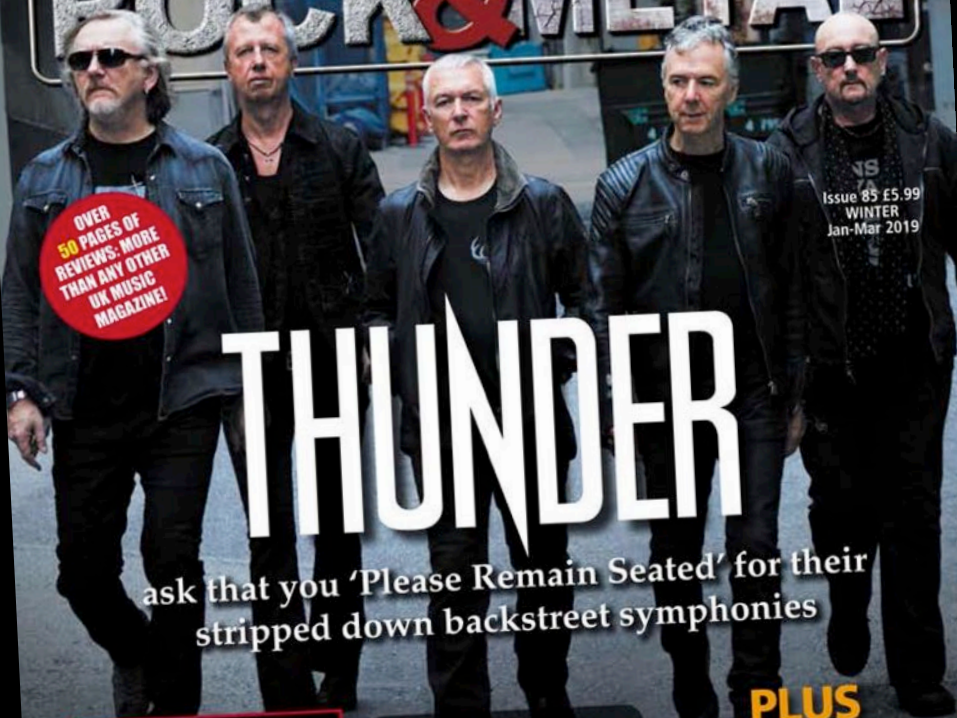


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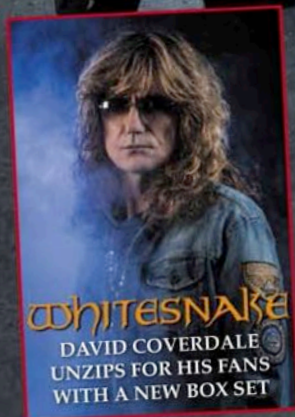
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Time Shifters are: Karolina Dvorakova - vocals, Vasilis Nikolos - guitar, Marek Gazar - guitar, Pavel Chaloupecky - bass, Ales Pechar - drums, and guest Pavel Homer - keyboards. It's a cold November evening in Prague, and guitarist Vasilis Nikolos is enjoying a glass of rum. Due to his job, he only has time in the evenings for rehearsing, or writing songs. Today he had a really nice lunch with his wife. "Both of us are working from home, so we have time for those moments, so we had an eggplant with feta cheese, olives and potatoes with a glass of Retsina, Greek wine," he tells me.



"My days are a bit shifted, I wake up late, around ten, so we have lunch later as well, therefore I still haven't had dinner even if it is nine o'clock now." Nikolos started to play when he was about sixteen years old, when he got his first guitar, "I don't even remember who gave it to me. It was in the early eighties, still under the totalitarian communist regime and music wasn't really available behind the iron curtain. We were listening to Radio Luxembourg, but it was often jammed by the authorities. We used to buy records on illegal markets, often disturbed by cops, so when someone of us got a new record, he made a copy on a cassette as soon as possible and it spread among friends in the underground,"

Hailing from Prague, Czech Republic we find punk rockers **TIME SHIFTERS**. They have an excellent new thirteen track CD out now called *Screaming Heroes* which runs in at just over thirty minutes long and is the band's debut album.



