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4 IDIOTS, are a fabulous pop punk/alternative rock quartet from Kassel, Germany. They have a new ten track album out now called 'Getting Serious' which runs in at just under forty minutes long and is the band's debut album.



4 Idiots are: Matthias Herrmann – lead vocals/guitar, Julian Rupp – guitar, Andre Wenderoth – backing vocals/bass, and Christian Wollenhaupt – drums.

It is evening in the kitchen of the apartment building where singer and guitarist Matthias Herrmann lives, in the middle of Kassel, Germany. It is dark and you can hear people working at a railway re-pair shop next to the building. There is an empty hamburger wrapper and an iced tea bottle sitting on the table. Matthias got his first guitar for Christmas when he was twelve years old, and it was an awful cheap Stratocaster. Back then his brother was already playing guitar for some years. Since he thought that was pretty cool Matthias wanted to start playing as well. "My parents liked the idea. So I started to take guitar lessons and about two years later I formed my first band with some of my schoolmates.

None of us wanted to sing and I was like 'Well, seems like I have to do it.'. And then I started writing my first songs," he tells me. At first, they sounded really bad. But he practised a lot and got better all the time. "The band broke up when I finished school and I started to act as a support in other bands until my dear friend Julian Rupp asked me to start a new

project with him. And that was when we formed the '4 Idiots'." The band's new album 'Getting Serious' is their first real album and they worked on it for years. They only released an EP before. The new album includes some really nice pop punk tracks and also some great alternative rock tracks. Guitarist Julian Rupp wrote two of the songs, bassist Andre Wenderoth wrote one and Matthias wrote eight of the tracks. And then there's 'Cheeseburgers'. The guys all wrote this song together. "The point of the album is somehow to not take yourself too serious. That is why I'm singing about my love for Jennifer Lawrence, killing all the re-bels on Hoth or freaking out at a drive-through for example. But there are also a few more serious tracks on the album. In fact our song 'The Whole Night' is about nearly dying at a hospital. Altogether I think we've got something for everyone who likes this kind of music," he adds. 4 Idiots gave only released two singles and an EP. "We re-recorded our singles because we changed our drummer. We also re-recorded two songs from our EP. We used much better equipment for that, and our sound engineer also had very good new ideas. The biggest difference between our album and our previous releases is definitely the production quality," he explains to me. "Everything sounds better now. We also learned how to sound more powerful than ever before. I can give you a headbanging guarantee for our song 'The Whole Night' for example. Otherwise you can expect the same kind of provocative and enjoyable content that you already know from us."

Matthias' musical inspirations are the older albums of bands like Blink 182, Green Day, MxPx, NoFX, The Offspring... "Basically the awesome stuff that was popular in the late

nineties and the early two-thousands. I wanted to write songs that feel like they were released at that time. For me pop music was so much better back then. And when I listen to the modern pop punk bands, they often sound too electronic for me," he explains. "If you take a look at the case of our CD you will realize that it feels familiar compared to cover arts like 'Life in General' by MxPx. We searched for a great illustrator for a long time to make that happen. And I'm still glad that we found Annemarie Buchner from South Africa to do that for us."



When he is not writing or performing Matthias is a bit of a nerd. "I love going to the cinema to watch horror movies. That is one of the things I am missing in particular since we have a lockdown again. My favourite movies are those produced by Jason Blum. But I also love everything made by Quentin Tarantino, even though that's not horror. My all-time favourite movie is Pulp Fiction. And I always try to find some time for playing video games. I am really into Call of Duty, Final Fantasy and Resident Evil. One of the few good things about having to face with the lockdown is that I finally found the time for playing through 'Final Fantasy VII Remake' and 'Resident Evil 3 Remake' which were pretty awesome," he smiles. 4 Idiots are often called a 'pop

punk band'. But if you listen to the most other pop punk bands on the radio you will hear a big difference between them and 4 Idiots. "We are not trying to reach a bigger audience by making pop music. Do not get me wrong, there is nothing bad about trying to do that. But we do not want to be a pop music band. We want to be an 'early two-thousands pop punk/punk rock band' being active today," he expresses.



"Also, we don't think that we can make the world a better place for everyone. In our music we do not tell people why they are acting wrong in their lives. There are already a lot of great bands that are doing this. Our music is supposed to get you through the day by helping you to deal with the stuff that is happening in your life. We want to bring a smile on your face." Matthias' highlight of the album is the song 'The Whole Night'. In 2016 he was in a hospital and because of a surgical mistake he lost 3 litres of blood and nearly suffocated a few times. "The song is about that situation and makes a contrast to the less serious tracks on our album. Also it is kind of emotional for me. One time when we played the song in our rehearsal room my bandmates said it would be pretty cool if we add one or

two breaks to it. So we played the song with the breaks and we loved it," he smiles. "Since that 'The Whole Night' is one of the biggest highlights of every concert we play. The people are always rocking as hell when we are playing it. And every time I listen to this song, I see myself playing on the stage again. I really love this record," he says with spirit. Since lockdown, the lads have not been able to play any real live shows. "We played our last concert in summer. The crowd was not too big because of the restrictions we had but we all had lots of fun and I am really glad that we had the chance to play. It was an open-air concert and we had more than 35 degrees on that day. But we really didn't care about the temperature because we just wanted to play live again. We will probably start to do some streaming events if things won't get better. I really hope that we manage to play on some festivals next year to celebrate our album release. My biggest wish is to give a concert at the Open Flair festival in Eschwege, Germany one day. That festival means a lot to me," he explains. "The Coronavirus affects us in many ways. Like I already said we cannot play live at the moment. Without the virus we would be able to be on tour now. Some bands decided to delay their releases because of that. But we thought it is better to release it now so that people can have some fun with it while they have to stay at home. In the next days we will set up a Jamulus server so that we can do our rehearsals online for the next months. We heard that this software works pretty good and I guess we all try to do our best by reducing our personal contacts as good as we can. Since we are sitting at home a lot, we also use a lot of our

time to write new songs. I think we wouldn't have so much new material if we were able to leave our homes to meet our friends in the last time." The biggest part of the album was recorded in the band's old rehearsal room in a very small village called 'Dissen'.



