

# LONG SHOT NOVENA

UK: ROUGH TRADE, US: SANCTUARY (2002)

## TIME

Like Lucinda Williams but with softer edges, Rose fuses country, honky-tonk and smouldering pop into something all her own. She has one of those rough, been-through-a-lot kinds of voices, but she's careful not to overplay it. On *Wheels Going By*, an ode to summer driving and radio listening, and the jokey lover's plea *See How I Need You*, she positively purrs. When the brooding comes on *Good Man*, Rose nails it, singing something close to the perfect song as she asks her lover to "jump that hedgerow/I'll jump this bedroom window/Together we'll go and just ride, ride, ride." Only a fool wouldn't take her up on the offer.

## THE OBSERVER

A pair of US songwriters both with a winning mix of intelligence, romance and rootsy music. There's a Sheryl Crow-style strut to the debut of London-based Rose, whose clear, bold voice worked equally well on acoustic or rockier moments . . .

A novena is a nine-day prayer of intercession - Eileen Rose calls it a prayer for lost causes, a category under which she apparently includes herself. Rose may feel like a loser, but this album and last year's predecessor, *Shine Like It Does*, argue otherwise. *Shine* - written in the wake of a broken marriage - left off, mixing regret and doubt with determination and optimism, and expanding the country influence to a wider range of styles. The title track, for example, is a moody, Velvets-style drone, 'Snake' is a Bo Diddley-style blast of R&B, and 'White Doves Awake' has the intensity and poeticism of Patti Smith. It's Rose's impassioned vocals that hold the attention, though. She has a voice that can shift from a Polly Harvey-style growl to angelic upper registers in mid lyric. There are plenty of lyrical surprises along the way. 'Tom Waits Crooning' is only tangentially about the old growler; beginning with an image of an angel fallen in the brine, with the bitter taste of salt in his mouth, it becomes a song about lost opportunity, feeling inadequate and glimpsing redemption. Like almost everything else here, it's a lovely, sweeping piece of work - a noble, not a lost cause.

## MOJO

SHE KEEPS you guessing, this Eileen. One moment she could be Chrissie Hynde staring you out in black leather, but elsewhere, amid the downhome rockabilly of *Wheels Going By*, *Snake* and *Big Dog*, you're more inclined to peg her into the Gillian Welch school of roots revival. *Shine Like It Does* was a promising album, but this is a whole lot more formidable. Rose's singing seems to have acquired a whole new range of colours (her bluesy, Dylanesque take on *Two in One* is exceptional), while her songs offer extra depths of emotion and mystery, perfectly illustrated by the slightly unnerving spiritual exploration of the title track. For *Marlene* tells the true story of a murdered friend and the agony endured by her mother with almost tangible pain; yet she has you smiling broadly at her worshipping eulogy to one of her all-time heroes on *Tom Waits Crooning*. And it's lifted almost imperceptibly by the studio approach. Subtle but lethal electric guitars slicing through the sound, offbeat arrangements keeping you alert and a production of such telling sparseness it could be Daniel Lanois tinkering with Emmylou's *Wrecking Ball*. This one won't lie down in a hurry.

## Q MAGAZINE

Second release from UK-based Irish-Italian American songstress The bottom may have somewhat fallen out of the anguished female singer-songwriter market, but Massachusetts-born Eileen Rose has more going for her than most; not least a set of pipes that can turn from lullaby-soft to throaty roar in a single breath. Made on a shoestring with decoration kept to a minimum, *Long Shot Novena* is hardly built to cause Jewel and Alanis sleepless nights. Her melodic and lyrical strengths are again evident, though, as she roams freely from the rolling country-rock of *Wheels Go Round*, through a Dylan-styled *Two In One*, to the beguiling title track with its Velvet Underground-hued undertow. Well worth savouring.

