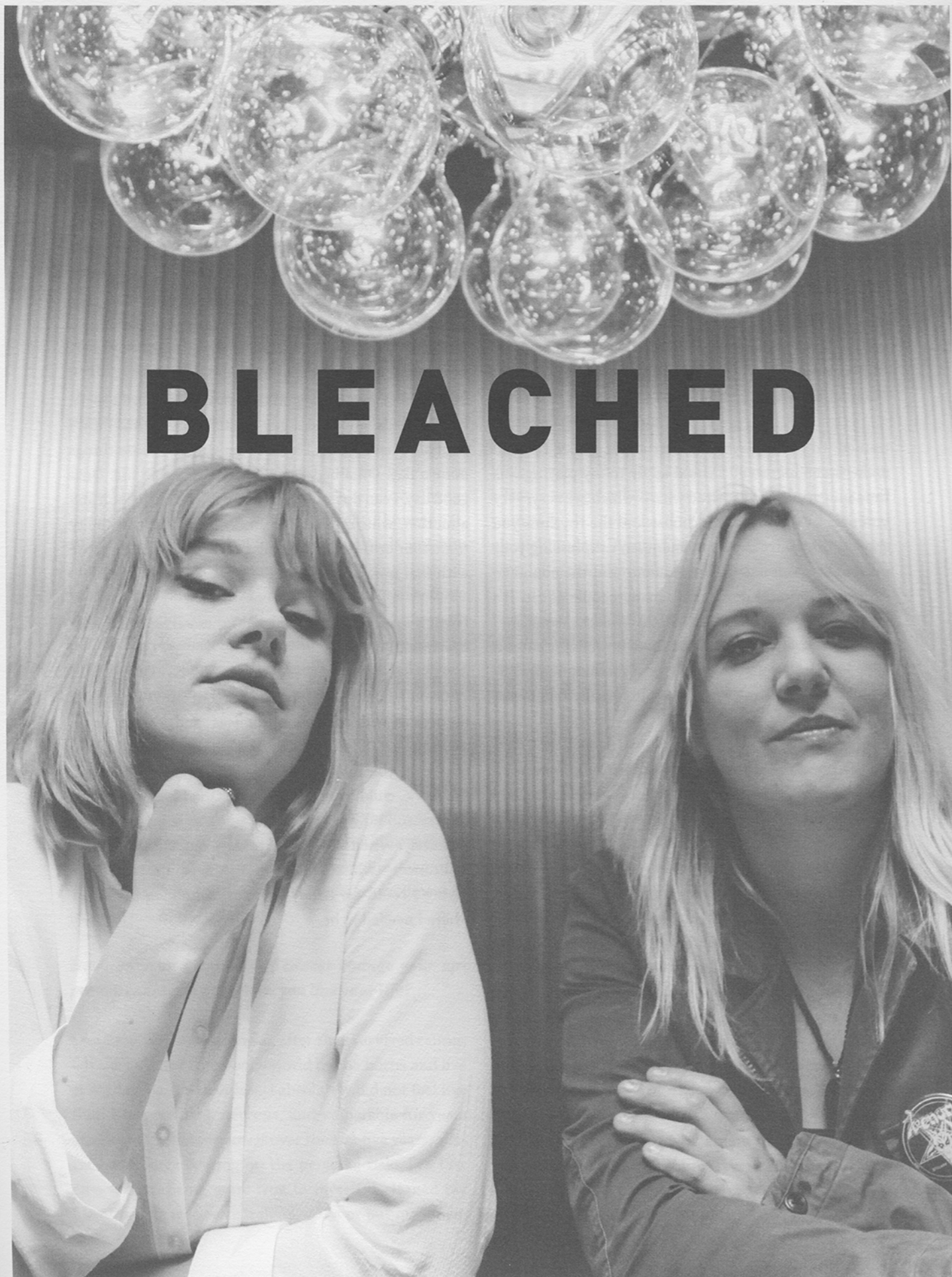


BLEACHED JENNIFER AND JESSIE CLAVIN

CHAPTER 2 INTERVIEWS



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TEXT + PHOTOS ALXIS RAIKEVICH

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Jennifer and Jessie Clavin of Bleached are the cool sisters you always wished you had. They came on the Los Angeles music scene in 2003 with punk band Mika Miko and gained a wide fan base with their energetic live performances, catchy songs, and from their full length record co-released by Post Present Medium and Kill Rock Stars. Take some punk undertones, mix in several more years of experience, add in Jen's slight Fleetwood Mac obsession and Jessie's love for Jimi Hendrix, and there you will find Bleached. Influenced by everything from punk to psychedelic, Bleached draws inspirations but are never derivative. They transform their inspirations to create something that feels very new alive. We talked with the sisters about growing up, dropping out, anxiety, and all things music.

SHE SHREDS What influenced you to become musicians?

JENNIFER Our dad played guitar, actually he probably knows how to play every instrument. He had guitars he made, and we would go to family events and our parents would perform. Our mom would sing Linda Ronstadt covers and our dad would play the guitar. Jess and I always felt like we were rebelling against our parents by getting super into punk, but still getting into music. I think secretly we were in denial of being inspired by them being so talented.