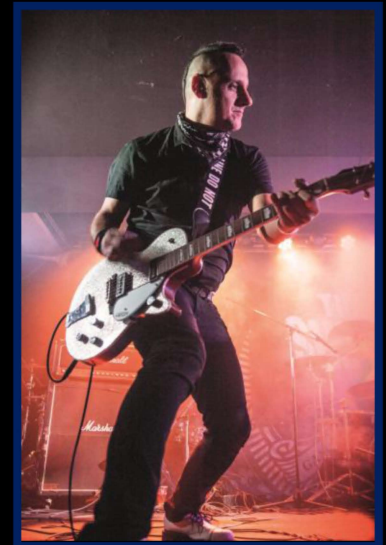
he explains to me." We were really supportive with each other, we supported each other, records were really expensive, so when someone of us spent half of his monthly wage on a record he made copies for others. That's why as soon as one copy of a record crossed the curtain all the punks had it on cassettes really quickly," he tells me. Nikolos thinks that we were closer to each other at that time, people in the underground were supporting each other.



"I guess it is natural under oppression," he says. Nikolos first heard his first punk song in 1979 and in 1981 he had his first band. "Forman brothers, sons of the famous film director Milos Forman, were starting a punk band, they wanted to cover 'Stepping Stone', and they asked me for help with the chords as they couldn't figure them out," he tells me. When Nikolos was playing the song for them another band heard him, their guitarist was about to leave for his civil service, so they asked him to join them. The band was called Ketchup and it was the very first punk band in Czechoslovakia. "We were playing illegally of course, there was no other way to do it, frequently we couldn't even

finish the gig. Usually the secret police showed up first, to monitor the event, soon after the regular police would show up with their batons to beat us up and the gig was over. That is how I joined the Prague underground movement and the anti-communist resistance. I joined 'Garaz' a quite famous and successful underground band for two years, lot of musicians went through that band at the time. We were covering some Plastic People of The Universe songs as they were not allowed to perform. The Plastic People of the Universe was a Czech band whose members did time in jail at the end of the seventies because of their music, because they refused to subdue to the communist authority, In 1990 Lou Reed came to visit Vaclav Havel to make an interview with him, and they decided to organize an unplanned gig where Lou Reed was backed by "Pulnoc" (Midnight), a band featuring mostly people from The Plastic People of The Universe. It was just after The Velvet revolution and it was really a blast to see my friends from the underground scene on stage with Mr. Lou Reed himself, being watched by our new president Vaclav Havel standing in the crowd along with a bunch of punks and other misfits." he smiles at the memory. Those were really interesting times for Vasilis, full of interesting and funny moments, events and people. "There is a very good play called "Rock'n'roll" by Tom Stoppard about this era, it exists as a book as well and I really recommend to read it." he enthuses. Later on in the eighties Vasilis got slowly into the roots of rock'n'roll and into the old blues. "I got hooked up by rockabilly and I started the very first Czechoslovakian old school

rockabilly band, we were the very first band trying to get to the roots of it with a double bass and so on... Around year 2000 I joined a very new band The Gangnails that were about to record an album and they needed some help with the guitars. It was way after the velvet Revolution and times were 'normal' so we could travel and tour the whole Europe. We recorded three albums and one of them was even released in Los Angeles in the USA. Then three years ago I got back to punk music where it all started, and I founded this band.



I am a bit older than the others, but age in rock'n'roll really doesn't matter." The band's new album 'Screaming Heroes' is a blend of modern sounds with a vintage feeling. The band like energetic music that doesn't let the audience stand still by the stage and they tried to put that energy into the album as well. "I think we succeeded, but it is up to the listener to decide. We picked thirteen songs among everything we wrote since we started, so it is a kind of a summary of our two years of playing together. Caroline, our singer is very energetic, she really gives the music everything, she has that rock'n'roll drive, it is our

benefit and we try to exploit it in our songs. The songs on the album have different rhythms, different feelings, 'Dirty Race' or 'Highway Road' are really rock'n'roll, Fuck You is almost a psychobilly song, the groovy 'No Soul Man' reminds us of the sixties and 'Time Shifting Heroes' was inspired by seventies glam rock music.' New Sunday Morning', 'Tumbledown' are more in the pop-punk style and 'Fire' is an old school punk classic. 'Star Bizarre' has a swinging feeling and the acoustic 'Turn of Fate' is a little bit out of the box as we wanted to record an album that wouldn't be boring to the listeners after three songs. I am pretty happy about the results. thirteen hits, thirteen melodies and stories, aliens, comics' heroes, fast rides, night life... everything is there," he marvels. 'Screaming Heroes' is the debut album from Time Shifters.

