



BREAKING OUT

BEACH HOUSE

Dreamy duo decide to ditch ambience and embrace their inner rockers



Alex Scally and
Victoria Legrand

Beach House's music may move in seductive, slow-motion waves, but the people who make it are far from mellow. "We're insane and neurotic," explains guitarist-keyboardist Alex Scally, who formed the band along with singer-organist Victoria Legrand in 2004. "We don't see ourselves as ethereal." In fact, they hope to convince others of the same thing with the recently released *Teen Dream*. Or as Scally puts it, "We desperately wanted to rock."

In order to achieve that ambition, Legrand and Scally, both 28, sought help. "We needed a bankroll," says Scally. Conveniently, *Dream* is the band's first album for Sub Pop after two efforts for tiny indie Carpark. The bigger label's cash infusion allowed Beach House to spring for an outside producer—Chris Coady, who's worked with the Yeah Yeah Yeahs and current Beach House touring partners Grizzly Bear. (Legrand sang on Grizzly Bear's *Veckatimest* and "Slow Life," the band's contribution to the *New Moon* soundtrack.)

The financial largesse also allowed them to shoot videos for each of *Dream*'s ten tracks, including one directed by Broken Social Scene's Kevin Drew. "Our music is already cinematic," says Legrand. "We wanted to bring a visual vocabulary to it."

It's a big leap from the band's beginnings in Baltimore's scrappy indie scene, where Scally and Legrand met in 2004. Kindred spirits, they recorded Beach House's self-titled 2006 debut in two days in a basement. For their latest, though, they spent nine months of 16-hour days crafting detailed and melodic songs, like twinkling first single "Norway," which, aided by a nagging "Ha ha ha" chorus, became a mainstay on online music aggregator the Hype Machine's "most favorited" chart when it leaked last November. "We obsessed over the new music the way teenagers do," admits Legrand, whose uncle Michel Legrand composed the scores for such films as *Summer of 42* and *Yentl*.

For Scally, that obsession had a specific goal: "Capturing the feeling of having a sex dream in biology class about your lab partner and then telling her your feelings at the school dance." There's more. "And then you make out while listening to the new Beach House album." Now that rocks.

BY MATT DIEHL
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