

GOGOL BORDELLO

SUPER TARANTA!

Eugene Hutz - vocals
Sergey Rjabtzev - violin
Yuri Lemeshev - accordion
Tommy Gobena - bass
Eliot Ferguson - drummer
Oren Kaplan - guitar
Pam Racine - percussion, dance
Elizabeth Sun - percussion, dance

“With SUPER TARANTA! Gogol Bordello is going to conquer the world,” boasts Eugene Hutz, Gogol bandleader and agent provocateur. “Everything on the album is taken to the next level. It’s more direct, more abstract, more focused, with more dark humor. The dub parts are deeper; the fast parts are faster, its pure orgasmo hysteria.”

Gogol Bordello chose producer Victor Van Vugt (Nick Cave, PJ Harvey) to help them bring their extreme vision to vibrant life. “Victor has been a fan since the beginning of the band and we often spoke about making an album together. He’s not afraid to experiment in any way; he’ll go wherever we’re willing to go. If we say: ‘This track is gypsy speed metal dub,’ he says: ‘OK let’s do it.’ No hesitation.”

Van Vugt’s fearlessness was a perfect compliment to Gogol’s wide open approach. His analogue studio in New York is defiantly old school. He doesn’t use Apple’s Protools to add the magic when it isn’t there. With his help, the band made a record that sounds like Gogol Bordello backed by artists Manu Chao and System of a Down.

Gogol Bordello has been breaking down musical barriers since 1999 with a supercharged music based on a brutal gypsy two step rhythm that sounds like an Eastern European cousin of ska, augmented by punk, metal, rap, flamenco, roots reggae, Italian spaghetti, Western twang, dub and other sounds generated by gypsies and rebels from across the globe. “Reggae and gypsy music were created by poor people with nothing to lose,” Hutz explains. “They had to find a new way to look at the world, so the theme of SUPER TARANTA! is New Rebel Intelligence - NRI – a concept born in the band. Looking at string theory, creationism, globalization, political cataclysms and the general chaos facing us makes you realize you have to find some way to survive.”

Gogol Bordello’s philosophy is simple and pragmatic. Music makes it possible to make the contradictions of life sound harmonious, at least for the duration of a song. Their trans-global rebel rock is based on the belief that music and art can transform negative energy to positive and inspire individual action.

“SUPER TARANTA! is our interpretation of Tarantella, a ritual music from Italy,” Hutz says. “I saw a painting in Tuscany of a woman in convulsions and guy playing a violin.

He's leaning over her, playing music to cure her hysteria, put her into a trance and exorcize her demons. It was sexual, mystical and cultural, almost obscene - all the qualities of Gogol Bordello. It was another musical way of transforming negative energy into positive. Our musical awareness isn't based on flirtatious moments of musical fusion; we're constantly adding new stuff that compliments or root – the gypsy music from the Carpathian Mountains of Ukraine."

SUPER TARANTA!, like all Gogol Bordello albums, was cut live in the studio, with minimal overdubs. "The people in the band bounce energy off each other and that's what we capture on the record. It's in your face music with the production more advanced, the songwriting more mature, the humor darker. The songs all have musical and lyrical references to each other; it's an album that paints a whole picture."

"Ultimate" opens the album with a dizzying blend of Gypsy stomp, one-drop reggae, subtle Flamenco rhythms, blistering punk rock and Oren Kaplin's twang-y spaghetti western guitar fills. "There are no good old days, only today," Hutz snarls, inviting listeners to explore their own vision of New Rebel Intelligence.

Another gem on the album, "Forces of Victory," is an amazing mash up of Gypsy, speed metal and dub, the kind of hybrid Gogol is so masterful at. The rapid fire playing of Yuri Lemeshev's accordion and Sergey Rjabtzev's fiddle is jaw-dropping virtuosic, displaying a hair-raising combination of passion, speed and technique, while the blistering rhythms of Eliot Ferguson's drumming and new bass player Tommy Gobena put the track completely over the top.

One of their straightforward Gypsy celebration songs is "Wonderlust King," which illustrates the band's traveling ethos, an odyssey of sharing music, love, food and culture, an exuberant explosion of joy with an irresistible sing-a-long chorus.

