



## ANI DIFRANCO HAS COMPANY ON HER NEW ALBUM, KNUCKLE DOWN

Singer/songwriter/guitarist Ani DiFranco is about to release a new album. It's called *Knuckle Down*, and it's due in stores January 25, 2005.

Now, if you've followed Ani's career for a while, that may not sound like news; after all, she's been putting out at least one CD a year since 1990. But this time—for the first time in her career—she has invited a fellow musician to co-produce the new record with her. That honor goes to **Joe Henry**, an acclaimed performer and songwriter with nine highly regarded solo discs to his name.

"I invited him out to share the stage, and we just struck up a friendship and started talking about making records — which both of us do, serially [laughs] — and really hit it off. We had a real lively creative dialogue going, so I took that as my cue to step out of my solitude and work with a co-producer for the first time — invite collaboration back into my life," Ani says. Another major change: Ani composed new songs with their role in the future album in mind, "This time, I had not only a deadline, but a context to write for: the group of musicians that I was gonna work with, and the where, how, and when of the record. I knew I wanted to have string accompaniment on this record — I thought I'd get string-y with it rather than get horn-y with it like I have in the past — use those kinds of colors."

On her last album, *Educated Guess* (2004), DiFranco performed completely solo, playing all the instruments, recording the tracks in her own home, and even engineering the disc herself. This time around, while a few songs are still primarily one-person affairs, she's also joined by more than half a dozen guest musicians throughout the album. Many of their names will be recognizable to people who have followed Ani's recent career: current stage partner **Todd Sickafoose** (on bass), former band member **Julie Wolf** (melodica), occasional openers **Tony Scherr** (electric guitar), and **Noe Venable** (voice), as well as Righteous Babe recording artist **Andrew Bird** (violin, glockenspiel, whistling). Less familiar to fans but equally notable are the contributions of **Patrick Warren** (piano, samples, chamberlin), **Jay Bellerose** (drums and percussion), and **Niki Haris** (voice).

The music Ani has created with their help is as stunning as ever, from such poignant yet instantly irresistible tunes as "Studying Stones" and "Recoil" to the spoken-word piece "Parameters," a harrowing account of a woman finding an uninvited stranger in her bedroom one night. On "Paradigm," Ani recalls helping her mother's efforts at grassroots activism, when she was "just a girl in a room full of women/licking stamps and laughing," an image that becomes a perfect symbol of "the feeling of community brewing / of democracy happening."

Through twelve new songs as intricately crafted as short stories, Ani DiFranco creates another unforgettable musical self-portrait of a woman coming to grips with love's twists and turns, confronting the legacy of her family, and learning to live on her own terms.

— end —

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ALBUM RELEASE DATE: JANUARY 25, 2005



Ani DiFranco is a songwriter, vocalist and guitarist perpetually on the move. From the raw “folk punk” of her early albums through the jazz/funk grooves she created during her years touring with a five-piece band to the twists and turns of her current work as a solo artist, Ani’s restless creativity continually leads her and her listeners into ever more exciting territory.

Born in Buffalo, New York, DiFranco was already singing and playing guitar in public before she was old enough to drive. As a teenager, the poems she’d been writing in “long skinny columns” soon evolved into lyrics, and music became a way for the teenager to talk about the things that mattered most to her: the power dynamics of romantic entanglements, the fragmentation of her family, the choices she watched her friends making, and the state of life in her hometown and her country.



The early 1990s brought a temporary relocation to New York and classes in poetry and politics at the New School, but her real education came on weekends, as she hit the road with increasing frequency and growing confidence, developing her signature percussive finger picking and dynamic range in order to grab and hold the attention of noisy bar crowds. Even the need to fill time while re-tuning became an opportunity to improvise off-the-cuff stories about whatever had happened during the course of her day, which became yet another hallmark of her

style. After just about every one of her funny, outspoken, intimate gigs, she’d leave behind a fresh batch of converts eager to spread the word to everyone they knew, via cassettes at first and then CDs. Rather than waiting for some A&R bigwig to sign her, Ani simply created her own record label, Righteous Babe, eventually turning down legions of potential deals when she realized they had nothing to offer that she couldn’t provide herself. In the process, the born performer began to learn her way around the recording studio, too, gradually developing her own innovative means to convey the spontaneity, intensity and wit of her live concerts on disc.

Nearly a decade and a half of hard work, glowing word of mouth, and relentless touring later, the self-described “Little Folksinger” is packing joints like Carnegie Hall and amphitheaters around the world, though she still makes each

venue she plays feel as cozy as a living room and as sweaty as a neighborhood dive. That DIY label of hers, still based in Buffalo (with a European branch based in London), has now released so many of Ani’s CDs that they’ve lost count and about a dozen more by an eclectic hand-picked roster of artists whose music is as unclassifiable and unpredictable as hers.

But that’s only part of the story. Over the years, Ani has swapped album appearances with **Prince** and **Maceo Parker**, produced recordings by **Dan Bern** and **Janis Ian**, performed orchestral

versions of her compositions with the Buffalo Philharmonic, helped find wholly new fans for the songs of **Woody Guthrie** and the stories of **Utah Phillips**, had her own tunes covered by the likes of **Dave Matthews**, and **Chuck D**, recorded duets with both **John Gorka** and **Jackie Chan**, and inspired countless other musicians to rewrite the rules of the recording industry by striving for self-sufficiency and refusing to allow art to be subsumed by cold commerce. Through her Righteous Babe Foundation, she’s been able to support grassroots cultural and political organizations around the country, and she has repeatedly lent her time and her voice to such diverse pursuits as opposing the death penalty, upholding women’s reproductive rights, promoting queer visibility, and preserving historic buildings back in Buffalo (including a long-neglected church currently being transformed into the new headquarters of Righteous Babe).

Ani DiFranco’s career has been full of surprises – for her, and for the rest of us – and she’s no stranger to change, both sudden and slow. But some things remain unchanged, like her commitment to speaking the truth, as she sees it, without fear or concession. **Bruce Cockburn** recently observed in *Performing Songwriter* that Ani considers it part of her job description, “to try and reflect real life in [her] songs. The life of the streets; the life of nations; the lives of people coping with power or its absence, looking for joy through the loneliness and pain and the complexities of relationships; the life of the spirit. All these are the stuff of human experience, and human experience is what we all share.”

She does so with two basic instruments, both of which are also constants in her ever-evolving world: her trusty guitar and her unforgettable voice. *Vanity Fair* describes the latter as, “astounding... coolly, permanently urgent, tugging at the sleeve or close at the ear, like the murmur of a lover who knows every last secret and decides to stay.”



“In her singular style, DiFranco muses and strikes with poignancy, humor and political correctness.”

