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Ozella Music | Schloss Hamborn 20 | D-33178 Borchen | Germany | fon +49(0)5251-38509 fax +49(0)5251-388909  
email [mail@ozellamusic.com](mailto:mail@ozellamusic.com) | [www.ozellamusic.com](http://www.ozellamusic.com)  
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## Erna Rot Ode An Die Freude



### Is it still Indie-Jazz or already Alternative-Pop?

YESTERDAY, TODAY, TOMORROW: Singer and composer Erna Rot finds the inspiration for her unique debut in German chanson, jazz, blues, swing, as well as modern indie and avant-garde pop.

Becoming an artist is hard enough. All the learning and practicing, the not-knowing-how. The wasted time. All the dead ends and the wrong turns. Is there another way? It seems there is apparently. „When I am Erna Rot, I am fully myself“, says singer Constanze Klaue, talking about her alter ego, „this music, this language, playing with words, the storytelling - that’s me.“

In the past Erna had tried to pair her warm alto with electronic beats. But no: „That wasn’t me.“ Luckily she found some experienced advisors to help her find her musical identity. Like Lisa Bassenge (Nylon et al) for example and Julia Hülsmann, who all assured her that composition and lyrics were her true strength. And so today her musical identity that’s Erna and the piano. „When I am sitting at the piano just playing it often sounds similar at first, jazzy, almost traditional.“ It just sounds like Erna, her fingers improvising notes, melodies and harmonies, her lips forming jabberwocky German words until suddenly a random melody and some words make sense and begin to form a new Erna Rot song. They are all about little observations, love, far away countries, outsiders, charlatans, grumblers and moaners. Wonderfully sketched miniature stories that tell of life in all its facets and beauties in a cheeky, ironic and sometimes even nasty way.

As an artist Erna is so much at peace with herself that nothing can harm her. Her songs are a paradox: they feel like cover versions of old songs and still you have never heard them before. The one actual cover version on „Ode an die Freude“, „Liebesleid“ by Fritz Kreisler, gets a unique makeover by Erna that only proves the paradox. Unique is the perfect word to describe Erna’s music, as it is sometimes so clear and close, so classical, that one could be misled to sense irony beyond the lyrics where there is none.

„Already as a child I loved the Golden Twenties“, says East Berlin born and bred Erna, „I liked the revues, the huge stages, the glamour and the shiny goddesses in their feather boas.“ An artist must be allowed to dream and Erna could dream best in Berlin’s backyard theatres, jazz clubs and cafés.

„For me Erna Rot stands for complete freedom“, she says, „I don’t set her any limits as long as it’s authentic.“ With this attitude she fits the zeitgeist of indie jazz that’s both inspired by pop music and inspiring pop music, a marvellous interplay that has given birth to a lot of great projects and musicians like Element of Crime, Annett Louisan or Erna’s mentor Lisa Bassenge. These artists haven’t developed their own style from the music of their heroes, they have cultivated and refined this style and have made it truly independent, so they don’t have to fear for the future of their craft.

Erna is on a good way to do just like them. And she is not alone. In all the years of studying and practicing her band has grown organically and is now able to elegantly bridge the gap between jazz and contemporary trends. Kurt Ebelhäuser would probably agree. He made his name with proper rock as a guitarist (Blackmail, Scumbucket) and a producer (Donots, Guano Apes, What?) but when he heard Erna Rot, he just felt like producing an album with her. Martin Englert (2raumwohnung, Tito&Tarantula) was responsible for the mixing.

So is this still indie jazz or already alternative pop? Is it yesterday, today or tomorrow? Or just timeless hot shit? German songs with German lyrics without the usual armour of irony, without a back door or a safety net - that’s Erna Rot. And not only is it very brave and personal, it’s also very 2015. In the best way.