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SUMMER 2021



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FULTON LEROY WASHINGTON (AKA "MR. WASH"), *POLITICAL TEARS OBAMA* (DETAIL), 2008. OIL ON STRETCHED CANVAS. 24 × 18 IN. (61 × 45.7 CM). COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

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MOVIES WE LIKE!



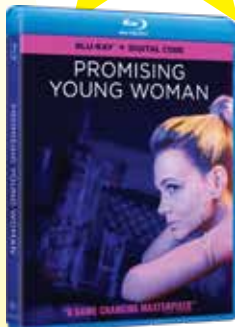
CROODS: A NEW AGE

The first prehistoric family must learn to coexist and work with the sophisticated Betterman family... or they'll all go extinct!



MARKSMAN

Ex-Marine and Arizona rancher Jim Hanson (Liam Neeson) is pursued by ruthless drug cartel assassins as he travels to Chicago to deliver an 11-year-old migrant boy to his family.



PROMISING YOUNG WOMAN

From visionary director Emerald Fennell (Killing Eve) comes a delicious new take on revenge, thrilling and wildly entertaining!



THE OUTPOST DIRECTOR'S CUT

Based on true events, a team of U.S. soldiers stationed at the deadliest outpost in Afghanistan fight for survival in the ultimate display of American valor.



WONDER WOMAN 1984

Fast forward to the 1980s as Wonder Woman's next big screen adventure finds her facing a wide array of foes including Max Lord and The Cheetah.



LITTLE THINGS

As Deputy Sheriff Joe "Deke" Deacon searches for a serial killer, disturbing secrets are uncovered that could threaten more than his case.



JUDAS & THE BLACK MESSIAH

FBI informant William O'Neal infiltrates the Illinois Black Panther Party. A battle wages for his soul. Will he align with the forces of good or subdue The Panthers?



JUSTICE SOCIETY: WORLD WAR II

THE FLASH breaks through the time space barrier and into the middle of World War II! There, he fights alongside WONDER WOMAN and The Justice Society.



TOM & JERRY: THE MOVIE

Enemies for their entire lives, the cartoon world's most famous cat and mouse team return with a live action/animation hybrid offering.



BREAKING SURFACES

Writer/director Joachim Hedén opts for realism and ingenious situations in one of the most intense and propulsive survival thrillers in recent memory. In Swedish and Norwegian with English subtitles



WILLY'S WONDERLAND

Stranded in a remote town, a quiet loner (Nic Cage) is trapped inside an abandoned family fun center; locked in an epic battle with the possessed animatronic mascots.



EAT WHEATIES!

Co-chair of his college reunion, Sid Straw is banned from the reunion when his messages to a famous classmate go viral. Sid hires an attorney to clear his name. Out 6-15!

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The instantly recognizable iconic colors and design of The Beatles Yellow Submarine album have landed on a turntable!

It is also the exclusive 2021 Record Store Day Turntable. Available at Amoeba Music for the June 12 Record Store Day drop, the Beatles Yellow Submarine Portfolio Turntable production is limited to the 1,500 units worldwide and will become an instant collectible. The Audio-Technica AT3600A moving magnet cartridge and adjustable tonearm ensure your records are respected the RCA outputs allow you to expand the sound beyond the built-in portable speakers.

Sky of Blue, or Sea of Green, we have your Yellow Submarine!

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SUMMER 2021

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knowledgeable experts (AKA, our staff)
have put their collective heads & ears
together to bring you a biased & completely
unobjective collection of ...

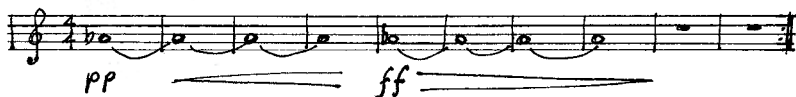
**OUR FAVORITE
NEW MUSIC
MOVIES & BOOKS!**



DESERT PIECE

(To be performed out of doors at dusk, throughout the spring and summer, by any number of participants, and lasting any length of time, as agreed upon in advance.)

1. Beginning as softly as possible, each performer hums one sustained tone.
2. Gradually build intensity, with a little change in pitch as possible.
3. Fade away into silence.
4. Try on the robe.
Repeat as necessary.



with accompaniment as follows:

- distant call of coyotes
- cricket chorus
- poor-will song



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Summer 2021

Amoeba Music has become synonymous with music and movie expertise from the arcane to the popular. Our staff consists of the most passionate connoisseurs of all cultural explorations.

All Amoebites were asked to list their favorite releases from the past six months and beyond. We then had a team of experts decipher their cryptic handwriting, analyze the results and compile the lists into this little book!

We hope you find the results interesting and useful. For more lists and updates on new releases, visit the Amoeblog on Amoeba.com.

A SELECTION OF OUR FAVORITES BY GENRE

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MUSIC We Like

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EDITOR'S NOTE:

In March of 2020 I was just putting an issue of MWL to bed when everything went nutty with Covid. Oddly, I spent the next two weeks of my life with Styx's "The Best of Times" rattling round and round in my head. It seemed apt in some weird way, because even though things felt pretty dire, I knew we were living in "memorable times." (A blessing and a curse!) Music got a lot of us through based on the lists you'll find in this book. Whether you were discovering, creating, or revisiting—music never stopped. It factored large in this year for me and maybe it worked that way for you, too.

If we haven't seen in you in person for awhile, know that we've missed you, and we look forward to seeing you again soon. Tell us about your discoveries and what got you through! And be sure to let us know if you find something you love in this book: @amoebamusic #musicwelike

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NEW items are designated with a white price tag. **USED** items have yellow, green or red price tags. Red tags indicate clearance items. All genres have clearance areas at the end of their respective used sections. **CLEARANCE** items have an ongoing deal; buy three, get the fourth of least value for **FREE!**

Don't forget to look underneath the bins for extra bargains that may not be represented in the above corresponding bin. There are tons of nuggets hiding in pockets all over this store, so be sure to look all around!

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Love, The Bedrock.LA Staff.

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A SAMPLING OF OUR FAVORITES BY GENRE



VINYL REISSUES

**Brian Eno & Jah Wobble –
*Spinner*** (ALL SAINTS)

**Brian Eno & John Cale –
*Wrong Way Up*** (ALL SAINTS)

Can – *Future Days* (MUTE)

Chaka Khan – *Epiphany* (RHINO)

Clan of Xymox – *Peel Sessions*
(DARK ENTRIES)

Deftones – *White Pony* (WARNER)

Elliott Smith – *Catalog*
(KILL ROCK STARS)

Gang Of Four – *Catalog*
(MATADOR)

Japan – *Quiet Life* (BMG)

Killing Joke – *Killing Joke*
(SPINEFARM)

PJ Harvey – *Catalog* (ISLAND)

Pylon – *Chomp/Gyrate*
(NEW WEST)

Roberta Flack – *First Take*
(ATLANTIC)

**Spiritualized – *Lazer Guided
Melodies*** (FAT POSSUM)

Swans – *Children Of God*
(YOUNG GOD)

**Valium Aggelein –
*Black Moon*** (NUMERO GROUP)

**Weyes Blood –
*Cardamom Times***
(MEXICAN SUMMER)

SOUL

**Adrian Younge – *The American
Negro*** (JAZZ IS DEAD)

Alicia Keys – *Alicia* (RCA)

**Aretha Franklin – *The Genius
Of Aretha Franklin*** (ATLANTIC)

Bettye LaVette – *Blackbirds*
(VERVE)

Black Pumas – Black Pumas

(ATO)

El Michels Affair – Yeti Season

(BIG CROWN)

Judith Hill – Baby, I'm Hollywood

(REGIME MUSIC GROUP)

Kali Uchis – Sin Miedo

(INTERSCOPE)

Kehlani – It Was Good Until It Wasn't

(ARTIST PARTNER GROUP)

Ledisi – The Wild Card

(BMG)

Menahan Street Band – The Exciting Sounds Of Menahan Street Band

(DAPTONE)

Prince – Sign O'The Times [Deluxe Edition]

(WARNER BROS.)

