

Debbie's still a drip, but Roxus rocks



"Body Mind Soul"
Debbie Gibson
Atlantic Records

Could it be true? Could ex-teeny-bopper Debbie Gibson possibly have moved beyond saying "I love you" 11 different sappy ways on an album? Not likely.

The pre-release hype for "Body Mind Soul" touted Gibson's new sound as being more mature than her previous works.

Admittedly, the 22-year-old Gibson has gone from wearing girlish skirts and cutesy hair bows to wearing Madonna-esque brassieres under blazers and red lipstick, but that's not enough for anyone to call her sound "mature."

Of the 11 songs on her new release, only one isn't about lost love, true love, love from afar or making love.

If Gibson truly wanted to shake her little-girl image, then she should have penned more than one song that showed she had a conscience.

One thoughtful track, "Tear Down the Walls," is a well-written, upbeat tune about prejudice that says, "Enough harsh blows, enough put-downs/We're all one and the same/



Courtesy of Atlantic Records

You are all my brothers/Though I don't know you by name."

As for the rest of "Body Mind Soul," there's nothing that a listener familiar with Gibson wouldn't expect. It's all reasonably good, but not exceptional, ballads and dance music with clichéd love themes.

"Body Mind Soul" probably will spawn several Top 40 hits, but the disc does not live up to all the record company would like for listeners to believe.

— Shannon Uehling

"Nightstreet"
Roxus
Savage Records

"Heavenly Bodies"
Gene Loves Jezebel
Savage Records

From the first haunting notes of the opening track on "Nightstreet," the debut release of five Australian rockers, Roxus, promises to deliver good rock with classic finesse — a promise kept for all 10 tracks.

Andy Shanahan's keyboards and Dragan Stanic's powerful guitar entice without overshadowing the slightly raspy vocals of frontman and resident gypsy Juno Roxas. Bassist John Nixon and drummer Darren Danielson underscore each track with their steady line of rhythm.

Imagine a toned-down version of the Rolling Stones, but substitute Roxas' contemplative lyrics for Mick Jagger's penned chauvinism and you've got the stuff of which Roxus is made.

Rich with Van Halen influence, Roxus represents a softer shade of metal, varying the format of Bad English, White Lion and Bon Jovi. Throughout the album, musical attitudes range from the rowdy arena brawl of "Bad Boys" to endearing ballads.

The ballad "Where Are You Now?," maintained by Roxas' high

vocals and memorable refrains, earned the group a gold single in Australia.

While clichéd love themes figure prominently throughout the release, the songs are undeniably well-written, attached by a strong thread of emotionalism and superb guitar runs.

Roxus wraps up the set with "Jimi G," a melancholic melody with thought-provoking lyrics.

If you like hard rock with a strong heart beat — heavy, but not too metal-ish — chances are you'll enjoy Roxus.

Once again, Savage Records, with the release of Gene Loves Jezebel's "Heavenly Bodies," exhibits a talent for picking champion bodybuilders of rock.

The sixth album for the British group, "Heavenly Bodies" is a tribute to tight musicianship and superb accompaniment.

The addicting vocals of Jay Aston guide the listener through 11 cohesive songs ranging from romance to mysticism, each track yanking you from reality and hurling you toward a celestial plateau of throbbing refrains.

Aston's aural imagery, backed by the swarthy riffs of guitarist James Stevenson, move mind and body, especially evident in the wild lyrics of "Wild Horse."

"Wild Horse" comes off as a particularly heavy number, further accentuated by the punishing, pounding beat of bassist Peter Rizzo and drummer Robert Adams.



Courtesy of Savage Records

What's nice is Aston's singing doesn't elbow its way to the front, but blends in unobtrusively with the rest of the music. Occasionally, his voice even echoes the philosophical whine of John Lennon.

Overall, "Heavenly Bodies" is a classic style-house reminiscent of Moody Blues and Emerson, Lake and Palmer without the dependency on a synthesizer.

But, as far as Roxus or Gene Loves Jezebel goes, forget the comparisons. Check them out for yourself.

— Jill O'Brien

Newest release from area band succeeds where most bands fail

"Toutensemble"
Hanna's Porch

The four members of Hanna's Porch threw this one together in just a two-day session while in a motel in Iowa.

It seemed unfair, as a result, to expect too much of this 10-track, self-produced debut — unlikely that it would be any more than a poor-quality blur with perhaps a glimpse of talent.

Well, the quality isn't great, but the tape demonstrates the band's real songwriting capabilities and musical ability; ability that is unfortunately equal to what some bands come up with after months of recording in California studios.

Hanna's Porch play energetically. That each fret on the guitar neck is discernible from the next prevents them from being heavy rock, but that is no bad thing. Many of the songs have a kind of jingle-jaggle feel, boosted by the occasional appearance of a harmonica.

Song titles such as "Cecil's Getting Gone" and "Locust (Grandma's on Acid)" add to a '60s Doors-type sound in parts. All that's missing from these short songs are five-minute Hammock-organ breaks.

But that is not to suggest that Hanna's Porch is in any way simply a throw-back band. Elements from a variety of different musical styles and periods are noticeable in their 10 songs, but none is predominant. The result is a style that is their own.

Hanna's Porch hail from Nebraska and Iowa. Members of the band formerly have played with Iowa bands Pithy and Uncertain Tricycle, and the now-defunct Omaha group, Acorns. The four-piece band has been together more than a year now.

The band is based in Omaha, where it has been playing gigs since last April, and they plan to play Lincoln soon.

If the tape is anything to go by, their show should definitely be worth seeing.

The self-titled tape is available at all Homer locations. In addition to the basic cassette, 50 tapes are also available with a book containing lyrics and drawings.

— Matthew Grant



Robin Trimarchi

Buckwheat plays the Zoo

"Buck" of Buckwheat Zydeco works the Zoo crowd Sunday night. An accomplished musician and showman, Buck filled the bar — even at \$8 a head.

Konzert

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Kimball Hall; Hate Head/Fishbox/November Ninth at The Edge; Gorilla Theatre at Howard Street Tavern; Winter Jam Festival (Foghat, Iron Butterfly, Cheap Trick and REO Speedwagon) at the Omaha Civic

Auditorium; The Village People with Marky Mark & the Funky Bunch at the Kansas City Municipal Auditorium.

Sunday — Soprano Jeanine Wagner at O'Donnell Auditorium; John Obetz organ recital at College View Seventh-Day Adventist Church; Malley Keelan and the Lincoln Light Opera at St. Francis Chapel; The Iowa

Beef Experience with Kid Death at Duffy's Tavern; Aelia at Howard Street Tavern; Extreme and Saigon Kick at the Omaha Music Hall.

All dates and performances are subject to change. For ticket information and times, please call the listed establishment.

— Compiled by Jill O'Brien

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