

Pretend Girlfriend EP by Pretend Girlfriend

Pretend Girlfriend's four track EP is a professional sounding affair with tight musical backing and good sound quality. However, the songs on display are unfortunately rather samey and repetitive, with nothing new to offer. The opener is a Green Day-lite power chord led pop-punk racket with snotty vocals and a meandering bassline. The backing is reminiscent of a million other nu-school punk upstarts (Blink 182, The Vandals, MXPX etc), but while hardly unique, it's clear Pretend Girlfriend are an experienced bunch. The second track is in a similar vein, spiky guitar, bombastic drum beats and anti-pop lyrics. Ironically, the gravel-voiced singer sneers at one point "No need to mimic / No need to mime" - while Pretend Girlfriend might not be lip-sync friendly, their music is heavily borrowed from other bands. The penultimate song marks a change in direction, with the band morphing into some kind of Oasis tribute act. A banal meat and two veg rock backing highlights the lead singer's desire to be Liam Gallagher, his tendency to distort words almost comical, making one think of the aforementioned Gallagher character on Bo Selecta' ("Sheeeeeiiiiine, Meeeeiiiiine, Breeeeeeiiiiine"). The track itself is a poor man's 'She's Electric', the tale of a dodgy sounding character who roots in your pockets if you turn your back for a second, tries to nick your girlfriend and perhaps worst of all, turns up at parties without any beer. The nasal vocals and frankly crap lyrics are so typical of the no-brain rock of the mid-90s you imagine Pretend Girlfriend to wear fisherman hats, think Shed Seven's break up was a tragic loss, and go on stage with a bottle of beer, a fag and an anorak on. The final song is a return to the So-Cal punk style of the first two, but by this time it is impossible to hear that sneer without thinking of a two-bit Gallagher wannabe, who here also sounds out of tune and monotonous. The accompaniment is again tight and professional sounding but still relatively unremarkable. However, as derivative as they are, it is difficult to categorise Pretend Girlfriend, purely down to the fact that their influences are on a wide spectrum - pub-rock like Stereophonics or Oasis and pop-punk like Green Day or Blink 182. Unfortunately, Pretend Girlfriend are unconvincing performing either. Their songs are uniform and basically non-descript. Instrumentally they show talent, but the songs are simply not good enough to indicate any big future for the band. Any chance to impress is also marred by their frankly terrible lead singer, who needs to be told that to front a band you need to develop your own style and, more importantly, be able to hold a tune. Pretend Girlfriend may be listenable to in the pub on a Saturday night, but that's all they ever will be.

About the Author

Source: <http://www.gigreviewer.com>