

ErsatzMusika

★★★★★

Songs Unrecantable
(Asphalt Tango)

ErsatzMusika's recent release and second to date is a stunning fusion of musical styles which the band refers to as post-Soviet urban folk music. This is defined by their melancholic and mostly accordion and acoustic guitar based melodies – with cabaret couplets, chansons, rock and dub elements. Although this may sound like a peculiar mix, after giving the disc a listen, you'll quickly realise that the way they do it makes it all flow together seamlessly.

The band is made up of Russian immigrants who landed in East Berlin after years of circulating in the Russian underground music scene. The ensemble is led by singer-songwriter Irina Dubrovskaya. This album is a follow up to their debut 'Voice Letter' which was an equally substantial recording.

The opening number of Unrecantable's 'Song on a Gypsy Air', is mesmerising and sung in Irina's wonderfully accented English accompanied by a melancholy piano tune. The decadent rock song, 'Wild Grass' has everyone in the band playing some kind of instrument. This is followed by the more upbeat (Psilocibin Panic) 'It's the Russian Beat', the saloon style



'Oy, Pterodactyl' – and there you have the four tracks that more or less define the parameters of the band. These are the sort of performers that are best experienced in a smoky bar but for those who can't catch them live – if you are lucky you may be able to see them in Berlin – listening to their album at least shed some light on what happens when Russian souls collide with the decadence of the West.

Asphalt Tango Records based out of Berlin is probably one of the better music distributors, if you're on the hunt for some of the finer Eastern European musical goodies. And even though their roster is mostly of the folk ilk, their releases tend to be in the more contemporary vein. ErsatzMusika could very well be one of their strongest artists. *Suska*