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Kids

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Thaddeus Rex

We Wanna Rock (Self-released, thaddeusrex.com)



It's pretty rare these days to find a kids' performer as imaginative and original as Thaddeus Rex, and rarer still, a musician who weaves educational content into his tunes in a hip way. For his second album, the singer-guitarist (T-Rex for short) widens and expands upon his 2004 debut, *Martian Television Invasion Lesson Plans* (the singer left the PBS show *The Friday Zone* in 2003 to focus on performing). His songs are as inventive melodically as they are lyrically—topics range from anxiety over moving to a new city ("I Don't Want to Go") to a surrealist riff on the library ("Kazooey Decimal") to, well, "You Can Tell a Boy by the Smell" and "I Stepped in Dog Doo." The use of mild gross-out humor in a handful of songs shows what a canny writer he is; it also acts as a clever ploy to keep kids interested during the more serious tracks. Plus, his songs expand well past the CD player—the T-Rex website has an impressive amount of material based around his tunes, as well as tips for kids interested in songwriting.

Thaddeus sings in a slightly quavering voice which, at times, is

reminiscent of David Bowie—flashes of Monty Python, Dr. Seuss and Shel Silverstein also flit in throughout the album. And a lovely, if incongruous, cover of John Denver's "Take Me Home, Country Roads" serves to make the CD all the more unusual. But make no mistake: While Thaddeus Rex's quirky originality and loopy energy may take some getting used to, it's guaranteed to keep kids from wishing he were extinct.—JA

Issue

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