Jim G. Thirlwell (aka Foetus) chats it up with Jennifer Charles, the sultry singer/siren of Elysian Fields, the hypnotic New York band with their first EP out on Radioactive Records.

JGT: What would drive you to murder? Vengeance, possibly?
JC: Maybe love.

JGT: Love scorned? Are you capable of a crime of passion?
JC: I don’t like to think so. But I think everybody has that in them.

JGT: I know I sure do. What’s the difference between trustin’ and thrustin’?
JC: (silent)

JGT: Okay, moving right along...do you think it’s ever necessary to kill?
JC: You don’t know what the difference between trusting and thrusting is?

JGT: I just like it ‘cause it rhymes. Your lyrics openly celebrate sexuality.
JC: I think all music is about seduction in some way.

JGT: Does that openness make you feel vulnerable?
JC: Sure.

JGT: Are you adopting a role?
JC: No.

JGT: Exaggerating?
JC: No. I want to bring my audience on a trip with me.

JGT: You invite them into your bedroom, metaphorically.
JC: Metaphorically.

JGT: Your lyrics are full of innuendo, but they couldn’t put a parental advisory sticker on your record, which I really like. You can say a word like “window” or something, and imbue it with so much sexual mystery. I mean, it’s dripping.
JC: That’s the beauty of communication. You can fuck someone with a look.

JGT: You fuck an entire room with a look. (laughter)
JC: It feels good. I want everyone to feel important and sexy and beautiful and free.

JGT: How do you master the mystery of understatement? Did you start with overstatement and work your way back? Practice in front of a mirror?
JC: (laughter) It’s just natural. I think you can tell when something’s contrived.

JGT: There’s a lot of sadness and introspection in there. Is that cathartic? Therapeutic?
JC: Absolutely. To express your vulnerability is very liberating.

JGT: Does it shed demons for you?
JC: I don’t know if it completely exorcises them. It gives them a chance to come out and breathe, a forum. I think that’s why people have idols, so that they can identify with that liberation.

JGT: Do you think you’re an idol?
JC: I don’t see myself that way.

JGT: Everyone else thinks you are. How do you deal with all of that scrutiny?
JC: I really can’t think of the result. I
JGT: "Mermaid" is a very personal song. What was your muse for that?
JC: They’re just feelings of openness, loss....
JGT: But you’re the manipulator in that song. You’re luring the sailors onto the rocks, saying, “As soon as you see me I’m gone.” You’re in control.
JC: To an extent. But there’s the feeling of being incomplete.
JGT: The mermaid is incomplete?
JC: Definitely. Because she sacrifices love for the sea. She can’t betray herself in the end.
JGT: Why?
JC: It’s just her destiny. She’s resigned to it.
JGT: How analogous is that to your life?
JC: I think everyone has moments of that.
JGT: What are your taboos? Where do you draw the line artistically? Socially?
JC: I just do what I do. I don’t stand in judgment of other people.
JGT: What about pig fucking?
JC: If it works for you, go with it.
JGT: So all right, how many lovers have you had?
JC: (pause) I’ve always gotten what I wanted.

JGT: But, inquiring minds want to know!
JC: I think the title of “Bad Girl” is something society brands on powerful women, because they pose a threat. But they’re really the good girls. I think it’s important not to let society stop you from being who you are.

JGT: Absolutely. I’m a big believer in female power. All of my best friends are women. What did you listen to growing up?
JC: My mother was a torch singer and my father was a jazz DJ, so there was always music around me. We listened to everything.
JGT: Do you want to blow up the world, blow off the world, blow off some steam, blow in the wind, or blow a chasm in the base of Mt. Ignorance, where you can plant a fungus of Jennifer Charles and Elysian Fields and have it fester and blossom?
JC: All of the above.
JGT: Are you conscious of the fact that you’re going to change the world?
JC: No.
JGT: Well, maybe it’s better you aren’t aware of it.
JC: Women who change things inspire me a lot. Gertrude Stein, Frida Kahlo, Mae West, Bessie Smith. They broke barriers, and people called them “bad girls.”
JGT: Billie?
JC: Yeah, I dig Susan Faludi, too. “The undeclared war against American women,” you know?
JGT: I was totally behind the Women’s Conference in Beijing. I’ve got a great affinity for women. Behind every foetus, there’s a woman.