

The latest NY Rock banter:

**Spyder's Web:**

- Avril Lavigne, 'Spring Broke,' 'The Terminal,' 'Chronicles of Riddick'

**NY Rock Confidential:**

- The Shocker, Avril Lavigne

**Street Beat:**

- Pushing Red Buttons, Frank, AnaVana, Apple Bros., Rob Dova, Mike Taranto and the Last Call, Kervin, Helen Slater, Lisala

**Soft Porn Central:**

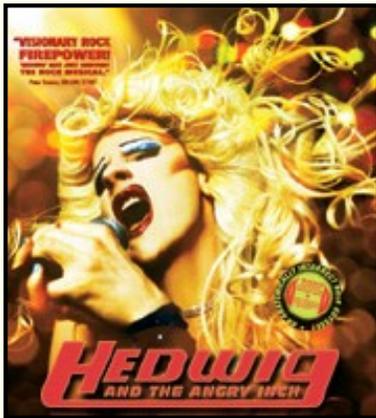
- Paris Hilton

**TRUE! Cartoons**



**[Hedwig and the Angry Inch](#) • [Adema](#) • [Rx Bandits](#)**

**CD Reviews by the NY Rock Staff**



**Hedwig and the Angry Inch, *Original Motion Picture Soundtrack* (WEA/London/Sire)**

"Don't you know me Kansas City? I'm the new Berlin wall!" proudly proclaims writer/director/actor/singer John Cameron Mitchell as Hedwig, the transsexual title character on the *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* soundtrack. The movie, based on the campy cross-dressed Off-Broadway musical, is about an "internationally ignored" glam rocker,

fighting for the recognition he/she deserves for songs that were stolen by a pernicious protégé. Though movie nor soundtrack can compare to the electricity and immediacy of the stage version, surprisingly, the sordid saga translates well from stage to screen to disc. Responsible for each song's glam-on-wry flavor is the talented composer/lyricist Stephen Trask, who also starred in the stage and screen productions.

The disc rolls from ballads to bawdy balls-out blustery rockers such as "Angry Inch," which discloses the punk-rocking history of Hedwig's botched sex-change operation. Celebrating diversity in more ways than one, the eclectic combo of tunes goes from an inspirational sing-a-long, "Wig in a Box," to the country-tinged "Sugar Daddy," which shows Hedwig to be your typical material boy/girl next door, to the chillingly Bowie-esque "Midnight Radio."

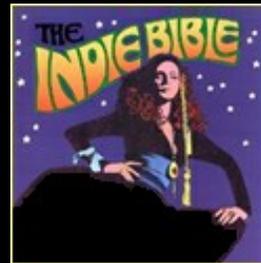
People on Prozac will find pleasure in the plaintive pathos of "Origin of Love," "The Long Gift" and the morose "Hedwig's Lament." While listeners with normal serotonin levels may want to skip directly to the selections that kick more ass. Skillfully scribed songs such as "Tear Me Down" are ironically as solid as the Berlin wall, not to mention steadfastly true to the [Ziggy](#), [Iggy](#), [Lou Reed](#) roots that stirred Hedwig on his journey from Hansel to Gretel in the first place. It's a long strange trip, for sure, but with Hedwig at the helm you can enjoy a rocking ride and cut at least half an hour off your arrival time. – Spyder Darling

[Hedwig and the Angry Inch Movie Review](#)

**Adema, *Adema* (Arista)**

On Adema's official Web site, vocalist Mark Chavez says, "I'm into making

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people feel good about living." He chides other bands that focus on the shitty side of life. "Life ain't that bad," he says.



