

Devi

Get Free
True Nature

Equal parts earth mother, sex siren, Hendrix-inspired guitarist, and all-out rocker, Debra leads bassist Dan Grennes and drummer John Hummel in 11 wonderfully under-produced tracks that never let up. This Jersey City trio seems to get hotter by the day, and it's not hard to figure why: Debra's vocal asides on a rocking version of "Runaway" and the band's fluid jam at the end of Neil Young's "The Needle And the Damage Done" make the songs personal statements instead of just another set of rote covers. The playing is expert, the charisma undeniable, and the effect is overwhelming. Debra even smiles in her publicity photos while sporting bellbottoms – how 1973 of her. Rock *can* live again, and Devi is just the group to bring it back to life.



– **Bob Smith**

Black 47

Bankers And Gangsters
UFO Music

What happens when you take Morrissey, trade his English accent for an Irish brogue, and layer him over flutes and tin whistles? The answer: Black 47's front man, Larry Kirwan. This Celtic-rock band burst onto the scene 20 years ago, playing a mix of rock, ska, and traditional Irish folk music.

The band's newest release is a socio-political commentary about the hardships that the Irishmen have faced throughout the years, all wrapped up in cheery Irish flutes and catchy beats. In "Izzy's Irish Rose," Kirwan sings about the friction between the Irish and the Jews in the old Lower East Side, while in the background are Irish melodies fighting with Yiddish melodies for dominance. The band shows its humorous side in "Long Lost Tapes Of Hendrix," which tells the true story of a "wily Yank" who tries to steal tapes of Jimi Hendrix; it also showcases a guitar solo reminiscent of (albeit not as good as) Hendrix himself.

Kirwan and company wave their Irish flag with pride, as almost every song on the new record has something to do with their undying love for the Emerald Isle, such as the closing track, "Bas In Eireann," a direct ode to their homeland with the lyrics: "All that I ask for/All that I need/is to live my life/in my own country," with traditional Irish instrumentation. Kirwan stated that the band tried to focus on the rhythm section and arrangements on this record; he should've thought about spending more time on his vocals, though, especially on "The Islands," as his wavering, whiny vocals lessen the impact.

Despite catchy hooks (listen to the energetic flutes on "Celtic Rocker" and try not to tap your toe along with it), Black 47 doesn't sound the least bit different from any other band you'll find playing at your local pub.

– **Heather Harrington**

The Guess Who

So Long, Bannatyne (Reissue)
Rockin' (Reissue)
Iconoclassic

Iconoclassic has quickly emerged as perhaps the finest classic rock reissue label, adding expert remastering, new liner notes including interviews, and other goodies to "long lost" releases that fans have coveted since the dawn of the CD era. These two discs, which add up to the third time they've turned their attention to Canada's The Guess Who ("American Woman," "These Eyes"), show the label's value as an important new imprint.

So Long, Bannatyne, originally released in 1971 at the peak of The Guess Who's popularity, shows the then-five piece (guitarists Kurt Winter and Greg Leskiw had replaced Randy Bachman) striving to stretch musically with varied results. Though the album is entertaining and daring, there are sorry misfires ("Life In The Bloodstream") and pure filler ("Fiddlin'," "One Man Army") to go along with the record's sole Top 20 hit, "Rain Dance," the jazzy "Gray Day," and the ambitiously strange "Goin' A Little Crazy."

Rockin', on the other hand, is a sloppy, gritty, punky classic. Legend has it that the entire album was finished in a rapid five days, and RCA executives showed up to see how the project was going only to be handed a completed album. Vocalist Burton Cummings' sardonic songwriting style was starting to emerge; the guitars scream and distort; and the over-the-top "Don't You Want Me," "Heartbroken Bopper," and Leskiw's utterly wild "Herbert's A Loser" are indescribably cool. This was a band as fine as any other from 1969 through 1975 – and this is the slab that cemented its unique, original greatness.

– **Bob Smith**

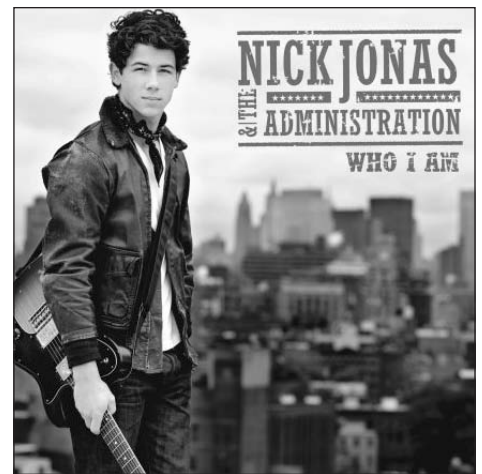
Anna Rose

Anna Rose
White Pony

If Jewel and Bob Dylan had a baby, it would most likely be this talented newcomer. Raised in a musical house (her father is a celebrated pianist), Rose was encouraged to explore her talents at a young age. After picking up the guitar when she was five, Rose knew that music was what she wanted to do. With a voice that's well beyond her years, Rose is here to prove to the world that she's not just another girl with a guitar.

Rose has no problem telling it like it is; the singer-songwriter pours her heart

and soul into every song on her self-titled debut. On the highlight of the album, "In The Morning View," she croons: "My head



is twisted; my heart is broken in two," and you can tell that she has no qualms about revealing her most personal feelings.

Rose and her band don't stick to only one musical style; they go from Ani DiFranco-esque folk in "The Four Corners" to the country-infused "You Got It For Free." Mix her soulful pipes in with the soothing sounds of the guitar, steady drumbeat, and occasional piano, and it all makes for an overall fine release.

– **Heather Harrington**

Nick Jonas & The Administration

Who I Am
Hollywood

One of the cutie pie Jonas Brothers obviously has designs on proving to the world that he's an *actual musician*, and this serious attempt at blending music styles isn't really as bad as one might think – but it suffers from two serious problems: His core audience wants goo-goo anthems, and his reed-thin voice can't come close to carrying off the attempts at R&B and funk.

Who I Am? Destined for the remainder bin, that's who you are.

– **Bob Smith**

