

The Pipettes
EP: Your Kisses are Wasted on Me

By Nancy Dunham

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It was probably 1981 when flyers announced a new group “The Go Gos” was going to appear at a popular upstate New York club that featured punk music.

My college-age friends and I rolled our eyes a bit, but went nonetheless. This was in the day when we went to see anyone and everyone who played at certain clubs. Sure, we saw a few clunkers. But we also saw REM, U2, INX, and many other defining artists before they were “discovered” by the masses. What a great way to experience a fresh, exciting sound.

The Go Gos, of course, made rock history with their new wave/rock style and their “Beauty and the Beat” debut album not only defined their sound but set a high-water mark for new wave.

More than two decades later, we have the Pipettes, a girl-group who have just released a four-song EP that includes a video of “Your Kisses Are Wasted on Me.”

Maybe I’m just old. Or jaded. But how many retreads of the Go Gos do we really need?

Yes, the three women in the Pipettes are charming and saucy. They have a flirtatious, bouncy stage presence, cute costumes, choreographed dancing – all the needed elements to accompany their sassy lyrics and pop melodies. But the bottom line is that the Pipettes sound and act just like girl groups who’ve gone before.

That isn’t surprising when you consider that the group was formed in mid-2003 to emulate the Phil Spector pop sound. In fall fairness, there’s absolutely nothing wrong with this music. It’s played well by four male members of the band who promoters insist are part of the group but who you don’t hear much about). And for those who want to quibble, I understand the Pipette’s sound is geared more toward Ronettes than Supremes.

The problem to me is that while the Ronettes had a very wholesome, endearing quality to their act, there was a lot of substance in their style and presentation. The Pipettes seems to be just an act.

Even with today’s nostalgic look back at the pioneers of all genres music, the Pipettes simply don’t offer enough original material or versatility to come off as more than an old carbon copy of some very fine originals.