Roberta Flack – First Take [50th Anniversary Edition]

(ATLANTIC)

Sam Cooke – Ain't That Good News [Reissue]

(ABKCO)

Sharon Jones & the Dap-Kings – Just Dropped In (To See What Condition My Rendition Is In!)

(DAPTONE)

Steve Cropper – Fire It Up

(PROVOGUE)

The Budos Band – Long In The Tooth

(DAPTONE)

Tower Of Power – 50 Years of Funk & Soul: Live at the Fox Theater, Oakland, CA, June 2018

(ARTISTRY)

Various Artists – Colemine Records Presents: Brighter Days Ahead

(COLEMINE)

JAZZ

A Love Supreme Electric [Henry Kaiser/John Hanrahan/Vinny Golia/Mike Watt/Wayne Peet] – A Love Supreme & Meditations: A Salvo Inspired by John Coltrane

(CUNEIFORM)

Ali Hasaan Ibn – Metaphysics: The Lost Atlantic Album

(OMNIVORE)

Angel Bat Dawid & Tha Brothahood – LIVE

(INTERNATIONAL ANTHEM RECORDING CO.)

Artemis – Artemis

(BLUE NOTE)

Charles Lloyd & the Marvels – Tone Poem

(BLUE NOTE)

Cindy Blackman Santana – Give The Drummer Some

(COPPERLINE)

Damon Locks & Black Monument Ensemble – NOW

(INTERNATIONAL ANTHEM RECORDING CO.)

Dr. Lonnie Smith – Breathe

(BLUE NOTE)

Instant Composers Pool – Incipient ICP (1966-1971)

(CORBETT VS. DEMPSEY)

Irreversible Entanglements – Who Sent You?

(INTERNATIONAL ANTHEM)

Jeff Parker – Suite For Max Brown

(NONESUCH)

Joe Lovano / Marilyn Crispell / Carmen Castaldi – Garden of Expression

(ECM)

Junk Magic – Compass Confusion

(PYROCLASTIC)

Kahil El'Zabar – America the Beautiful

(SPIRITMUSE)

Mary Halvorson's Code Girl – Artlessly Falling

(FIREHOUSE 12)

Natural Information Society with Evan Parker – Descension (Out of Our Constrictions)

(EREMITE)

Pat Metheny – Road to the Sun

(MODERN RECORDINGS)

Pino Palladino / Blake Mills – Notes With Attachments

(IMPULSE!)

R+R=Now – R+R=Now Live

(BLUE NOTE)

Ron Miles – Rainbow Sign

(BLUE NOTE)

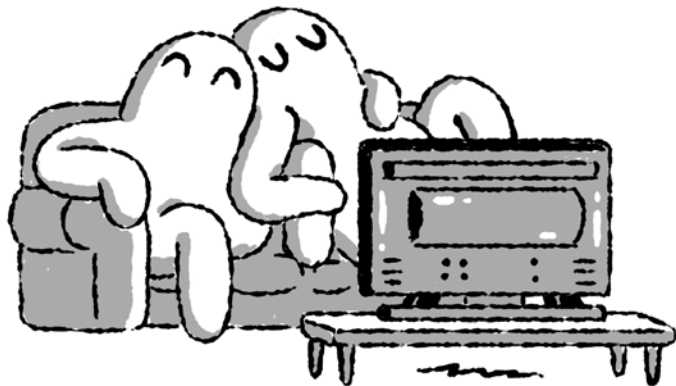
Tomoka Reid / Joe Morris – Combinations

(ROGUEART)

Wayne Krantz – Music Room 1985

(ABSTRACT LOGIX)





ELECTRONIC

Autechre – *SIGN* (WARP)

Chico Mann – *Double Life*
(UBIQUITY)

Floating Points / Pharoah Sanders & the London Symphony Orchestra – *Floating Points / Pharoah Sanders & the London Symphony Orchestra*
(LUAKA BOP)

Il Quadro di Troisi (Eva Geist & Donato Dozzy) – *Il Quadro di Troisi*
(RASTER)

Jessy Lanza – *All The Time*
(HYPERDUB)

Kamaal Williams – *Wu Hen*
(WARP)

Lindstrøm / Prins Thomas – *lil* (SMALLTOWN SUPERSOUND)

Moor Mother – *Circuit City*
(DON GIOVANNI)

Nicolás Jaar – *Cenizas*
(OTHER PEOPLE)

Octo Octa & Eris Drew – *Fabric presents Octo Octa & Eris Drew* (FABRIC)

Ólafur Arnalds – *Some Kind Of Peace*
(MERCURY KX)

Patrick Cowley – *Some Funkettes* (DARK ENTRIES)

Pauline Anna Strom – *Angel Tears in Sunlight*
(RVNG INT'L)

Pole – *Fading* (MUTE)

Róisín Murphy – *Róisín Machine*
(SKINT)

serpentwithfeet – *DEACON*
(SECRETLY CANADIAN)

The Avalanches – *We Will Always Love You*
(ASTRALWERKS)

Various Artists – *Pop Ambient 2021*
(KOMPAKT)

COUNTRY AND BLUEGRASS

Brothers Osborne – *Skeletons*
(EMI NASHVILLE)

Chris Stapleton – *Starting Over* (MERCURY NASHVILLE)

Cole Quest & The City Pickers – *Self [En]Titled* (OMNIVORE)

Colter Wall – *Western Swing & Waltzes and Other Punchy Songs* (LA HONDA)

Garland Records – *Pacific Northwest Snuff Box*

(BEATROCKET)

Gillian Welch / David Rawlings – *All The Good Times (Are Past & Gone)*

(ACONY)

Jim Campilongo / Luca Benedetti – *Two Guitars*

(BLUE HEN)

Loretta Lynn – *Still Woman Enough*

(SONY LEGACY)

Luke Combs – *What You See Ain't Always What You Get*

(SONY MUSIC NASHVILLE)

Mandy Barnett – *Every Star Above*

(BMG)

Margo Price – *Perfectly Imperfect At The Ryman*

(LOMA VISTA)

Molly Tuttle – *...but I'd rather be with you* (COMPASS)

Sarah Jarosz – *World On The Ground*

(ROUNDER)

Steve Earle & The Dukes – *J.T.* (NEW WEST)

Sturgill Simpson – *Cuttin' Grass Vol. 1 & 2*

(HIGH TOP MOUNTAIN)

Tanya Tucker – *Live From The Troubadour* (FANTASY)

The Mavericks – *en Español* (MONO MUNDO)

Thomas Rhett – *Country Again, Side A*

(BIG MACHINE)

Tyler Childers – *Long Violent History*

(RCA)

Willie Nelson – *That's Life*

(SONY LEGACY)



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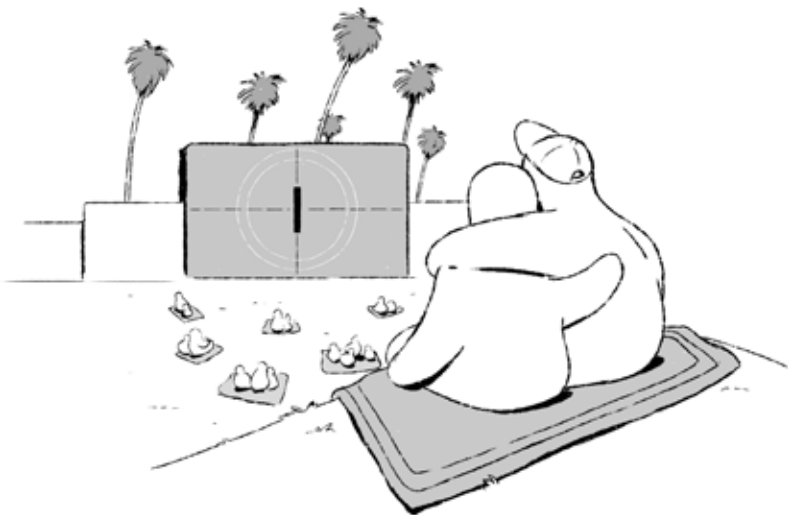
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ORANGE

