



# Age is just a number

## First Aid Kit

**T**he first thing that strikes you about First Aid Kit is the uncertain correlation between the band's age, and the adult material of much of their work. Sisters, Johanna and Klara Soderberg, were born in 1990 and 1993 respectively and repeatedly find a hostile focus on their ages, perhaps because for many the lyrics will resonate with insincerity, perhaps for rejecting the tweeny portfolio of subject matter expected of artists (not to mention family duos) still in their teens. For the most part, the sisters have a firm understanding of people's expectations. "There are definitely people who look down on us because we're young, who think we're not real, which sucks."

First Aid Kit's folk credentials mean their influences of Bright Eyes, Joanna Newsom and Bill Monroe trip easily off the tongue. Although Klara initiated the musical process, once Johanna joined her on stage the band naturally completed itself, "something had been created with our harmonies, something special added to the music." Songwriting is now very much a collaborative, spontaneous process, while the album's artwork is a further synergetic touch and emphasises the sisters' movement away from the commercialism of the music industry. "We knew we didn't want a photo of us on the cover, it shouldn't be about how we look. There's a story of a city on the top of a mountain at the start of the album, and the train's going up to the city. The seven people on the cover — those are the people that we are singing about in the songs."

*Drunken Trees* has a beautiful sound. *You're Not Coming Home Tonight* begins as a sombre contemplation of a crumbling relationship, eventually transporting itself to future hopefulness with "the ship

is sailing/ I'll meet you on the other side." Wistful lyrics showcase the optimism of Klara's writing talent, but some of the more macabre musings, such as "you'll start drinking again" perhaps do raise concerns for the listener over authenticity. There are no falsehoods about the background to their lyrics however, "it's from what we've read, what we've heard, what we've seen, but it's very much fictional, we're pretty young so we haven't been through that much. We just want to be storytellers and tell people stories, it doesn't matter if it's about us or about anyone else. We can relate to our songs even though we haven't been through what we're singing about."

Youth may very well be on their side and First Aid Kit breathe life into a staid folk scene, because the band is open to influences and to expanding their knowledge, but in a very 21<sup>st</sup> century manner. The title of the hauntingly simplistic *Jagadamba, You Might* is extracted directly from google, an afterthought that somehow works with *Drunken Trees*' off the cuff inception. "We were looking for an Indian kind of name, so we googled Indian names. It means mother of the world. The song is about the state of the world, things like war and environment, but it's not very literal, it's very open to interpretation." In a music industry saturated with interpretation, soul searching and oblique referencing, the attitude of First Aid Kit, "we just do what comes naturally, making music is fun," is incredibly refreshing.

*Drunken Trees* is available on Wichita Recordings now. For further information please visit [www.myspace.com/thisisfirstaidkit](http://www.myspace.com/thisisfirstaidkit).



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