- **BILLBOARD**



“...Ms. DiFranco radiates skill and self-confidence, quick-strumming her guitar and pouring out words in a voice that can be bright or tart, affectionate or testy.”

- **NEW YORK TIMES**



“For DiFranco, her unfettered self-expression is more humanism than feminism. Although her first toehold was in the women’s folk market, she’s become an inspiration for anyone who wants to follow dreams or try to change the world a few ticks.”

- **BOSTON PHOENIX**



“From the prolific recordings and near non-stop touring to the guiding of Righteous Babe Records and outspoken political activism, Ani is a heroine on many fronts to many people. What she creates through unflinchingly honest explorations of both her inner and outer worlds is no less than stunning again and again as she molds minute, seemingly mundane, slivers of life into sublime poetry. Bold as it may be to say, Ani at her best is on par with the masters of the form.”

- **VELVET PARK MAGAZINE**



“From political rage to heartache to political rage to existential ennui – did I mention political rage? - her smart and insightful lyrics always give me the words I can never seem to find on my own.”

- **DVDVERDICT.COM**

“Some musicians inspire love and laughter. Some evoke applause, standing ovations or mosh pits. If Ani DiFranco were so inclined, she could cause a riot.”

- **IOWA STATE DAILY**



“Most significant of all, perhaps, DiFranco has maintained a rebel spirit and a sense of her work as political in the deepest possible sense – as a rallying point for dreams of a better, more just America. Over and over, in her own work and that of the artists she promotes, she’s proven that this political dimension can coexist with sophisticated, edgy music - and that cool can have a soul.”

- **INDIE CULTURE 2004**



“To call her prolific is like calling a hurricane a pleasant summer breeze.”

- **WOMEN WHO ROCK**



“All in all, she’s one of the most rewarding and individual artists active in this relatively fallow period.”

- **THE BIG TAKEOVER**



“She follows no musical trend but her own muse and sounds like no one. [...] The woman next to me started sobbing, and the crowd roared like amplified sheet metal. I’d never seen an artist connect so deeply with an audience before, and I don’t count on ever witnessing it again.”

- **HIGH TIMES**





**BUFFALO  
NEWS**

### DIFRANCO'S CONCERT VIDEO IS GRAINY, GRITTY AND BEAUTIFUL

November 9, 2004  
By Jeff Miers



Her right hand attacks the strings of her weathered acoustic guitar, and you feel sorry for them. Press-on nails are wrapped in layers of black electrical tape, five plectrums held in place like some bizarre bionic implant, and she's not exactly caressing or cajoling a reaction from those much-maligned wires.

Everything you need to know about Ani DiFranco is in that right hand, a claw with talons that knows no mercy. She came to play, and play hard; this is not your father's folk music.

*Trust* is DiFranco's new DVD, out today, and it's aptly named. Go to a DiFranco show and have no doubt exactly what you're going to get – plenty of that merciless yet still subtly virtuosic guitar playing, songs brimming with ideological fury and moral outrage, more songs that case a withering eye both inward and outward, and still more that sneak with stealth into the dusty nooks and crannies of love relationships, walking the wire between that sublime emotion and its more earthly counterpart.

There is a bond of trust between DiFranco and her worldwide cult audience, and *Trust* is far more than a concert documentary; it is in fact a filmic delineation of that bond. And it manages to capture some serious butt-kicking along the way, with nary an electric guitar or wall of Marshall stacks in sight.

Filmed over two nights at Washington, D.C.'s 9:30 Club in May of this year, under the watchful verite eye of Danny Clinch, *Trust* is grainy, gritty and beautiful.

Part of its considerable charm lies in the way it refuses to turn DiFranco into an icon by airbrushing and editing her into some larger-than-life representative of alternative music feminism. Clinch does not lionize his subject, but rather, allows her artistry to dictate the flow of his film. Thus, shots of backstage rehearsals with DiFranco, her upright bassist Todd Sickafoose and guest guitarist

Tony Scherr meld seamlessly with multi-angle renderings of her onstage performance with the same sort of guts and grace laid to tape by the granddaddy of all rock documentarians, D.A. Pennebaker and his Bob Dylan slice of life, *Don't Look Back*.

It's fitting for DiFranco's music, stripped of its alternative clothing, is essentially a form of pure folk music. The sort represented by those old Alan Lomax field recordings, early Folkways stuff, Woody Guthrie riding the rails and singing the people's songs back to them, though they'd never written them down themselves. As radical as DiFranco's music can be, she is still part of a tradition. Mainstream, slipstream, estuary – whatever. It's, in a very real sense, populist music.

Still, by the time you've digested the opening sequence featuring "Educated Guess," and then segued through "Origami," you realize that DiFranco has her own take on just what "populist" means. Clinch's multi-camera attack, the spot-on, left-of-center editing, the startlingly intimate 5.1 surround sound, all are subservient to one thing: DiFranco's songs, her syncopated snarl evolving into a throaty, elegant soulful full voice on the long notes (you wish she'd do just a touch more of that), her abusively beautiful guitar style piling plenty of rhythmic bedrock for Sickafoose to lay over with melodic brickwork, her breathy, rapturous delight as she discovers her own songs in front of a live audience yet again.

One would be remiss in failing to emphasize the lyrics in DiFranco's songs, for they are clearly a healthy portion of her craft. This is personal stuff writ large and butted right smack up against the broadly political and social. But DiFranco has always made it clear that for her, the personal is political – and vice versa. That's why she can dress down the male of the species in a tune like "Origami," and even the men in the audience will be smiling – Clinch caught a few doing just that – or lay a socio-political discourse like "Grand Canyon" on listeners and they'll still feel it in the marrow of their bones as somehow "the truth," if even only for the moment. Doubtless, many DiFranco fans feel it for much longer than that.

Clinch's genius with *Trust* is that he captures the humanity and artistry behind that idealism. DiFranco might be called "the l'il folksinger," but she has clearly tapped into some of the big ideas.

**B B C**

December 2004  
Cormac Heron

Following on from the release of *Educated Guess* earlier this year, Ani DiFranco returns with the live DVD *Trust*. Taken from gigs performed in Washington DC earlier this year, *Trust* is more of a concert experience than DiFranco's previous DVD outing *Render*.

Where *Render* gives a intimate insight to this uncompromising artist, *Trust* is a whole different affair, sporting tracks which span DiFranco's vast catalogue: from the early "Anticipate" to this year's "You Each Time", plus three previously unreleased numbers.

"Educated Guess" opens the collection and acts as a gospel-like welcome to an eclectic sounding mix of tunes that cover all different genres,

from beat-punk poetry to funk to plain ol' country 'n' Western. DiFranco is on great form, too, coming across like the love child of Daniel Johnston and Kate Bush; she's every bit as dramatic.

