

● Look ma, I'm only breeding! Off-duty from the Pixies, Kim Deal's regrouped THE BREEDERS in Dayton, Ohio, roped in her twin sister, and invited DELE FADELE along to the family home to witness family rows, gun talk, sex talk, and all-round small-town USA strangeness. Procreation rebels: STEVE DOUBLE

The first hint of the mythical weirdness beneath the banal facade of Middle America comes in a downtown bar in Dayton, Ohio.

With 30 minutes to kill before a photo session, The Breeders and entourage locate an innocuous looking drinking den and make a beeline for it. Upon entry, the corpulent owner immediately demands ID cards to prove we nearly-thirtysomethings are actually over 21. Apparently, she can get sued for whatever damage—physical or otherwise—we do while under the influence. We overcome the obstacle, order and sit down.

The strains of a rude, lascivious Country song fill the musty air. A deaf mute comes and sits beside us. He passes handwritten notes enquiring about our names, ages and current thoughts. I retire to the bathroom, where baseball graffiti sits side by side with (untouched) KKK graffiti: 'Keep America free from welfare and AIDS, kill a nigger today.'

I return and eye the exits nervously, as the new acquaintance reveals the true purpose of the enquiries: could we please buy him his next drink?

If that little scenario dents your faith in human nature, the funny, gregarious, unaffected, unpretentious Breeders restore it. Their faith in the healing power of quirky but accessible so-called alternative rock means they've just returned from a two-year sabbatical with an EP titled 'Safari', that shows up indigenous equivalents for the preening clothes horses they are.

I'm half a world away, across the ocean, because agile tunes like 'Do You Love Me Now' and 'Don't Call Home' make me feel like an arrested adolescent who wants to be anarchic and infinitely destructive. With delicate melodies, sturdy rhythms, wide-eyed, emotive singing, pleas to lovers and empathy with teenage runaways, The Breeders prove you can be traditional and authentic and not be some over fed, overblown shoooperstar taking a mad ride on life's rich highway.

LAZILY LABELLED as 'an indie supergroup' or 'a Pixies penis extension', The Breeders feature Kim Deal from the Boston caterwaulers, Tanya Donelly, recently departed from Throwing Muses (who can't be with us because of recording commitments with her new group, Belly), Jo Wiggs, who was formerly in The Perfect Disaster but now fronts her own group Honey Tongue and, because they're "drum sluts", Jon Mattock from Spiritualized alternates pounding duties with Brit from Slint. Kelley Deal, Kim's identical twin, has recently joined on guitar and vocals, so she comes full circle from when they both used to be in groups together in high school.

When we finally get round to chatting with Jo, Kim and Kelley around a tape recorder, two things become apparent. Firstly, The Breeders are an outlet for Kim's obsessions where she sometimes gets to call the shots and express herself fully. Secondly, Kim and Kelley might look identical, but you can soon tell the difference between the former's wildness and the latter's intensity. Jo is a diplomat, well-schooled in gender politics. Together, they can talk the hind leg off a buffalo, darting, as prompted, from subject to subject, always with some unexpected insight. Did you know, for instance, that The Breeders haven't earned a penny from the sales of their debut LP, 'Pod', due to Rough Trade America's collapse and

TUNES HELP YOU BREED MORE EASILY



Let It Breed: Kelley, Kim, Jo and John

subsequent bankruptcy? Or that they're only signed to a major in the States—Elektra—as part of a 4AD package deal? What do they think of their present situation?

"It's weird," Kim admits, "we're all in other bands. I don't like bands who do

side projects. I like more conventional bands, like The Ramones; everybody knows what they're about, they're not gonna deviate from it and I like that. I hate bands who go solo, I f—ing hate 'em, but, y'know, f— it. I don't want to be the lead singer of the Pixies and I

would hate it if I was. The Breeders don't sound like the Pixies; I think people just hear my voice and think 'Where have I heard it before?' but there were large sections of our last LP where nothing much was going on, just drums and feedback, we wouldn't do that in the Pixies."

Just like in England, except on a much grander scale, America is in the grip of election fever. We arrive just after Jerry Brown has narrowly defeated Bill Clinton in the Democratic race in Connecticut and he's on every talk show spelling out laudable policies, the gist of which is setting up a National Health Service and reclaiming politics from the faceless but powerful money men.

Meanwhile on the right-wing, right-thinking Republican front, which seems to have been scripted by one of those tele-evangelists who save your soul from drugs if you just send money, protest votes against George Bush have put demagogue Pat Buchanan and his 'America First' (screw minorities and the rest of the world) campaign in the media limelight. Bush still looks like he's gonna win, and if it takes a war to do so, so be it: bomb Libya for votes. Kelley has something to say.

"You can't have a Republican President and Senate and a Democratic House Of Representatives. Opposing parties in power means nothing ever gets done. That's the shit we've had for the last eight years."

Kim: "Oh, really?"

Kelley: "Yes. That's my consensus opinion."

Kim: "I understand that there has to be a figurehead, and we agreed many years ago that this would be the president. If anything is wrong with the process it's the fact that people don't

participate actively in their local communities and on up. I'm not registered to vote and I've never voted in my life."

Kelley: "You're not registered? DON'T PRINT THAT FOR GOD'S SAKES!"

Kim: "No. I'll either vote for Clinton or Bush. Ooooooohh! What a decision I have. The only way to get involved..."

Kelley (interrupting): "You're not involved at the local level. You've never been. Ohio is totally a Democratic state."

Kim: "I don't care."

Kelley: "Well, it makes a difference. If you get a Republican president, you'll have the probability for voting Republican at your state level, so you're strong..."

