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Music Stuff



The Dresden Dolls are proof a band can have label success and hold onto creative freedom.

With an unlikely alt-radio hit "Coin Operated Boy," in tow, the Boston-based duo of Amanda Palmer (piano, voice) and Brian Viglione (drums) is connecting with listeners.

Viglione recapped the band's history and current success by phone, during a tour stop in Austin, Texas. He recalls meeting Palmer, a self-taught player, at a Halloween party in 2000 at her "wacky artist's loft."

"I saw from that moment that we were on the same page musically," Viglione said.

Within a week, they were jamming and constructing the innovative Dolls, who fill the listener's plate with melancholy themes, piano trickery and a sprinkle of composed chaos.

Pretty soon the duo was hell bent for live shows with the fervor of a rock band.



Amanda Palmer and Brian Viglione - the Dresden Dolls.

But those who saw the Dresdens at their recent Kansas City appearance with Sonic Youth at the Uptown Theater might say their music both fits and doesn't fit with the million-sellers they shared the stage with.

So what do The Dresden Dolls sound like? Grab their self-titled CD and find out.

It opens with a piano ditty, "Good Day," but the tempo and mood swing into near moshing frenzy on the second track, "Girl Anachronism." The enhanced CD includes a video of the second track.

Track six is the quirky and unexpected hit, "Coin Operated Boy."

Viglione explains why.

"When the song was first written, it was kind of a joke," he said, "a fun song."

The Dresdens, because of their proclaimed diversity, shrug off the pigeonholing of the negative critics.

"We try not to take too much (hype) seriously," he said. "It's good for promotion, but it's not the be-all end-all."

"We're definitely a live band. That's where people connect with us."

Brian Viglione
Dresden Dolls

Although the band name and song title would coincide with the duo's costuming and mood lighting, the band, according to Viglione, likes to get down and rock at live shows. "War Pigs" played on the piano will get some people's attention.

"We're definitely a live band. That's where people connect with us," he said. "(On tour) you spend so much time

looking forward to that 40 minutes where you can connect with the audience."

Speaking of connections, Viglione and Palmer are open about being together and not together at the same time. No strings attached.

"It's one of the most beautiful and most complex relationships, but it gets more simple as time goes on," Viglione said. "We're very attracted to each other, but we knew that if we tried to be a couple, it would be the downfall of the band."

They are bandmates, brother-sister, and an old married couple at the same time, he adds. "It's something I'm very grateful for ... Our higher purpose together is the band."

Painted up and costumed, the Dresdens throw a slightly androgynous angle in for good measure.

The theatrics and a piano-based theme haven't slowed them at all in the Midwest, where rock and rap are the radio staples.

Fans of 96.5 The Buzz rang phones off the hook for weeks this summer and fall, hoping for another dime in the "Coin Operated" juke-box.

After the tour, The Dresden Dolls are about to cut a new disc on Roadrunner Records, known in the rock world for bands like Slipknot and Killswitch Engage.

Wait. Roadrunner signed The Dresden Dolls?

"I grew up on diet of Slayer and Sepultura," Viglione said. "Roadrunner supports strange and distinct bands, as well. We feel understood by them."

To understand more about The Dresden Dolls, visit www.dresdendolls.com.