Todd Sickafoose provides a lovely extra width to the experience on his double bass and every so often Tony Scherr of Bill Frisell, Sex Mob and Norah Jones fame joins the duo on six string. This is all topped off by an appearance from Congressman Dennis Kucinich. Shot beautifully by renowned photographer/film-maker Danny Clinch, *Trust* will be hugely appreciated by DiFranco's fans the world over.





January 24, 2004

By AZ

After last year's impressive full-band album *Evolve*, Ani DiFranco announced she was returning to her solo roots. With *Educated Guess*, [...] the renegade singer/songwriter/guitarist makes good on her minimalist promise by delivering a one-woman set recorded with overdubs on vintage reel-to-reel equipment. She serves up four literate spoken-word pieces and several tunes that sound like they were journal-generated. In her singular style, DiFranco muses and strikes with poignancy, humor and political correctness. There is also the personal politics: the questioning of love (the lyrical "You Each Time"), the plaintive breakup (the gritty, blues/rock-charged "Bubble") and the act of independence (the best track of the collection, "Swim," with its clinky-clunky guitar line matched by the cadence of her vocals.) Overall, DiFranco exhibits a strong-fingered guitar attack on the CD that is characterized by production rawness.

educated guess  
ani diFranco

## NO DEPRESSION

March-April 2004

by Russell Hall

Ani DiFranco has long been one of America's premier independent artists, having released sixteen full-length albums since 1990 and generally going her own way in nearly all respects. On *Educated Guess*, she takes that independence a step further by dispensing with the funky accompaniment of her recent efforts, opting instead for a solo approach.

DiFranco pares the instrumentation down to just acoustic guitar and vocals, plus an imaginative sense of how those tools should be arranged. Unlike, say, Todd Rundgren's *Something/Anything?*, this album doesn't seek to dazzle with do-it-yourself virtuosity, but neither does it adhere to the lo-fi insularity of demo-style recordings such as Bruce Springsteen's *Nebraska*. Rather, the album splits the difference between those methods, boasting a warm, organic sound that balances perfectly its stripped-down motif.

Of course, none of the above would matter much if the material on the album didn't measure up, and in this respect *Educated Guess* often does dazzle. Buoyed by syncopated guitar figures that zigzag between funk, folk and jazz, DiFranco offers up Whitman-esque celebrations of self ("I am an all powerful amazon warrior," she sings at one point), stark snapshots of vulnerability ("Bodily"), and the occasional Beat-like spoken-word poem ("Akimbo"). She also strikes the usual blows for feminism, the environment, and civil disobedience, but manages to stay just this side of proselytizing.

## Los Angeles Times

January 18, 2004

by Natalie Nichols

Singer-songwriter Ani DiFranco has a knack for looking, seeing and telling. And she has a lot to tell, releasing at least one album a year on her own label since 1990. This entry (in stores Tuesday) is both a departure from 2003's *Evolve* and a logical progression for the Buffalo native, whose recent works have mixed her spare, acoustic folk with lush funk and R&B elements.

Here she returns to a stark, acoustic feel of earlier recordings, and the sense of isolation in such numbers as "Swim" is reinforced by her creative approach: She single-handedly wrote the songs, played the instruments, sang lead and background vocals and recorded and mixed the collection. Yet *Educated Guess* still incorporates jazz and blues influences into 14 largely melancholy, reflective musings on romance and politics.

With big, open spaces and the stark clash of heavily struck guitar strings, the music feels foreboding and at times almost dissonant, echoing her tense, vividly emotional ruminations about how love can be exhausting and identity-sucking, especially when a partner is endlessly needy.

A handful of frank spoken-word tracks includes "Platforms," an intimate glimpse at the humility of heartbreak, and "Grand Canyon," another of her pieces blending observations of contemporary American life with a specific statement (in this case, that being a patriot partly means celebrating feminism). Even when nursing a bummer, DiFranco still inspires.



Seattle Post-Intelligencer

educated guess  
ani diFranco

### DIFRANCO'S *EDUCATED GUESS* IS DOWNRIGHT BRILLIANT

Tuesday, January 20, 2004

By Gene Stout

"I hated to pop the bubble of me and you/ but it only held enough oxygen for a trip or two." The playful words are from "Bubble," a tender yet stirring story-song from singer-songwriter and spoken-word artist Ani DiFranco's brilliant new solo album, *Educated Guess*.

DiFranco, a voice of passionate dissent who creates stunning narrations on life in today's America, wrote and recorded the album single-handedly. She sang all the songs (lead as well as backup), played all the instruments and did all the recording and mixing herself for this latest release from her self-made and remarkably successful independent label, Righteous Babe Records of Buffalo, N.Y. The lavishly packaged album features DiFranco's original artwork and three bonus poems.

A singular talent who isn't afraid to speak her mind about life, love, politics and the troubled soul of America, DiFranco has wowed us before with her tender musings and feisty rants. But on *Educated Guess*

the diminutive folk-punk poet is downright brilliant in her latest reflections on romance, patriotism and the often-compromised American spirit.

She opens "Grand Canyon" with this thought: "I love my country / by which I mean I am indebted joyfully / to all the people throughout its history / who have fought the government to make right."

In "Origami," she describes herself as "an all-powerful Amazon warrior, not just some sniveling girl" and teases that men are "delicate origami creatures who need women to unfold them."

Recorded on vintage reel-to-reel equipment in Buffalo and in New Orleans, the album has a rich, warm feel that brings her skillful guitar playing and strong, self-confident vocals to the fore.

The songs are somber and spare, but imbued with a sly sense of humor: "The light blue rhythm of the neighbor's big console TV / Is basking on the ceiling of another insomniac spree."

harp

March 2004

by J Poet

*Educated Guess* marks DiFranco's stylistic return to the acoustic singer/songwriter format that brought her to national attention, a move that has invigorated her songwriting to give us an intimate, if troubled, album. Most of the songs deal with the tribulations of love, mainly the raw emotions one feels as a relationship bites the dust. The sparse jazzy acoustic guitar on "Bodily" accents the song's dirge-like tempo, "Rain Check" has a smooth R&B feel thanks to DiFranco's subtle guitar and bass arrangement, while the asymmetrical rhythms of "Origami" underline the frustration a woman can feel at the end of a dysfunctional relationship.