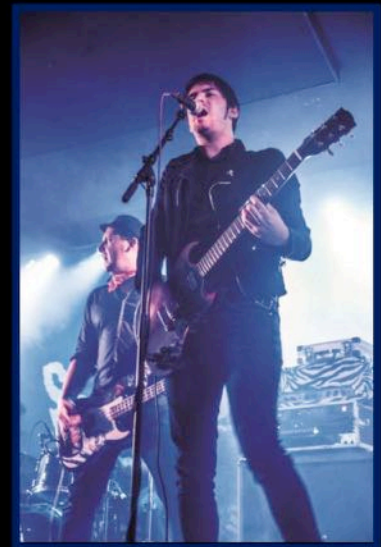


Last year the band recorded one single, which is also included on the album as those are songs from the same period of time. "We wanted to have them all together on one record. So as far as differences are concerned, ask me next year, when our second album will

be recorded. The material for it is almost ready," explains Vasilis. The band are a very eclectic band, and they enjoy listening to a lot of various styles of music. "My main source of inspiration is the first wave of seventies punk and fifties and sixties rock'n'roll. Throughout my career I played a lot of styles, punk, rockabilly, psychobilly, blues, the inspirations are therefore various from the old blues and rockabilly to the sixties and so on... The Kinks, T-Rex, The Stooges, The Clash, The Cramps, Motorhead, David Bowie, Velvet Underground or Tom Waits. I could carry on with more names, but it would be too long, I have been influenced by many, many things during all those years," he says with spirit. "But the influences are quite various within the band, we have a hardcore fan, a Britpop fan... so our music is influenced by various styles. Usually we bring new songs in with the other guitarist Mara and we work on them all together in the studio, so everyone can put in his own feeling to them. If you listen carefully you will notice that every song is different."

Vasilis makes a living as a graphic designer. "I really like my work. I have been doing this for twenty years now. I have always liked the graphic art, unfortunately I couldn't study it, because during the totalitarian era one couldn't enter the graphic arts university without having someone, a relative in the communist party," he says. "After the Velvet Revolution I was lucky to get a position as a graphic designer in an advertising agency and since 1994 I have my own graphic studio. I am the author of the band's visual as well, I like comics as you can probably see from the design of the album. My work and my hobbies are linked together,

and when I am working for the band, I am doing both at the same time ! I am very lucky, I am a very happy man." The guys started Time Shifters three years ago. It is the first time in Nikolos' musical career that he has a band with a female singer. "I wanted to give it a try. I was a little bit worried, I was afraid that a female voice would soften the music, that it would get too pop, I like pop music, but it wasn't what I wanted. There are lots of bands with female singers, but it is harder.



When a guy starts to sing the punk, all he has to do is to know how to sing and to give it all he's got. With girls it is more complicated not to lose the ferocity of it. After all girls are softer, prettier than us, aren't they," he chuckles. Luckily, he met Caroline, who was recommended to him by some friends. Caroline is from a musician family, her father has a hard rock band, she has been participating in the organization of the Czech biggest ska-punk festivals Mighty Sounds, so the punk scene is her home. She started to sing as a little child in a choir." After our first rehearsal it was all clear to me, The slightly dirty voice, her energy and the unbelievable drive she has, it

was exactly what I had been looking for," he enthuses. Pavel, the bass player was my friend for years, he used to live in France for thirty years and when he moved back to Czech Republic, we started the band. We met the drummer and the other guitarist in a rock'n'roll club in Prague and after a few beers everything was arranged. Six month later we started to tour all sorts of bars and clubs and the machine was on. When you are inside the band it is hard to have the necessary distance from things to be able to judge properly. I may have the impression that our songs are all different from each other, but the audience can have a totally different opinion on it," he explains to me. "I don't know what make us different from others.



