



Act : VulgarGrad

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Websites : www.vulgargrad.com
www.myspace.com/vulgargrad



VULGARGRAD

VulgarGrad bring you the old songs of the Russian thieves (called *blatnie pesny* or *blatnyak*), along with punk classics of the Perestroika era. *VulgarGrad* arose in Melbourne in late 2004 out of a collaboration between some of Australia's best musicians in underground ethnic styles and the incredible vocal talents of one Australia's most formidable stage and screen actors, Jacek Koman (*Moulin Rouge*, *Children of Men*, *Romulus My Father*, *Australia*). This genial but vengeful front-man roars with the voice of a man betrayed, backed by a gang of the most illustrious ex-cons drawn from bands that include *The Ennio Morricone Experience*, *Mikelangelo* and *the Blacksea Gentlemen*, and *Zulya and the Children of the Underground*.

Throughout the twentieth century, criminal culture always played a strong, if unofficial part in Russian cultural life, and this was never more highly developed than in the thieves' songs, or *blatnye pesni* – performed by, for, and about criminals in the prisons, gulags and seedy bars of Soviet and post-Soviet Russia.

Famous exponents of the genre include *Leonid Utesov* (although Jewish, actually one of Stalin's favourite singers) in the 1920s and 30s, *Arkady Severny* and the great *Vladimir Vysotsky* in the 60s and 70s, while more recently, groups such as *Leningrad* and *La-Minor* have incorporated the *blatnyak* style and lyrical content into their sound. *VulgarGrad* combine elements from all of these performers, updating it into their own inimitable sound, producing something that transcends the language barrier by aiming straight for your convict heritage and your dancing feet.

Since that time they have caused a sensation on Australia's live music and festival scene, proving that what Australian audiences really seem to need is a wild night of old-fashioned Russian criminality. After all, if Russia and Australia have anything in common, it's convicts.

It's vodka-fuelled oompah swing ska punk... gulag-style. Theatrical, hilarious and dangerous: unmissable.

BAND MEMEBERS :

Jacek Koman : Vocals
Phil McLeod : Contrabass balalaika
Ros Jones : Trombone
Adam Pierzchalski : Trumpet
Nara Demasson : Guitar
Ben Hendry : Drums
Paul Dornau : Piano accordion

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NATIONAL TOURS and FESTIVALS :

Bellingen Global Carnival, NSW (2010)
WOMADelaide, SA (2010)
Port Fairy Folk Festival, VIC (2010)
St Kilda Festival, VIC (2010)
Warrandyte Festival, VIC (2010)
Woodford Folk Festival, QLD (2008/09)
Adelaide Cabaret Festival, SA (2009)
Bitter and Twisted Festival, NSW (2009)
Queenscliff Music Festival (2008, 2009)
The Famous Spiegeltent, Sydney, NSW (2007, 2008)
The Sydney Opera House Studio, NSW (2008)
The Sydney Festival, NSW
Great Escape Festival, NSW
Brisbane Cabaret Festival (2008)
The Adelaide Fringe Festival, SA (2007)
Melbourne International Arts Festival, VIC
Brisbane Cabaret Festival, QLD
The Northbridge Festival, WA (2007)

VENUES :

The Corner, Melbourne
The Toff in Town, Melbourne
Northcote Social Club, Melbourne
The Gaelic Club, Sydney
QIRKZ, Sydney
The Clarendon, Katoomba
The Brass Monkey, Sydney
The Cambridge Hotel, Newcastle
The Garden of Unearthly Delights, SA
The Tivoli, Brisbane

ALBUMS :

King of Crooks (2009)
Popular Street Songs of the Russian Underclass (2005)

TELEVISION :

ABC Television Arts program : live in the studio (2010)
Featured in the soundtrack for the Channel 9 drama series, *Underbelly* (2008)
Spicks and Specks, ABC TV's (August 2008)
Channel 10 News (2008)

QUOTES :

"These guys are enough to make you sell your dog to get a ticket."
: *Kate Welsman, The Age*

"Melbourne band VulgarGrad had the Queenscliff Music Festival audience yelling, cheering and dancing to their set of old and new songs of Russian thieves and punk classics of the Perestroika era."
: *Paul Petran, Music Deli, ABC Radio National*

"*King of Crooks* is a ferocious 16-track offering which should be all over the radio, not tucked away in the World Music section... It seems almost impossible that a bunch of Australian musicians playing distinctly Russian music and celebrating criminal culture could gain accolades, but the irresistible nature of the music is to blame for that... You don't have to understand a word of Russian to enjoy this. The wonderful vocal abilities of Koman are enough to translate any story straight to your heart, and you'll be so busy dancing you won't care about what the lyrics mean... I can't recommend it enough."
: by *Ivana Stab, The Dwarf.com.au*

"Coming off as a merry, drunken horns-laden racket, the Melbournian septet's invigorating take on *blatnyak* (songs from and about the Russian criminal underworld) is absolutely uproarious in a live setting, while also being a great non-alcohol-fuelled listen."
: *Denis Semchenko, Rave Magazine*

"Their raucous performances of Russian thieves' songs - *blatnye pesni* – have achieved huge followings in Melbourne's live music scene. VulgarGrad injects the music with its own perestroika punk and gulag swing, transcending the language barrier and aiming straight for the dancing feet."
: *Lachlan Jobbins, City News*

"It swings, stutters, stumbles and growls, veering and careering from cabaret cheese to jazz groove to carny to ska. While the musicians are clearly seasoned, they play with shambolic abandon... Superlatives aside, this is a great slab of music – energetic & fun, well-played and imminently danceable. 10/10 potatoes."
: *Bradfield Dumpleton, indie-cds.com*

YOUTUBE LINKS :

"I'm Your Cowboy" : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFPpgzotKSU>

"Zhopa" : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EeZspiOv5e0>

"Liminchiki" : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qUg0p1sIPol>

"Tram#10" : http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QSq_dSdJXro

Channel 10 News

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9x_CIM-CT0

ABC Arts

<http://www.abc.net.au/arts/stories/s2818303.htm>

Spicks and Specks

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-l9TFn1V11k>

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