

# DRESDEN DOLLS

HQ: Boston, MA

CHECK OUT: The Dresden Dolls

(RFT RECORDS; DRESDENDOLLS.COM)

THE  
**100**  
BANDS  
YOU NEED TO KNOW

**WITH THEIR JONES** for Kurt Weill and '30s cabaret, their white-faced homage to mimes (singer-pianist Amanda Palmer even studied briefly with legendary mime Marcel Marceau) and, of course, their Teutonic handle, the Dresden Dolls have "import" stamped all over their sound—and their highly theatrical schtick. Which, naturally, means the duo are as American as apple pie, or at least Marilyn Manson. And since winning WBCN's Rock & Roll Rumble two years ago, Palmer and drummer Brian Viglione have taken darkly tuneful goth oddities like "Coin-Operated Boy" and "Girl Anachronism" straight to the heartland, with encouraging results.

"There was a girl in Chicago who had tattooed a couple of lines of one of our songs across her chest," says Palmer. "Brian and I sort of looked at each other and went, 'Holy shit! This is bigger than both of us! Once somebody tattoos your work on their body, you feel pretty fucking validated as a songwriter.'"

What makes the Dolls' house irresistible theater is that there's no buffer—onstage or off—between Palmer and Viglione, whose "strange, complicated and ambiguous relationship... has us both constantly reeling and trying to figure out what we mean to each other," Palmer says. Whether they're friends, lovers or just kinky silent-film stars trapped in the wrong era, that tension—in addition to Palmer's passionate piano-pounding and Viglione's punky drumming—means you can't not watch.

Palmer is more revealing about the band's sophomore release—to be produced by Boston heavyweights Sean Slade and Paul Kolderie (Radiohead, Courtney Love)—and the secret of her artfully applied eyebrows. "No one believes this, but it literally takes me 10 seconds to do them," she says, laughing. "It's just like the mark of Zorro." **DJL**

**MIXTAPE NEIGHBORS:** RASPUTINA, PJ HARVEY, FAITH & THE MUSE

[PHOTO: TED TERREBONNE]