Our music maybe. We have a female singer which is still quite an exception these days in our style of music. When you put together our rough punk-rock sound with that beautiful female voice, when everything fits in then it makes our songs that are unique. We play around with melodies a lot as well, I love Social Distortion, the way they mixed together punk and country music to create beautiful melodic songs. I like it. At the same time you need to be careful and not to lose the punk ferocity, the punk arrogance. But all these are things that I may think, and I may write the songs with that feeling, but I am unable to judge whether I succeeded or not and whether we are different from other bands or

not. It is up to someone from outside of the band to do it," Nikolos cites the song 'No Soul man' as his personal highlight from 'Screaming Heroes', and he wrote it under the influence of the sixties garage bands. "I love the sixties. We even added some organ to the song in the studio. I don't know where this song belongs, what style," he says.

"But it doesn't matter I don't really care about genres all that matters is to have fun playing it. This song is a highlight for me maybe also because I had a really good time recording it, we had fun with it, there is a lot of backing vocals, organs it was a lot of fun. This song works great on concerts as well. We chose it for our first video clip, if I don't count in the video for Dirty Race that we released as a single last year. Well Dirty Race is a highlight as well from another point of view, it is the song where you hear what I like the most, rock'n'roll and punk, you can even hear a kind of Motorhead feeling in it! Can I say then that the record has two strong moments? Dirty Race is to be heard on the CD that people got with the magazine. We will be happy if they let us know how they liked it." Playing live is complicated, because the guys still don't have a booking agency that would work with them. "I have some contacts, as I have been playing for a long time now, so I am doing most of the booking or we are contacted directly by the organizers of gigs. But this works only within the country borders, maybe in Germany where people know me a bit from my previous bands and even if the drummer Ales is trying to get us some gigs as well, it cannot replace a booking agency," he explains. "We would like to cut a deal with a European booking agency

that would like to work with us, no matter from what country as Europe is quite a small place.



We are making songs that are to be played, live shows is the most important for us that's why we want to play as much as possible, that's where we are headed, that's what we like." The band recorded 'Screaming Heroes' with a sound engineer that is the best in the field. Pavel Kure Hejc is a really famous person in the Czech republic. He has been a musician for years in a successful heavy metal band Vitacit, and besides the studio he is also a resident sound engineer in the legendary 007 Club. A lot of international punk and hardcore bands, such as The Ruts DC, The Varukers, The Vibrators, Discharge, G.B.H, Demented Are Go, just to say a few play there, so he knows that style of music very well. He didn't only record the album, but he worked with the band as a producer as well. He helped them a lot, and gave them a lot of important advice, and ideas. "He enjoyed doing it as much as we did so the cooperation was perfect. As we had been playing the songs live for two years before going to the studio, they had time to settle down, we had enough time to get used to them, therefore the recording process was quite fast. There was no stress, the songs were ready, so we could enjoy the studio at our best potential. We are looking forward to going back there! The mixing and mastering took a bit longer, I guess it took eight different

versions before we were really happy. We were in the studio in May and the final master was ready by the end of July," explains Vasilis.



Time Shifters plan to record a second album, and to keep on continuously working on new songs. "We have so many of them that we don't have enough time to rehearse them and they are piling on my desk. We shot a video clip that is being produced as we speak, and we would like to shoot another one before the end of the year.

We would like to release this first album on vinyl as well, but for the moment we don't have enough money to do that, so we are looking for a label that could cooperate with us. Isn't there somebody reading this that could help us ? Maybe I forgot to mention that I had a really good sense of humour ! So as far as the future is concerned : play, play and play," concludes Vasilis, bringing an end to our conversation. The hard version is on CD available from the bands Facebook shop or on Bandcamp shop, the online version is available on all the usual streaming medias and shops, Spotify, Apple Music, Deezer, iTunes, Amazon Music, Google Play, etc. and so on as well on

SoundCloud, BandCamps and Reverbnations. Check Time Shifters out at www.timeshiftersband.com/ <https://open.spotify.com/album/17RZinSeZBTMxVLVAiYgEI?si=BEhYbhsuRUCKAE5NZmvMHA/> <https://geo.itunes.apple.com/cz/album/screaming-heroes/1436019795?mt=1&app=music/> <https://geo.itunes.apple.com/cz/album/screaming-heroes/1436019795?app=itunes/> <https://soundcloud.com/time-shifters/sets/screaming-heroes>