GUITAR WORLD  
**Acoustic**

March 2004

by Nina Pearlman

DiFranco's 13th studio album is the first she's recorded without backing musicians since 1999's *Not So Soft*. The singer-songwriter recorded the album at home on an old-fashioned eight-track, at her home and the result is a quiet affair featuring nothing but DiFranco's idiosyncratic acoustic playing and her agitator's voice. Throughout, she sings of female empowerment and self-discovery, perfectly suiting her accompaniment to the song's subject matter —lightly strumming chords on the title track, slapping the strings percussively on "Bliss Like This," fingerpicking violently on "Bodily."

A testament to the power of simplicity.



**VOTE DAMMIT!**

UNABASHEDLY LIBERAL ANI DIFRANCO CONTINUES TREND OF POLITICALLY ACTIVE ARTISTS WITH CURRENT TOUR

September 16, 2004

By Sacha Evans

"in the last presidential election, 100,228,726 Americans didn't show up to vote."  
 – Tag Line of Ani DiFranco's VOTE DAMMIT! Tour

Among artists involved in this year's get out the vote campaign, there seems to be no shortage of beating around the bush (no pun intended). Consider the mesmerizing, near-blinding spectacle of red, white and blue that surrounded the letters V-O-T-E on the set of Outkast's closing performance at the MTV music awards, or the proliferation of musicians at campaign-related events. In this same vein, punk folk queen Ani DiFranco's current U.S. tour is simply entitled VOTE DAMMIT!

Inspired by low voter turnout in the past, the tour blazes through 12 identified "swing states" from now until early December. Special guests include comedian Margaret Cho, Indigo Girls, and more. Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio), who has been in cahoots with DiFranco throughout both their careers, kicked off the first show.

Before sound check at her Baltimore performance last Friday, DiFranco took some timeout to chat with college journalists from across the country.

"Young people were born into their disillusionment with the political system in this country," she said. "We have never known a time when 'politician' was not synonymous with 'greedy, calculating liar.' So it is natural and smart to feel alienated from the government."

DiFranco explained her belief that low voter turnout stems from

underlying messages in corporate America. "I think it has been many years now that we have absorbed the message that we are consumers, not citizens, and that happiness will come materialistically rather than through being an active member of a society," she said. "Exercising our right to vote is simply necessary for creating democracy. Without participation we don't have a democratic system, we have a capitalist system."

DiFranco, a registered Democrat, said, "It's often the most conservative areas that I dread performing in because there is not a cohesive energy in the audience." DiFranco named the situation in Iraq as an issue presidential candidate John Kerry has been "skimming because he's a calculating politician, not a hero of our people. But hopefully this election will be a tiny step in the right direction," she said.

Despite her personal politics, DiFranco said the tour aims at 100 percent voter turnout among audiences. Representatives from voter registration organizations, peace, justice, civil rights, environmental and other progressive groups will be present at every show to register voters and educate people about the issues.

"This tour and my politics have nothing to do with Bush," she said. "Whether or not we are empowered citizens is an issue much bigger and more eternal than the joker in the Oval Office. I am simply about sharing and celebrating truth, in this and every tour."

## Orlando Sentinel

**ANI DIFRANCO DELIVERS DEFT BALANCE OF MUSIC, POLITICS**

September 17, 2004

By Jim Abbott

Ani DiFranco has a chance to preach to the choir on Wednesday, but she wisely decided to sing to it instead.

At House of Blues, the fiercely independent singer-songwriter headlined her Vote Dammit! concert, a swing-state caravan designed to foster voter registration, especially among the wound women who are a significant part of her audience.

Like the other politically oriented concerts dotting the landscape this election year, DiFranco's message is pointedly partisan. Anyone wearing a Bush-Cheney button in the crowded hall would have felt as welcome as a liberal listening to AM radio.

That was especially true during singer-songwriter Dan Bern's 30-minute opening set, a positively Dylan-esque hootenanny of folksy protest songs. By comparison, DiFranco was wisely content to keep her music at the forefront. Her nearly 90-minute set mixed older songs with a smattering of material from her latest album, *Educated Guess*. Taking the stage after a slide show that juxtaposed historic photos of the women's suffrage movement with current voting statistics and issue-oriented Bush-Kerry comparisons, she didn't allude to politics for almost an hour.

Instead, she offered stark versions of her densely lyrical songs, bolstered only by her guitar and the intricate upright bass foundation of accompanist Todd Sickafoose. Her guitar technique was an idiosyncratic as her

unconventional singing, an intensely physical exercise that hops from ringing harmonics to brutally percussive plucking and pounding.

On stage, she's a kinetic presence, prowling in tight circles, hoisting a leg to lean back at an odd angle, bouncing in the air or flashing an incandescent smile. She continued to throw her entire body into songs even when the inexplicably chatty crowd at the back bar threatened to overshadow her solitary style.

That persistence was eventually rewarded as the audience fell into a welcome hush for her final 20 minutes. It was then she addressed the point of the evening: "We have all this groundwork laid," she said, alluding to historical struggles for voting rights. "All we have to do is exercise our power."

DiFranco's power on Wednesday was that she expressed ideas in songs rather than sermons:

"It's a crash course in religious fundamentals," she sang in "Evolve," which closed the main set. "Now let's all go to war, get some bang for our buck. I am trying to evolve."

Bern returned to join her for a rousing closing encore of "Do-Re-Mi," Woody Guthrie's ode to class struggle, but it was DiFranco's recitation of her poem "Grand Canyon" that more eloquently conveyed her mission:

"I love my country, by which I mean I am indebted joyfully to all the people throughout its history who have fought the government to make right."



## CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

### DIFRANCO'S ENERGY, LYRICS BEWITCH

January 19, 2004

by Brian Orloff

When Ani DiFranco performs, she does not simply take the stage. She bounds onto it.

DiFranco made an indelible entrance Saturday at the Chicago Theatre.

Leaping onstage with her acoustic guitar, she immediately launched into the staccato "Names and Dates and Times," assaulting her instrument with her strident strumming. "I know so many white people," she sang, eliciting cheers from the sold-out crowd. "I mean, where do I start?" [...]

Drawn by her textured rhythms, she contorted and bounced around with her vibrant folk tunes during the 75-minute set. And it didn't matter that she performed sans band. DiFranco harbored enough energy and musical dynamism within her petite frame to more than compensate for the sparer musical setting.

You might think that DiFranco's elastic stage presence and the hyper banter between songs would distract from her poetic and articulate body of work, but her performance style matches the nature of her career and her songwriting. [...]

Songs such as "Educated Guess" challenged listeners with their complicated time signatures, switching tempos mid-song, from billowy ballads to urgent pleas. "Use your education and take an educated guess about me," she sang, her lyrics offset by nervy guitar playing. [...]

But it's as a lyricist that DiFranco shines. She mesmerized with several spoken-word pieces, intoning each word with a thoughtful forcefulness.

Her songs and monologues are never simply angry; they're sorrowful, spiteful and simultaneously hopeful.

