



MISS PAIN

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MISS PAIN -- Sarah, Verity and Dom, or "two-girl, one-boy perverse synthcore" to you -- are huddled on the lone bed in their one-bedroom flat, the floor carpeted with plastic flowers and military uniforms. Magazine cut-outs of impossibly glamorous stars line the walls several layers deep. Here and there, the collage is augmented by an opportunistic headline -- "MORE PAIN. PLEASE." it says at the foot of the bed. There's a cage with rats fighting inside it, about seven inches from my face, and a Morse code machine, though they're not saying who or what it's connected to.

It's the morning after the night before, and we're shunning the summer sun to talk about the previous evening's show -- where Miss Pain's usual cocktail of artifice and anarchy spilled into outright confusion. With half a stage of vintage synths in open revolt against their human masters, one memorable moment sees Sarah scolding a particularly obstinate korg with a megaphone.

"It's been threatening to happen for a while," Verity shrugs. "There's a lot of potential for chaos."

"But they sound, and look, so much better," says Sarah, trailing her finger down the rat muzzle, "you can have one bloke in jeans and a T-shirt sitting behind a laptop - or us three looking fucking cool behind

loads of good old analogues." One thing's for certain -- the Miss Pain experience is pretty far from the kind of clinical playback so often associated with electronic artists live. Since forming in Brighton a year or so ago, they've built a reputation for glamour and high drama in equal measure. Triumphs include launching hundreds of heart-shaped paper aeroplanes into the audience, Dom's sinister Easter Island mask, and Sarah disabling the venue's security to make an impromptu costume change in the alley outside.

It's little surprise that such escapades have endeared the as-yet unsigned trio to the brightest and best dressed on the hipster circuit, who pack out hometown gigs regularly. Their most dedicated followers are a gaggle of GCSE-agers who breathlessly swap gossip and report sightings on a dedicated site -- their message to the band: "Your sleaze is destroying our childhood -- and we love it." Such extreme reactions are not uncommon -- ask the lone German who approached them after an early show to declare, "You orchestrate noise, and noise is the biggest sound there is" (a phrase that's graced their flyers since).

'Your sleaze is destroying our childhood -and we love it'

Anyone who's seen them can attest to the fact there's not a man, woman or killer dog that can tell Sarah Pain she's not a star.

"It was the only way we could get her to move down here," explains Verity. "Promise to be in a band with her."

Sarah nods: "I always thought I'd be too embarrassed, but then I got into being more and more and more of a poser. It was only

embarrassing when I was doing something I didn't want to do - like at school."

Whether she's reciting lyrics from a diary, dancing on the spot with a framed photo or just strutting around in a nurse's uniform, people continually ask if her stage persona is a character. She replies, "If you see me in the street I'm not generally going to be jumping about snogging a picture of Bryan Ferry. But I do in my own home."

Songs include "Electric Blue Fire Hazard" and "Bus Lane Crash". (Sarah: "I saw a bus crash outside my house the other day. It was brilliant I've got pictures and everything.") Each one embraces a couple of different genres - handclaps and keys, post-punk guitar squalls or military orchestration: Fifties style filtered through Eighties glam -- stylistic shifts that can perhaps be put down to the fact Miss Pain can't agree on their inspirations. They deny being influenced by similarly chic stars of yesteryear. (Verity: "Bryan Ferry never danced around in a turquoise mini-dress.")

Dom reels off some less obvious reference points: "Olivier Messiaen. Ennio Morricone. John Foxx. Neon lights. Church organs. Cabaret."

"Army uniforms and high heels," chimes in Sarah.

Dom: "Lullabies, music boxes... Having to go to work. And not liking it"

"For the last year," Sarah announces dramatically. "I have read nothing but Mills & Boon."

www.misspain.co.uk