



The Dresden Dolls

Yes Virginia

Roadrunner

SUBCULTCHA

If they were due a difficult second album, somebody forgot to tell them. Yes Virginia sees the 'Dolls return in fabulous form...

Boston's Amanda Palmer and Brian Viglione, aka The Dresden Dolls, return with 'Yes Virginia, the follow-up to their eponymous debut, and any doubts that mainstream success may have diluted the energy and quirkiness that make The Dresden Dolls so unique is quickly dispelled as the album kick-starts with 'Sex Changes', a four-minute long (the Dolls don't do ditties) relentless rant at the folly of love and sex; as Amanda shrieks 'we might need to chop your cock off! Tick-tock, Tick-tock, Tick-tock!' it's obvious that they're not pulling any punches with this record

The gothic drama created by the 'Dolls' unique dynamics are on full display on this record; Palmer's theatrical wail and cabaret piano arrangements and Viglione's punk drumming colliding together to create a debauched, vaudeville sound, that you might expect to hear playing in the background in a nineteenth-century backstreet abortionists. It's a rare occasion when the musical violence of a band matches its lyrical violence, and the Dresden Dolls pull this off perfectly, the topics of the songs ranging through loneliness, alcoholism and sexual deviance; there definitely aren't any 'difficult second album' nerves here, and the confidence of the lyrical goes a long way to demonstrate that.

With ex-Pixies and Radiohead cohort Paul Q. Kolderie and Sean Slade at the helm producing Yes Virginia has a cleaner, crisper sound to it than their debut, which might be a grievance for some, as it perhaps does not have the same murkiness, but in giving it such a tight and polished sound, they've really harnessed the power of the songs to their full extent – if their first album was akin to Edgar Allan Poe, then Yes Virginia is definitely more big-budget Tim Burton. The Dresden Dolls are one of the most original and interesting bands of the moment, and while their cabaret-punk style may be nodding to the past, for the 'Dolls, the future is definitely looking bright.

By **Chris Bell**

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