Take the unreleased "Manhole": DiFranco introduced the piece, ostensibly about her recent divorce, as "just another bitter little song that I wrote recently." But the tune, like much of her oeuvre, felt much richer.



Backed by spare guitar, she sang, "After my dreaded beheading, I tied the sucker back on with a string/And I guess I'm pretty different now, considering."

The crowd whooped, but DiFranco continued, her vitriol converted to something more philosophical.

"I look up to see that integrity finally won over desire," she sang.

Moments such as this one explain why DiFranco commands a devoted following.

She allows her fans to see her vulnerability, but she keeps charging ahead.

## The Daily Times-Call

### DIFRANCO PERFORMS NEW SONGS, OLD FAVORITES AT RED ROCKS

August 20, 2004

By Cassandra Schoon

The Faithful converged upon Red Rocks Amphitheater. A quick survey of license plates in the parking lot showed that they are from Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Michigan and South Dakota. The pilgrims greet each other with embraces, cries of "I knew I'd see you here." This is no typical concert. This is the Church of Ani.

Ani DiFranco is one of those rare artists whose reach extends well beyond just a fan base. The people at this concert on August 6 did not come here simply to listen. They came to worship. [...]

On this, her first tour without her band and accompanied onstage only by her bassist, Todd Sickafoose, the scale of DiFranco's music has become more subtle. However, her following demands larger venues than ever before. [...]

"This is new-music night," she said, "in case you didn't read the writing on the rocks."

While she still boasts an impressive vocal acrobatics – one second she coos like a baby sparrow, the next she growls like a threatened god – and expert guitar abilities, her music has become more mature and contemplative than ever before.

The majority of the songs DiFranco performed were from her newest album, *Educated Guess*. Songs like "Swim" speak of the world-weariness of a woman who has written her share of break-up songs. The intense introspection of the new songs made all but the most diehard fans take a seat on the bleachers to listen hard. [...]

While the "new-music night" offered much for them to ponder, the faithful had come to hear the songs they knew well. They had come to worship their righteous babe, past and present, and she did not disappoint.



## ANI DIFRANCO RIGHTEOUS RAGE

September/October 2004

By Jack Chester



**Your new tour is running through the swing states and you titled the tour "Vote Dammit!" Why this urgency now?**

Besides the obvious? Desperation for a regime change here! There seem to be a lot of people out there right now who are talking about voting and feeling inspired, finally, to do so, which is really encouraging. I've always felt that voting was step one for citizenry. Democracy just doesn't exist without our participation.

**Your friend Dennis Kucinich had said that he would continue his campaign**

**up to the Democratic National Convention, but how did you feel about way the mainstream media dismissed him quite some time ago?**

It's typical of the corporate media these days, which not only controls information, but controls minds and decides elections. His intention was to run up to the convention to get as many delegates at the Democratic Convention with the idea that even though the media has deemed Kerry the candidate long ago the direction of the Democratic Party was still up in the air.

**Do you think that Kerry may have intents and ideas that he and his people might be slow to put out to air because of the way the mainstream media deals with new information?**

One can hope that there's a liberal coil in him waiting to spring and he will act sanely and try to enact some justice when he's in office because I firmly believe that we must get out there and we must elect him. It's just gotta happen. I can't even contemplate the alternative. A Democrat in office means a whole regime change, as the bumper stickers say. Whether or not John Kerry is the savior of our country, I think we are. And just having the opportunity under a kinder, gentler administration for us to do the good work of political change is all that I hope for.

**What would you say to young potential voters who may be disenfranchised but maybe have also done their research and found out about the voter roll purge in Florida in the 2000 election and feel that a vote is powerless?**

I would say, get up, leave your house and speak to it. That 2000 coup presented such an opportunity for systematic change. There it was in all our faces, the winner-take-all state by state bullshit, the electoral college. And then, of course, we had a supposed president who had no interest in heeding the call and learning the lessons and making systematic change and then there was 9/11, which became the endless excuse and distraction from everything else that is real and pressing, but it's not too late. I'm so struck by the immense power that we have as citizens that we don't exercise. I think that we are taught to feel helpless. The boob tube has been telling us that we are consumers for decades and that this is our route to happiness. And it's been intentionally making us forget that we are citizens and that actually community involvement, that leading an active and engaged life, is the route to happiness; not buying stuff. Just simply leaving your house and going and finding people who are doing good work in your own community and helping them is an incredible jolt toward liberation and empowerment. Stand with people who are doing the work and help them; there are so many opportunities.

**It does seem easier for people fall into line and hit the complacency train...**

I just went on a trip to Burma, which was life changing and mind altering. Burma happens to be the longest running dictatorship on the planet right now. It's incredibly repressive and violent. There's basically a campaign of ethnic cleansing happening there; it's just brutal and startling. And in contrast with such darkness

there is just incredible light; there are people who are so strong and convicted and have dedicated their lives to the fight for democracy; who hold democracy higher than anything, which is so inspiring and refreshing, especially coming from this ultra-privileged apathetic society where we don't even bother to exercise our power to vote and we have the opportunity.

**It seems that your material has gotten more overtly political over the years. Much of your earlier material was more personal than political.**

Right from the beginning, it was a sort of political lens I was looking through. Even at 18 or 19, whenever I was first making recordings, I was definitely politically oriented... the thing is my politics, like I think a lot of young women, if you're an 18-year-old female, you don't have to look very far outside of your personal life to see political manifestations; I mean, your fucking body. There are people who are trying to reach inside your guts and control your reproductive system for you, saying, "You don't even own your own body." Women's power is overlooked, culturally, or within a patriarchy and so that consciousness was there from the beginning. So when I'm writing about, even in the early days, I was writing about my abortion or my relationships, my struggle to become myself; that was extremely political stuff, but in a feminine sense. It's the other half of the coin from a male folk singer singing the songs of goin' off to work on the railroad or goin' off in the army.

**Do you ever feel when traveling in the middle of the country, in less urban populations, where outside information comes almost solely from television, that you're on another planet in your own country?**

Ya know, the new places that are just all strip malls, that were built on air conditioning and automobiles, where people are living in great isolation and are very much a slave to the television, in those places you feel the disconnection in the audience; the abortion of history. I just played in Vegas and then in Phoenix and those are places that are especially spiritually diseased. Overrun with commercialism and artificial environments. I especially like playing in Chicago, in Atlanta, even in Cedar Rapids, IA, a place where people are connected. And that has a lot to do with our physical environment, the existence of history around us that also speaks to the future.