"We recorded the rest in our new rehearsal room in the village 'Breuna'. Both of these villages are not far from Kassel, Germany. Florian Nelle from Soundwork Studio produced the album. We recorded the whole album like four times. The first time we recorded it with our old drummer. That was when we released the singles 'Bad Luck' and 'Uncertainty'. After we found our new drummer, we recorded the album three times because we were not happy with the first two results," he explains to me. "At the end, the whole process took about two and a half years. We really went through development hell. But we learned a lot in those years, and I think next time we will be a lot faster." For the future, the band is planning on making some music videos! "We always wanted to release some music videos when our album releases. But because of the lockdown we were not able to record the videos that we have planned yet. At the moment we are writing songs for our next release. I think we will focus more on pop punk and less on alternative rock this time. We plan to do a concept album so the songs will be connected somehow. But of course you will feel that it is our second album in every way. We have many stories

to tell with our next release and I already cannot wait to show you more. Before we release a second album, we probably will do some featured tracks with other bands. There are a lot of bands I always wanted to work with, and I hope that we can create great tracks with a few of them," concludes Matthias, bringing an end to our conversation. 'Getting Serious' will be out soon on vinyl, and in the meantime, you can get the album on CD and from all the usual digital platforms. Check 4 Idiots out at www.4idiots.de

CONSECRATION, are an excellent kick arse post-metal, ambient rock, atmospheric sludge, progressive doom trio from Belgrade, Serbia. They have a new six track album out now called 'Plava laguna' which runs in at just under forty minutes long and is the bands sixth release. Consecration are: Danilo Nikodinovski – vocals/guitars/synthesizers, Matija Dagovic – drums, and Ivan Arandelovic – bass guitar.



It's early afternoon downtown Belgrade, Serbia. The weather is nice and not unlike Consecration's music; partly cloudy, partly sunny. The trio are sitting in a cozy apartment on the third floor of apartment building. Singe/guitarist and synth player Danilo Nikodinovski is making everyone some coffee and tea and Duran Duran's 'Rio' is playing in the background. Music is all that Nikodinovski could remember anytime he would think about his earliest childhood

memories. He has vivid memories of the first cassette tapes by Riblja Corba ('Mrtva priroda') and Bajaga & Instruktori ('Jahaci magle'). It was probably 1986 or 1987. Soon enough Guns N' Roses happened and that was what caught he and his brother's attention. His brother is six years older and he loved them from the very beginning, as soon as 'Welcome To The Jungle' happened. "Even our mom liked GN'R. She liked The Beatles, Stones and Rod Stewart so GN'R got a green light for us, so to speak. There was a local TV show that aired only metal videos and it was aired a bit late at night and we had to get up for school early in the morning so we taped those shows and watched them later repeatedly. What caught my attention immediately was W.A.S.P. and their 'Forever Free' video. I loved it," he remembers. Both the brother's birthdays are close together, and Danilo remembers that it was March 1990 when he talked his dad into getting Mötley Crüe's 'Dr. Feelgood' as a birthday present for his brother and then talked him into getting W.A.S.P.'s 'The Headless Children' for himself too since his birthday was few days away. "That album blew my mind. I became a fan instantly and then became even more thrilled later upon discovering Blackie's stage antics during the band's beginnings. 'Forever Free' is a ballad and that's also when I discovered I gravitated more towards emotional songs. Power ballads if you like. Soon we [me and my brother] got into Maiden, Metallica, Megadeth," he tells me. His brother was a musical omnivore, so soon enough together they discovered Sepultura, Napalm Death, Suicidal Tendencies, Morbid Angel, Cannibal Corpse..." It was amazing time really, late eighties and early nineties when everything happened.

Death metal, Faith No More, the birth of grunge... I also loved Def Leppard, they were big for me. I think their approach on 'Pyromania' and 'Hysteria' made a lasting impression on me and I'd discover years later it was not just the songs but the big production too that got my interest and fascination," he expresses.



I always wanted to learn to play guitar and I sang along with the tunes all the time. Parents got me an acoustic guitar with nylon strings in 1990 or 1991 while on vacation in Italy and soon I started taking lessons in classical guitar. I got my first electric guitar (a Slash signature Epiphone) in 2000 when I was 17 and that's when I had everything I needed to start a band. I never had any tabs, I played other bands' tunes all by ear. I think that was important because it sharpened my hearing abilities in the early age. Bass guitarist Ivan Arandelovic started playing bass during the NATO bombing back in 1999 and he has been playing in some small bands soon after. "About ten years ago, there was a party at the same building I was living in at the time and Matija and Danilo were there and asked me to join the band," he adds. "I am living on the fifth floor, my room is exactly on this spot few meters up," he points out. That event/detail was inspiration for the song 'Vertikala'.