

Independent on Sunday 14.10.07

ErsatzMusika – “Voice Letter” / Asphalt Tango Records

Anyone out there waiting for a new Waits album could do worse than check out this Russian, Berlin-based band. They strike a clever balance between the old world and the new in their woozy waltzes, gypsy punk workouts and scratchy cabaret reggae. Smokily restrained Ribot-esque guitar works as the perfect backbone for Irina Doubrovskaja's nostalgia-steeped vocals as she sings of war-torn Leningrad, looking for wild mushrooms in the woods, or drinking until she drops. They call what they do "urban folk" but that seems too limiting a label for this haunting, sonically adventurous stuff. *Howard Male*