**How much of this culture was inflicted upon the greater mass and how much is it a byproduct of human nature?**

You can feel the cultural disease in this country, especially those of us who leave the country a lot and get that kind of distance of perspective because people are not happy. We are not fulfilling ourselves through commercial accumulation of stuff and of money and leisure because we are not connected, because what we really want is to be in power. People, like you were talking about earlier, we feel helpless, we feel powerless, we feel frustrated, we feel isolated. I think of this as a capitalist country now as opposed to a democracy.

**A Capitalist Christian country.**

Right. As Arundhati Roy would say, the governments, the militaries, the fundamentalists and the capitalists and the international corporate elite are walking hand in hand for global control. Meanwhile, us people are not; it does not service us, it does not allow us to become ourselves. True happiness comes when we are connected, when we are empowered. But we don't realize this because the television and all of the messages from the media again and again tell us that happiness is achieved materialistically and individually and it's a fallacy. We have to, as Abbie Hoffman would say, become the media; tell our own truth.

**Truth's kind of become a dirty word.**

Or an endangered species.

For the full transcript of this interview with Ani, visit [www.relix.com/ani](http://www.relix.com/ani)



### ANI DIFRANCO TALKS ABOUT THE MAKING OF *KNUCKLE DOWN*



**Q: Your most recent album before this one, *Educated Guess*, was very much a one-person show, with you as sole performer, producer, even engineer. *Knuckle Down* seems to be a complete about-face.**

A: Well, yes, it was time to get out of my hole and work with other people again. The trajectory of my life has been very solitary, and my art goes with that, but whenever my heart sees a chance for collaboration, it leaps to it. I just crave that kind of input. I don't have nearly as much of it as I'd like in my life. Especially for the past few years, I've had more than my share of time to think my own tiny thoughts—to think and overthink things—and, you know, lose track of what it is I'm supposed to be thinking about. At this point I look at *Educated Guess* and I think, "How did I do that?" How did I get up and be disciplined enough in my time off to set up microphones and try and make a record without any interaction with anybody? I'm really glad I did it, [just] to prove to myself that I could, but it's very helpful to have somebody else working the machines so that you can make the art. You know, you want to be getting warmed up, you want to be getting focused, you want to be getting yourself there as an artist to perform, and getting used to the sounds and the space, but you're not. You're running back and forth, futzing and futzing. It's very hard to just [snaps fingers] be all those people.

**Q: Let's talk about your co-producer, Joe Henry, and his role on the album. How did you first hear about him?**

A: Through recordings; I was an admirer of his last few records — *Scar* in particular. I invited him out to share the stage, and we just struck up a friendship and started talking about making records — which both of us do, serially [laughs]—and really hit it off. We had a real lively creative dialogue going, so I took that as my cue to step out of my solitude and work with a co-producer for the first time — invite collaboration back into my life. I think Joe played the role of catalyst as much as anything for this project.

**Q: You've mentioned that you and Joe have similar approaches to making records. Can you describe that shared sensibility?**

A: Well..., tracking live, only spending a couple of days — you walk into the studio prepared to make music, ready to lay it down. You don't go in and learn the songs or do a million takes, or perfect and piece things together or overdub until you're blue. You just go hit it and keep it organic and make it a performance.

**Q: What do you mean when you describe Joe's role as "catalyst"?**

A: I invited him to co-produce my new record — and I had, like, 3 songs. [laughs] He said yes, and I said, 'Whoa, okay, time to get to writin'. We started plotting out the time frame of the record and scheming about the cast. So I wrote to a deadline, in a sense, which I've never done. I usually just wait till there's a pile of songs and go record them. This time, I had not only a deadline, but a context to write for: the group of musicians that I was gonna work with, and the where, how, and when of the record. I knew I wanted to have string accompaniment on this record — I thought I'd get string-y with it rather than get horn-y with it like I have in the past — use those kinds of colors. It was kind of cool to flex that writing muscle and be real craftsmanlike about it, more so than in the past, when I was just completely at the whim of and on the schedule of my muse.

**Q: This time you recorded in a studio in L.A., as opposed to your house?**

A: Yep. These days my "home studio" is much more a home than a studio. It's one thing to record myself solo there, it's another thing to track a whole band, which was what this plan called for. So one of Joe's contributions was the place that we worked—the studio in L.A.—which really was a factor of the engineer, who is somebody he's worked with a lot and who had a huge hand in the sound of the record: Husky Hoskolds. It's a studio that he likes to work at. Husky has this whole sonic palette that he works with when he records, so I sort of pushed that into the direction of my music until we arrived at a hybrid. I think it was a very successful kind of collaboration.

Joe also brought the drummer, Jay Bellerose, and the keyboard vibemaster, Patrick Warren, into the mix. And I went out there with Todd [Sickafoose, bass player] and invited Andrew Bird, Noe Venable, Tony Scherr, and Julie Wolf to play, so I had my crew kinda there contributing as well. I'm very pleased with the special guests that appear, because I feel like they're really there as themselves. Their character appears on the record; it's not like they just play the notes [they were told to play, like session musicians]. I think they all brought a lot of inspiration with them.

**Q: It must have been very different putting together the last album, where you could get up in the middle of the night and record.**

A: Yes, the actual recording of this album was the very opposite experience: go to La La Land and cower in disgust on my way to and from this Hollywood studio, and just lay it down in 6 days — 2 songs a day, including the process of basically teaching them to half the band. That was a lot of work, and we were leaving really early! [laughs] We would leave by, like, 8 o'clock at night, or 11 at most, because people had families. As a singer, as the artiste, it was funny; it was towards the end of the week before I turned around and thought, "Whose schedule is this? Who came up with this get-up-in-the-morning-and-sing business?" It was a challenge on a lot of levels to just go and hit it.

When it came down to actually recording the album, I found it much as it has always been: the buck stops here, in terms of arranging and performing and making all the decisions. But during the pre-production of the record, I really enjoyed having Joe as a sounding board, and the kind of fantasizing that we did about the project. I met with Joe before the recording session and I played him the tunes. There was one tune that I was working on that was in a much earlier form. I had all these different guitar riffs, ones that were hanging around for months and months and not fleshing themselves out into songs. And Joe said, "That riff, I like that." So I made that sort of the center of "Lag Time". I wrote the song around it. In writing, you know, a song is like these leaves scattered everywhere in the fall, all of these ideas, and you start raking them up into a pile and stuffing them into a bag, making a certain shape and form for them, and some of them just fly off in the wind. Joe helped me sort of decide which direction to go with that particular song.

**Q: Todd Sickafoose has been accompanying you in your live shows for a while now.**

A: He's incredible. He's breathed new life into my love of performance. I sort of had my arc with the band, and then I played solo for a few years, and I was starting to get a little sick of the sound of my own voice again. Just then, Todd came along, and, whew, it's just the best thing ever. I re-met him when he and Noe Venable opened for me last year. He's Noe's musical collaborator and ex-partner; I was like, "Hmmm. Noe... can I borrow Todd? [laughs] Indefinitely?"

