

Laura Izibor

Live from Crawdaddy, Dublin

ATLANTIC RECORDS



by Lauren Proctor

www.lauralizibor.com

Laura Izibor has soul. At 20 years old the Irish native belts out piano driven tunes like the shining star in a gospel choir, and it's easy to see her naturally fitting alongside the likes of Alicia Keys or Joss Stone.

Izibor's live album is polished and well produced. Her music sounds like it's piped straight from the studio; the excited and participatory crowd never intrudes on the songwriter's sound.

Lyricaly, Izibor focuses primarily on love. In "Don't Stay" she bellows "If you don't want to stay

/ Baby I'll be okay" and in "Can't Be Love" she sings, "I don't believe in love." Tracking an entire span of relationship experiences, Izibor's take on the most popular topic in music never feels dull or overused.

Izibor's perspective on love shifts completely in "Mmm..." "You're my light in the dark / Guiding me home," she sings. The live set is most powerful on this track as the songwriter asks her audience to contribute to a gentle chorus.

This live performance will leave you in awe; but being a rookie in the industry inevitably has

its drawbacks. Izibor's first full length album isn't slated for release until 2008, and this mini-album is gravely short. Clocking in at just over 17 minutes, a lack of material is perhaps the disc's most significant flaw.

Just as Izibor's honest piano and emotive voice engulfs you, the album ends with the audience cheering for more. If *Live From Crawdaddy, Dublin* is a preview of what's to come, her first full length is certainly worth waiting for.



Love In October Pontus, The Devil, and Me

THE MUSIK GROUP



by Todd Siskowski

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Quick: think of the first thing that comes to mind when someone mentions the most popular bands that came out of Sweden. Many people would think of ABBA, and then struggle a bit after that. However, the past couple of years have seen some very positive buzz coming from that country via the successes of The Hives and Peter Dinklage.

A possible future addition to that list just might be Love In October. Their first full-length CD *Pontus, The Devil, and Me* is a promising debut that will appeal to most pop rock fans. Interestingly, LiO

is now based out of Minneapolis, and the group has embraced the American indie rock/emo sound. The opening track, "Circa 1989," showcases this best. It's a great guitar-based song with a catchy chorus reminiscent of Jimmy Eat World.

LiO is not just a band that has stolen a familiar sound, however. Its two leaders, Erik and Kent Widman, have wisely decided to mix things up. Instead of just guitar-heavy tracks, there is a good use of piano and keyboards on some tracks including the beautifully disorganized instru-

mental "An Average Idea" and the rambunctious yet infectious "Petula the Destroyer."

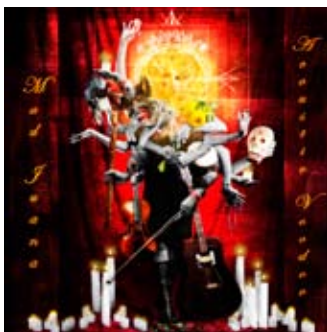
Sure, *Pontus, The Devil, and Me* isn't groundbreaking musically. And the album's title—which is meant to be a reflection on people's nature—is a bit overbearing. But any band that can record a good song with lyrics entirely in Swedish (the quiet "Vi Gar till Stranden") and get away with it deserves praise.



Mad Juana

Acoustic Voodoo

AZRA RECORDS



by Eric W. Saege

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Well here's just what the doctor ordered: some Borat! Oh, wait—no it isn't.

Decorum would suggest that we're supposed to be enthralled and overwhelmed that a weird, unlistenable band has risen from a frivolous collab between a New York Dolls guy and a chick who wants to be Patti Smith so bad her ovaries hurt, but wait, there's less: it's not an original New York Dolls guy. Sami Yaffa actually came up with Hanoi Rocks and nowadays makes a living messily touring with whatever's left of the Dolls.

From what I gleaned through a modicum of research, the band's lady singer, Karmen Guy, was some sort of fringe player in the early glam scene. This spells cred, but Jesus, is glam even a passing thought these days?

So you have here a six-piece comprised of guitar, etc. plus accordion, sax, trumpet, congas and violin. If these guys were Canadian you'd bet anything that this was a spin-off operation from Broken Social Scene and therefore there was some need for wine-snob hipsters to buy it. But long story short, they aren't and there isn't, unless you've got

a serious jones for quasi-world music that's not quite zydeco, not quite Borat, not quite spaghetti-bolero and not quite Patti Smith.

"Venus in Furs," one of the more intelligible titles, is compelling in its own way, pressure cooker guitar strumming and wounded rock chick Jarboe half-sung babble eventually collapsing in a pileup of screamy sax and other unpleasanties. Stuff like that is useful for your basic college radio DJ, at least to help weed out the local serial killer by monitoring any strangely positive responses on the request line.