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FOLK

Chris Smither – *More From The Levee* (SIGNATURE SOUNDS)

Fred Neil – *38 MacDougal* (DELMORE RECORDING SOCIETY)

Gwenifer Raymond – *Strange Lights Over Garth Mountain* (TOMPKINS SQUARE)

Jack Blount – *Spider Tales* (FREE DIRT)

Josephine Foster – *No Harm Done* (FIRE)

Kacy & Clayton and Marlon Williams – *Plastic Bouquet* (NEW WEST)

Leyla McCalla – *Vari-Colored Songs* (SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS)

Loudon Wainwright III – *I'd Rather Lead a Band* (THIRTY TIGERS)

Luka Kuplowsky – *Stardust* (MAMA BIRD)

Martin Simpson – *Home Recordings* (TOPIC)

Mason Lindahl – *Kissing Rosy In The Rain* (TOMPKINS SQUARE)

Michael Hurley – *Blue Navigator* (FEEDING TUBE)

Mike Cooper – *Playing With Water* (ROOM40)

Rhiannon Giddens – *They're Calling Me Home* (NONESUCH)

Robbie Basho – *Song of the Avatars: The Lost Master Tapes* (TWOGOODEARS)

Selah Broderick – *Anam* (WESTERN VINYL)

Shirley Collins – *Heart's Ease* (DOMINO)

The Staves – *Good Woman* (NONESUCH)

Various Artists – *The Harry Smith B-Sides* (DUST-TO-DIGITAL)

War & Treaty – *Hearts Town* (ROUNDER)

BLUES AND NEW ORLEANS

Archie Lee Hooker & The Coast to Coast Blues Band – *Living In A Memory* (DIXIEFROG)

Danny Kroha – *Detroit Blues* (THIRD MAN)

Elizabeth King – *Living In The Last Days* (BIBLE & TIRE RECORDING CO.)

Elvin Bishop / Charlie Musselwhite – *100 Years of Blues* (ALLIGATOR)

Fantastic Negrito – *Have You Lost Your Mind Yet?* (COOKING VINYL)

Joanna Connor – *4801 South Indiana Avenue* (KTBA)

Jon Batiste – *We Are* (VERVE)

Kenny Wayne Shepherd – *Straight To You: Live* (PROVOGUE)

Popa Chubby – *It's A Mighty Hard Road* (DIXIEFROG)

Professor Longhair – *The Bach Of Rock* (SUNSET BLVD)

Selwyn Birchwood – *Living In A Burning House* (ALLIGATOR)

The Reverend Peyton's Big Damn Band – *Dance Songs For Hard Times* (FAMILY OWNED)

Various Artists – *Our New Orleans* (NONESUCH)



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WORLD

**Ali Akbar Khan –
Bear's Sonic Journals:
That Which Colors the Mind**

(OWSLEY STANLEY FOUNDATION)

Altin Gün – *Yol* (ATO)

Bombino – *Live In Amsterdam*
(PARTISAN)

Dom La Nena – *Tempo*
(SIX DEGREES)

**El Gran Combo de
Puerto Rico – *En Cuarentena***
(RIMAS)

**Femi Kuti & Made Kuti –
*Legacy+*** (PARTISAN)

Field Works – *Cedars*
(TEMPORARY RESIDENCE)

Fleur – *Fleur* [PINK VINYL]
(6131 RECORDS)

**Guedra Guedra –
*Vexillology*** (ON THE CORNER)

**Hallelujah Chicken Run Band
– *Take One*** (ANALOG AFRICA)

**Hooshyar Khayam /
Bamdad Afshar – *Raaz***
(30M)

**Jane Birkin –
*Oh! Pardon tu dormais...***
(VERVE)

Karol G – *KG0516*
(UNIVERSAL MUSIC LATINO)

**La Femme –
*Paradigmes***
(DISQUE POINTU)

Mariza – *Sings Amelia*
(NONESUCH)

Mdou Moctar – *Afrique Victime*
(MATADOR)

Noa / Gil Dor – *Afterallogy*
(NAÏVE)

**Star Feminine Band –
*Star Feminine Band***
(BORN BAD)

Tony Allen – *There is No End*
(BLUE NOTE)

**Toumani Diabaté and London
Symphony Orchestra –
*Korolen*** (WORLD CIRCUIT)

**Various Artists –
*The Secret Museum of
Mankind: Guitars Vol. 1:
Prologue to Modern Style***
(JALOPY)

**Various Artists –
*Silk Road: Journey of the
Armenian Diaspora 1971***
(TERRESTRIAL FUNK)

**Vicente Fernández –
*A Mis 80's*** (SONY U.S. LATIN)

**Wu Man & Wu Wei –
*Distant Mountains***
(DREYER GAIDO)

CLASSICAL

**Arianna Savall –
*Le Labyrinthe d'Ariane***
(ALIA VOX)

**Bunita Marcus –
*Lecture For Jo Kondo***
(99CHANTS)

**Cecilia Bartoli –
*Queen of Baroque***
(DECCA)

**Daniel Hope /
Alexey Botvinov –
*Schnittke: Works for
Violin and Piano***
(DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON)

**Danny Driver –
*György Ligeti: The 18 Etudes***
(HYPERION)

**Evelyn Glennie;
City Chamber Orchestra
of Hong Kong; Jean Thorel –
*Alrich - Jenkins - Rorem:
Concertos for Mallet
Instruments***
(NAXOS CLASSICS)

**Gentle Fire –
*Explorations (1970-1973)***
(PARADIGM DISCS)

**Hamrahlíð (Hamrahlid) Choir
– *Come And Be Joyful***
(ONE LITTLE INDEPENDENT)

**Judith Hamann –
*Music for Cello and Humming***
(BLANK FORMS)

**Katia & Marielle Labèque –
*Les enfants terribles***
(DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON)

**Kelly Moran / Prurient –
*Chain Reaction At Dusk***
(HOSPITAL PRODUCTIONS)

**Kronos Quartet –
*Long Time Passing:
Kronos Quartet and Friends
Celebrate Pete Seeger***
(SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS)

**Martha Argerich / Mito
Chamber Orchestra /
Seiji Ozawa – *Beethoven:
Piano Concerto No. 2;
Grieg: Holberg Suite***
(DECCA)

**Momo Kodama /
Seiji Ozawa /
Mito Chamber Orchestra –
*Hosokawa / Mozart***
(ECM NEW SERIES)



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Foreign Experiences
(LOVELY MUSIC)

Sarah Hennies –
Spectral Malsconcities
(NEW WORLD)

**Yo-Yo Ma / Stuart Duncan /
Edgar Meyer / Chirs Thile** –
Not Our First Goat Rodeo
(SONY CLASSICAL)

EXPERIMENTAL

Catherine Christer Hennix –
Unbegrenzt
(BLANK FORMS/EMPTY EDITIONS)

Chris Corsano / Bill Orcutt –
Made Out of Sound (PALILALIA)

Conrad Schnitzler –
*Paracon (The Paragon Session
Outtakes 1978-1979)* (BUREAU B)

**Controlled Death/
Rudolf Eb.er** –
Death Ceremonies
(COLD SPRING)

David Toop –
Apparition Paintings (ROOM40)

Diamanda Galas –
De-formation
(INTRAVENAL SOUND OP)

Donald Miller – *Transgression!*
(VIN DU SELECT QUALITITE)

Einstürzende Neubauten –
Alles In Allem (POTOMAK)

Eyvind Kang – *Ajaeng Ajaeng*
(IDEOLOGIC ORGAN)

Hive Mind – *Elysian Alarms*
(DIFFICULT INTERACTIONS)

John Zorn – *Azoth* (TZADIK)

Kaitlyn Aurelia Smith –
The Mosaic Of Transformation
(GHOSTLY INTERNATIONAL)

Lol Coxhill / Fred Frith –
French Gigs (KLANGGALERIE)

