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FRAGRANCE

John Varvatos Makes a Rockstar

by **Adam Klappholz** September 16, 2009, 3:12 PM

Top and below: The Reckless Sons take the stage at the John Varvatos concert in New York City.

Earlier this week, as crowds packed into **John Varvatos"s**; store on the Bowery, in New York City, it looked like the invitation had called for black leather and lace. True to form, Varvatos' store, formerly home to the legendary punk rock venue CBGB, brought out a decidedly rock 'n' roll crowd. Varvatos isn't showing in New York's Fashion Week, so he decided to hold a rock concert called Free the Noise instead in order to find the next great rock band. Teaming up with *Spin* magazine and Island Records, Varvatos fielded over 300 band submissions from around the world, and flew three of these bands to Manhattan to perform in front of himself, rock photographer Mick Rock, and Jane's Addiction frontman Perry Farrell,, among others.

What separated Varvatos's event from the rest of Fashion Week was its laid back atmosphere. No velvet rope. No stop and repeat. No blinding flash bulbs. Just cold Heinekens, Patron cocktails, and three young bands all playing for the opportunity to win a development deal with Island Records.

The Fast Romantics, from Calgary, Canada, went on first and were met with lackluster enthusiasm—they just didn't have the charisma to hold the crowd's attention. The next two bands totally rocked though. **Reckless Sons**, New York locals, had the crowd jumping around, and the final band, Howlers, from Santiago, Chile,

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convinced Farrell to head towards the equator for a visit.

After all of the bands performed three songs, the judges huddled together and named the Reckless Sons the winner of the first Free the Noise event. The band then took stage to perform a whole set on its own. While Fashion Week may be about towering heels, celebrity parties, and paparazzi, Varvatos is blazing a trail by combining his love of music with fashion. Unlike other labels, he doesn't just pay mainstream artists to perform at his parties, instead, he's discovering them.

Keywords:
John Varvatos

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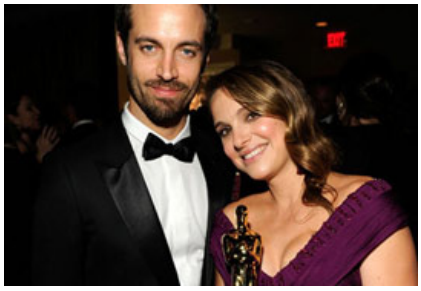

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