The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Detroit Band Known for Gay Bar Lyrics to Play in Moscow

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November 17, 2013



Electric Six might test the limits of the ban on gay propaganda at their Wednesday concert at 16 Tons in Moscow.

The Detroit rock band Electric Six, best known for a song exhorting listeners to go to a gay bar, will play songs from their new album in Moscow on Wednesday.

An eclectic band that melds genres such as garage, punk and disco into their music, Electric Six is a six-member band with memorable lyrics and very danceable songs. The group first visited Russia last year, and on this trip they will be playing new songs from their ninth studio album, "Mustang," released last month, in addition to their classic hits.

Despite a shifting lineup, Electric Six's style has stayed consistent since 2003, when the band gained fame with breakout singles such as "Danger! High Voltage" and particularly "Gay Bar," the music video for which had a series of Abraham Lincoln impersonators — or "Gaybrahams" — standing in the White House singing lyrics such as "I wanna take you to a

gay bar" and "I've got something to put in you" interspersed with shots of phallic imagery.

Electric Six's previous eight studio albums have maintained the irreverent, shocking humor of their first singles, and their consistent ability to surprise audiences has helped them to maintain their popularity for a decade.

The band's unique energy is reflected in the title of its new album "Mustang," an explanation of which could be found on the Electric Six website: "The American male needs to feel like a wild horse from time to time. Electric Six is a band from Detroit comprised of six American males. The American male, upon birth, is issued three Wild Horse Cards™ from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and he can play this card at any point in his life when he needs to feel like a wild horse for a year. 2013 is the year that all six members of Electric Six are electing to play one of their cards at the same time. The result is Electric Six's ninth studio album, 'Mustang.'"

In an interview published by Antiquiet, the band's lead singer Dick Valentine described "Mustang" as an "absurd album" with "some pretty ridiculous songs."

"It's gonna be a good one, that's for sure," he said.

Gregory Heaney of Allmusic wrote that "if the first nine albums weren't enough to convince you that their brand of absurdist rock was for you, 'Mustang' isn't likely to change anything. If, however, you've given yourself over to the pleasures of Electric Six, this is an album that will affirm that your choice to follow the band's descent into dance rock madness was a sound one."

Electric Six is touring Russia as part of their "Save The World, Save The World" tour, first stopping in St. Petersburg and then moving to Moscow, where they will play Wednesday. The band will go on to give concerts across Europe, ending its tour in the Britain in December.

Songs like "Gay Bar" were popular in Russia in the early 2000s, yet with the current climate surrounding gay rights — including the recently passed anti-gay "propaganda" law banning the promotion of "nontraditional sexual orientations" among minors — it remains to be seen if they will be received in the same way. This is especially true since growing knowledge of the English language in Russia means that an unusually large percentage of the audience will actually know what the band is singing about.

According to an employee of the club who spoke to The Moscow Times over the phone Sunday, concerts at 16 Tons, the Moscow club where Electric Six will perform, do allow minors. Thus, it remains to be seen whether the music could be considered gay propaganda.

Apart from legal issues, the club owners may have safety concerns, given recent attacks on gays. In the early hours of Saturday morning, two armed men attempted to enter the Moscow gay club "Central Station," apparently intending to shoot the guests, Life News reported. There have been numerous well-publicized attacks on gays and gay activists throughout Russia in recent months.

Electric Six will perform at 8 p.m. on Nov. 20 at 16 Tons, 6 Presnensky Val. M. Ulitsa 1905 Goda. 499-253-5300. 16tons.ru*.*

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Original url:
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