**Loren Connors /
Oren Ambarchi** – *Leone*
(FAMILY VINEYARD)

**Marcia Bassett /
Thomas Dimuzio** –
Losing Circles (YEW)

Moonbeam Terror –
Coercive Control (DEATHBED TAPES)

Negativland –
The World Will Decide
(SEELAND)

Oneohtrix Point Never –
Magic Oneohtrix Point Never
(WARP)

Sun City Girls –
*Live at the Sky Church -
September 3rd, 2004*
(TWENTY ONE EIGHTY TWO)

Sunburned Hand Of The Man
– *Pick A Day To Die*
(THREE LOBED)

Susan Alcorn Quintet –
Pedernal (RELATIVE PITCH)

Trance – *Ancient History*
(TRONIKS)

Various Artists –
*La Ola Interior: Spanish
Ambient and Acid Exoticism
1983-1990* (BONGO JOE)

William Basinski –
Lamentations
(TEMPORARY RESIDENCE)

Yellow Gas Flames –
Accepting the Necrophile
(HOSPITAL PRODUCTIONS)

METAL

Black Knife – *Murder Season*
(JEMS/HUSK)

Ebony Pendant –
Garden of Strangling Roots
(FORBIDDEN SONORITY)

Eyehategod –
History of Nomadic Behavior
(CENTURY MEDIA)

Gatecreeper –
An Unexpected Reality
(CLOSED CASKET ACTIVITY)

Hulder – *Godlastering*
(IRON BONEHEAD)

Kommodus – *From the Ashes
of Empire* (BESTIAL RAPE)

Lamp of Murmuur –
Heir of Ecliptical Romanticism
(DEATH KVLT)

Pan-American Native Front –
Little Turtle's War
(STYGIAN BLACK HAND)

Summoning – *Demon Tapes*
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The Ruins of Beverast –
The Thule Grimoires (VÅN)

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OLDIES

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The Coed Albums:
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Adam And Evening**
(OMNIVORE)

**Dusty Springfield –
The Complete
Atlantic Singles 1968-1971**
(REAL GONE)

**Elvis Presley –
From Elvis In Nashville**
(SONY LEGACY)

**Jimmy Sweeney –
Without You** (ORG)

**Little Richard –
King Of Rock And Roll**
(OMNIVORE)

**Nancy Sinatra –
Start Walkin' 1965-1976**
(LIGHT IN THE ATTIC)

**Shaker's –
In The Studio Again**
(GUERSSSEN)

**Sly & the Visaynes –
Yellow Moon: The Complete
Recordings 1961-1962**
(ACE)

**Small Faces –
Small Faces [Deluxe]**
(CHARLY)

**Various Artists –
Born To Hula!:
Stag-O-Lee DJ Set Vol. 4**
(STAG-O-LEE)

REGGAE / SKA

**Delroy Wilson –
Better Must Come**
(RADIATION ROOTS)

**Jah Thomas –
Dub Of Dubs**
(BURNING SOUNDS)

**Lee Scratch Perry –
Black Ark In Dub**
(VP RECORDS)

**New Age Steppers –
Stepping Into The New Age
[5-CD]** (ON-U SOUND)

**Prince Far I –
Jamaican Heroes**
(MUSIC ON VINYL)

**Various Artists –
Studio One Rocksteady
Got Soul** (SOUL JAZZ)

**Various Artists –
I Love The Reggay!
Boss Sounds From
Randy's Records**
(DOCTOR BIRD)

**Various Artists –
The Ska From Jamaica:
Original Album Plus
Bonus Tracks**
(DOCTOR BIRD)

**Vivian Jones –
Bank Robbery**
(ROOTS VIBRATION)

**Yabby You & The Prophets –
Conquering Lion**
(PRESSURE SOUNDS)

COMEDY

**Harry Shearer –
The Many Moods Of
Donald Trump** (TWANKY)

**Jeremiah Watkins –
Family Reunion** (COMEDY DYNAMICS)

Jim Gaffigan – Pale Tourist
(COMEDY DYNAMICS)

**Richard Pryor –
Craps' (After Hours)**
(OMNIVORE)

Tim Minchin – Apart Together
(BMG)

SOUNDTRACKS

**Adrian Younge /
Ali Shaheed Muhammad –
Run This Town**
[Original Score to the
Motion Picture]
(LINEAR LABS)

**Andra Day –
The United States Vs.
Billie Holiday**
[Music From the
Motion Picture]
(WARNER)

**Branford Marsalis –
Ma Rainey's Black Bottom**
[Music From the Netflix Film]
(MILAN)

**Daniel Pemberton –
Trial Of The Chicago 7**
[Music From The Netflix Film]
(VARESE SARABANDE)

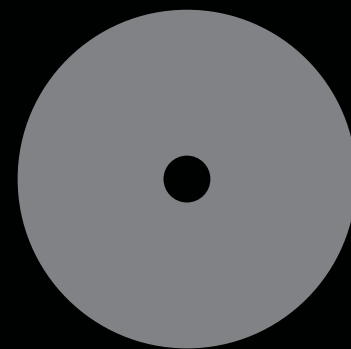
**Trent Reznor & Atticus Ross
– Soul** (DISNEY)

**Various Artists –
One Night in Miami...**
[Original Motion Picture
Soundtrack] (ABKCO)

**Various Artists –
Coming 2 America**
[Amazon Original
Motion Picture Soundtrack]
(DEF JAM)

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**Various Artists –
The Devil All The Time
[Music From the Netflix Film]**
(ABKCO)

**Various Artists –
Tina: The Tina Turner Musi-
cal [Original Cast Recordings]**
(GHOSTLIGHT)

DVDS & BLU-RAY

MUSIC DVDS

**Bob Dylan/Martin Scorsese –
Rolling Thunder Revue** (CRITERION)

Frank Zappa – Zappa
(MAGNOLIA)

Go-Go's – The Go-Go's (UNIVER-
SAL)

**Robbie Robertson/The Band –
Once Were Brothers**
(MAGNOLIA)

**Shane MacGowan –
Crock of Gold** (MAGNOLIA)

Various Artists – White Riot
(FILM MOVEMENT)

**Various Artists –
Jazz On A Summer's Day**
(KINO)

TV

Star Trek: Picard: Season One

South Park Season 23

**Lovecraft Country:
Complete First Season**

**Yellowstone:
Season Three**

**Schitt's Creek:
The Complete Collection**

**Babylon Berlin:
Season Three**

**The Office:
The Complete Series**

The Undoing

ACTION / THRILLER / MYSTERY

The Bloodhound (2020)

Tenet (2020)

Greenland (2020)

HORROR / SCI-FI SUPERHERO / FANTASY

Willy's Wonderland (2021)

Psycho Goreman (2020)

Host (2020)

I Am Lisa (2020)

Reunion (2020)

Birds Of Prey (2020)

DRAMA / COMEDY

Ladybug Ladybug (1963)

First Cow (2019)

Mank (2020)

Judas and the Black Messiah
(2021)

Promising Young Woman (2020)

**Barb & Star Go To Vista Del
Mar** (2021)

Paint (2020)

Bill & Ted Face The Music
(2020)

FOREIGN LANGUAGE

House of Hummingbird
(2018)

World of Wong Kar Wai
[Criterion]

Lust, Caution (2007)

Vitalina Varela (2019)

Bacurau (2019)

Another Round (2020)

DOCUMENTARIES

Paris Is Burning (1990)

**Horror Noire: A History of
Black Horror** (2019)

**Happy Happy Joy Joy:
The Ren & Stimpy Story** (2020)

Filmworker (2017)

An Accidental Studio (2019)

**Leap Of Faith: William Friedkin
On the Exorcist** (2019)

A Perfect Planet (2021)

Collective (2019)

ANIMATION / KIDS

Soul (2020)

Earwig & The Witch (2020)

Pinocchio (2019)

Wolfwalkers (2020)

BLU-RAY / 4K

Pump Up the Volume
(1990)

Paid In Full (2002)

Secrets & Lies (1996)