"Supertheory of Supereverything" is a jaunty gypsy reggae drinking song that advises us to set aside the mysteries of astrophysics, religion and politics and find a way to celebrate our differences. On the other hand, "Have Your Ever Been To American Wedding," features the searing horn section of New York's Slavic Soul Party. They drop some rowdy gypsy wedding music into a track that looks at an American celebration through an immigrant's eyes. Eastern Europeans are used to three day weddings, so how does that look next to an American wedding? The song is full of healthy sarcasm and irony.

One of the album's most political, and chilling tracks, is "Zina-Marina," a song that speaks to the problem of white slavery that has plagued former Soviet Bloc nations since the collapse of the USSR. "Even 10 years ago in Ukraine there were a lot of hot chicks," Hutz says. "Now 70% of them are gone and no one knows where. They get captured and sold to whore houses in Dubai. There's a dark side to Eastern Europe that nobody is talking about."

The songs on SUPER TARANTA! were all road tested, many of them already hits to the band's rabid fans, but on the album they're played with a force that even surprised Hutz. "This album gives you everything you want from Gogol Bordello - and more! There are new sounds but the music stays raw. We will never be comfortable; we're constantly searching and discovering new sounds, finding new ways to make negative energy positive."

Since dropping *Gypsy Punks* in 2005, Gogol Bordello has been circling the globe igniting

the international community with their frenzied brand of anarchic mayhem. They've scorched venues all across the U. S.; headlined Festivals in Britain, where they topped the Rock, Metal and Indie charts and wowed fans in Berlin, Vienna, Warsaw, Kiev, Zagreb and Prague. Along the way they've discovered more styles of rebel music and incorporated them into their omnivorous sound.

Hutz is driven by an inexorable creative desire. In the past two years he's starred in Liev Schreiber's film *Everything Is Illuminated* and was the focal point of a documentary called the *Pied Piper Of Hutzovina*. The documentary follows Hutz to the Ukraine in 2006, filming him while he searched for the extended family he left behind when he fled Chernobyl in 1986. "It was a challenging experience. The film connects the dots, joining different aspects of Gypsy culture in Hungary, Ukraine, Russia and Siberia, from its manifestations in elite society, all the way down to the musicians and activists in the ghetto."

Hutz came to the United States from the Ukraine after escaping the Chernobyl meltdown and enduring an epic seven-year trek through Eastern Europe refugee camps. "It's an interesting story, but maybe not so interesting when it was happening. I was listening to BBC radio when the DJ said: 'for the citizens of Ukraine: There was just a disaster in Chernobyl and it's not likely your government will tell you about it.' I was 13 or 14 and into punk rock and didn't want to leave [Kiev,] but the evacuation turned into another discovery. We visited the village my family came from. My relatives introduced me to the essential foods and music of our gypsy culture. My parents hid [their gypsy roots] in the city; in the countryside I was face to face with it. My biggest musical influence was coming face to face with that ancient culture."

The Hutz family settled in Vermont, but Eugene left for New York as soon as possible. In The City's melting pot he found other refugees who shared his vision of an international punk rock sound. "Our gypsy fiddler, Sergey Rjabtzev, was a theater director in Moscow for 10 years. Yuri Lemeshev, our 53-year-old accordion player, is from Sakhalin in Russia. Guitarist Oren Kaplin is from Israel. The drummer is American Eliot Ferguson, the only sane person in the band."

Hutz had a following from his DJ gig at Mehanata, where he cued up Gypsy, rai, flamenco and global underground sounds for exuberant crowds of artists, scene makers and local Ukrainians, Russians, Gypsies, and Bulgarians. Gogol took off immediately, with a high voltage show that demonstrated the extreme nature of gypsy music and those that sing and play it. "People after the show say: 'I'm exhausted just watching the show, how do you do it, night after night?' I say if you're putting your soul into it, and pursuing your dream, it's more than music and behavior. It's a lifestyle; it's a mission. It's about pursuing the world for yourself; rejecting the fake convenience of the modern world. The economy wants to keep you happy with brand name shit, but people need to remember we're all a bit supernatural. You just have to do some work to get to it."