**Q: So it's back to the dynamic of you and one other person on stage?**

A: Yes, yes. Which hasn't existed since the Andy Stochansky days and is really my favorite thing, I've decided. It's sort of like all of the excitement of playing music with somebody, but all of the freedom of being solo, almost. If I have an accompanist

... continued

who is a really good listener and really intuitive and we get a whole subliminal groove on, then, you know, I find I can still be as spontaneous, unpredictable, and extemporaneous as I can when I'm solo. That kind of exchange of energy can be so synergistic. It just feels right. I was playing solo for so long and then I got a band; I felt like I could do things with them that I couldn't do solo, so I tried those things. Then I bid farewell to the band, and I felt like I could finally do things solo that I just couldn't do with a band—you know, reach levels of intimacy, or focus. Now with Todd I feel the same again; there are places that we go that I could never reach alone. That sort of focus times two.

**Q: I can only think of one song on *Knuckle Down*—"Paradigm"—that is overtly political in the conventional sense, and it seems like this is the first album since maybe *Dilate* where that was the case. I know this is a radical oversimplification, but—**

A: —No, I'm down with it, as radical oversimplifications go! [laughs] Yeah, well, again, I sort of sat down and wrote these songs within a few months. I was just a writing fool [laughs]; there's an emotional moment that's definitely being explored, since that was a lot of what was going on with me. Yeah, and now I've already sort of half written another record—because that's the way it goes [laughs]—and [that one contains] a lot of political stuff. There are certain times when you are ingesting the outside world and processing through your personal world, and there are other times when you're reacting to/speaking back to the outside world and your personal life is just coasting comfortably.

**Q: You don't tend to make the age-old distinction between the "personal" and the "political."**

A: Not as much as the rest of the world does. To me it's all an expression of a perspective, and things are very rarely exclusively either political or personal. They're always both in my mind or my heart or that place that inspires me to write. So, no, I just write about what's on my mind, and that shifts like weather.

The song "Paradigm" is pretty much a definitive statement of my political focus this past year. A lot of the work that I have been doing has just been talking to people about becoming citizens again and exercising our rights, our power—we have so much unused power that it just hurts me.

**Q: In the song, you acknowledge that paying taxes is part of the essence of democracy. Taxes in themselves are not this inherently bad thing which must be eliminated.**

A: Yeah, yeah. [The move to cut them is] just playing into this baseline greed our culture is focused on now. That's selfishness. But look at them Canadians: they pay all kinds of taxes. And they put 'em to good

use, and they're pretty happy. Pretty progressive. Pretty balanced society. I think we have the choice between Big Government and Big Business. The former will answer to the people sooner than the latter, if you ask me. We can certainly make this so with a little bit of personal investment.

**Q: Of course, "Paradigm" is also a very personal song.**

A: Always.

**Q: It's true—all of your songs are very first-person, no matter what you're singing about.**

A: Yeah, that's part of my mechanism. But I wouldn't want this record portrayed as just a personal record, because although there's not a lot of political songs, it's all connected, all the ingredients are there, just with new flavors and proportions.

**Q: Speaking of "person" in that sense, you've always written a lot in the second person. A lot of your songs over the years tend to be addressed to "you".**

A: Yeah. I think that's one of my favorite things about the English language: that I can write to you, which is either you, a singular other person, or you, as in everyone else, the-rest-of-the-world you. And English is unique in that way. In all the romance languages, the languages that we're so connected to, you have to specify what kind of you you're talking to. And I just love that about English, because it really works for the whole songwriting thing, because songs are always letters to myself and to another person, so the you is always specific and yet universal, because you're always just speaking to the whole world when you speak to one person. It's like you're just giving voice to yourself, and that works very well in terms of singing to people.

**Q: The spoken-word piece "Parameters" is one of those second-person tales where the "you" seems to be yourself—**

A: —Oh, I don't know. It kind of trips and drifts all over.

**Q: I guess you're right. But that particular poem seems like a beautiful illustration of taking something that is very specific to you, and making it this very universal kind of song.**

A: Yeah, that's sort of my way, to try to take from my personal experience and find in it the universal. To make it useful to others. My friend Erin McKeown was listening to that track the other day and she said, "I can totally feel that feeling of anxiety, that whatever-it-is-that-haunts-you button getting pushed."

**Q: Have you performed "Parameters" live?**

A: Yeah, it's a tough one. You need just the right space to perform it in. It has worked out so it's been



very creepy and effective, and then the other night it was on the set list in New York, and I didn't realize it at first, but the audience was just so hyper—you know, they came out of the box just screaming and on their feet. And so that was a really hard night to do that poem. Every afternoon I sort of try and divine how the evening will go, and I was a little off that night.

**Q: What led you to make "Knuckle Down" the title song of the album?**

A: It was just an intuitive choice, because the expression "knuckle down" seemed to me to apply to the album as a whole, a running theme [laughs], if you will. It was one of the first songs I wrote for the record. Actually, it sort of got bumped from *Educated Guess*; it didn't quite take form until just after that record was complete, and it felt like a foreshadowing of the record I was then ready to work on.

I think if you look back at all my scads of records and all of their titles, together they make a little poem that is me. Which is maybe connected to the way that I don't feel political writing to be separate from personal writing—because, again, it's all just a person's perspective revealed. Peeling patches of paint. Whether it's a personal relationship or a societal dynamic or whatever it is I'm writing about, it's just an expression of my nature... being affected by the world. For whatever reason, the titles I finally settle on [tend to have] several levels of meaning for me, in terms of the individual songs that they come from, and the group of songs they speak to, and the person that gave birth to them and carries them around.

Interview by Ron Ehmke





On April 25th, Ani DiFranco joined 1,150,000 people at the **March for Women's Lives** in Washington, D.C. to voice her support for women's rights. As an Honored Guest, she marched in the front row for the three-mile route, along with Margaret Cho, Janeane Garofalo, Whoopi Goldberg, Gloria Steinem and many others. Later in the day, Ani played a few songs on the main stage in front of the Capitol, including "Your Next Bold Move".



In July, Ani, along with fellow musician Damien Rice, traveled to Thailand and **Burma** where they visited refugee camps and met with dissidents struggling for freedom and democracy in Burma. Burma is ruled by one of the world's most brutal military regimes, which has locked up 1991 Nobel Peace Prize recipient Aung San Suu Kyi. On this trip, organized by the US Campaign for Burma, Ani became the first American musician to visit the refugee camps. Ani donated a track to a benefit CD, *For the Lady*, organized by the USCB, which will raise awareness of Aung San Suu Kyi and the struggle for freedom in Burma.

