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**SIX DEGREES RECORDS ANNOUNCES THE DEBUT ALBUM FROM ZMEI3
ROUGH ROMANIAN SOUL IS OUT APRIL 22, 2016**

PRODUCED BY GRAMMY® AWARD-WINNER IAN BRENNAN

Zmei3 (pronounced zmay-tray) is made up of Romanian immigrants whose beautiful and heartfelt music rises from the harsh realities and struggles of a post-Communist rule. Their debut album ***Rough Romanian Soul*** (out April 22nd on Six Degrees Records) is produced by **GRAMMY®** award-winner, **Ian Brennan**, best known for his work with **Tinariwen**, **Zomba Prison Project**, **Ramblin' Jack Elliott**, and the **Malawi Mouse Boys**. Zmei3 being huge fans of Brennan's work, successfully raised funds via Kickstarter to cover recording costs, travel, and more. They flew Brennan to Romania and began recording the album in August 2015 live without overdubs in the Transylvanian mountains, just a stone's throw away from Dracula's Castle.

The band is led by powerhouse vocalist, **Paula Turcas**, a trained, soprano opera singer who gave up classical music in the pursuit of a more truthful artistry grounded in the struggles of everyday life. When she was three years old – the daughter of the village priest – began to sing the traditional Romanian folk songs. She would sing with such despair that when people passed by, her father would lift her up on the table and people would stop and listen with tears in their eyes. Her voice remains so visceral that Berlin's ***Der Tagesspiegel*** newspaper stated, "When Zmei3 are playing, it's not rare that tears are falling in the audience." Their sound is made all the more unique by featuring vibraphone virtuoso, **Oli Bott**, for their lead instrument. **Mihai Victor Iliescu** leads the talented group on guitars and lyrics, with **Arnulf Ballhorn** on double bass. The band's name is inspired by an ancient Romanian anti-hero, misfit dragon – a rebellious figure, who rarely prevails, but remains committed to his ideals.

The name of the album, *Rough Romanian Soul* is an ode to Romanian music entrenched with a deep history of regional blues and soul, as well as the inherent spirituality of their work. Turcas adds, "The land is rough and the people strong, and our legacy is one of survival." Music from Transylvania is not commonly associated with aggressive styles mashing up blues and soul with influences of jazz, avant-garde, and folk with such introspective topics and emotive soundscapes. But that is exactly what Zmei3 succeeds in doing on their fifteen-track debut.

Bott explains, "We had more than three albums worth of material and many of our most famous songs live were left off the album, in exchange for newer and more challenging material."

Across the fifteen songs, Zmei3 cover topics of resistance, immigration, oppression, love, death, pride, loneliness, and strength. **“2 Mai” / 2nd of May** is story of 2 Mai, a village at the Black Sea, close to the border with Bulgaria, which was a haven for hippies who wanted to escape the constraints of the communist regime. **“Poveste Din Tara Mea” / Story From My Country** is about the feelings of an immigrant who left behind everything that he loved. A father is telling his little girl that she should never forget that there's a country, a lost paradise, and that one day they will seek revenge on those who destroyed it. **“Shhh!!! ... Tot Ce Nu Se Spunea Atunci” / Shhh!!! ... All The Forbidden Speech** is an improvised song, created around all the things, ideas and thoughts that were forbidden during the 45-year repressive regime in Romania. **“Marie, Marie” / Mary, Mary** is an essential love ballad from southern Romania. A kind of southern blues. **“Pana Cand Nu Te Lubeam” / Since I've Been Loving You** according to the band says, “It's a strange coincidence that there is a Led Zeppelin song with the same title - but maybe it's no coincidence since it's exactly about the same feelings. ‘I'm about to lose...my worried mind’ - only that this song is urban folklore from Bucharest, dating from around 1850.” **“Intr-o Zi” / One day** is the band's slow blues song which was inspired by Bob Dylan's “Girl From The North Country Fair.” Other standouts include **“Imn” / Hymn** composed without lyrics and dedicated to the human experience, while **“Vis” / Dream** is dedicated to the memory of the Resistance fighters from the 50's - and to those very few who always choose to fight and resist, even when it's clear they have no chance.

Much of the songwriting was done via “instant composition,” where the producer Ian Brennan pushed the band to create songs and record simultaneously. All while being inspired by the environment of the Transylvania mountains that were in view. Brennan expresses, “music should breath, music should live, and come from inside a person. Equipment is secondary. Simply a means to an end. The ability to be high amidst the mountains, to see them, and be there together, lends a sacredness to this project.” Brennan is known for capturing the environment in which he records. For example Brennan's latest release on Six Degrees Records, Zomba Prison Project was recorded in Malawi, and documented the music of prisoners at the maximum security prison in Zomba. The album was nominated for a “World Music” **GRAMMY®** which garnered critical praise on the cover of the *New York Times*, as well as features in *CNN, Newsweek, Al Jazeera, NPR, Associated Press, Rolling Stone, The Guardian*, and more.

Brennan concludes, “Eastern Europe in general has been neglected by the rest of the world in terms of interest and exploration of music and culture. It has literally and deliberately been treated as a bloc. There is a great ignorance amongst many as to what Eastern Europe even is after World War II, so to have vibrant and modern music from Romania is a very valuable thing.”

Track Listing:

1. Stai Langa Mine (Stay Near Me)
2. Imn (Hymn)
3. 2 Mai (2nd Of May)
4. Poveste Din Tara Mea (Story From My Country)
5. Shhh!!!...Tot Ce Nu Se Spunea Atunci (Shhh!!!...All The Forbidden Speech)
6. Marie, Marie (Mary, Mary)
7. As Munci La Plug Si Coasa (To Have You)
8. Pana Cand Nu Te Lubeam (Since I've Been Loving You)

9. Ah! (Ay!)
10. Intr-o Zi (One Day)
11. Vreau Un Barbat (I Want A Man)
12. Somn De Frumusețe (Beauty Sleep)
13. Voi Gasi (I Will Find)
14. Vis (Dream)
15. She's Gone Wild

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