Dum Dum Girls

Only in Dreams

release date: September 23, 2011

Write about what you know. That's what they say. But that's a lot easier said than done when what you know is very, very difficult to bear. That was the challenge Dum Dum Girls' leader Dee Dee faced when writing the songs for the band's moving second album *Only in Dreams*. "The first record was basically the first songs I'd ever written," says Dee Dee, "and I was thinking nostalgically about being a teenager.  This record, it was pretty much impossible not to write about very recent, very real things."

Very real things indeed: Dee Dee wrote "Hold Your Hand" immediately after her mother (the pretty lady on the cover of both the Dum Dum Girls' self-titled 2009 debut EP and their 2010 debut album *I Will Be*) was diagnosed with what turned out to be a fatal illness, and it's one of several songs on *Only in Dreams* that unsparingly trace her mom's passing. Other songs spell out the emotional toll of separation from one's lover, something Dee Dee had to deal with while she and her husband (Brandon Welchez of the acclaimed noise-pop band Crocodiles) pursued their own tour schedules.

"Just about all the songs reflect the fact that I'd been on the road for about a year, pretty much separate from everything real in my life except the band," says Dee Dee. "A lot of it is about distance and detachment."

On several levels, *Only in Dreams* is a great leap forward for a gifted songwriter and an equally gifted band—it's heavy, deeply personal stuff and surely unprecedented for this style of music, and that's what gives *Only in Dreams* both its uniqueness and its gut-punch emotional impact.

*Only in Dreams* retains Dum Dum Girls' signature blend of the girl-gang eyeliner punk of the Shangri-Las, the trashy propulsion of the Cramps, and the moody atmospherics of Mazzy Star, but for the first time, all four Dum Dum Girls play and sing on the album. Now the harmonies have more depth, Jules plays her own distinctive guitar leads, and the Bambi (bass)/Sandy (drums) rhythm section powers the music like a vintage V-8 engine. Best of all, tons of time on the road— including two massively successful headlining tours—have molded Dum Dum Girls into a very formidable rock & roll band, giving the music an undeniable force.

And now that power and glory is showcased by a full-on studio production—while *I Will Be* was recorded at home and modestly spiffed up in a studio by legendary pop maestro Richard Gottehrer (Blondie, Go-Go's), *Only in Dreams* was recorded at Josh Homme's Pink Duck Studios, "almost a museum in terms of the old amps and guitars he's amassed," says Dee Dee admiringly. Gottehrer again produced, this time with Sune Rose Wagner from the Raveonettes.

*Only in Dreams* more than fulfills the promise of 2011's *He Gets Me High* EP, with impassioned, front-and-center vocals from Dee Dee that sometimes recall one of her heroines, Chrissie Hynde; big singalong choruses draped with almost choral harmonies; a chugging wash of guitars drenched in reverb, tremelo and fuzz; and mighty, booming bass and drums. "I've always wanted to be in a loud rock & roll band and still maintain some feminine sound," Dee Dee says. "So even though this album is much poppier and a lot more polished, it's still tough." "Heartbeat" hooks with its Buddy Holly-esque guitar line, while "In My Head" uncorks one of the album's greatest choruses, and brace yourself for the incredibly poignant closer "Hold Your Hand."

Listen to the slowdive ballad "Coming Down," which Dee Dee wrote not long after her mom passed away. "That song came out of being in and out of awareness of the depth of the situation," she says. "Sometimes when I write, I don't really analyze what I'm saying but the more I hear that song, the deeper it feels. I don't know if I'm addressing life or God or what, but it's our big, epic song on every scale."

Dee Dee wrote "Bedroom Eyes" after returning from a European tour, jet-lagged and lonely. "I was home alone," she says. "Insomnia was taking its toll; I felt absolutely crazy. I looked up poetry on the subject and found a Dante Gabriel Rosetti poem and the song was born from that. I'd finally convinced my dad to give me one of his prescription sleeping pills and it kicked in while I was writing the song and I started hallucinating."

*Only in Dreams* represents a musical evolution for Dum Dum Girls and a personal one for Dee Dee, and that's no coincidence. "I'm for real," she says. "We all are. I'm really passionate about this, it's all I know. And maybe we've just grown up a bit—or grown out a bit. There's some weight to what we do, and a pure intent, and I think that comes across on this album.”