

## Album reviews

### Jesse Malin

★★★★★

**Glitter in the Gutter** (Adeline/East West)



Three decades into his career, it seems unlikely NYC underground vet Jesse Malin (Heart Attack, D

Generation) will ever quit playing music. But if he does, he'd make a stellar music-geek-cum-radio-DJ, à la Rollins or Little Steven. Malin's credentials are unimpeachable: His social circle includes Ryan Adams and Bruce Springsteen, he casually namechecks pop-culture touchstones (Coney Island rides, Lenny Bruce), and he reveres cool music ranging from '60s girl groups and Motown to the Ramones and the Replacements.

For now, Malin seems content funneling all these assets into his own work. *Glitter in the Gutter* is enormously airwave-friendly, rife with succinct, impeccably well-formed originals. The big melodic hooks of

"Black Haired Girl" and "Prisoners of Paradise" recall proven oldies by Van Morrison and (honest) A Flock of Seagulls, respectively, and the quota of cars-and-girls lyrics would make the Boss feel right at home. In fact, he does, swapping verses with Malin on the ballad "Broken Radio."

What's missing is any hint of recklessness. From its impressive guest list (Adams, Springsteen, Jakob Dylan, various Foo Fighters and Queens of the Stone Age) and annoyingly memorable rhymes such as "misunderstood/Like Robin Hood," right down to an acoustic cover of "Bastards of Young," the 13-song set feels positively calculated by the two-thirds mark. Not insincere or vacuous—just professional to a fault. But if Clear Channel's programming department is listening, that precision could pay off nicely. One way or another, Malin belongs on the radio.  
—Kurt B. Reighley

*Jesse Malin plays Bowery Ballroom Mon 19.*