Am I losing it? After listening to Adema's self-titled debut, I thought the CD should have been titled "Preface to My Suicide." Sure, the music is aggressive and dark, and will incite plenty of moshing at live shows. But, I swear, with the exception of three songs, the stuff on their debut album is a downer. The whole "my life sucks, I'm ending it, nobody understands me, I need you to love me, but I hate myself so much I should die" theme is so daunting. But it'll sell, no doubt, for two reasons. First, Chavez proclaims himself an unwanted outcast and that's something teenagers can latch onto. Second, the band qualifies for plenty of radio play because they sound like Linkin Park, and Linkin Park is always on the radio. Did I mention that Chavez's older half-brother is Jonathan Davis of Korn? Guess emotional baggage is hereditary after all.

Perhaps a peek into some of the tracks will back me up. Take some lyrics from "Giving In": "I look forward to dying tonight/ Drinks spill on myself, life's harder every day/ The stress has/ got me/ I'm giving in." Oh, dear. I was hoping the song "Close Friends" would be an ode to friendship, but it turns out Chavez is angry because his "friends" betrayed him and he's "gone insane" as a result. Bummer. We'll try some lyrics from "Freaking Out": "And everything that my mom said made me mad/ And everything that my dad said made me sad." Jeez! Now I'm depressed. I don't feel good about living at all. I feel like giving Chavez a hug and then hanging myself.

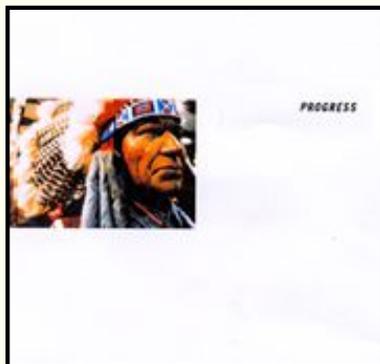
On an unrelated note, isn't it interesting the way political leaders go ape shit over [Marilyn Manson](#) and [Eminem](#), but they completely ignore the obvious cries for help that these new bands are so blatantly blaring? I think it's way more unsettling than any Eminem tune, but that's just my socio-political opinion, and what the hell do I know? – Jeanne Fury

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### Rx Bandits, *Progress* (Drive-Thru Records)

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It'd be interesting to pin down the sociological factors that gave birth to the Orange County, California sound. Heavy on ska and reggae influences, populated with quick chord changes (erroneously called punk, but what are you going to do?), crunchy fat distorted guitars, and vocals usually in the higher part of the register, the place has given birth to bands like Sublime and No Doubt among others. And now, comes the hard-charging Rx Bandits with

their third release, *Progress*.

Musically, they seem at ease plucking from a variety of stylistic trees, infusing ska beats with hardcore overtones, or whatever else fits. As trombone player Rich Balling said, "We go from reggae to punk to hardcore. We're not lost or confused. We're doing it on purpose.... Our focus is all the styles." The question the listener poses is, does it work?

Well, that depends to a large extent on what you'll endure. A typical Rx Bandits' song starts off with light guitars and an upbeat ska rhythm that suddenly gives way to a much louder chorus. Preceded by that is the heavy-metal cliché of running the pick up the strings before the chords crash like surf on a beach, all while horns pump like ambulance sirens. So if you don't mind that then the Rx Bandits are clearly up your alley.

Another curious aspect of the ska/reggae thing is the slight straining of the vocals. Throughout the disc Matt Embree's voice is stretched as if the songs are a note or two above his range. This phenomenon seems to be a required component of the type of music, dating back to the early days of the Police with Sting, or the one-hit wonders the Outfield, who tried to be the like the Police (but fought the law and the law won). Punning aside, though it is a minor quibble, it might bother some. Yet there's no mistaking the energy of the band. They pummel through numbers with all the quaint reserve of a [WWF](#) Pay-Per-View special, and the tight instrumentation by bassist James Salamone and drummer Chris Tsagakis is worth noting too. In a nutshell, if your preference is for a melange of styles including ska, reggae, punk, with a dash of hardcore, or if you just want a taste of that Orange County sound, the Rx Bandits offer an interesting blend for your listening pleasure. – Bill Ribas

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