

A Woman Of Many Talents And Bands

As with many things in indie rock of late, the quality of the performances at the Mercury Lounge on Sunday night was directly tied to the placement of

Frankie Rose.

MUSIC REVIEW

JON
CARAMANICA

In the last three years Ms. Rose — who sings and plays both guitar and the drums — has become a

sparkplug for a certain sort of band that's begun to seem pervasive: all-female, lo-fi, garage-rock and girl-group influenced.

First there was Vivian Girls, in which she was the original drummer; she jumped ship just as the group found its sound and its audience. From there Ms. Rose landed behind another drum kit in Crystal Stilts (an anomaly: she was the lone woman), subsequently leaving to form her own band, Frankie Rose & the Outs, for which she moved out front, with a guitar. Sometime thereafter she signed on to drum in Dum Dum Girls, which was the headlining band on Sunday, with Ms. Rose's band immediately preceding it.

Dum Dum Girls is the project of Dee Dee (born Kristin Gundred), a slightly darker spirit than Ms. Rose, as is evident on the Dum Dum Girls' debut album, "I Will Be" (Sub Pop), which will be released next month. Produced by Dee Dee with Richard Gottehrer, who

On a girl-group kind of night, Frankie Rose seems to be everywhere.

wrote "My Boyfriend's Back" more than four decades ago and produced records by Blondie and the Go-Go's, it's an inviting and disorienting record, with sharp-angled production clearing room for lyrics that range from cloying to goofy to odd.

The finer points, though, were tough to come by during this sugary, rollicking set, in which new songs were mixed with odds and ends from last year, largely undifferentiated apart from a sleepy and mournful cover of the Rolling Stones' "Play With Fire." The ragged worry of "Jail La La" sounded a lot like the earnest swooning of "Rest of Our Lives": peppy and a little brooding. (Though in fairness, the cover of G G Allin's "Don't Talk to Me" was a bit more than brooding.)

With this band, Ms. Rose was attacking her drums and singing high, sweet, mildly gothic harmonies, a contrast to what she had done just 45 minutes earlier with her own band. On the surface, both groups, glamorous and impassive, appear similar, but in a head-to-head matchup, Dum Dum Girls prevail on almost every count: sharper musicians, more arresting fashion, welcome bubbles of feeling.

With the Outs, playing guitar and singing lead, Ms. Rose appeared tentative, and her vocals verged toward the muddy. Altogether, the band was polite, as if not wanting to step on toes, hesitant and fuzzy at the edges.

For the last song, though, Ms. Rose swapped places with the drummer, taking her place behind the kit. Immediately, the group cohered into something forceful, swapping a rudimentary charm for a purposeful churn. Ms. Rose, in this case, was both the patient and the doctor.



RAHAV SEGEV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Dum Dum Girls, featuring Dee Dee and, on drums, Frankie Rose, on Sunday at the Mercury Lounge. Ms. Rose's band, Frankie Rose & the Outs, was also on the bill.