**John Hughes:
5 Movie Collection**

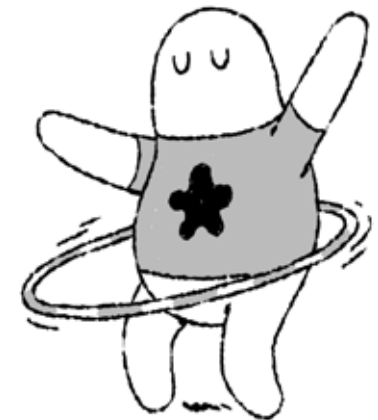
North Shore (1987)

Irma Vep (1996)

Spaceballs (1987)

The Wild Life (1984)

Masculin Feminin (1966)





BOOKS

LITERATURE / GRAPHIC NOVELS

Andrew Krivine – *Too Fast to Live Too Young to Die: Punk & Post Punk Graphics 1976-1986* (PAVILION)

Adrian Tomine – *The Loneliness of The Long Distance Cartoonist* (DRAWN & QUARTERLY)

Lana Del Rey – *Violent Bent Backwards Over the Grass* (SIMON & SCHUSTER)

Matt Ruff – *Lovecraft County* (HARPER PERENNIAL)

Mark Millar/Wildfredo Torres – *Jupiter's Legacy Vol. 1* (IMAGE COMICS)

Barry Windsor-Smith – *Monsters* (FANTAGRAPHICS)

MUSIC BOOKS

Richard Thompson (with Scott Timberg) – *Beeswing: Losing My Way and Finding My Voice 1967-1975* (ALGONQUIN BOOKS)

Allison Moorer – *Blood: A Memoir* (HACHETTE)

Billy Miller & Michael Hurtt – *Mind Over Matter – The Myths & Mysteries Of Detroit's Fortune Records* (KICKS)

Rich Tupica – *There Was A Light: The Cosmic History of Chris Bell and the Rise of Big Star* (PERMUTED)

Rob Halford – *Confess: The Autobiography* (HACHETTE)

Joni Mitchell – *Morning Glory on the Vine: Early Songs & Drawings* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN HARCOURT)

FILM BOOKS

Joseph Lanza – *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre: The Film That Terrified a Rattled Nation* (SKYHORSE)

Jamie Nash – *Save the Cat! Writes for TV* (SAVE THE CAT! PRESS)

Adam Nayman – *Paul Thomas Anderson: Masterworks* (HARRY N. ABRAMS)

NON-FICTION

Damien Echols – *Angels & Archangels: A Magician's Guide* (SOUNDS TRUE)

Barack Obama – *A Promised Land* (CROWN)

Isabel Wilkerson – *Caste* (RANDOM HOUSE)

Erik Larson – *The Splendide & The Wire* (CROWN)

Robert Kolker – *Hidden Valley Road: Inside the Mind of an American Family Hardcover* – (DOUBLEDAY)

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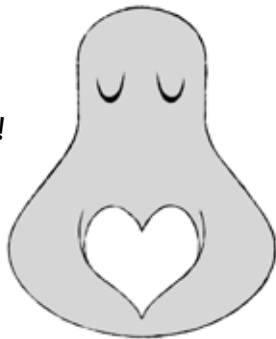
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Filth – *Don’t Hide Your Hate 7”*

(MAD BUTCHER CLASSICS)
Find it in: PUNK

Östro 430 – *Keine Krise Kann Mich Schocken (Die Kompletten Studioaufnahmen 1981 - 1983)*

(TAPETE)
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The Fall – *Live At St. Helens Technical College, 1981*

(CASTLE FACE)
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Screamers – *Demo Hollywood 1977 12”*

(SUPERIOR VIADUCT)
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Rubble – *Parts Per Million 7”*

(DISTORT REALITY)
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Crucifix – *Dehumanization*

(KUSTOMIZED)
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Adulkt Life – *Book of Curses*

(WHAT'S YOUR RUPTURE?)
Find it in: PUNK

Various Artists – *Somewhere Between: Mutant Pop, Electronic Minimalism & Shadow Sounds of Japan 1980–1988* (LIGHT IN THE ATTIC)

Find it in: INTERNATIONAL ROCK

Nailah Hunter – *Spells*

(LEAVING)
Find it in: NEW AGE

Einstürzende Neubauten – *Alles in Allem* (POTOMAK)

Find it in: EXPERIMENTAL

Ayalew Mesfin – *Tewedije Limot (Let Me Die Loved)*

(NOW-AGAIN)
Find it in: WORLD



**Zephaniah Ohora –
Listening To The Music**

(LAST ROUND UP)
Find it in: COUNTRY

**Sturgill Simpson –
Cuttin' Grass**

(HIGH TOP MOUNTAIN)
Find it in: BLUEGRASS

Waxahatchee – Saint Cloud

(MERGE)
Find it in: ROCK

Paul Weller – On Sunset

(VERVE FORECAST)
Find it in: ROCK

**Guided By Voices –
Mirrored Aztec** (GBV INC)

Find it in: ROCK

**Various Artists –
When Jah Shall Come**

(PRESSURE SOUNDS)
Find it in: REGGAE

**Psychedelic Furs –
Made Of Rain**

(COOKING VINYL)
Find it in: ROCK

**Jeff Tweedy –
Love Is The King** (DBPM)

Find it in: ROCK

**Elvis Costello –
Hey Clockface** (CONCORD)

Find it in: ROCK

KEVIN

**Calvin Keys –
Shawn-Neeq [Reissue]**

(BLACK JAZZ / REAL GONE)

Find it in: JAZZ

This is a must-have reissue for jazz collectors. Deep guitar/ Rhodes driven quintet led by Oakland native, Calvin Keys. They get a little outside at times but over-all very mellow & groovy. As is the case with most Black Jazz LPs, there is one seriously funky cut and the rest is top-quality Jazz.

**Cleveland Eaton –
Plenty Good Eaton**

(BLACK JAZZ/ REAL GONE)

Find it in: JAZZ

This is one of five outstanding records led by former Ramsey Lewis bassist, Cleveland Eaton. Also another reissue from the highly sought after Black Jazz Records. This is an unusual one, not for Eaton, but for Black Jazz. Their catalogue does not consist of much disco. This LP is mostly funky bass-driven grooves with a couple of heavy-hitting jazz tunes. A record that will fit in beautifully with any disco/funk collection.

**Dave Alvin – From an
Old Guitar (Rare and
Unreleased Recordings) [2-LP]**

(YEP ROC)

Find it in: ROCK

An outstanding two LP collection of beautiful songs from seasoned vet Dave Alvin. It's got rock, country, blues, and beautiful guitar sounds drenched in classic reverb. Sounds like a well put together LP, not unreleased tracks. Quality stuff!

Sault – V (FOREVER LIVING ORIGINALS)

Find it in: SOUL

Thanks Ramo for putting me onto this one. Hopefully by the time this comes out we will be restocked. This flew off the shelves when we got it in and for good reason. This ambiguous-looking release produced by Inflo, from the UK, is SUPER funky. We got in all of this group's releases, but this one did it for me. Modern soul with dancy funk/ hip-hop grooves and some electronic elements. Killer bass lines and vocals throughout. Been on rotation at home a LOT.

**La Locura De Machuca –
La Locura De Machuca**

(ANALOG AFRICA)

Find it in: WORLD

A crazy comp from a small Colombian psychedelic label. This one SMOKES! Super stripped down & repetitive funky grooves. Latin, African and funk elements all over this. Lots of weird, funky vocals that sound like they're being sung through a tin can. Many of the tracks are over a super basic drum machine. Really glad I picked this up.

Duke Pearson – The Phantom

(BLUE NOTE)

Find it in: JAZZ

One of a literal ton of must-have Blue Note LPs. Reissued as one of their Tone-Poet series, this is a superb pressing. Unlike others from this series, this is not a gatefold, which to me is kind of nice, because the Tone Poet gatefolds take up a lot of damn space! They're worth it, though. This record is just some really groovy jazz.