# EILEEN ROSE

PRESS ARCHIVE



*A WINNING MIX OF INTELLIGENCE,  
ROMANCE AND ROOTSY MUSIC.*

THE OBSERVER

*WELL WORTH SAVOURING.*

TIME OUT

# LONG SHOT NOVENA

UK: ROUGH TRADE, US: SANCTUARY (2002)

## UNCUT

If last year's debut, *Shine Like It Does* announced the UK based Irish-Italian (that's Eileen Rose Giadone) American singer-songwriter as a welcome promising new addition to the alt-country influenced ranks, her sophomore release has seen her musical progress take something of a quantum leap. Nothing on her debut prepares you for the opening title track, a doomy drone that recalls the Velvets' *Black Angel's Death Song* with Rose sounding like Nico at her most strung out. And if you think that's dark, *For Marlene* is a starkly played, chilling but compassion infused hymn to the mother of her late best friend attempting to come to terms with her daughter's unsolved murder. Thankfully, the album doesn't harp on such gloomy moods; even the melancholic bluesy *White Dove's Awake* finds a beam of hope in realising you can never go back. She rings the stylistic changes. The falsetto *See How I Need You* is a floating pop tune about love as the best medicine, *Good Man* delivers a lazy drifting countrified love song about best intentions (with harmonica), while *Two In One* offers up Dylanesque slouching blues with a glowering guitar as she talk-sings through a tale of regrets. And if these are generally slow, measured unfurlings, there's up-tempo notes too as *Wheels Going By* rides the boxcars on a Southern twang and *Snake* does the rockabilly hand jive in a Sun blessed duet with guitarist Kris Dollimore with Glen Matlock on bass. It's not easy to narrow it down to favourites with such consistently quality choices, but breaking through neck and neck at the finishing post ribbon has to be the haunting, easy slow dancing *Tom Waits Crooning* conjuring clear starry nights and the closing *Big Dog* which begins in Appalachian hymnal mood, Rose sounding somewhere between Dolly and Emmylou, before breaking out into a joyous mountain music stomp- with Jew's harp- as she sings of going back home for some emotional cleansing. Come back soon.

## HOTPRESS.COM

*Long Shot Novena*, Eileen Rose's sophomore solo album, is a deliciously bluesy, slightly countryish affair, characterized by a guitar that sounds like it's been baked for hours in the Southern sun and a tobacco-scarred voice that's been left to stew in a New Orleans hot-pot. Which is strange, really, when you consider that Rose's roots lie not in the belly of the bayou but in working class Boston, and for the last decade the songstress has resided in the distinctly unrootsy rural Essex and latterly in North London, not exactly renowned for its links with pedal steel gee-tar. However, writing off Rose's earthy compositions as roots music is only getting half-way to understanding her talent: there are elements of blues, country, rock and folk enmeshed in the songs, sure, but Rose never lingers long enough in any one song-suit to be tarred with forever. If you were to hear the album's closing brace, '*For Marlene*,' and '*Big Dog*,' you might place her somewhere left of Nashville, although Iain Harvie's electric axework on the former track ensures it steers well clear of cliché. But then you'd be missing the honky tonk shuffle of '*Snake*,' featuring Glen Matlock on bass, the bittersweet beauty of '*Good Man*,' the jangly guitar-driven '*Two In One*' or the distinctly laid-back '*Wheels Go By*,' where Jim Riley's harmonica creates a Dylan-ish vibe. The powerful title track is like Emmylou meets Shvaree, with a vague nod towards *To Bring You My Love*-era Polly Jean, as our heroine ponders the role of faith and religion in her life, without ever getting too heavy. The wonderful '*See How I Need You*' is a tongue-in-cheek falsetto take on traditional love songs, with Rose adopting the role of the lovesick female for a magically breezy affair that veers close to pop territory. Then there's the string-laden melancholy of '*Tom Waits Crooning*,' as Rose pays tribute to one of her musical heroes. Overall then, an eclectic and emotional collection.

