

DUM DUM GIRLS

Short description: Finely crafted throw-back pop filtered through a modern, lo-fi aesthetic; like listening to MP3s in an old Chevy Impala.

Kindred spirits: Vivian Girls, the Jesus and Mary Chain, the Ronettes

Performing: March 25 at 9 p.m. DC9, 1940 Ninth St. NW. 202-483-5000. www.dcnine.com. \$10; \$8 in advance.

There are plenty of hints as to what to expect from the Dum Dum Girls based on the little details. The band's name references songs by proto-punk wild man Iggy Pop and cult favorite '80s indie-pop group the Vaselines. Kristin Gundred, the 27-year-old Californian who started the band as a one-woman project a couple of years ago and goes simply by Dee Dee, shares a stage name with a member of the Ramones. The band's first album, "**I Will Be**," comes out at the end of the month on storied Sub Pop Records.

But the best hint may be that "I Will Be" features production assistance from Richard Gottehrer, co-writer of '60s girl-group mega-hit "My Boyfriend's Back." While Gundred's songs are as compact as the Ramones' punk blasts and share a scruffy charm with the Vaselines, sweet harmonies and sticky choruses make for an inviting combination.

"Pop songwriting of the 1960s has al-

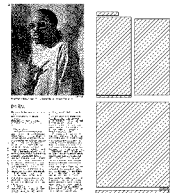
ways ranked high on my list [of influences]," Gundred says. "I'm not a revivalist, but I do strive to write songs as catchy as all the oldies I grew up on."

Being able to do that is what makes "I Will Be" such a striking debut. It delivers on the promise of a handful of fuzzy, self-recorded singles that have had blogs buzzing for the past year. This time around, things are more refined. The vocals gently float on top instead of lurking lower in the mix. The overall sound is still noisy, with generous doses of reverb, but the various elements never congeal into a massive sonic wash.

Now the Dum Dum Girls are helping to spearhead a renaissance of indie girl groups that includes Best Coast, Vivian Girls and Frankie Rose and the Outs. Just don't expect any "Mean Girls"-type rivalries. Quite the opposite.

"I am only happy to see other women playing music," Gundred says. "What's lame is when competitiveness between them is forged. It doesn't have to be only one on top."

Not that she has time for such competitiveness, anyway. The band recently completed a week of shows in London and will kick off a month-long U.S. tour in Austin next week. "I'm just trying to take advantage of all the opportunities I've been given," Gundred says. "I want to make music for a living. I'm not compelled to do anything else."





LAUREN DUKOFF

Dum Dum Girls, from left, Dee Dee, Bambi, Frankie Rose and Jules, would like to see a resurgence in the number of girl groups.