

Too Tough to Die

(by Erik Bauer, Middle Class Pig Records)

Formed in 1980, K.G.B. was one of the first Punk bands to come out of southern Germany, and, since that fateful day, is still a driving force behind German Punk Rock. While other people were listening to Peter Maffay and Cliff Richards and smoking incense sticks and worshipping the penile zodiac god, the boys in K.G.B. were writing short, yet poignant Punk Rock songs ridiculing not only German society and government. Throughout the '80s and '90s, they released several singles and LPs, toured the U.S. twice and Europe several times and made loads of radio and some television appearances. Particularly notable in the international Rock 'n' Roll scene is their collaboration with Toxic Reasons, Big Danny and the Sloppy Seconds, M.D.C. and The Zero Boys. Over the years, K.G.B. has put on gigs for bands coming through Tübingen and provided them with a place to sleep, food and enough alcohol to kill the Russian army. Although the line-up of K.G.B. has changed several times, singer Hannes Koerber (the only founding member still in the band) has kept it all together and, in the face of bad management and near financial ruin, has never given up hope.

K.G.B. is the only "political" band on Middle Class Pig at the moment. But, K.G.B. is more than a Punk Rock band that likes to bitch about the government. Hannes Koerber is a poet, and, if you can read and understand German, you will see that his lyrics are a witty and clever poke at modern society. In the tradition of Goethe, Schiller and Hölderlin, Hannes' work is poetry, literature, a play on words, a metaphorical and metaphysical trip through the German psyche. Add three chords, drums and a guitar solo to that and you have a damn good Punk band that really has something to say. With the backdrop of a medieval town with modern-day inhabitants, K.G.B. is where the past and the present meet. If Goethe would've had a Punk band, it would've sounded something similar to what K.G.B. is doing.

But, dammit, don't get the impression that K.G.B. is a group of ultra-serious German intellectuals that carry around a Kafka novel wherever they go to impress all the chicks in Tübingen who have bruised knees from playing the cello. If there's anyone who likes to rip it up, drink beer and schnaps, pass out at the bar, only to wake up later and drink more alcohol with a perverted, glazed smile, and, for all practical purposes, cause such a ruckus that the cops have to come, it's K.G.B.. This band will party all night, and, when all their American friends have either gone home or drown in a pile of their own vomit, the boys will open up another bottle of Vodka (at 8 in the morning), dance a jig, argue with each other, minutes later forgetting what the fuck they were arguing about, walk around in their leopard-skin G-strings, and crack out every Rock 'n' Roll record they ever bought and attempt to put it on the turntable (and wonder why they're all scratched the next day).

To top it all off, Hannes and his bandmates Silver, Michi, Fabe and Benny are the coolest, most generous folks you'll ever meet. Not only will they pump you full of alcohol, they'll cook you a meal at 3 a.m., give you more alcohol and then let you sleep in their bed (because you can't make it home anyway). If there's anyone who sincerely lives a communal lifestyle without being pretentious about it, it's the members of K.G.B.. They'll give you the shirt off their back and never expect anything in return. If more people would think that way, no one would ever have to buy food, beer or clothing ever again.