

Legal disclaimer: This story is entirely a work of fiction. All characters, settings and incidents portrayed are the work of the author's imagination and that of any commissioner/trader where present. Any resemblance to actual persons, whether living or dead, or real locations or events is purely coincidental. Any views or opinions expressed in this work are those of the characters only, not of the author or anyone they belong to.

Slezy Drakona's band discography

Written by Blue Kitty Tales.

01/04/19

Origin: Rostov On Don, Russia

Musical genre: Folk Metal

Activity: August 2014 – present

Record Label: Temple Records

Current lineup

Nikoleta Zima: lead vocals, flutes, accordion, songwriting, album art (2014 – present)

Vladimir Zherdev: lead guitars, backing vocals, songwriting (2014 – present)

Andrei Zvyagin: rhythm guitars (2014 – present)

Sasha Travkin: traditional wind instruments (2014 – present)

Tetyana Vitsina: bass, backing vocals (2014 – present)

Roman Kurepa: drums and percussion (2017 – present)

Past members

Dmitry Chernykh: drums (2014 – 2016)

Oleg Botvinnik: touring drums (2016 – 2017)

Releases

EPs:

Свет солнца (Light of the Sun) (December 15th 2014)

LPs:

Прощай, мой дорогой сын (Farewell, My Dear Son) (September 17th 2016)

Евгений Баллада (Yevgeny's Ballad) (February 2nd 2019)

Early history (2014)

Utterly heartbroken by the death of her son at just seven years of age, Nikoleta wanted to try anything to ease her pain. She had divorced from her husband and, no longer feeling able to act as any sort of mother, had resigned all custody of her one surviving daughter Olga to him, never to see either of them again. Though she had not wanted to turn to alcohol or drugs, she had still liked the company there was in bars around the town she called home and spent as much time as she could in them socialising with anyone she could.

Eventually, with some encouragement from the friend she was living with, she eventually decided to join in on the karaoke evenings one of the bars offered. Much to her surprise, she stunned the other patrons with both her singing voice and her growls and screams, a vocal technique she refers to as a dragon's roar. One night, after she had finished a song she dedicated to her son, in turn moving herself to tears mid flow, she caught the attention of a group of musicians who were amongst the audience.

Each of them approached her once she stepped down from the stage and introduced themselves one by one. They introduced themselves as a white fox named Vladimir Zherdev, a black wolf named Andrei Zvyagin, a lanky grey rabbit named Sasha Travkin, a white cat named Tetyana Vitsina and a Dalmatian named Dmitry Chernykh. They had each been delighted with her singing and wanted to form a band, recruiting her as the lead vocalist.

In a heartbeat she took up the chance and immediately started to record the material for their demo, hoping this would allow them to cement their place in the Metal scene in the country. Later that year, their opening demo was released, titled *Свет солнца* (Light of the Sun) in reference to the fondest memories Nikoleta had of her son. Between her vocals, she contributes with the flute or accordion depending on which instrument is

needed for each song. This release proved to be well received, with many critics saying that their music gave a unique spin on Folk Metal.

Breakthrough and debut album (2015 – 2016)

Though Nikoleta wanted to start touring right away, each of her bandmates thought otherwise, for they wished to get more material written for their debut before considering it. Commencing from the week after their debut was released, they began to write the material for the album they hoped would propel them further to stardom. In this period, they also recorded a DVD documentary that told the story of how the band first came to be and the making of their demo and debut, with Nikoleta also giving an insight into the mythology that inspired her lyrics and the life her son had lived.

The resulting debut finally came together and was released on September 17th 2016 with the title *Прощай, мой дорогой сын* (Farewell, My Dear Son), which bore a retouched photo of her son sharing a cuddle with her as its album art. The album consisted of eleven tracks, two of which being rerecorded versions from their demo. Satisfied they had enough material to get started, the band embarked on their first tour to promote and support it starting from that November, as well as get closer to other Folk Metal bands around the world.

Unfortunately, Dmitry left the band before touring started due to musical and political differences, requiring them to recruit a touring drummer, a black lizard named Oleg Botvinnik, for its duration. Additionally, the band discovered that Nikoleta's ex husband Sergei had found out about the album and its cover. He did not give a public response to the use of this photo, but did make a post about it on his Flutter account in which he had cited that he felt it and what she was doing now was a lovely way to remember their son and that he wished their marriage could have ended differently. He had since remarried and had wished Nikoleta well in her new career.

Reuniting with an old flame and *Евгений Баллада* (Yevgeny's Ballad) (2017 – present)

Nikoleta did not respond to Sergei's post, still believing that she was far beneath him due to what had happened to Yevgeny. But she would get a surprise she had never foreseen during the final stop of the tour in January 2017. Before the band could begin performing their first song, she recognised her former lover Roman in the audience and called him up to the stage. Upon introducing him to the audience, they cheered in delight, growing even louder when the two dragons embraced and kissed. That night's performance had Nikoleta and Roman singing in duet, who it turned out had been a fan and had memorised a lot of their songs.

Once it was complete, Nikoleta invited Roman backstage, where they spent an hour catching up. She then called her bandmates in and explained to him that the band was looking for a permanent drummer, before asking him if he wanted to join. He accepted in an instant, and required only a month to memorise each of the songs the band would perform in their next tour, some of which being previously unreleased at that point.

Though at first, her bandmates each had misgivings about his ability to fill Dmitry's role due to it being his first band, this was quickly put to rest when he started to play, for he did not have trouble keeping up, even with the faster sections. As a result, the band wanted a chance to show him off before their next tour, leading to them producing their first music video for the opening track of their album, *Конец Старого Света, Начало Нового Света* (An Old World Ends, a New World Begins). The video consisted of footage of each of the members visiting several different landmarks in North Triston and Russia, with Nikoleta miming singing the lyrics during her segments.

Following the *World Folk Music* tour that took them to many dozens of different nations, the band was ready to record their next album. This time, Nikoleta wanted this release to make full use of their musical capabilities, as well as use a song that she had once sung to Yevgeny to get him to fall asleep whilst still a baby. The resulting album contained thirteen tracks, with the second track, *Евгений Баллада* (Yevgeny's Ballad), giving its name to the album.

When released in February 2019, it received widespread acclaim, with many critics awarding it perfect scores. *Metal Brain Magazine* cited it as 'the Folk Metal album of the year', whilst *Mythology Recordings* said of it, 'We didn't think it possible, but Slezy Drakona have shown us that Metal can be sad and sombre and yet still make you want to join in.'

As well as sad scenes, the band's music covers Slavic mythology and is known for the often sombre, melancholy tone to their music. In particular, this is the tone reflected in each album's title track, forming the band's tradition for these particular songs to be dedicated to Nikoleta's son. While she is largely seen as the main face of the band, she does not like to take all of the credit for the band's work, though does act as the band's manager. The band is now preparing to film their next music video as well as embark on another tour to promote their new release and support other bands within the genre.

