

OFF Festival Katowice 2013: Pop, rap, house and noise!

The most eclectic music festival in this part of the world has a lot in store for you this August: The Walkmen and Thee Oh Sees from the US, the cult British band known as The Pop Group, and the reunited Super Girl & Romantic Boys are just some of the surprises we've prepared for you this time.

The Walkmen

Remember "The Rat," unanimously hailed as one of the best tracks of the decade by Pitchfork, Rolling Stone, and the NME? The OFF Festival is your only chance to hear it live. The legendary American act The Walkmen have just confirmed their appearance in Katowice. Founded over a decade ago on the ashes of Jonathan Fire*Eater and The Recoys, The Walkmen won critical acclaim for their unique mix of no-nonsense garage rock and an artistic vision worthy of a stadium headliner. There aren't many other bands that would compare themselves to both U2 and The Velvet Underground. The group's latest record, released last spring, bears the best possible title, *Heaven*, given that it's a truly heavenly experience for fans of high-brow, tasteful, organic, adult indie rock. Produced by Phil Ek (Built to Spill, Fleet Foxes), the album garnered rave reviews from both fans and critics, one of whom described *Heaven* as a "triumphant culmination of the Walkmen's first decade."

The Pop Group

You could hardly imagine a more ironic band name, but the really sad part is that you could hardly imagine a more underappreciated band. The Pop Group's 1979 debut record *Y* is an unfettered manifesto of creative freedom. Punk rock rage, funky beat, free-jazz tangents and the hysterical vocals of Mark Stewart were too far ahead of their time to gain much popularity before the band's untimely demise in 1980, after releasing just two full-length albums. The Pop Group would later become the object of admiration of such artists as Portishead and Nick Cave, leading to the band's reactivation in 2010. They are currently said to be working on a new album and – more importantly for us – they're going back on tour!

Three Oh Sees

This Californian group headed by John Dwyer is the paragon of hard work: they come out with a fresh record every year, but it's their energetic, enthusiastic shows that they're really famous for. The Oh Sees' music is a unique combination of solid songwriting and punk chaos, the kind that only ever seems to crop up across the ocean. We have to warn you: this concert is going to rip your head off, unless you're already decapitated by the band's upcoming album *Floating Coffin*, said to be the darkest in band's history, slated for release this coming April.

AlunaGeorge

A London duo featuring vocalist Aluna Francis and producer George Reid, said to have connected over their love of intelligent, soul-tinged 90s pop, though reviewers describe their tracks as heavily influenced by the latest sounds coming out of Britain's trendiest clubs. Praised by the BBC (they made the Sound of 2013 list, of course) and Pitchfork alike (they're

already booked to perform at this fall's festival in Paris), AlunaGeorge were discovered by the broader public through their remixes of Florence & the Machine and Lana Del Ray. The duo's debut album is set to be released ahead of their performance in Katowice.

Blondes

Sam Haar and Zach Steinman have been performing together for years. They started with post-punk guitar riffs and ended up with semi-improvised, transy dance tracks. The New York duo burst onto the scene with their 2010 EP *Touched* and their subsequent eponymous full-length release. Hypnotic rhythms, thumping basslines, and endless subtle harmonies: if this is "hipster house," then we're all hipsters.

Super Girl & Romantic Boys

This band referenced trashy 80s electro before it was cool. The legendary Warsaw band known for its hit track "Spokój" off of the compilation album *Disco Chaos* signed a record deal, recorded their debut album, and... never released it. Disappointed with the show-biz world, Super Girl & Romantic Boys broke up mid-last decade, regrouping for a single tour in 2008. Vocalist Kostek Usenko didn't drop off the radar completely, performing with the punk act 19 Wiosen and releasing a book titled *Oczami radzieckiej zabawki* ("Through the Eyes of a Soviet Toy"). Don't miss this show: OFF is the only festival the band is playing this year! Thankfully, Antena Krzyku is planning to release the group's lost debut record *SGRB – Miłość z tamtych lat* with bonus material this June.

Très.B

Now that they've won a much-deserved Polityka Passport, everyone knows and appreciates Très.B, but we discovered them first: the international trio led by the charismatic Misia Furtak has performed at the OFF Festival twice, both in Mysłowice and in Katowice. We've decided to invite them back again this year, so impressed were we with their 2012 album *40 Winks of Courage*, which revealed an unexpected dark and melancholy side to the band.

Bisz/B.O.K Band

"I keep splattering crap on pages like Pollock / Everyone has to be someone, I'm fine with being myself" raps Bisz, summarizing his personal philosophy in one of Poland's best (not just hip-hop) tracks of 2012. The Bydgoszcz-based rapper's entire album – titled *Wilk chodnikowy* ("Sidewalk Wolf") – is one big rule-breaking event. With these intelligent and intriguing beats and acerbic lyrics, it looks like we've finally found a new master in this game.

We'll see and hear the rapper perform with an expanded lineup this August: along with the frontman, Bisz/B.O.K features six musicians playing turntables, live drums, and violins.

Passes are now available at the OFF Shop on the festival's official website:

- Three Day Pass: 140 zł without campsite access / 160 zł with campsite access

- Four Day Pass: 150 zł without campsite access / 180 zł with campsite access

Prices are valid until March 4, after which the pass price will go up slightly. Get your tickets early!