

Dresden Dolls fail at different genre

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The Dresden Dolls' new album is like a peanut butter and jelly sandwich — predictable, yet digestible.

Amanda Palmer and Brian Viglione make up the playtime duo still marching to the "cabaret-punk" beat with songs about gender changes, orgasms and alcohol.

"Yes, Virginia ..." is set to be released Tuesday with melancholy carnies, circus freaks and lonely gypsies rejoicing from Transylvania to the Dolls' home of Boston.

The album has a somber tone throughout, stemming from a strong sense of alienation from the modern world.

The Dolls' goal is to update the sexually repressed emotions many theatrical outcasts felt at the turn of the 19th century, with a 2006 conscience.

But does the promiscuously-dressed duo accomplish its goal? Well, kind of.

Palmer's lyrics are excessively abstract, leaving the listener in a foggy haze of dilapidated theaters and black and white panty hose. It's like she's afraid to concretize the listener in an exact time or locale, which makes it hard to connect or feel the songs.

But it's still honorable that the songstress is attempting to be different and indulge in a novel musical genre. She just needs to be more confident.

As of right now, she comes off as a middle schooler presenting a book report on a novel when she has only read the CliffsNotes.

Palmer is tiptoeing around in an attempt to be historically correct. If she would only stay true to her own opinions about what life was like for traveling outcast performers at the turn of the century, her delivery would come across as more convincing.

Most of the lyrics have an erotic edge to them, but are not sung in a sexy tone.

On the seventh track — "First Orgasm" — Palmer has a wonderful opportunity to shock her listeners by singing lines such as, "The first orgasm of the morning/Is cold and hard as Hell" in a provocative style. But instead, she sings in a very straight forward fashion, almost in a monotone manner, erasing the flair of the tune.

As for the other half of the Dolls, Viglione is the man in the top hat playing a wealth of instruments — drums, percussion, bass and guitar.

Viglione is solid on everything he plays, but hits the drums quite harshly, pushing Palmer's lyrical delivery further into the emotionless realm.

As soon as these gloomy bohemians start to feel their music, they will be great. But right now, they are only average musicians riding the wave of a trendy new genre.



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