

**Lovable: Nova One's ambitious new release is equal parts challenging and comforting**



Roz Raskin; photo credit: Shea Quinn

With clubs and concert halls shuttered, it's a difficult time for the music community, and especially for all the performers and employees left without an income. If you're looking to lend some support, perhaps the easiest thing you can do is buy some of your favorite music.

We've all accepted that music is essentially free now, but there are a lot of expenses that the .008 cents per Spotify stream doesn't cover. If you're a regular reader of this column, you've seen many links to Bandcamp albums. This time, consider kicking in a few sheckles. And when this is all over, be sure to get out to your favorite local venue for the post-pandemic blowout that will no doubt be happening.

### **Nova One - *lovable***

Nova One, the project of local music supernova Roz Raskin, is back with a second release, titled *lovable*. The record sees their songwriting reach new heights, and bolsters an already-impressive body of work. It's a nice mix of experimental and conventional, challenging the listener with ambitious themes on a bedrock of melodic maturity.

In 2018 Raskin's longtime band, The Rice Cakes, disbanded after a decade-long run, and the release of the E.P. *secret princess*. While The Rice Cakes were known for being experimental and cerebral, Nova One revels in unapologetic hooks that provide the listener with an innocent comfort.

Asked about their coming out as a lover of catchy melodies, Raskin said, "For many years with the Rice Cakes, I worked to flip pop on its head (which was fun as hell), but this project has given me an opportunity to be loud and proud about my love of pop music. It felt important that these songs were vocal-centric with a pad of warm, raw sound underneath."

The shimmering guitars and synths throughout give *lovable* sonic textures that remind me of artists like Jay Som and Beach House. "Feeling Ugly" is a fuzzy chamber pop tune, and "Close Encounter" is a reimagined Rice Cakes single that treads lightly over shimmering guitar chords. The Cakes drummer, Casey Belisle, also performs on three tracks.

The record's dreamlike quality is in part the work of Big Nice Studio in Lincoln, which Raskin calls "truly an incredible space" that they worked with multiple times. "Bradford Krieger and Chaima Parker, who engineered and co-produced the album and played on several tunes, tirelessly work to make every project that comes through that studio sound the best it can."

In addition to the soundscape, the album is thematically ambitious, tackling the nature of relationships, expectations and growing apart. "This particular record felt like a big release," says Raskin. *lovable* was written while I was going through a heavy breakup with an incredible person and while also feeling a need to be more vocal about my queerness and non-binary identity."

"Somebody" is about the predictability of domesticated love, stating, "I don't want to be everything you need." The surreal, midtempo beauty "violet dreams" deals with how desires are sometimes put off for the sake of others, and the raw emotion and imagery of "let's party" addresses anesthetizing yourself in the face of sadness.

The standout for me is the album's title track, which has it all: simple guitar leads, a devastating hook, and a compelling bridge build-up. It asks the poignant question that all sentient beings ponder at some

point in their time on this mortal coil: "Am I lovable?" It's straight-up radio hit pop perfection, and a song I hit repeat on way more than was necessary to write this article.

When asked how they're dealing with these times of uncertainty, Raskin says, "Communication is key for me right now. I think putting in effort to stay in touch with our communities the best we can is super important right now so folks don't feel isolated."

And their suggestions for supporting the creative community during this time? "Buy merch online, support Patreon pages, tune into live streams, leave loving comments on social media, share your musician friends' works."

*Lovable releases April 24 on Community Records, and can be purchased at:  
[novaonenovaone.bandcamp.com/album/lovable](https://novaonenovaone.bandcamp.com/album/lovable)*