On October 21st, Ani was honored by the Southern Center for Human Rights with the **Frederick Douglass Human Rights Award** "for using her extraordinary talents as a songwriter and music maker to educate people and inspire activism on a number of issues, including the death penalty and the human rights of people in prison." The Center is dedicated to the protection of the civil and human rights of people prosecuted in the criminal courts – particularly those facing the death penalty – and confined in the prisons and jails of the South. Ani has also lent her voice as narrator for the upcoming film, *Fighting for Life in the Death-Belt*, a documentary about the SCHR.



On December 7, Ani DiFranco's 2004 solo album, *Educated Guess*, was nominated for two GRAMMY awards! *Educated Guess* received its first nomination in the **Best Contemporary Folk Album** category. From the personal to the political, these songs are Ani's *Educated Guess* about love, life, and country, and each one was written, performed, recorded, engineered, and mixed by Ani herself. She and Brian Grunert were also nominated, as art directors of *Guess*, for **Best Recording Package**, the very same category in which they took home a GRAMMY for *Evolve* last year.



Looking toward democracy in her own nation, and inspired by the low turnout in the last presidential election, Ani toured the swing states in her fall **Vote Dammit!** tour to encourage 100% voter registration of her audiences. Former presidential candidate Dennis Kucinich visited the tour to speak, and a slideshow on our voting rights history and issues was played before Ani's set every night. A motley crew of special guests Indigo Girls, Margaret Cho, and Suzanne Westenhoefer also joined Ani throughout the tour, and political singer-songwriter Dan Bern opened many of the shows. The **Vote Dammit!** tour raised thousands of dollars for the Feminist Majority Foundation, and 20,000 people signed pledge cards to vote in the election, thousands of them newly registered at the shows.



# ANI DIFRANCO

# ◀ DISCOGRAPHY ▶



RBR042  
2005 **knuckle down**

2005



RBR040  
2004 **trust (DVD)**

2004

"Cinch's multi-camera attack, the spot-on, and left-of-center editing, all are subservient to one thing: DiFranco's songs, her syncopated snarl evolving into a throaty, elegant soulful full voice on the long notes, her abusively beautiful guitar style, her breathy, rapturous delight as she discovers her own songs in front of a live audience yet again."

—*The Buffalo News*



RBR034  
2004 **educated guess**

"...one of her sharpest, most honest works to date."  
—*Rolling Stone Online*



RBR030  
2003 **evolve**

"It's quite simply her finest hour on record, in no small part due to the contributions of her stellar band and the imaginative clarity given the arrangements by DiFranco and her small tribe of collaborators."  
—*The Buffalo News*



RBR029  
2002 **so much shouting, so much laughter**  
(double live album)  
"For two hours and three minutes, you can lose yourself in Ani DiFranco's fervent spirit, and intermittently, feel your heart flutter."  
—*San Diego Union-Tribune*



RBR026  
2002 **render (DVD / VHS)**

"Just like any Ani show: entertaining education."  
—*Relix*



RBR024  
2001 **revelling/reckoning**  
(double album)  
"A perfect album for anybody dealing with an overwhelming world."  
—*Minnesota Daily*



RBR020  
2000 **swing set** (6-song EP)  
"Another example of the efforts of Righteous Babe and DiFranco to chronicle and keep current the work of pioneer folk artists. Any way you slice it, you win."  
—*Bust*



RBR017  
1999 **to the teeth**  
"Her bite intact, the folk-punk icon tops off a decade's worth of music that would take many artists a lifetime to equal."  
—*The Des Moines Register*



RBR015  
1999 **fellow workers**  
stories: **UTAH PHILLIPS**  
music & production: **ANI DIFRANCO**  
"The sound is captivating: new, old, hip, timeless and thoroughly American."  
—*The Boston Globe*



RBR013  
1999 **up up up up up up**  
"By expanding her production palette, DiFranco has made a CD that's less an ancillary byproduct of her incendiary live shows than an album that marks a distinct sonic territory."  
—*The LA Times*



RBR012  
1998 **little plastic castle**  
"A serious expansion of [DiFranco's] musical palette, as though she's thrown open the windows to let the light in and discovered whole new worlds waiting there, new surroundings for her blunt, challenging poetry."  
—*Philadelphia Inquirer*



RBR011  
1997 **living in clip**  
(double live album)  
"A profound collaboration with her audience — the essence of the rock & roll ideal."  
—*Dave Marsh, Addicted to Noise*



RBR010  
1996 **more joy, less shame**  
(6-song EP)  
"For her fans, this EP will probably be a missing link..."  
—*Vancouver Sun*



RBR009  
1996 **the past didn't go anywhere**  
stories: **UTAH PHILLIPS**  
music & production: **ANI DIFRANCO**  
"The kind of album you want to sit and share a dozen times with a dozen different friends."  
—*Austin [Tx] Chronicle*



RBR008  
1996 **dilate**  
"A microscopic examination of envy and adoration, a hard-won lesson that you can't know anyone the way you hoped you could ... a beautiful record... the genuine article." —*CMJ*



RBR007  
1995 **not a pretty girl**  
"A direct, if sometimes disturbing, view into the collective soul for anyone who stops to listen."  
—*Dirty Linen*



RBR006  
1994 **out of range**  
"Pound for pound, the funniest, hurtinest Ani DiFranco outing thus far."  
—*The Village Voice*



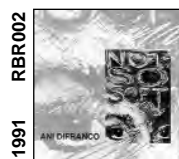
RBR005  
1993 **like i said** (songs 1990-91)  
"Subtle but marvellous... DiFranco's growth as a thoughtful, expressive singer informs the delicate, intimate reconsiderations."  
—*Ira Robbins, The Trouser Press Guide to '90s Rock*



RBR004  
1993 **puddle dive**  
"Joined by British harmonica player Rory McLeod, violinist Mary Ramsey, and pianist Ann Rabson of Saffire: The Uppity Blues Women, DiFranco sings songs the way guerrillas fight revolution."  
—*The Boston Globe*



RBR003  
1992 **imperfectly**  
"Don't fence her in and don't sell her short. Ani's got passion, humor, and tenderness."  
—*Montréal Gazette*



RBR002  
1991 **not so soft**  
"Articulate reflections on a fully engaged young life."  
—*Robert Christgau, The Village Voice*



RBR001  
1990 **ani difranco**  
"A fertile, melancholy sound and a strong lyricism, held together by her voice, which travels from an exquisitely held high note to a rough growl, from sharply rapped-out rhythms to soft, tremulous notes." —*Ms.*

