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MUSIC

Silent running

Lesbian twin popsters want to plug up that pigeonhole and talk about music. Well...OK.

BY CORI TARATOOT

Canadian power-pop duo Tegan and Sara are earning their props the proper way—touring the highways of America's West Coast in promotion of their sophomore album, *If It Was You*. Portlanders—still high from their energetic display last fall at the Roseland—get to see them again Jan. 18 at Aladdin Theater.

Recently recovered from gigs opening for alt-country boy Ryan Adams, Tegan spent a few minutes with *Just Out* to catch us up on life on the road, the best boy-rock of 2002, the downside of being pegged “lesbian twin rockers” and the year she didn't eat meat.

Cori Taratoot: I really dig the new album.

Tegan: It's been a lot of fun. With the last one I felt, not embarrassed, but...I feel more proud of this one.

CT: Would you ever have thought you'd want to be in a band with your sister?

T: No. Oh god, no. If you told me five years ago, “You're gonna play in a band, you're gonna open for Neil Young”...if you had told me that I would have to spend years on end in a small car with Sara...no. I'd have been like, “I want to go to university.”

CT: You guys are honest, and it's rare.

T: It's rare, and it's also dangerous...there's all this pressure.... In Canada, they're like, “MORE, MORE, SHOW US MORE, TAKE OFF YOUR SHIRTS!”

CT: How have your U.S. dates been?

T: We're still in that really awkward stage in America; we're kind of like 14 there still...I've had to explain to everybody we're not sad that we're not on MTV...y'know, we're 22, and we're just figuring out who we want to be...today I might feel like not going out and signing autographs—that's not the type of band I want to be. And then tomorrow I'm like, “Throw me into the crowd, Sara, I wanna go surfing!” [Laughs]

CT: Tell me about the band, the guys on drums and bass.

T: OK, so the guy on bass is my only friend; his name is Gabe, and he's....

CT: Now, come on Tegan, I have a hard time believing that....

T: No, no, I'm for real, I'm telling you. It is very hard to make friends in Vancouver...Sara has lots of friends. She lets me hang out with them.

CT: I'm not buying it.

T: I'm for real, I swear to god, I don't lie.

CT: Well, who are all these girls you're writing about in the songs?

T: Um, they are not my friends. [Laughs]

CT: Do you and Sara ever want to date the same people?



Sister act: Tegan (right) and Sara play Jan. 18 at the Aladdin

T: Oh god, no. We are opposites in who we attract—in dating and in friends. We're very different people....

CT: OK, so do you bring complete songs to Sara, and she has her own songs?

T: Yep, that's exactly it. But you can just write that I wrote them all. [Laughs]

CT: Tell me what your mom thinks about this whole rock band thing.

T: She's actually really supportive...she was a drummer when she was a teen-ager.... Sometimes she still talks about Led Zeppelin and throws her fist up in the air and gets really emotional.

CT: Thank you Cleveland!

T: Totally...we used to have gigs in our garage, and my mum would serve drinks and stuff.

CT: Do you like performing live?

T: I'm ADD. I think that's why we're like that on stage. It's not a shtick, it's not because we're sisters...I'm transferring all of my insecurity onto everybody else. Everyone in the audience wants to go to the bathroom, but they're just scared to get up. [Laughs]

CT: Have you ever fallen in love on the road?

T: Nope.

CT: Have you ever met anyone on the road?

T: Nope.

CT: Oh boy.

T: I find it really creepy actually sometimes when I read our fan sites and they're like, “What kind of girls do Tegan and Sara date?”...We're very shy. We don't come across that way, but we are.

CT: It's gotta be frustrating to be boxed in as the “lesbian twin sister act.”

T: Yeah. Why not talk about music instead? We love Bruce Springsteen. Our favorite records of this year are Spoon and Hot Hot Heat and Queens of the Stone Age.... And I

didn't eat meat for a year once, and I was really hungry. And I'm insecure, and I love to play music, and I love recording....

CT: Do ya like the Cars? Those guys rock.

T: Oh yeah, but...when we were in the 1980s, we were watching *Smurfs*. We were 8. It's impossible for us to say, “Oh, we've been influenced by the '80s.” We haven't! I wore Hammer pants and had bad hair.

CT: What music was playing when you were growing up?

T: Springsteen is the soundtrack to our lives. My dad was listening to Mike and the Mechanics, Dire Straits, that kind of stuff.

CT: Mike and the Mechanics?!

T: I love Mike and the Mechanics.

CT: There ya have it.

T: For real. That's who we think we sound like. When I write a new song I'm like, “God, that is so Mike and the Mechanics.” And then everyone else is like, “Do you listen to Ani DiFranco?” and I'm like, “NO! MIKE AND THE MECHANICS!”

CT: So, are you the oldest?

T: Yeah, by eight minutes.

CT: And that's influenced your music...how?

T: Well, I'm still striving for that quietness. [Laughs] That eight minutes was perfect. I was an only child. For eight minutes...I had my mum all to myself...it was all about me. [CT]

It's all about TEGAN AND SARA 8 p.m. Jan. 18 at Aladdin Theater, 3017 S.E. Milwaukie Ave. Tickets are \$8 or \$10 the day of the show from the box office or Ticketmaster. Come hear and meet the musicians 1 p.m. Jan. 18 at Borders, 708 S.W. Third Ave.

Free-lance music writer CORI TARATOOT loves the Cars and is furiously working on her “Top 100 Albums” list for Tegan and Sara.