

SHOUT IT OUT! THE RELATION OF NOISE AND ART

As you might expect from band named after the permeability of the small intestine mucosa for particles excreted via the kidneys nothing in The Hirsch Effekt is trivial. This also applies, of course, to their energetic music, oscillating between a variety of genres like Indie-Rock, Metal and Post-Punk. Their eclecticism may be due to the different musical backgrounds of the individual band members. Lead singer Nils Wittrock studied classical guitar at the Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media (HMTMH), and quickly found that the instrument made him an outsider in the classical concert business: "As a classical guitarist, it was difficult to find people who wanted to play music with you," he remembers. At a seminar on mixing he attended out of personal interest, he met the bass player Ilja Lappin who was studying Popular Music at the HMTMH at the time. Together with drummer Philipp Wende, who also suggested the band's name, they recorded their first demo tape in 2009. When Wende left the band in 2013, doctorate candidate Moritz Schmidt took over the drum sticks.

"The band was an outlet for what I actually wanted to do – make music with other people," Wittrock says. "I found it totally exciting that I could put what I learned in composition studies into practice right away in my rock band." This goes some way to explaining the artsy approach that has become a characteristic of The Hirsch Effekt's music. Not for nothing a reviewer praised their 2017 album "Eskapist" with the words: "The relationship between noise and art will never be the same again." However, the success of the "indie-electro-postpunk-do-it-yourself band", as they define

themselves, was anything but predestined. Young Nils picked up his first guitar at the age of 13 and taught himself the fingerings with the help of guitar manuals in his parent's basement. Studying the classical guitar then became a fixed idea during his civilian service: "I didn't know anything about music. I didn't know what significance the classical guitar had in music, and I had never competed with other musicians. If I hadn't passed the entrance exam at the university, I might be a social worker today."

Even the musical style of The Hirsch Effekt was new territory for Nils Wittrock: "I got into metal through the band. It's a special kind of music that has its own universe, and is often very virtuosic. I wanted to make music that challenges you as a musician." When they are invited to festivals, the musicians are billed among the more pop-oriented bands, because of their use of cellos and classical guitars. However, their music is not for everyone. When they performed at the Fête de la Musique in the Aegidienkirche, a medieval church ruin used as a memorial, people complained that the singer was shouting inappropriately. At the family day of another festival, there were complaints that children started crying when the band began to perform. At their own concerts, too, some audience members have grumbled that they cannot dance to their songs. Wittrock faces the criticism calmly: "We don't want to make 'beautiful' music. You can discover a lot with us, but you have to get involved, like in a movie, to find out what the musician was thinking when he wrote the song. We don't make music to dance to."

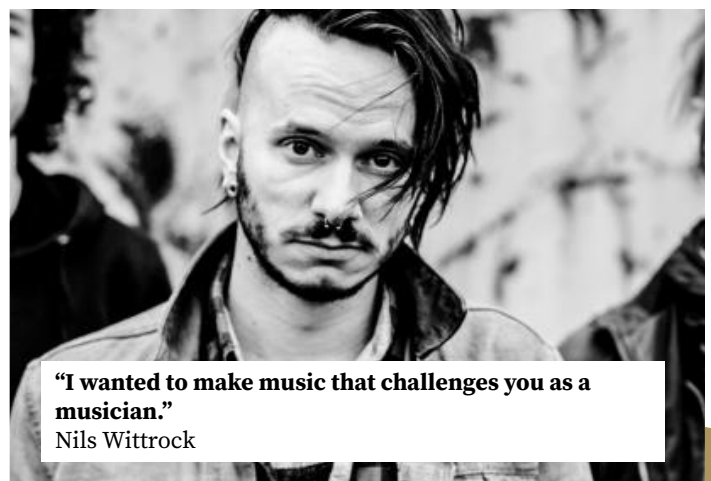
10. CITY OF MUSIC-TALK

WITH: Nils Wittrock
lead singer of the band
The Hirsch Effekt

WEB: www.nilswittrock.de

Date: 15 November 2021

Where: Staatsoper Hannover



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Nils Wittrock

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This is also reflected in the lyrics of their songs, which often deal with critical issues like migration, terror or climate change. Wittrock attends demonstrations to research the topics he is writing about – in German. “There are always people who say: why don't you sing something in English? But if we had sung in English from the beginning, maybe we wouldn't have got as far as we have,” Wittrock points out. The band's discography includes five albums, the most recent, “Kollaps”, released in 2020 on the Hanover-based label Long Branch Records. Wittrock used the pandemic to write new material, but refuses to release it until The Hirsch Effekt can go on tour again: “It's extremely difficult for me to create something new now, when there's still so much in the pipeline,” he explains. However, online concerts are not an option

for the man who craved (and still craves) interaction – with his fellow musicians and the public.

Their next tour has been re-scheduled for April 2022 and the demand is very high, which is unsurprising in light of the professionalism of the musicians: “We are communicative with the local people, no airs and graces,” Wittrock says. In the end it is this down-to-earth attitude – alongside their desire for creative freedom – that characterises The Hirsch Effekt. And the fans feel that too.

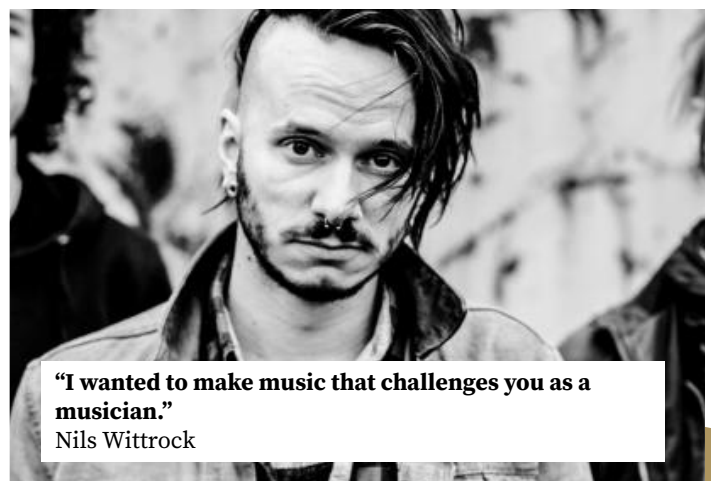
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