

# ABBY TRAVIS

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You remember curling up in your room with a real album by your fave rock & roll band -- their new one -- grokking the lavish cover art and savoring the lyrics and liner notes and in the process finding yourself utterly... transformed! Those bands really took you somewhere, they colored your world. And that album was an Event.

Singer/songwriter/multi-instrumentalist Abby Travis misses the feeling, too, and that's what her new solo set *IV* is all about. "I wanted to make a album that wasn't just a collection of songs but was a cohesive whole," she says. "On my first three records there was always one or two songs that had a nod to the glitter rock that I love, and I always felt that that kind of music was a guilty pleasure. So this time I said I'm just gonna make my Glam Record!"

Travis' self-produced *IV* comes through with a slew of tunes that pop, and when she references pop she's talking XTC and Wings, anthemic songs you can actually sing along and pump a fist to. A veritable pack of chart-toppers from a parallel universe (a far more musical one), the album is a tasty tribute to the art of songwriting and arranging. "Lulu" ("You make them cheer / the stratosphere's all clear / you drive them crazy / you're everybody's glow and get 'em girl") hails the DJ as high priestess with Queenlike twin-guitar leads and head-turning chords; mid-tempo rockers like "Rosetta" or the funky "One Hit Wonder" fondly recall the

photo by Austin Young

glories of '70s keyboard rock; headphones-ready stereo mixing, orchestrally charted synths and multiple vocal overdubs grace "Mr. Here Right Now" and the sultry "Don't Walk Away" ("There's been some trouble..."). The Mellotron-laced "I Don't Know What It's Like" (Travis' response to the BeeGees' "To Love Somebody") breaks into anguished ax thrash then counterpointing keyboards, rock-classical style. Travis brings it all back home with the Prince-inspired "Lightning Squared," a '50s rockabilly-er choicely spiked with ? and the Mysterians organ. The Mythology of Rock looms large, and that extends to the album's packaging, which will include a limited-edition vinyl picture disc with photography by acclaimed fine artist Rocky Schenck.

First coming into the public eye as the 16-year-old bass player in the garagey Lovedolls, featured in the renowned *Desperate Teenage Lovedolls* and its sequel, *Lovedolls Superstar*, L.A.-born-and-raised Abby Travis went on to become a much-favored session player/singer with Elastica and Beck at Lollapalooza '95, then with an eclectic array including Exene Cervenka, Michael Penn, KMFDM, the Bangles, Butthole Surfer Gibby Haynes, Dee Dee Ramone, Vanessa Paradis and Spinal Tap; recent gigs include bass playing with The Eagles of Death Metal and Masters of Reality. She has appeared in several indie films, including *Shadow Hours*, *Weathermen '69* and *The Book of Manson*, and makes frequent appearances in theater roles; her musical catalogue was adapted for the 2009 drag queen musical *Little Black Veil* in Los Angeles.

Mainly, though, Abby Travis makes great records (including the critically hailed 2001 *Cutthroat Standards & Black Pop* and '06's *Glittermouth*) that combine her fearsome vocal and bass chops in heavy-rocking and artfully crafted pop scenarios, with an affection for Weillish cabaret and a decidedly glittery, glam-rocky joy.

"I liked that the old-tyme rock stars were really separate from the audience, sort of demi-gods or deities," she says with laugh. Now listen to *IV* and meet Abby Travis, your brand new Rock & Roll Queen.