

The Pierces
Thirteen Tales Of
Love And Revenge
 Lizard King

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It's tempting to imagine that The Pierces—sisters Catherine (brunette) and Allison (blonde)—will end up as a one-hit wonder. Or more aptly, a one-video wonder, thanks to their widely YouTubed clip for "Boring," the first single from their third album. The track, a glammy, tongue-in-cheek ode to New York nightlife ennui, is funny, sardonic, and precisely the kind of novelty hit that could destroy an artist with nothing else in its catalogue to match it. The

Pierces have an album's worth. Actually, "Boring" is pretty dissimilar from the rest of *Thirteen Tales Of Love And Revenge*, though it fits perfectly anyway. Turns out the Pierces are wicked smart and have pretty traditional tastes: "Turn On Billie" celebrates Billie Holiday with an ode to enjoyably lazy weekends ("We'll paint the town blue, 'cause red is so passé"), while much of the album consists of varying shades of folk-rock, particularly the calliope-like opener "Secret" and the studio folk-rock "It Was You" and "Go To Heaven."

There's also a healthy dollop of Prince, from the mock-Wendy & Lisa shtick in "Secret" ("Do you swear on your life?" / "I swear on my life" is straight out of "Computer Blue") to the entirety of the limpid "Lights On," whose title describes the thing they'd like to make love with. "Boring" (song and video) lampoons the sisters' considerable sex appeal, but "Lights On" sharpens it.

The duo's arrangements always have something sliding out from around the corner: "Sticks And Stones" opens with a four-four bass-and-kick-drum pulse and a light-fingered acoustic rhythm guitar that's half-hoedown, half-disco, before a snare tattoo gives the pre-chorus a swift kick and a glockenspiel steps on the gas. "Kill! Kill! Kill!" bridges twee indie-pop and Dolly Parton country, thanks to the hint of twang in Catherine's powerful vocal. Everything is ingeniously arranged—and unlike the work of far too many indie kids with orchestras in their heads, none of it cries out for notice as ingenious arrangement. It just draws listeners back to songs that deserve the attention.

—Michaelangelo Matos **Grade: A-**