

# TEENGIRL FANTASY *In your* DREAMS



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"Time is alive," wrote Jay Griffiths in her 1999 book *Pip Pip: A Sideways Look At Time*, a remarkable unraveling of modernity's obsession with measuring time and the subsequent erosion of our untamed experience of it. Griffiths reaches across centuries and borders to examine historical and cultural readings of time and in doing so playfully peels away the artifice of the dominant chronological structure of hours, minutes and seconds, leaving us to question our impulse to count over simply being in the present.

A similar fascination with time is the current that runs through New York duo Teengirl Fantasy's second album *Tracer*. The track titles point to it like hands on a watch face – "Eternity", "End", "Mists Of Time", "Timeline" – yet the album's rhythms burst free of any fixed structure to fly like seeds from a dandelion clock. It is very much apparent during their intense live set at Boiler Room the night before I sit down to chat with Nick Weiss and Logan Takahashi. They play

in the centre of the tiny, fittingly humid venue in east London and the crowd gathers in a circle around them, watching, motionless at first. Then, gradually, shoulders start moving, limbs start jerking and we're all sucked into the vortex of chords, acid and emotion that spill forth from Weiss and Takahashi's synths, drum pads and pedals. The room becomes a blur of sweat and shifting texture, spinning patterns, tension and release. They play "Cheaters" and "Dancing In Slow Motion" from their 2010 debut album *7am*, but stretched, warped versions of both; seamless exercises in delayed gratification. It is a hot, heavy set that leaves everyone grinning and gasping for air.

In the background of a cafe where we meet later, the Supremes' "Baby Love" plays over the stereo. A little bleary but smiling, Weiss and Takahashi plump for green tea in an attempt to starve off tour-induced colds. They speak softly and thoughtfully about *Tracer*, an album they rightfully see as more complete, cohesive, than their still remarkable debut. *7am* was made in fits and starts around their college work at Oberlin in Ohio but *Tracer*, begun a month after they graduated, had their full, undivided attention. And it shows.

For *Tracer*, the moment is in constant transition. Lines and sounds bleed into one another and then skitter off somewhere new. Weiss explains that on their first album, "the skeleton of the song would often be based on a four-bar loop but we didn't really do that this time." Working almost entirely without samples, "allowed the songs to evolve a lot more because they weren't held to anything. There are a lot of repeating sounds but they were all able to shift in real time." Takahashi picks up the thread: "This album is way more teleological

than the last album. It's going from point A to B, rather than repeating itself; it's always evolving and changing."

That extends to the terrains they draw upon, and move between. While Detroit techno is a clear, volunteered influence on *Tracer*, there is also a kinship with Glasgow's hip hop and R&B inversions (particularly on "EFX" featuring Kelela) and NY-LON's endlessly textured club shapes (on "Inca", the Panda Bear-featuring "Pyjama" and the Opus III-evoking "Mists Of Time" with Laurel Halo). Acid's visceral squelch is also very much present, mostly resonating on the closing track, "Timeline", although Weiss refers to it as digi-acid. "We approximated a lot of the Roland 303 sounds with Nick's Juno and my Monomachine," explains Takahashi. The one link to *7am* is the upfront house number "Do It" with legendary producer and singer, Romanthony.

While touchpoint spotting is fun, it is not what drives Teengirl Fantasy. The feeling is what matters most. "We're not analogue purists; we're not retro or classic fetishists," explains Weiss. "We really don't think about genre that much when we're making music. Obviously we're influenced by what we like but we try to push past that and think outside of that, not limit ourselves."

*Tracer's* vision of time is ultimately, refreshingly progressive. "We are thinking about some sort of future in that we are trying to create a new type of sound. In doing that, you have to look backwards at the same time as looking forward, like Janus," says Takahashi, referencing the two-faced Roman god of beginnings and transitions. "Apparently you use the same part of your brain when you remember something as when you think of the future," he smiles. For Teengirl Fantasy, time is vitally alive with promise.

*Tracer* is out now on R&S Records.  
teengirlfantasy.angelfire.com/  
randsrecords.com



Sofia Niazi, *Social Networking* (2011)  
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THERE IS NO FINAL ONE;  
REVOLUTIONS ARE INFINITE

YEVGENY ZAMYATIN, *WE* (1921)

coat PRADA | shoes CAMPER | socks PANTHERELLA