

## People &amp; Places

## Music

## Grantis explores fusion

## Rose's 'No Words' delicate, beautiful

By Ragan Clark

Lucy Rose, "No Words Left" (Arts & Crafts)  
"Conversation don't come easy," Lucy Rose softly sings on the opening track of her new album. "But I've got a lot to say."

Guitar picking fills the space of the track "Conversation," joined by subtle strings as Rose grapples with feelings toward a lover she longs for despite misgivings. "No one makes me high like you do... no one lets me down like you do."

It's the perfect start to the English-based folk artist's gentle, yet salient album called "No Words Left." Masterfully mixed, the album's primary aesthetic feels stripped down – with an emphasis on piano and acoustic guitar parts alongside Rose's Joni Mitchell and Laura Marling reminiscent vocals – but with the added color of brass and strings elevating the composition.

The album is also carefully paced. The instrumental track "Just a Moment" begins like a lullaby, the guitar softly strumming in. With peaceful interludes, like "Just a Moment" and the appropriately named "No Words Left (Pt. 1)," the album never forces itself along. Rather, it flows gently and patiently.

Though Rose remains delicate throughout, she strikes different tones on each song. In "Solo(w)" her pain is palpable as soft piano crescendos and she sings out, hypnotically and repetitively, "Cause something's missing/When I am solo, so low, solo, so low." "What Does It Take" is pleading, while "Treat Me Like a Woman" shows her resolve as she confronts the man who "fires" words at her: "And you treat me like a fool/Or do you treat me like a woman."

"No Words Left" is melancholy in a way that feels relatable and raw. Rose knows she's written a collection of blue songs and instead of fighting the inclination, she embraces it. In her closing track, she is good natured as she coos, "Song after song/All about me and my misery. And I'm still blue/so blue."

Blue is a color she wears well.

Donna Grantis, "Diamonds & Dynamite" (eOne)  
Like with Miles Davis or David Bowie, having played with Prince is an entry in a musician's resume that's worth a thousand recommendations. Canadian guitarist Donna Grantis spent four years in various capacities with the late artist who once changed his name to an unpronounceable glyph. Among other credits, Grantis wrote the title tune for "PlectrumElectrum," Prince's 2014 album with the group 3rdEye-Girl, which she was also part of.

For this eight-track instrumental collection, she has teamed up with a trio of Minneapolis aces – drummer JT Bates, bassist Cody McKinney and keyboard player Bryan Nichols – as well as New York-based, Minneapolis-born tabla virtuoso Suphala.

"Mr Majestic" is a mellow opener, with Grantis varying her guitar's volume to hover over a lush base provided by electric piano and Suphala's delicately high-pitched percussion. It's followed by the title track – a wide-ranging composition darting across the spectrum of funky, jazz-rock fusion – which Grantis says was, as the rest of the album, greatly influenced by her experiences with The Purple One.

Pearl Jam guitarist Mike McCready adds fiery string work to "Violetta" and "Trashformer," two of the heaviest tracks on the record.

Grantis saves one of the best and most dynamic tunes for last. "Elsa" closes the album with plenty of all-around movement, lively interplay between Suphala and Bates, a fuzzy keyboard solo and some nasty guitar tones.

Recorded live-to-tape in just two days, a pace similar to that of many great jazz albums, "Diamonds & Dynamite" is an experimentally adventurous set, which contains ample evidence why Prince held Grantis in such high regard.

Renee Wahl and the Sworn Secrets, "Cut to the Bone" (Double R Records)

The first sound of Renee Wahl's voice on her fine new album is enough to set off the comparisons to Rosanne Cash.

The opener is "To the Bone," and the song's first line even includes a black Cadillac, and of course was in the title of one of Cash's best albums. Wahl's "Cut to the Bone" has more in common with Cash's fiery, passionate earlier work, and yet it sets itself apart with an intensity all its own.

For all that, though, her voice has the same kind of let-me-tell-you-something urgency that set Cash apart. There's the vivid writing, too, when she describes "the smell of chicken and gasoline" on "Cold Day in Memphis."

But Wahl, an Air Force veteran and physicist who is also a teacher, demonstrates the capacity to dig deep. There's the edge of anger mixed with warmth and regret, as on the title cut and "From Here to There," a song set on a long drive across Texas as she daydreams about a man she knew in Ireland.

"Me Before You" is a cleverly structured ballad with an evocative melody. "In the Field" describes lying in a field where a soldier has died, set against an understated but persistent military drum cadence.

Despite the similarities to Cash, this is an ambitious, fresh contribution to the Americana canon. The songs are well thought out and finely crafted, and several of them seem likely to endure.

Todd Snider, "Cash Cabin Sessions, Vol. 3" (Aimless/Thirty Tigers)

The microphone pops when Todd Snider delivers an especially emphatic lyric, and his chair creaks under the weight of his performance. The rustic charm of the setting – Johnny Cash's recording studio in Hendersonville, Tennessee – is audible throughout an album that ranks with Snider's best work.