**Sturgill Simpson –
Cuttin' Grass Vol. 1**

(HIGH TOP MOUNTAIN)

Find it in: COUNTRY

A solid bluegrass record (with drums) from the highly original Sturgill Simpson. This could not be more different than his last record. It's a straight-ahead country/ bluegrass album with some top musicians, including former child-prodigy and now adult-prodigy Sierra Hull, the fine Stuart Duncan, and many more. I do think Simpson's voice is more suited for country and rock tunes. It's strong and clean with a lot of twang, but it still works very well for this release. Glad to see him doing whatever the hell he wants musically.

**Art Blakey & the
Jazz Messengers –**

Roots & Herbs (BLUE NOTE)

Find it in: JAZZ

Previously an extremely difficult record to find from the always spectacular Jazz Messengers has now been issued on the Blue Note Tone Poet series! This particular lineup features Lee Morgan, Jimmie Merritt, Wayne Shorter, and Bobby Timmons! Holy shit!! Don't those names just say it all!! Can't say enough about how great these sound and look.

Also notable releases on this series and that feature unreleased material: Tina Brooks – *Minor Move* and Stanley Turrentine – *Comin' Your Way*.

There are a handful of other titles of stellar unreleased material, and for what you get they're worth every penny.

FELIX

**Fonema Consort –
Vistas Furtivas** (NEW FOCUS)

FIND IT IN: CLASSICAL

This recent release by the bold and fearless Chicago based ensemble, Fonema Consort (I'm a newcomer to this group) is a fresh take on sound. The word fonema is Spanish for phoneme: the smallest unit of speech, which distinguishes words according to their sonic quality. On this recording there are brief units of distinct sounds in tight proximity, creating unusual contrasts. Here, the Fonema Consort collaborates with the Ecuadorian-American composer, Juan Campoverde, a familiar partner of the ensemble since 2013. This collection of compositions reveals to the listener an array of highly stylized microcosms of sound taken from individual instruments as well as solitary voices. The effects are striking yet unusually fragile especially when presented on such a stark canvas.

The opening track, "Umbrales I" (Mr. Campoverde's first composition with this ensemble), begins with a breathy yet elegant Asiatic delivery from Costa Rican flutist, Dalia Chin. In parallel, British guitarist Samuel Rowe spits out staccato notes with micro-tonal tuning while soon after, New York soprano Nina Dante coupled with French soprano Nathalie Colas exchange forceful yet abbreviated, wordless phrases. At first it all might seem a jumbled mess only if the listener is still stuck in the past (which is the case for most of us). Yet with careful attention this whole 7-minute piece is a conglomerate of varied sounds carefully arranged to produce a sort of spell or incantation; or so it seems. Campoverde's latest piece "Umbrales II" (2019) heard a few tracks later, begins with rather subdued vocal phrases (half spoken & half sung) which are made to sound highly expressive. The focus of both Miss Dante & Miss Colas vocal sounds (as well as both the guitar & flute) are pregnant with altering the normal sound of each instrument so as to stress color and tone shadings. Spacing (or lack of) between each sound enhances these effects.

Closely spaced clusters of micro-tonal notes from Mr. Rowe's guitar in "Topografias" paints an eccentric image. Every idiom or phrase (and there are tons of them here), if taken out of context, reminds me of a finished thought, or cadence. The listener becomes enamored with each struck note for all notes are played with such distinction. Each struck string possesses a personality of its own as notes ring, chime and bend amidst several like-minded stringed sounds. Mr. Rowe's attention to focused detail is quite impressive.

One other guitar solo work "Muna II" is coupled with enveloping electronics which swirl around Samuel Rowe's right and left hand finger tapping notes. The angular guitar plucking is immersed inside strange diaphanous-like electronics which at times reveals some vocals. The result is utter weirdness reminding one of spirits being recalled during a séance.

"Basalto" unites electronics with both flute and soprano voice creating delirious and intoxicating impressions. The highly varied vocals from Nina Dante are enjoyable to hear with an array of growling or throaty sounds & snorts alongside other highly expressive notes which constantly change while both the electronics and fluttering flute swirl around her multi varied locutions. Obviously this is not the typical or rather traditional music that people normally listen to. The approach here is one of poetic aesthetics, or 'art for art's sake' and not one of practical, moral or narrative considerations. Or is it really? The lack of a narrative booklet can only make one wonder.

"Los Lugares Del Deseo" is a four-part piece which underlines the starkness of each of the sounds that are heard throughout this highly nuanced recording. Phrases are more elongated than the conglomeration which was expressed in the previous tracks. Frankly I was a bit surprised at how much I enjoyed this music.

My only complaint, if I may dear reader, is that the liner notes lack pertinent information. Upon further research, all of these tracks are actually inspired from present day Latin poets and championed by the Ecuadorian-American composer, Juan Campoverde. This is nowhere mentioned in the brief liner notes that accompanies this CD.

Presumably inspiration is taken from the Galapagos Islands off the coast of Ecuador and it's demise from over tourism. Also erotic love poems from a certain poet is the inspiration of

the 4 movements of the last piece. Each of the 6 compositions on this disc are taken from poems from Latin America yet this important fact is never mentioned in the notes.

Regardless of the limited information, the unconventional music on this disc speaks for itself with highly expressive yet unusual sounds. "Music We Like" is simply that; music we like but not necessarily music we recommend. However if you, dear reader, are looking for a different approach to listening to music, well then, this is the disc to buy.

Eric Whitacre / Los Angeles Master Chorale – The Sacred Veil

(SIGNUM CLASSICS)

Find it in: CLASSICAL

This glorious project was initially formed by Charles Anthony Silvestri (lyricist, author, poet) whose wife, Julie, passed away in 2005 of ovarian cancer at the much too young age of 35. Having been friends with the now, 50 year old composer, Eric Whitacre; Mr. Silvestri shared with him some of his poetry concerning his late wife's death. It took Mr. Silvestri over 10 years to finally begin writing about her death and the fond memories he naturally coveted. Alongside his poetry as well as his wife's, the composer Eric Whitacre, in this release, has composed 11 gorgeous pieces. All are sung by the wonderful Los Angeles Master Chorale and elegantly accompanied by pianist, Lisa Edwards and cellist, Jeffrey Zeigler.

In the provided booklet, Mr. Silvestri brings light to what exactly the "Sacred Veil" conjures: "We have all experienced the loss, in one way or another, of someone or something we have loved deeply. How do we know when it's time to move forward? "The Sacred Veil" represents a journey toward the answers to these questions." And in the opening track entitled, "The Sacred Veil", pianist Lisa Edwards begins to ponder this fragile world of remembering the one person we were so close to and spent so much time together. Meditative phrases from Miss Edwards piano soon give way to Jeffrey Zeigler's soft and elongated cello notes as the chorus begins to sing Mr. Silvestri's poem. A gorgeous ethereal wave of purposeful chanting begins this heavenly journey where all 40 members carefully sing in unison, recalling the opening phrases of Miss Edwards piano. Soon the chorus' intentions become robust most naturally due to yearning. Eric Whitacre's writing here is strongly felt.

The following track, "In a Dark and Distant Year" the chorus splits to male & female alternating sung phrases (about 20 male & 20 female singers). Both the male & female parts exude a lovely wafting effect that is so light and airy which quietly fades into the next track, "Home". Miss Edwards' piano releases soft clusters which carefully give way to a beautiful soaring note of the cello. This begins to open the floodgates of one's tears as a gentle hand begins to caress our deserted nerves. As Mr. Zeigler's cello becomes stronger and stronger the chorus answers in such a loving & powerful way. Yes, it's time to reach for the Kleenex. The intent is so warmhearted and kind.

Mr. Silvestri's late wife Julie, wrote this next poem, "Magnetic Poetry" which seems to speak from the heavens above for the chorus, which I believe represents the afterlife, soars overhead. It is true that Julie Silvestri had a strong desire to have children (she eventually had two) but Mrs. Silvestri died soon after her wish was granted. "Magnetic Poetry" recalls her happiness while being pregnant as the chorus lovingly echoes her words but with cool sadness.