**EILEEN ROSE**  
PRESS ARCHIVE



*AN ECLECTIC AND EMOTIONAL  
COLLECTION.*

[HOTPRESS.COM](http://HOTPRESS.COM)

# LONG SHOT NOVENA

UK: ROUGH TRADE, US: SANCTUARY (2002)

## METRO

If Eileen Rose could once be categorised as alt country, she's now less easily defined: second album *Long Shot Novena* glows with so many different ideas it's almost impossible to categorise. Yes, her songs are rootsy. *Good Man* is a lovely steel guitar lament, the harmonica tinged *Wheels Going By* a low-slung hillbilly rocker. But the growing wall of guitar crackle on the sultry opening title track sounds like something Mogwai could have written, while *Snake* takes its starting point from Elvis. Gospel is the most important influence, though, both musically and lyrically. If one thing is responsible for the strength of these tough, intimate songs, it's a belief that music is a form of redemption, and if that sounds over the top, check out *For Marlene*, a song written for the mother of a murdered daughter.

## THE SUNDAY TIMES

For those in thrall to this New Englander's sensational debut, *Shine Like It Does*, *Long Shot Novena* may seem less forthcoming. Certainly, the shattering emotional directness that made the first record so startling here sounds more familiar, with (initially) a resulting lessening of impact. But Rose's songs sidle up and ambush you. This time round, the open wounds from a failed relationship that fuelled *Shine* show signs of healing, if not yet disappearing. Thus, when she sings "I'm gonna take my sugar with lemon on the side" in *Two on One*, you feel the line is shot through both with weary self-recognition and an unquenchable thirst for adventure. The country twang remains, alongside Rose's rewarding mainstays of barroom blues (*Snake*), Floyd-like, contemplative spaciousness (*White Dove's Awake*) and reductive, finger-picked shuffle-and-swing (*See How I Need You*); and the voice is as insinuating and cracked as ever. A stunning return.

## THE EXPRESS

This is a lush mix of emotions and country styles, from the airy pop of *See How I Need You* to the desperate acoustic sorrow of *For Marlene*, a track about the mother of Eileen Rose's murdered

best friend. Rose is capable of a kaleidoscope of emotion in the same song, injecting the tracks with a living, breathing reality and often singing like Emmy Lou Harris at her most brooding.

## PUNCH

Eileen Rose established herself as a singer-songwriter to watch on last year's debut album, *Shine Like It Does*, and through her live shows, both as a solo artist and with fellow country mavericks such as Alabama 3. However, on "*Long Shot Novena*," the opening and title track of her second album, this Boston-born singer, now based in England, breaks out of the roots mould by coming on like Marianne Faithfull, and then refuses to be pigeon-holed by mixing gentle pop ("*See How I Need You*"), with rockabilly ("*Snake*"), while also throwing in an unashamed tribute to one of her song-writing heroes ("*Tom Waits Crooning*"). The album title refers to a prayer which is repeated nine times in a row for nine consecutive days in order to obtain a spiritual intention, and *Long Shot Novena* glows with a very specific kind of lyrical and musical grace.

## THE TIMES

One of the great things about Eileen Rose's second album, *Long Shot Novena* (Rough Trade), is that you don't feel as if you have to know everything, or indeed anything, about the personal history of the woman to enjoy her songs. For the record, she was brought up in Boston but spent most of the 1990s in Britain. Her influences are the great American songwriters Lou Reed, Neil Young, and Bob Dylan. Encompassing a wide, and at times rather erratic, variety of musical methods and mood swings, the album works best when Rose takes the direct route, as on *Good Man*, a bittersweet reverie on the fragility of human intentions, which recalls the golden-girl cool of Aimee Mann. "And we both know there's no weaker thing / Than a woman who loves a man that lies," Rose sings between a sad, slow swirl of harmonica and steel guitar. Some genuine wisdom, at last.