On "Cash Cabin Sessions, Vol. 3," Snider is clearly inspired by his historic surroundings, and he came armed with marvelous material to enhance the intimate front-porch feel. (The album title is a bit confusing, because there was no Vol. 1 or 2, and the CD jacket sports a photo of Snider holding a single finger aloft.)

The 34-minute set features mostly a one-man band, with occasional backing vocals from Jason Isbell and Amanda Shires. Snider accompanies himself with Cash's Martin guitar, a 12-string guitar, mandolin, harmonica and a four-string banjo that's perfect on "The Blues on Banjo" even though he can barely play it. (AP)



Rose



This July 14, 2018 file photo shows Jenny Lewis performing at the Forecastle Music Festival in Louisville, Ky. Lewis' latest album 'On the Line' will be released on Friday. (AP)



This cover image released by eOne shows 'Diamonds & Dynamite,' a release by Donna Grantis. (AP)



Kelly



Smollett

## Variety

**DUBAI, United Arab Emirates:** Dubai found itself entangled in the sex abuse case against American R&B singer **R. Kelly** on Thursday after the performer asked a US judge to allow him to come to the Arabian Peninsula sheikhdom to perform shows and "meet with the royal family."

Officials in Dubai and the wider United Arab Emirates did not immediately respond to requests for comment from The Associated Press regarding the singer's request, which an Illinois judge could consider at a court hearing on Friday.

However, Kelly's request highlighted the close political and security ties between the US and the UAE, a federation of seven sheikhdoms. It also comes as celebrities and even world leaders on the run have chosen Dubai as a safe haven.

Kelly was charged on Feb 22 with 10 counts of aggravated sexual abuse for allegedly assaulting three underage girls and one adult woman, coming after the release of a documentary "Surviving R. Kelly." He has denied ever abusing anyone.

In a court filing Wednesday, Kelly's lawyer **Steven A. Greenberg** said the singer needed to raise money as "he has struggled of late to pay his child support and other child related expenses."

"Before he was arrested Mr Kelly had signed a contract to perform between 3-5 shows in Dubai, UAE, in April 2019," the court filing read. "He requests permission to travel to Dubai for the shows. While there he is supposed to meet with the royal family."

The filing does not elaborate on where Kelly is supposed to perform. There was no immediately publicized event for which Kelly was known to be a performer, nor did anyone in the entertainment industry hear about one. (AP)

**SEOUL, South Korea:** South Korean police on Thursday arrested K-pop singer **Jung Joon-young** over allegations that he illegally shared explicit videos of women taken without their knowledge or consent.

The Seoul Central District Court issued an arrest warrant for Jung hours after he appeared at a hearing and apologized to the victims and to "everyone who has showed affection for me." He was later escorted to a police station in downtown Seoul in handcuffs.

People involved in scandals in South Korea often issue public apologies even as they maintain their innocence.

Jung was first questioned by police last week about allegations that he secretly filmed his sexual encounters and shared them in private group chats with his friends.

Police are also investigating another K-pop star, **Seungri**, who soared to international stardom as a member of the group Big Bang, over suspicions that he attempted to arrange unlawful sexual services for his business investors.

## Music

## 'It's more of a rebound record'

## Rough journey to new music: Lewis

By David Baude

Life hasn't been easy for singer Jenny Lewis since the sunnier days when she performed in support of a 2014 album while wearing a rainbow-hued pantsuit and carrying a guitar with similar bright colors.

Her mother died, and a 12-year relationship ended, sending Lewis on a cross-country journey in search of herself. Finally, with a new album finished and awaiting a Friday release, she's had to deal with the uncomfortable story of occasional collaborator Ryan Adams' alleged mistreatment of women.

Spending much of the upcoming year on tour may seem like a relief.

The up-tempo songs "Red Bull & Hennessy" and "Heads Gonna Roll" from her "On the Line" album, with Lewis' unerring sense of tunefulness, will get the initial attention. But the work's emotional core emerges in quieter, more introspective material like "Dogwood," "Rabbit Hole" and "Taffy." Those are the songs that will stick.

Much of the material was written in stolen moments on borrowed pianos, in friends' apartments and hotel lobbies, where she had to keep quiet to avoid making a disturbance.

"I don't think of this record as being a breakup record," she said. "It's more of a rebound record. It's kind of the space in between."

The southern California native relied on a network of friends during her post-breakup travels, staying in musician St Vincent's New York apartment, for example. She and two friends formed a band and wrote songs in a Manhattan storefront, where pedestrians mistook them for an art installation. She spent time in Nashville and Minnesota.

Even when she returned to California, Lewis used Airbnb to explore different parts of Los Angeles.

"I ran away," the 43-year-old said. "I really just got back here a couple of months ago. It was a three-year adventure." How much of an adventure? It's hard not to notice all the references to alcohol and other substances sprinkled

throughout the album's lyrics. There's Hennessy, of course. Grenadine. Bourbon. Beaujolais. Red wine (unspecific). Amphetamines. Paxil. A bong. Part of it is a good writer's attention to detail, but still...