"I'm Afraid" represents Mr. Silvestri's poem describing the moment he heard the news of his wife's cancer. Here is when the notes of the piano sings with confusion & grief as the chorus sings "I'm afraid we found something..." This is occasionally repeated throughout as the piano mirrors the swirling thoughts of Silvestri's erratic mind; the moment he heard the devastating news. The effect is simply gorgeous.

A few tracks later in "You Rise, I Fall", Mr. Silvestri's simple lines are resounded with such beautiful, elongated phrases that it is difficult for this writer to describe. Phrases are carefully sung yet stretch and bend to soaring heights. But the concluding track "Child of Wonder" is the most captivating song on this disc. Written by the composer himself, the Los Angeles Master Chorale sings his words with a tenderness and beauty that provokes profound humility and surrender. Grace, as is always the case, ends up as having the final say. In a society that is bombarded with machismo, especially in movies & politics (including what the many streaming services provide for us, which is a great deal of "feel good" revenge stories); listening to these songs can help one to heal and recuperate from, yes, all of that nonsense. This music can also provide solace for the loss a great deal of us might have experienced during Covid.

An interview with Charles Anthony Silvestri by Eric Whitacre fills up the remaining 22 minutes

of this triumphant CD. Maybe someday I will listen to what both artists feel in need to add. But until then I am left admiring this glorious music and am reminded that none of our personal sadness goes unnoticed. This is a fact which we should all feel grateful for. If you, dear reader, need to be reminded of this, well then I encourage you to purchase this musical release. You will become a fan of both Eric Whitacre's compositions, as well as a true fan of this wonderful chorus; the Los Angeles Master Chorale. Subsequently, breathing will feel easier and undisturbed.

Alessandro Scarlatti / George Frideric Handel / Franz Joseph Haydn – Arianna

(ALPHA CLASSICS)

**Featuring: Kate Lindsey / Arcangelo /
Jonathan Cohen**

Find it in: CLASSICAL

Here we have three Italian cantatas which tell the story of Arianna's impassioned love affair with the mythical king, Theseus. All composed during the 18th century and sung magnificently by the American mezzo, Kate Lindsey. Equally impressive on this disc are the early music ensemble group, Arcangelo not to mention it's conductor (and creator), Jonathan Cohen. These three cantatas are elegantly presented here with a meticulous focus on the baroque format. Decorative and flamboyant are the main key components here which simply manages to take the listener back 300 years when only the elite nobility were allowed the chance to partake. The effects of this recreation are simply; intoxicating.

The name Arianna is a Latinized form of Ariadne, a Greek goddess who fell hard in love for Theseus. The crux of this legend stems from the story of Arianna, madly in love, rendezvousing with Theseus. When on an island, she fell asleep with Theseus by her side only to awake with Theseus abandoning her. The photo on the cover of this recording shows Kate Lindsey portraying Arianna moments after waking and realizing her nightmare as she hopelessly looks out towards the sea, only to see her lover sailing away.

The ever so celebrated Italian composer, Alessandro Scarlatti, was a master and extremely influential at writing chamber cantatas. In the opening piece entitled, "L'Arianna (Ebra d'amor fuggia)" the ensemble Arcangelo expeditiously executes tightly-knit harmonies in-line with the baroque style yet soon after, eases into a luxurious polyphony of sound. We, as the listener,



are drawn in and soon after the opulent singing of Kate Lindsey confesses her happiness, “Ebra d’amor fuggia.” It’s a marvelous introduction to a paint-by-numbers approach to recounting this fabled story of abandonment. Scarlatti’s method was deeply rooted in the baroque way of framing a story and as a result, we get a 23-minute version of what occurred from the moment Arianna awakes with joy until the end when she is consumed with her tears. The range of emotions expressed by Miss Lindsey are a marvel to witness. A typical baroque way of expressing a short 4 line stanza can take several minutes to sing for decoration and ornamentation are the key here, and Miss Lindsey is a sensation at performing this.

All three of these cantatas are sung in Italian, as is in the following cantata by the German composer, Georg Handel. His approach is so very much different from the literal approach of Scarlatti. In, “Ah! crudel, nel pianto mio” the story begins with Arianna in tears and in a very angry mood yet determined to accept her unrequited love for this man. Her strength turns anger into a blessing, a noble transition for Arianna as the journey is quite painful, hence the sheer intensity of Kate Lindsey’s voice. The ensemble initially plays with frolic wonderment yet right before Miss Lindsey expresses her disappointment with telling emotion, the instrumentation suddenly becomes solemn. Again, the range of emotions are what’s so intriguing about listening to these cantatas. How she elongates a number of the words with resonating sadness is marvelously enjoyable. But she can just as quickly change that same resonance with sheer rage. One can only wonder at the hours upon hours upon hours of hard focused rehearsal work so as to accomplish such a finished outcome.

There are several different endings to Arianna’s tragic tale in regards to her affliction. Scarlatti’s version ended with the gods feeling

sorry for Arianna by bailing her out while Handel’s version had Arianna choosing the much tougher, but nobler high road. Yet, in the last cantata on this disc, Haydn’s version has Arianna choosing suicide (or at the very least, nods in favor of it). Composed over 80 years after Handel’s & Scarlatti’s rendering, Haydn stresses solely on Arianna’s sorrow. His piece relies more on dramatic expression than technical skill which, for the most part, eschews the ornamentation of baroque qualities toward a more down to earth approach. There is not a great deal of decorative color required in Miss Lindsey’s vocal approach but rather one of realism & verisimilitude. I found it appealing how Kate Lindsey uses her gift of singing solely in the lower register which, being a natural mezzo, is a strength for her.

The dignified and solemn bent to Arcangelo’s instrumentation in the opening to Haydn’s account, is gorgeously insync with the undertone of Miss Lindsey’s mingled torpor of restlessness. A simply beautiful moment for me as the instrumentation swirls in agreement with her mental state. Not meaning for this writer to sound weird, but one can almost sense, especially with this particular cantata, the exact placement of the singer’s tongue whenever she sings her sorrowful lines. Intimacy is Miss Lindsey’s strong suit throughout this entire recording. The wonderful array of differing approaches with timbre which this American singer has accomplished is simply enough to give this CD an enthusiastic two thumbs up! What are you waiting for?

Various Composers – **Ginette Neveu: The Complete Recordings** (WARNER CLASSICS)

Find it in: CLASSICAL

About 13 years ago in what was then, Berkeley’s Amoeba “Classical Room” (wow, those now seem like magical times for sure!), a devoted customer of ours wanted to satisfy my curiosity as to who might be the most musically gifted violinist in interpreting Ravel’s “Tzigane.” As luck would have it, we actually had the one recording he was pining for: “Art of Ginette Neveu” an EMI Angel studio recording. I immediately replaced the CD we were playing for his recommendation. Several minutes of listening I soon noticed how impressionable her playing felt to me despite it’s mono sound (it was recorded in 1946). Yet it reminded me of the generalized expression I heard in an interview long ago, which was “the playing had a voice to it”. Yes, now I get it. Ginette Neveu’s playing most definitely has a “voice” to it.

There are approximately 15 different composers throughout these 4 CDs, as the first 2 discs are accompanied by a full orchestra (1946 & 1948), while the last 2 CDs are just her and the piano (1938, 1939, 1946 & 1948). The first disc opens with Sibelius’ Violin Concerto played by the Philharmonia Orchestra and led by Walter Süsskind. Just after the 7 minute mark is where we really get to hear Miss Neveu’s abilities with the violin. Her wiry, sinewy approach to bowing the strings are made with so much confidence as heard in her initial solo which lasts a good 4 or 5 minutes in length. And of course Sibelius’ famous final few minutes of the first movement has Miss Neveu sounding so captivating & bewitching. Her playing is both so alluring with dramatic shifts. It’s almost as though we can hear her own vitals pulsating in rhythm.

