



{ MUSIC }

Pop Rocks

Indie queens **TEGAN AND SARA** embrace a more bubblegum sound on their new album, *Heartthrob*.

IT'S NOT EASY TO CATEGORIZE TEGAN and Sara Quin. Despite their petite frames, the 30-year-old, Canadian-born, identical-twin musicians can't fit into just one genre. These sisters are edgy yet vulnerable, sarcastic but genuine and serious while remaining playful — and simply, as they're known to their fans, Tegan and Sara.

"We were very tentative at the start of our career," Tegan explains of how they've grown over the past 13 years. "We sort of knew going into this that, because we were twins, we were young and we were gay, that there would be a lot of people thinking it was just shtick or a record-company-concocted band. So we made choices very early on to make sure we were taken seriously."

With the release of their seventh studio album, *Heartthrob* (Warner Bros., \$12), Tegan and Sara are once again redefining any preconceived notions anyone may have had about them. Having previously suppressed early pop influences for more

of an indie sound, the women credit mainstream acts like Rihanna, Alicia Keys and '90s girl group TLC, along with the 2011 film *Drive* and the TV series *The West Wing* and *Homeland*, for inspiring the new album's direction.

"It was kind of like our musical midlife crisis," Tegan says. "We realized we didn't want to make the same record we had already made. We started singing out of our range and really pushing ourselves."

But while *Heartthrob* is perhaps fresher and brighter than previous efforts, it maintains classic Tegan and Sara elements,

like their trademark haunting lyrics disguised beneath upbeat rhythms. The album is a reflection of the women's lives and careers, from the pure feelings of high school love to the journey down the path to self-discovery.

"Our intention was to prove that no genre is off-limits for us," Tegan says. "No matter how poppy our music is, we are still going to be Tegan and Sara. You can't push that out of us."

—KRISTY ALPERT

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Trixie Whitley is The Next Cat Power

WHO SHE IS: Whitley, a 25-year-old singer-songwriter who grew up in New York and Belgium, is the daughter of late blues/rock singer and guitarist Chris Whitley.

on a drum kit. Whitley describes her sound, a potent cocktail of jazz, pop, punk, and rhythm and blues, as "soulful groove-based music with a punk attitude."

WHY SHE'S THE NEXT CAT POWER:

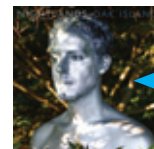
Fans of Cat Power will find a lot to like in this month's debut from Whitley, *Fourth Corner* (Strong Blood Records, \$14). Like Power — a multi-instrumentalist who, for nearly two decades, has captured listeners with heartfelt lyrics and stirring vocals — Whitley injects soul into every introspective word she sings and is equally comfortable behind a piano, with a guitar or pounding

INFLUENCES: "I grew up drenched in blues and soul music, from Nina Simone to Betty Davis and Thelonious Monk," she says. "Rhythmically, I've been heavily influenced by Malian music and crazy electronica. I'm inspired by a range of artists from Iggy Pop to The Cure, PJ Harvey to Cat Power."

DOWNLOAD: "Gradual Return," "I Need Your Love," and "Never Enough"

—JAMES MAYFIELD

Lyrical Speaking



"Learning to sing is the hardest thing to do. But there's always a ring, a ringing tune in my ears when I'm with you."

NIGHTLANDS

"Born to Love"
Oak Island
(Secretly Canadian, \$12)