Kim: "People put too much credence in politicians. They don't run the country. We do."

Kelley: "They do."

Kim: "No. It's such bullshit. If someone tried to pass a law that was ridiculous, people would go f—ing crazy."

By now, voices are raised and tempers are frail. Kim and Kelley have reached a deadlock and continue arguing about the machinations of the system for ten minutes. In this way, The Breeders differ from other, more prominent Amer indie groups who'd never take a stance on anything. Kim and Jo agree that The Breeders would never actively write about politics because they couldn't set what they feel to a 4/4 beat, but point out that the apathy that's rife in England doesn't extend to their patch; youth here are aware and active, even those educated by MTV. Kim is convinced that America

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accelerated the arms race so as to bankrupt the Soviet Union. Needless to say, an argument ensues.

OAKWOOD IS a leafy, sedate suburb of Dayton, Ohio, where Kim and Kelley currently reside. Their street is almost

Breeders will be making a video for 'Do You Love Me Now', which Kim thinks hasn't got the faintest chance of denting the British Top 40.

Me, I think a copy should be in every home and I'm not biased – I just love pop music. And, although these maverick musicians distance themselves from their environment, even saying Jo is more American than they are and pointing to the example of Kim

travelling all over the place all the time, these dulcet sounds would make perfect sense in the corner of America time seems to have forgotten, especially when Kim and Kelley are fighting (others) in its bars.

The Breeders covered 'Happiness Is A Warm Gun' on their debut LP and should go even further when they record a follow-up later this year, but what do they think about the proliferation of guns?

"I don't think anybody should have any guns," Kim states, defying the Ted Nugents and Eazy-Es of this world. "You've been getting along fine without them, haven't ya? This is what a gun does: it's a small explosion to pump a pellet into a living organism to kill it. That's the only thing a gun is for. I just don't understand why we need to go around with the capacity to pump a pellet into someone. It's a weird thing. It's still left over from the constitution,

when the British said Americans shouldn't be allowed to carry guns. To us, it was a big thing that every man, woman and child should be able to arm themselves and defend themselves..."

"The reason it's still an issue," Jo adds, "is because it's still tied up with the personal freedom thing. And that is just a mistake. Having the right to carry a gun is not a freedom, ultimately, it's the opposite."

Kim: "There was a talk-format TV show we watched recently about children getting killed accidentally if a gun misfires, whether the parents could be held liable because they left a loaded gun that a child could get hold of. It's just so sad, tragic, children leave home to visit the next door neighbours and you never see them again."

Eventually, we get to the link between crack and guns and how dealers will give 13-year-old kids a gun and a hundred dollars to work a corner

for the day. If guns were illegal, Kim argues, there wouldn't be such problems, until Jo points out that similar things are happening in Manchester. And crack has so obsessed the American government that their covert war on drugs has extended to relatively harmless substances like marijuana and, more unbelievably, alcohol.

THE CONVERSATION rides on further, taking many dips and turns, too numerous to catalogue here. Suffice to say, The Breeders like both noise and melody, think rock will survive and keep evolving, and found out they weren't very good at making dance records. Kim and Jo think scientists shouldn't be allowed to conduct DNA experiments to create perfect humans – it's unethical – and know and respect their cultural icons.

We discuss 'outing' (Breeders is homosexual slang for heteros), but they have conflicting and convoluted views about the process, evident from the example Kim gives.

"Say I smoke a lot of pot and I want to be a teacher..."

Jo: "But that's illegal."

"OK," Kim continues, "Say I like to be sodomised, and people make these huge big posters telling everybody that I like to be sodomised, I'd have serious trouble finding a job."

Jo: "People who enjoy sodomy aren't generally victimised. The main reason some people stay in the closet is that they fear victimisation."

Kim: "Well, if someone ruined my reputation around town, I might have trouble getting a job too. So, I think it's not really the fact that they enjoy sex one way or another, it's the fact that everybody makes a big issue about sex. It's not even that the outers are declaring 'He's homosexual'; they're saying 'He has sex!' And they've got the name and they've got sex, so they make it really personal..."

The Breeders aren't running scared of the FBI or the CIA, not even the alternative rock (dirty words ahoy!) fuhrers can find flies on them, they're just living life above the soil, telling home truths and avoiding stereotypes. It's the real deal. You'll love 'em.

"I don't like bands who do side projects. I like conventional bands, like The Ramones; everybody knows what they're about. I don't want to be the lead singer of the Pixies and I would hate it if I was." – Kim

unnaturally quiet, save for the buzz of the occasional car. Everyone drives here; there are no pedestrians in sight. You sometimes wonder, after reading all the tales and seeing the films, what goes on behind these nice semi-detached houses. The neighbours probably think a bunch of louts have just moved into Kim's house, but we're just soaking up the vibes, chatting, watching MTV, not doing anything outlandish.

The house itself is well-decorated and cosy, with only the Pixies gold discs on the wall pointing to any connections with raawk. Their dad gives me and Jon Spiritualized a lift from the airport and he's real cool, turning us on to 97.5 FM, which plays The Sugarcubes and calls Lush "part of that new English movement, wombadelia". Jon can't believe the size of the cars and trucks, the width of the freeway and the friendly manner of the locals. It's his first time in America and, after this reverie, he's sure to get freaked out by New York City.

On the second, rainy, day of our stay at Kim 'n' Kelley's we meet their mum and their brother, who're both pleasant, hospitable people. In three days' time, after we've left, The



Box set go! The Breeders take their places amongst the all-time crates