JESSIE It wasn't until I was older that friends of mine would come over—mainly boyfriends at the time—and say, "Whoa, your dad has a LinnDrum? That's insane, that's what Depeche Mode used." I was like, oh, my dad is cool.

Did your parents teach you how to play instruments?

JESSIE I asked my dad for a bass and he totally got me one. He taught me scales. I would be sitting there trying to learn while he would just solo on top of it. So I started realizing that he actually just wanted to have someone to play bass with him [laughing]. There was a point when I was playing with my dad a lot and then Jen and I started playing. I feel like we never really played solo unless we were practicing or trying to write something.

JENNIFER I was never really interested in playing an instrument until we started going to shows every

weekend in high school. I remember I saw this one band F-play with two girls in the band, and I remember thinking, "Whoa, let's start a band." I picked up one of my dad's guitars and Jessie, who was really good at bass, had to sit around waiting for me to learn guitar. At the time one of my favorite bands was the Slits, so we thought we'd do Slits covers.

Do you feel like you were inspired by seeing other female musicians play live?

JESSIE I was really inspired by a lot of male musicians, but I wasn't thinking gender. Punk got me into music but I remember when I really got into a female musician was with Heart. I think it's also because they were sisters.

JENNIFER I think dad being supportive of us being musicians inspired me, but looking back at it, seeing two girls playing music definitely had a big influence on me. Just relating to there being women playing music, playing instruments, and thinking, "Oh, I can do that too." I also remember when we were kids, like really young, maybe seven and nine, our dad took us to his friends band's show and they were called...Down Girl [they yell in unison]. It was a four-girl band, and I remember walking into this warehouse in downtown L.A., and I was holding onto my dad I was so scared. Jessie wasn't scared at all, she like ran off somewhere [laughs].

JESSIE They were shredding, they were really good.

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How did you transition from Mika Miko to Bleached?

JENNIFER Mika Miko was more of our coming of age band with our two other best friends. Just learning to play our instruments by listening to our favorite punk bands. Once leaving Mika Miko I started to explore a whole other world of music that I was becoming so obsessed with. When you go from listening to punk to Fleetwood Mac you realize other ways to build a song. I don't like when a band sounds exactly like another band, but having different influences is awesome. You can take that influence and turn it into anything.

JESSIE It's also more hands on because it's just the two of us. With Mika Miko we all had our part. That's what was really exciting about Bleached. We are really musical people, we want to try everything we can.

What about your lyrics? How do you write?

JENNIFER [Our] last record was really about being honest. Mika Miko was not honest lyrics, it was almost a joke, it was a way to feel cool about writing lyrics like stuff about zombies. With Bleached I started listening to so many bands that weren't punk and realizing that their lyrics were so honest. I'm honest but keep it vague. It leaves it open for more people to relate. People love when they can relate to a song. It's like when you hear a song and you think you know what it's about and then you find out later that it's not about that at all. Like that joke that your favorite love song is actually about a turkey sandwich [laughs].

Now this next record, the lyrics are more about growing up, suffering through depression and getting out of it, some relationship songs, but mostly still just trying to be really honest. My mom listened to country songs, and I really like how they were stories throughout the whole song. I always really admired that, and I feel like I'm trying to get in touch with that side of songwriting, especially with this new record.

Whose lyrics for you are the epitome of honest?

JENNIFER Definitely Stevie Nicks. When I saw her play, I cried. She's just so beautiful and so honest and so talented.

JESSIE Of course I always come back to this [laughing] but Jimi Hendrix. He's just my idol. The first time I saw him playing "Little Wing" on guitar, and he was shredding, and that guitar solo is in my head 24/7 [everyone laughs]. That's the soundtrack to my life.

What would you say is the point of Bleached?

JESSIE There's a part of Bleached that's helping me get through my own personal struggles in life. At the end of the day everyone is human and deals with stuff. Even just sitting down and trying to write a guitar part is like a meditation process for me. Even just being able to express myself, like going back to the lyrics you feel like, "Can I express this? Is this ok?" and Bleached is like this person who's like, "Just come on tell me everything, just give me what you've got."

When was the first time you performed?

JENNIFER Dead Banana Ladies, which was our high school band. We were a thrash band but it was different, we would just go onstage and play our instruments and look down. When we decided to start Mika Miko that was the first time where I was singing. I totally wore sunglasses and faced my back to the audience the whole set. I was so embarrassed. I think at one point I walked into everybody and tried to do that thing where you lean on people when you're singing and then I just came back on stage.

Do you still get stage fright or have anxiety before you play?

JESSIE I sweat really crazy on stage. It's not even the lights or moving around on stage, it's the anxiety. There's not one show where I'm not nervous before, and it takes a song to get into it, and all the sudden I'm like, "Why was I so nervous?"

JENNIFER I'm trying to learn how to deal with it actually. I go to therapy and my therapist was talking about a strategy to separate the feeling of anxiety from who you are. One of her patients will pretend her anxiety is a dog sitting next to her. It's a really good idea because it drags it all out of you.

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