes but the second gig the day after was just perfect. Since then I have never had pre-gig anxiety.



Who writes lyrics/music?

Janis: Sergej usually has an idea for the lyrics and a beat, then me and him try out some riffs and then each one of us comes in with her/his ideas for the song and we work on the arrangements together. Sometimes we also work on the lyrics together and now Trish is starting to write more stuff by herself too.

What bands influenced your music?

Trish: Each one of us likes something else but we all share the love for late 70s Punk and early 80s Post Punk/New Wave as well as Anarcho Punk and Russian New Wave. So we aim to mix a bit of all of that into our music without copying any particular band.

Let's talk about gigs: what was the weirdest/funniest thing that happened to you during a show?

Sergej: We don't only like the musical aspect of shows but also the visual, so Trish often made some action on stage like dressing normal at the beginning and later taking off her clothes, staying only in bondage-harness, or wearing first a wig and later removing it showing her shaved head. Once actually she shaved her hair completely off on stage. Janis likes crossdressing and sometimes people are confused whether to say "he" or "she". Except for that, rarely something really extreme happened on stage during our gigs - except for the usual stuff like people falling on stage and disconnecting cables or a sound which was perfect during the soundcheck suddenly having completely changed into shit once we start the show. The weirdest thing actually happened to us in Göttingen: When we arrived at the club and introduced ourselves people from the venue said: "Nice to meet you, but you're show tomorrow, not tonight!". It turned out that there had been so much confusion with gigs and busses before that I accidentally told the organizer a wrong date on which we needed the gig. It also feels a bit weird when people ask us for signatures after the show...  
 Janis: I actually like the signatures, haha. True, once there was one gig on a punk festival in Poland where random people were just hanging out on the stage. They were walking around the stage in the middle of the set, tripping on cables, unplugging them and so on.

When did you start listening to punk? Is there any story behind this?

Trish: I started to listen to punk when I was 15, with the Sex Pistols, growing up in a little town, rebelling to what seemed to be too normal, fighting with my mom over heavy makeup and ripped stockings.  
 Janis: In my late teens. Before that I was listening more to Classic Rock and Post Punk.  
 Ruby: I also started with Goth music and at some point extended to Punk as well.



What can you tell about goth/punk scene in Berlin? What bands would you recommend?

Ruby: The problem of Berlin is that it is so big and that there are so many separate scenes which work all independently from each other. The Gothic scene in Berlin within the last years has been getting more and more electronic, it's mostly about Minimal Wave, by now even a lot of EBM and some "dark techno" stuff. But here are some suggestions of bands with which we have played together or that we just know personally, that are worth to check out: Diät (Post Punk), Todesstrahlen (Industrial/Post Punk in a vein of Einstürzende Neubauten), Dystopian Society (Dark Punk), P.U.F.F. (Synthpunk), Fox Devils Wild (Post Punk/Wave), Ben Bloodygrave (Synthpunk).  
 Janis: I think the punk scene in Berlin goes much more in the direction of HC and Crust. There are not so many bands that play Punk 77 or Anarcho Punk. As Ruby said, the Wave and Goth scene is much more synth oriented...

October '17 you've played in Wrocław at Return to the Batcave-share your impressions!

Ruby: Oh, it was a blast, we had so much fun!... and a lot of Soplica of course, haha... But seriously, I recommend anyone who's into Goth music - whether Deathrock, Post Punk, Dark Wave or Minimal Wave - to check out this festival!

Sergej: I also think the Return to the Batcave festival is exactly what the European underground DIY Post Punk scene needs right now. There is always a great line-up with some legendary bands and some bands that are not so well known yet but worth to check out. There is also a good mix of different styles of music so everyone can find something they like. Other festivals have become much more Hipster Cold Wave orientated. And of course there is always a great atmosphere with a lot of friends from all over the world.

What bands influenced your music?

Trish: Each one of us likes something else but we all share the love for late 70s Punk and early 80s Post Punk/New Wave as well as Anarcho Punk and Russian New Wave. So we aim to mix a bit of all of that into our music without copying any particular band.



With what bands did you enjoy playing the most and with what bands would you like to play?

Sergej: One of the many good sides of playing in a band is that you sometimes have the chance to play with a band you really like and even never have dreamed of seeing live. For me the best experience so far was to share the stage with 1919 who were not only great on stage but also really nice people. I was even a bit afraid before playing because their music is basically based on tribal drumming so I thought that might not like it and could say: "Why do you play with drum machine instead of a real drummer?" or something like that. But their drummer was actually the first one who came to us after our gig and said that he really liked our show.

Ruby: For me it was a great experience to play together with Omega Tribe, one of my favorite bands. We played with them in Groningen last summer.

If you had a chance to travel in time-where would you go?

Trish: Pretty much everywhere. Hollywood in the 1940s, Nashville in the 1950s and London in the 1977.

Ruby: Berlin in the rowing '20s and '80s (OF COURSE, haha), New York in the '70s...

Janis: I'd go to the 60's, the Flower-Power era. Actually I used to think that earlier everything was better, especially the music-more honest, more innovative, more daring. But it's probably just stuff that we project on a time that we haven't experienced first-hand. Actually, now I'm happy that we live in this time because that's the only time when we can do something worthy. If you don't like how the things are at the time you live in, it's up to you to change the way things are. So it's actually a pretty excited time to be alive.

Sergej: There are so many options but now I think I would go to the future to find answers for this interview so we don't need to type it all in still...

Name your Top 5 releases of all time

Sergej: Stooges first LP, Abwärts "Beirut Holiday Inn" EP, Kino "Poslednij Geroj", Killing Joke "Wardance/Pssyche" Single, Dead Kennedys "Holidays In Cambodia/Police Truck" single.

Janis: Pink Floyd: Wish were Here, Portishead: Portishead, Auctyon: Bodun, The Birthday Party: Mutiny/The Bad Seed, Adverts: Crossing the Red Sea with the Adverts.



What inspires you?

Sergej: Every time something else. Sometimes it's something you see on the news that pisses you off so much that you already got the whole song ready in your head. Sometimes it's more personal stuff like going alone at night by Metro feeling completely alone and sad without any particular reason. Those feeling I sometimes feel like putting into a song.

Trish: What does inspire me? Musically? In life? I can say I always inspired myself since young age to strong female characters. I like Lara Croft or Tank Girl. I never dreamed of being a princess, I always wanted to be the badass.

Thank you for the interview!!! Hope to see you playing in Ukraine one day! Maybe you'd like to say something to the readers?

Thank you for writing to us, it is always good then people doing something, like organizing shows, or making fanzines that way we all keeping the scene alive.

thisistotenwald.bandcamp.com



How would you describe your music in few words?

Sergej: It's Punk mixed with elements of Goth and New Wave.

Tell me about your new LP "Dirty Squats And Disco Light"! What is it inspired by?

Janis: Our new album "Dirty Squats and Disco Lights" sounds more raw and punky than our previous debut EP that sounded more wavey, but that might also have to do with the fact that it's recorded analog. There's also the saxophone as a new instrument on it now. We rerecorded two of the songs that were already on our EP for it, as they include saxophone now. Bat-cave productions released album on CD together with live DVD as extra bonus and for total oldschool fans there is a tape on Moscow Sierpien records.