# EILEEN ROSE

PRESS ARCHIVE



## A WORLDLY TALENT.

MAXIM

## A STUNNING RETURN.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

# LONG SHOT NOVENA

UK: ROUGH TRADE, US: SANCTUARY (2002)

## MAXIM

While Sheryl Crow sleeps, she dreams of being as good as Eileen Rose Giadone. A sultry Irish-Italian American and descendent of the legendary heavyweight world champ John Sullivan, this superb second album more than backs up the promise that was suggested, but not entirely realised, on her warmly received 2000 debut, *Shine Like It Does*. Spreading her musical wings way beyond the countrified acousting strum of many of her contemporaries, the angular rock 'n' roll of Snake and the fairground blues stomp of Two In One mark her card as a worldly talent, more than worthy of comparison with snakeskin rockers like Ryan Adams. The tender, weeping strings of Tom Waits' Crooning tear at the heartstrings, but the slide-guitar hoedown of Big Dog tops them all. A benchmark release for 2002, then? No question.

## THE MIRROR

Eileen, an Irish-Italian from Boston who is now based in London, has discovered musical color and a sharp edge on her second album. Her writing mines a rich seam - spit 'n' sawdust country filtered through the Velvet Underground - and her yearning sultry voice projects many emotions. Say your prayers.

## THE TELEGRAPH

Massachusetts-born Eileen Rose reminds me of the sort of person you find performing in one of the more remote and obscure tents at Glastonbury: a bit finger-in-the-ear folkie, perhaps a touch trad and musicianly, but nonetheless so abundantly talented you do rather wonder why she's not playing somewhere bigger. Though there are bits on her second album which veer slightly towards the country equivalent of pub rock, when she's good she's great with a big husky voice like a cross between PJ Harvey and Mama Cass, and strong tunes that veer from the Dylanesque to something oddly akin to Pink Floyd.

## TIME OUT

With a hip-shake shimmy and heart laid bare, here are songs of ache and hurt, strength and fear. Licks of love and flames of doubt. Album of the year? Well, probably not. There'll be others that'll shout louder and impress more, hoist the flag and catch that wave. Ya di ya di ya. But few, if any, will hit so hard, connect so deep or reverberate as long and sure.

Rose's debut, 'Shine Like It Does' in 2000, was a nifty thing of (vaguely) country-fired craft that fitted the time and established her name. But this is something else entirely. A huge step forward. A work of savage emotion, tenderly wrought, owing nothing to nobody. There's a sense of flow to it, too. And it grows, to conclusion. Only one track, 'Snake', jars, sounding dated and throwaway (though 'Two In One' perhaps doesn't hunker down fully and really let loose like it should). But the rest is sublime. 'See How I Need You', 'Good Man', 'Tom Waits Crooning' (the latter pure Eileen Rose) and 'For Marlene' written for the mother of a friend brutally murdered back home in Boston, the killer never caught. ('Grace in forgiving and all that other shit/That they tell you when they want to take the sting out/It never does, it never does/Not when you love someone who got bled out.')

In places this is extraordinary. Her voice a sheer, soaring smoulder. Yes, Eileen Rose stands apart; not hip and flighty, young or flash, but drawn and driven, on and ever on. She is that rare thing, a songwriter who can genuinely touch and move (and grab and still). And this is a mighty, powerful work. As beautiful as it is brave, as bold as it is true.

## THE INDEPENDENT

Delivering on the promise of her debut, the follow-up from this Bostonian is intensely personal, and set to a predominantly gutsy, bluesy-country sound. With a vocal delivery that switches between a female version of Chris Robinson and a more airy Stevie Nicks, this is a brave, challenging album that stands up to repeated plays.

# EILEEN ROSE

PRESS ARCHIVE



## A WORLDLY TALENT.

MAXIM

*SHE IS THAT RARE THING, A  
SONGWRITER WHO CAN GENUINELY  
TOUCH AND MOVE (and grab and still).  
AND THIS IS A MIGHTY,  
POWERFUL WORK*

TIME OUT