

SEE GREEN

Courtenay Green vocals/guitar/percussion/synth **Greg Pajer** guitar **Blake Paulson** drums
Andrew James bass **Aris Archontis** piano/synth **Will Phillips** percussion

Courtenay Green isn't a "color inside the lines" kind of girl. In fact, she's not really into borders of any kind.

The L.A.-by-way-of-New-York songwriter and singer is perhaps best defined by the parts of her that can't be swept under the carpet. Ostensibly, she's a sunny L.A. girl, blonde hair spilling down over a form-fitting retro dress, all sparkling eyes and winning smile. She might make a pretty picture sauntering down Sunset Boulevard, but Green's still got a figurative cigarette butt stuck under those 5-inch heels from the Lower East Side, her former stomping grounds, where she can still pop up in a venue like Pianos for a cozy little sold-out concert with friends and fans. She's packing a Princeton degree and isn't afraid to hit you over the head with a 50-cent word when necessary. She hardly ever uses the word "like" frivolously. In other words, there is even more to Courtenay Green than meets the eye.

The same could be said for the music of Green's aptly named seven-piece band, **SEE GREEN**. On the surface, it boasts the qualities one would demand from an artist with such a cosmopolitan background. It's the collision of L.A. and New York, pop shaking hands with rock. Glittery, shimmering hooks rubbing elbows with dapper, metropolitan riffs. Keyboard bleeps colliding with guitar bleeps colliding with scattershot dance beats and cascading melody lines. But Green knows something that fellow quirk-popsters like THE NEW PORNOGRAPHERS, TEGAN AND SARA, and DAVID BYRNE know – underneath the ornamentation, there must lie a simple, honest, immaculately constructed song.

"A song can be gussied up until the cows come home with samples and processors and drum machines, but at the end of the day, you should be able to sing it with just an acoustic guitar and have it stand alone," Green says. "I never like to lose sight of that basic principle, but at the same time, I'm always looking for ways to make the layers of a song more interesting. So I guess that's what I'm shooting for – something old, something new, something borrowed and something ... Green."

That sentiment is on full technicolor display on *Violet*, the debut EP from **SEE GREEN**. The album bristles with the musical aesthetic that's driven Green throughout her burgeoning career – namely, that of mid- to late-'60s pop – but funnels it through her myriad other influences, from folk to electronica to, if you want to take her word for it, death metal, polkas and Indonesian gamelan orchestras. It sounds bizarre until you hear a track like "Gold Mine," which flawlessly melds classically oriented harpsichord and bass lines with decidedly modern guitars and synthesizers, or "Devil In The Details," a contender for the catchiest midtempo disco romp of the year, topped with Green's trademark emotive vocal delivery, albeit with tongue often planted firmly in cheek. "Instead of coming across as direct descendants of one artist or genre or time period, my songs tend to become sort of like FrankenSongs, full of little components gathered from all across the musical spectrum," Green says.

Green's musical evolution began at the age of 5, when she took up the piano. By junior high, her arsenal included trumpet, guitar, drums and every other instrument she could get her hands on. A few musical obsessions later (including a Buddy Holly epoch and what is now referred to as her regrettable show tunes phase), Green was on her way to becoming the commanding, adventurous songwriter she is today. Now backed by an able-bodied assortment of likeminded adventurers, she's got the munitions to take on the world with characteristic confidence, quirkiness and, most importantly, sincerity.

"I want people to know that I'm putting 100% of myself into every song I create. Each rhythm, bass line, guitar part, synth riff or whatever else is the result of hours and hours of meticulous arranging, writing, re-writing and tweaking, which I think gives each track a deeply personal and authentic quality," she says. "I'm concerned with staying true to myself as an artist, writing straight from the heart, the soul, and possibly the spleen or kidney, and I hope that comes across in the music." It does, more and more, with each FrankenSong she writes.



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www.blacklodgepr.com • Jeff Breil - ieffb@blacklodgepr.com • Jeff Rover - ieffr@blacklodgepr.com