

The Dresden Dolls, self-titled, (8 Ft./Roadrunner) ☆☆☆☆ —



Admit it: You're totally lost if your goth isn't accompanied by an overbearing helping of cabaret-style piano rock.

Fret not, Boston's Dresden Dolls are more than happy to accommodate you. Delivering a strong, catchy 12-track album that's manic, emotionally unbalanced and altogether memorable, vocalist/pianist Amanda Palmer and drummer Brian Viglione will be right at home opening a national tour for Nine Inch Nails.

The album opens with scathing ballad "Good Day," on which Palmer's deep, masculine voice sounds tortured and hurt. That leads into the disc's finest song, and one of the most notable of the year, "Girl Anachronism."

On it, she sings "You can tell from the state of my room/ that they let me out too soon/ and the pills that I ate/ came a couple weeks too late." It's like a cut from some twisted, dark theater show, in a scene in which Palmer would be wearing streaking eyeliner and a ripped dress while tearing her hair out by the handfuls.

"Coin-Operated Boy" is hilariously demeaning, and "Bad Habit" makes no apologies for its obvious subject matter.

The songs are insane, oddly melodic, and they scream of female righteousness. And the duo sounds oddly European.

On top of that, Dresden Dolls just might pull in theater buffs who can handle something a little bit out there.

RIYL: Concrete Blonde, Rasputina, Regina Spektor (BK)