"It's relevant," she said.

She brings a bottle to a restaurant in the heart of Hollywood where she talked about her music. Not to drink: it's a gift for a friend, singer Nikki Lane, who's performing later that night nearby. A former child actress who turned to music and was a member of the group Rilo Kiley before going solo, Lewis has a wide circle of friends and admirers in the business.

None of that could have prepared her for the surreal experience she had at Los Angeles' Capitol studio while making "On the Line," however.

## Intimidating

Lewis played on the piano that Carole King used to make "Tapestry", which is intimidating enough. Her band included former Tom Petty keyboard player Benmont Tench, record executive and bassist Don Was and the drum duo of Ringo Starr and Jim Keltner.

"That's one of my favorite moments in my whole life," she said. "Standing in the control room and watching Ringo and Jim play together, I was mesmerized. Of course I am thrilled, honored. Shocked, really. I kept thinking, 'Is someone doing somebody a favor here?'"

She believes it was Was who called in Starr. "I don't know exactly," she said. "He was just there with his drums."

Beck and Adams were two other big names who helped out. Adams, who produced Lewis' 2014 album "Voyager", produced some of the new music, too.

The association with Adams became noteworthy when the New York Times reported that he allegedly pursued younger female artists for sex and sometimes became verbally and emotionally abusive when turned down. Adams has denied the accusations.

Lewis was not included in the

Times' story, and her interview with The Associated Press took place before the story was published. She declined a follow-up request to talk about it, and tweeted a statement: "I am deeply troubled by Ryan Adams' alleged behavior. Although he and I had a working professional relationship, I stand in solidarity with the women who have come forward." Lewis subsequently held an online album-release party that doubled as a benefit for the Los Angeles Women's Center, and it raised more than \$10,000.

For Adams, the fallout has been swift: a canceled concert tour, an album release put on hold. Could the controversy hurt Lewis by association?

Jason Lipshutz, senior director of music for Billboard magazine, said it might have been an issue if Lewis had publicly defended him or been part of the Times' story. The women's center benefit was a smart strategic move, he said.

"I do think that it is something that people are going to be able to separate from her music," Lipshutz said.

## Also:

**CHICAGO:** Ariana Grande, Childish Gambino, Twenty One Pilots and The Strokes will headline this summer's Lollapalooza music festival in Chicago.

Festival organizers announced the lineup for the four-day event on Wednesday, saying more than 170 acts will play on eight stages in Grant Park along Lake Michigan. Other performers include Tame Impala, Flume, J Balvin, The Chainsmokers, Janelle Monae, Lil Wayne and recent Album of the Year Grammy winner Kacey Musgraves.

The festival runs Aug 1-4. Founder Perry Farrell launched Lollapalooza as a touring festival in 1991. It's been held in Chicago since 2005 and attracts more than 100,000 people a day.

The Jane's Addiction lead singer will play with Perry Farrell's Kind Heaven Orchestra. There also will be performances by **Slash**, **Shaquille O'Neal** and **Tenacious D**.

The Seoul Metropolitan Police Agency requested an arrest warrant for Jung on Monday through state prosecutors. The scandal has caused an uproar in South Korea, where women are increasingly speaking out against what they describe as a culture of misogyny with the rampant spread of intimate photos and videos taken

by hidden cameras, which they say have women living in constant anxiety and distress. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: "Empire" co-creator and executive producer **Lee Daniels** says the weeks since cast member **Jussie Smollett** was arrested and charged with fabricating a

racist and homophobic attack have been "a freakin' rollercoaster."

In an Instagram video that doesn't refer to Smollett by name, Daniels says since "the incident" he and his cast have "experienced pain and anger and sadness and frustration and really don't know how to deal with it."

Daniels had been among the first to voice his support for Smollett after he made the report in January.

Daniels says the situation nearly made him forget to tell audiences that the Fox drama returns to the air Wednesday. Daniels and other producers removed Smollett's character from the season's final episodes after his arrest in Chicago. Smollett has pleaded not guilty. (RTRS)

**LOS ANGELES:** "Hamilton" star **Leslie Odom Jr** has joined "The Many Saints of Newark", the prequel movie to the television series "The Sopranos".

Odom Jr will play an unspecified role in the movie, which will open on Sept 25, 2020.

**Alan Taylor** is directing the movie for New Line. The previously announced cast includes **Cory Stoll**, **Billy Magnussen**, **Jon Bernthal**, **Alessandro Nivola**, **Ray Liotta**, **John Magaro**, **Vera Farmiga** and **Michael Gandolfini** as the young **Tony Soprano**. The film will be set during the Newark riots in July 1967, when the acrimony between African-Americans and Italian-Americans became lethal as 26 people died and hundreds were injured in New Jersey's largest city. (RTRS)



Lupita Nyong'o (from left), Evan Alex, Shahadi Wright Joseph and Winston Duke attend the premiere of 'Us' at the Museum of Modern Art on March 19 in New York. (AP)