



ROD STEWART ISN'T KNOWN AS ONE of rock's deep thinkers. But that could change with *Time* (Capitol, \$11), a philosophic album that shows there's more to him than a great raspy voice and a rooster-comb bouffant.

Having survived thyroid cancer, two divorces and a litany of dubious wardrobe choices, the 68-year-old singer first had to overcome writer's block to record his first album of original music in almost 20 years.

"I didn't have any confidence in my songwriting," Stewart says of the decade he spent recording pop standards. "I grew a bit lazy and just gave up."

But he recaptured his spark while writing his 2012 book, *Rod: The Autobiography*, and began penning thoughtful songs about his family. "Can't Stop Me Now" pays tribute to his late father, who encouraged him early on — even as music execs rejected him for his odd hair and sizable schnoz. The partly fictional "Brighton Beach" recalls the ill-fated teen romance that produced Stewart's first child. "It's Over" deals with his 2006 split from second wife Rachel Hunter.

Some of *Time's* best songs find Stewart imparting wisdom to his children. He wrote "Live the Life" for Liam Stewart,

his 18-year-old son with Hunter and star of the Spokane Chiefs junior ice-hockey team. "Pure Love" speaks to all eight of his kids, whose ages range from 2 to 49.

"Hopefully it'll bring a tear to their eyes, because it's Dad's little instruction on life," he says. "Like most dads, I've become better as the years have gone on. But I still struggle with when to spoil a child and when to deprive them."

Stewart wrote several tributes to his third and current wife, Penny Lancaster, the 42-year-old model and photographer who shot the CD's cover. He describes one ode to Lancaster, "Sexual Religion," as "maybe the 2013 version of 'Da Ya Think I'm Sexy?'"

That's a bold comparison, as "Sexy" was both a career high and low for Stewart. It topped the charts in 1979 but infuriated fans of his soulful early work, including *Rolling Stone* critic Greil Marcus, who famously wrote, "Rarely has anyone betrayed his talent so completely."

"It was a good kick in the [rump] for me," Stewart says of the barbs. "But I wouldn't change anything in my life. It hasn't been a bed of roses. But as I reflect on it, it's been a wonderful life." —THOR CHRISTENSEN

{ MUSIC }

## Feeling the Love

**JOHNNY RZEZNIK's** cup runneth over. As if celebrating the release of the Goo Goo Dolls' new album, *Magnetic* (Warner Bros., \$10), and the launch of the band's tour with Matchbox 20 weren't enough, the lead singer is set to wed longtime girlfriend Melina Gallo next month. "I feel like I'm in a much more positive place and much more comfortable place in my life than when I was a younger-ish man," he says. "I feel really grateful for everything I've been given."

With romance in the air and a healthy repertoire of love songs to his credit ("Iris," anyone?), we asked the 47-year-old frontman to share his favorite odes to amour.



FROM LEFT: Mike Malinin, Rzeznik and Robby Takac

### "MARTHA" by Tom Waits

"I love that song. He's trying to reconnect with an old, lost love, and it's beautiful."

### "MAYBE I'M AMAZED" by Paul McCartney

"There are some really classic lines in there. It's about a very solid, pragmatic part of love."

### "SOUVENIR" by Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark

"There's something about that song that melts into me; there's something very haunting about it."

### "YOU AND ME" by Lifehouse

"It's one of those songs that's just so completely undeniable. It's just the honesty and purity of it that really amazes me."

### "FIX YOU" by Coldplay

"It just has this very longing quality about it — like there's an incredible amount of distance between two people sitting in the same room, and [he's] trying to fill that space."

—KRISTY ALPERT