

MEG & DIA

The Indie Pop Girls Next Door

BY BRIEN OVERLY

"THIS IS HOW MEG AND DIA roll with groupies," explains a wide-grinned Dia Frampton of her band's unofficial policy, "we have the greatest conversation with them, and then we peace out."

And if ever there was a statement that summed up sisters Dia and Meg Frampton, along with the boys who make up their self-named band, that would indeed be it.

With Dia on vocals and Meg on guitar, bassist Jonathan Snyder, drummer Nicholas Price and fellow guitarist Carlo Gimenez round out the band. Put them together and they read books (well, most of them do), argue about word usage and don't watch TV. They are, by all accounts, good kids.

Wholesome as they may be, the band has garnered a fan base from a varied mix of backgrounds and acclaim from sometimes unlikely sources, they themselves drawing on influences both old and new and touring with an equally eclectic mix of bands.

"We're definitely pop rock, but I can never pinpoint who would like us," says Dia, the younger of the two Framptons. "We've had a lot of different people like us, and we've gone on a lot of different tours. You definitely have to like pop, and we're not going to be the most indie-hipster-New-York band you can find out there," she says with a laugh, adding, "we're just a band that hopefully

everyone can listen to and have fun with."

Because they're also still a young band with only one album under their belts, 2006's *Something Real*, Frampton hopes fans will continue to give her band the opportunity to grow and find themselves stylistically.

"We just are what we are, and hopefully people can grow with us," she says. "And some of those songs we've been singing since we were 14, so this next record will hopefully show seven years of growth."

As the band members continue to mature as songwriters, so too do they grow as performers, having braved harsh conditions and sometimes harsher audiences on the road.

"We've been touring for two years now, and I think with every tour we get better as musicians, tighter and more confident," says Dia. "Live shows are a scary experience. I get really nervous before we go on. Sometimes it takes a song, sometimes it takes five songs for me to actually get comfortable, but one thing about us is that we're bad at faking energy. Either we're in the zone or we're not."

"If we're having a hard time or we have emotional things going on independently, I think people can see that too. Everything's going to be raw whether we're having a good time or we're frustrated with ourselves. If I'm having a really sad day, I can't go on stage and fake that everything's awesome, but that anger and aggression will come out during the show, so emotions will play their part."



(l to r) Meg Frampton, Nicholas Price, Dia Frampton, Jonathan Snyder and Carlos Gimenez of Meg & Dia

This approach of presenting themselves honestly and without pretense has surely paid off with winning over audiences and being able to form a more visceral bond with fans.

"I love when people say the lyrics helped them through something or that a story I wrote happened to them," Dia says. "That's one thing I think people overlook sometimes, and that's the first thing I look at when I get into a band. I'll find the lyric book or look up the lyrics on the Internet because I can't listen to anything if the lyrics aren't good."

Matching a lyrical and musical vulnerability with a personable approachability, the band may not be all over TV and radio just yet, but their fans are nevertheless fiercely dedicated to them.

"We played this one show in Texas where this really drunk frat dude was yelling at us the entire set; he stood there for a whole song with both of his hands up flipping us off, then like 20 people surrounded him and put up their hands in peace signs so we couldn't see his hands anymore," says Dia. "It was the cutest thing ever. I thought I was going to cry. It was really cool to see people kind of taking care of us."

Though they may still be in the process of finding their proverbial niche, these two sisters and three boys are going to do it as intelligently and honestly as possible. And what's more real than that? ☐

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music

stretching his own boundaries.
Grade: B+

—Angela Matano

The Shepherd's Dog is currently available.

METRO STATION

Metro Station
(Red Ink)

"Won't be 17 forever/And we can get away with this tonight." Those wise words form the chorus of "Seventeen Forever" and push along a great radio-ready, should-be hit that recalls '80s hitmakers like the Cars and the Outfield.



The Cars seem to be a big influence on the songwriting here overall; "Shake It" with its sing-along chorus and popping dance beat would no doubt get a big smile out of Ric Ocasek. The sentiment of "Seventeen Forever" is thrown out the window for "Wish We Were Older," another song laden with hooks, this time done in the style of the Fixx.

Almost every song here deserves mass exposure: "California" is an anthem in waiting, "Tell Me What to Do" has a fun and funky bass and beats mix complementing perfect pop, and "Disco" grabs both the feet and the ears with an irresistible riff.

Grade: A

—Kevin Wierzbicki

Metro Station is currently available.

OFFICE

A Night at the Ritz
(New Line)

In due time, Office will prove to be a dream for any music director providing tunes for primetime TV comedies and dramas, perhaps "House" or "Lost." With their new release *A Night at the Ritz*, the Chicago-based quintet mixes sugary pop with gritty guitars and razor-sharp keyboards to produce a highly marketable, infectiously catchy indie pop vibe. A bit Local H and a tad the Cardigans, Office blends a very '90s

music dvd reviews

LENE LOVICH

Live from New York at Studio 54

(MVD Visual)

Lovich has made a little comeback noise lately by releasing new material in 2005 and then appearing at the Drop Dead Festival the following year. But mostly she hasn't been heard from since she surfed in



on the New Wave, and you could say that this 1981 show at New York's famous dance club Studio 54 came at the tail end of her career.

Lovich was never a big name even at the height of her popularity, but this audience seems to freely swing with her through various moods, empathizing with her when she sings for her mother on "Too Tender

(To Touch)," joining in the frenetic dance of "Say When" and especially enjoying the moments where the singer demonstrates one of her vocal specialties, a mimicking of birdsong.

Lovich's biggest hit "Lucky Number" comes about mid-show followed immediately by "New Toy," a song written by Thomas Dolby who also happens to be on hand playing keyboard. This film has been overlaid with some unnecessary and annoying special effects, but they



come in tolerable-enough short bursts.

Grade: C

—Kevin Wierzbicki

Live from New York at Studio 54 is currently available.

THE PINK FLOYD AND SYD BARRETT STORY

(Zeit Media)

This documentary chronicles the birth of one of the most influential groups of all time,

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pared to the late Nick Drake, has run the risk in the past of walking the line between melodic and somnolent.

Fronted and backed by Samuel Beam, Iron & Wine is best known for relatively lo-fi grooves — both pretty and soulful — that offer excellent listening in times of

heartbreak and melancholy. Beam's sounds — mellow enough to retreat into the background — are also able to hold their own on a road trip, meshing with the surrounding landscape. This flexibility and adaptability serves Iron & Wine well in movies (*In Good Company*).

The Shepherd's Dog, for better

and for worse, acts less like a soundtrack-friendly group of potential background filler cuts and more like songs that demand your attention. From "Carousel" to "Peace Beneath the City," Beam's music departs from his previous efforts.

With so much talent and a

relatively prolific output, *The Shepherd's Dog* may save Iron & Wine from its only Achilles' heel, which might have been a tendency toward preciousness. Sam Beam took a chance by pushing past his fans' expectations and succeeded in

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