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Music Pick
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Prima Donna at the Knitting Factory

Prima Donna singer-guitarist Kevin Preston must have spent a lot of time playing with dolls when he was growing up. His band's new self-titled debut on Acetate Records includes the songs "Doll Face Baby" and "Stray Doll," and the word "doll" figures prominently in at least three other tracks on the CD. (Not to mention that Prima Donna borrows heavily from the style of the New York Dolls, although the young Hollywood quintet ultimately sounds more like Mott the Hoople, thanks to Aaron Minton's "sexy sax" and "killer keys.") Lyrics are obviously not Preston's strong suit (when an amoral vixen attempts to seduce the surprisingly timid singer on the S&M romp "Crucify," he can only protest, "The leather's so tight/I can't see clearly"). If anything, Prima Donna's retro-glam songs would actually seem cleverer without the inclusion of the demystifying lyric sheet, which undercuts the power of the group's energetic and genuinely anthemic choruses. For all of their clichés and borrowed imagery, "Everything's Wrong" and "Double Crosser" have rousing hooks that evoke the Dragons and tonight's headliners, the Joneses — bands who have managed to amplify their Johnny Thunders influences while adding their own sense of seedy majesty. (Falling James)