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[Education](#)

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[Obituaries](#)

[Columns](#)

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[Ducks](#)

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VENDETTA VALENTINE: The O.C. band recalls the sounds of the late '70s and early '80s on its new album, "There's Nothing Safe."

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

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Thursday, March 27, 2008

Orange Pop: Local acts release a spring bounty of new albums

Check out reviews of the latest from Vendetta Valentine, NEVERWONDER and more.

By ROBERT KINSLER

Special to the Register

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Vendetta Valentine, "There's Nothing Safe" (Jungle Music) – Over the past few years, there have been a number of great Orange County artists mining the electronica-anchored sounds of the late '70s and early '80s for new life.

On its 13-song debut released on March 4, Santa Ana-based Vendetta Valentine joins the celebrated likes of Vale, the Dear & Departed and Her Voice Remains as strong proponents of the regional retro-fueled movement.

From the decidedly upbeat synth pop of "Let It Burn" and "Dissidents" to the haunting low-fi rocker "Golden" and gorgeous "Brave New World," "There's Nothing Safe" is great from start to finish.

The trio features the strong talents of Daniel Powell (lead guitar, bass, programming), Anna Judd (keyboards) and Thomas Monroe (vocals, rhythm guitar).

Information: www.myspace.com/vendettavalentine

You might like if you enjoy: New Order, early Cure, the Lucy Show.

Bastard Winos "Empty Bottles ..." (independent) – If members of AC/DC and Lynyrd Skynyrd joined forces with blues greats Howlin' Wolf or Muddy Waters, the sonic outcome might well sound like the new debut from Bastard Winos.

Fronted by singer Chile Thomas, the rip-roaring outfit also includes guitarist-singer Harlis Sweetwater, bassist Chris Garcia and drummer Greg Garcia.

Echoes of everyone from Little Richard ("100 Proof Juice") to the Georgia Satellites ("Bottle of Ink") abound on this set of raucous rock 'n' roll.

Is this band's boisterous approach the real deal? You bet.

Bastard Winos and Barrelhouse will perform at Fitzgerald's Pub, 19171 Magnolia St., Huntington Beach, at 9 p.m. on March 29.

Information: www.myspace.com/bastardwinos

You might like if you enjoy: AC/DC, early Led Zeppelin, the Georgia Satellites.

Andrea Emmes "I'm On My Way"(Aselah Productions) – Armed with songs centered on her Christian faith, Buena Park-based Andrea Emmes has crafted a heartfelt debut.

The 11-song "I'm On My Way" has enough room for '80s styled rock ("Lost"), R&B-tinged ballads ("Father"), folk ("Don't Cry") and authentic blues ("Thank You"). Emmes has a wealth of experience in the entertainment industry (including stints singing at Disneyworld and as a production assistant on the TV show "Making the Band: O-Town"), but has found a decidedly more personal niche with "I'm On My Way" thanks to uplifting songs that showcase her effective vocals.

Information:www.myspace.com/andreaemmes.com

You might like if you enjoy:Amy Grant, Natalie Grant.

NEVERWONDER "(3-song demo)"(independent) – Even when singers get voted off "American Idol," the widespread exposure can often help them launch a successful career in music.

Such should be the case with vocalist Megan Bobo, who finished in the top 24 during Season 5 of the popular show and has now been recruited as the singer of the band NEVERWONDER.

The group (whose members come from Los Angeles and Orange counties) has just released a three-song sampler from a forthcoming sophomore effort and the results are solid. The band's ability to deliver accessible pop is displayed courtesy of "Is This the End," while NEVERWONDER's full-force rock instincts come via "Movin' On" and "Lucky."

Information:www.neverwonder.com or www.myspace.com/neverwonder.

You might like if you enjoy:Evanescence, Taming Ingrid.

ORANGE SLICES

What does Orange County's RX Bandits have in common with classic rockers such as Neil Young, John Lennon, Roger Waters and Bruce Springsteen?

Tracks by all those artists are featured on "Body of War: Songs That Inspired an Iraq War Veteran," issued by Sire Records on March 18.

Inclusion of the RX Bandits' reggae-styled rocker "Overcome (The Recapitulation)" will put a well-deserved renewed spotlight on the band's dazzling 2003 effort "The Resignation" (the album where the song first appeared).

"Body of War" also features songs from Eddie Vedder, Bad Religion, Ben Harper, Pearl Jam and Bright Eyes.

Information:www.bodyofwarmusic.com

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