I could go on & on about how thoroughly enjoyable it is to listen to Miss Neveu playing this piece by Sibelius for the next two movements are a wonder to observe with lots of melodramatic phrasing coupled with amazing delicacy, not to mention bits of tongue in cheek fun. But this is what we get throughout the 2 and a half hours of music on this box set. Her tight vibrato when playing Brahms violin concerto especially those elongated phrases she carries out are so poignant & stirring. Yes, dear reader, you will feel goose bumps. Just another sign indicating that Miss Neveu’s playing surely has a voice.

Miss Neveu graduated from the Paris Conservatory in 1928 at the age of nine(!) and at around 15 she won an international competition, overtaking the legendary 27 year old violinist David Oistrakh. An amazing feat especially since the leading violinists at the time were dominated by men. One of the pieces she performed in the competition was Ravel’s “Tzigane”; the same piece I mentioned earlier which got me hooked to her playing. “Tzigane” is the opening piece on the third CD. The few highlights I noted in the previous two violin concertos are all continuously concentrated in this one sensational piece. Aren’t we so lucky? But the next piece, Ravel’s “Pièce en forme de Habanera” is basically a Spanish song without words and after her brother, Jean Neveu, plays the intro, Miss Neveu’s violin sings with marvelous phrasing.

Both the entire third & fourth discs are all focused on Miss Neveu’s violin playing. Her brother Jean, plays on the 3rd disc while two other pianists assist on the last disc. There is a sort of gypsy tongue in cheek dance number from the Romanian composer Grigoras Dinicu.

Yet the Josef Suk “Four Pieces” is quite serious. Again, her violin sings with deep affection. And I’m in love with the finale on this 3rd disc; “Debussy: Violin Sonatas.” What a beautiful yet magical work of art!

The fourth and final disc were recorded when she was 19 & 20 years old and soon after her triumph at the Warsaw competition when she overwhelmed the jurors. Shouldn’t that alone cause you to want to run out and purchase this fabulous set? I remember listening to a Van Cliburn (famed pianist from Texas) interview who said that his favorite form of music was listening to opera. His reasoning struck me for he said that this is what all musicians playing instruments are pining to achieve; namely to have a voice. So the real question for all lovers of music (such as yourselves) is simply this; does the music that your hearing have a voice? Listening to these 4 marvelous CDs from the French violinist, Ginette Neveu, is a perfect example of this expression of simply having a voice.

It’s unfortunate at only 30 years old, as the classical world is very aware of, that Ginette Neveu, along with her brother Jean, (including her 1730 Stradivari violin) were killed in a plane crash traveling from Scotland to America. As sad as it might sound, this one box set is all that remains of this one, truly memorable & outstanding artist. An opportunity one should not ignore.

Richard Strauss – Die Frau Ohne Schatten (ORFEO) **Featuring: Vienna State Opera / Christian Thielemann**

Find it in: CLASSICAL

I will try my best to simplify Hugo von Hofmannsthal’s complicated synopsis of *Die Frau*: His story takes place in an imaginary area ruled by an emperor but controlled by the leader of the spirit world, Keikobad. A year before the story takes place, the emperor (Kaiser) is out hunting and was about to spear a gazelle before it suddenly turns into a beautiful woman (Keikobad’s daughter). Needless to explain, she becomes the empress (Kaiserin) but during that drastic transition, she had lost the talisman which had given her power of transmogrification. When the curtain rises, we see Amme (her nurse) about to emerge from the dark for her annual visit to Kaiserin (the empress) following orders from Keikobad in regard to the question: “Does the Empress cast a shadow?”. In other words, can she become pregnant? And when Amme answers in the negative, Keikobad warns her that if after



three more days the empress remains childless or “ohne Schatten,” then she must be returned back to the spirit world and in turn, Kaiser (emperor) will forever be turned to stone. From there both the nurse and empress conspire to join forces by traveling down to earth so as to barter with a possible candidate so as to obtain the earthlings shadow. The goal of course is to save Kaiser from turning into stone.

That’s pretty much the premise of the story with Hofmannsthal complicating the matter with numerous borrowing of folklore from multiple cultures. It’s a fantasy world that is more geared for adults. Strauss’ music requires a massive orchestra not to mention a plethora of ways to transform all of Hofmannsthal imaginative ideas down onto an opera stage. The challenges are quite daunting but in this audio recording by the Vienna State Opera with maestro Christian Thielmann, there is no need to interpret and dissect the visuals of the stage but rather to take in the amazing power and force of not only the enormous orchestra but also the highly dramatized singing from Camilla Nylund (Kaiserin), Evelyn Herlitzius (Amme), Nina Stemme (Farberin, the earthling wife who has a “shadow”) and Wolfgang Koch (her saintly husband).

All emotions are elevated to excessive levels throughout this 3 1/2 hour opera as one immediately notices with Amme’s (the nurse) opening lines and sung marvelously by Evelyn Herlitzius. Her numerous acrobatic fluctuations of singing might cause a newcomer to shake their head in disapproval but one must first take this into retrospect: German composer, Richard Strauss wrote *Die Frau* between 1915 & 1919 which was in the thick of the German Expression movement. Just imagine transforming Edvard Munch’s “The Scream” (which inspired the movement) into music. Those naysayers who cover their ears are the same people who have

this type of art on their calendars at work or home thinking they understand the art. *Die Frau* was composed less than 20 years after Munch’s masterpiece. Understanding this might change a novice’s judgement not to mention helping to adopt a different perspective.

The sweeping phrasing from the Vienna State Opera is mind blowing but more so is the constant shifting of melodies or leitmotifs which Strauss often uses so as to identify specific characters. There are so many variations of color to this score; think of the German-Danish painter Emil Nolde’s work and one can only imagine. *Die Frau* is a heavy composition that asks a great deal from it’s singers and musicians. Yes, there is an array of vibrato used in the singing, especially with Miss Herlitzius’ singing but this is an established practice when singing these lines. But Evelyn Herlitzius is the Steph Curry of emotive singing. Listening to her sing Hofmannsthal’s lines (she literally sings well over 400 of them in this opera!) one does not need to see her expression due to her wonderfully suggestive locutions. Extremely angular with high angles and chiaroscuro contrasts. It’s a pleasure to just sit down inside my own space and listen to her sing.

The husband of the mortal woman who naturally possesses the “shadow,” Wolfgang Koch, has a tremendous voice with zero wrinkles. His is a pure but measured bass-baritone sound which matches his saintly nature. He is one of the “good ones” who has an admirable tendency of acting out his selfless nature. Listen to track 15 and hear Mr. Koch’s beautiful phrasing interspersed between the chorus and light orchestration. But his wife, Farberin, sung by another great dramatic soprano, Nina Stemme; Farberin is angry at her husband’s patience and good will. It’s preventing them from having children and raising a family. This is why she is such a perfect target for Amme & Kaiserin to barter with. Farberin’s constant bickering with her husband bodes well for Miss Stemme’s ability to sing those piercing high notes yet still sound lifelike; like someone who is angry and frustrated.

Without explaining the many twists and turns which led to the story’s conclusion, the empress (Kaiserin) almost single-handedly manages to not only obtain a “shadow” for herself but also retains Farberin’s shadow as well, through acts of selfless kindness; much to the resentment of Amme (who detests humans!) and more importantly, to the satisfaction of Keikobad. The point of this far flung tale is a bit unclear but it’s something like this: If you are selflessly

married and in love, having and raising children is the most perfect and complete act humans can accomplish...period.

Maybe a bit displeased by that? I know I should be but regardless, the point is that this is a highly charged emotional story-line which perfectly sets the stage for Strauss’ ideas in expressing orchestral strokes along with highly charged vocals. Thielmann understands this emotional challenge as the Vienna State Opera carefully manages to allow the singers to shine, while at the same time exudes colorful phrases so as to paint a mythical description of this sensational opera. Because this particular opera is so rarely performed or recorded, it became my most exciting purchase during the pandemic. I hope at least one of you out there in “music lovers land” follows suit!

MICHAEL H

DJ Megasoup on KALX, maker of solo music as Selaroda + one half of duo Skyminds.

AK’Chamel The Giver Of Illness – The Totemist (AKUPHONE)

Find it in: ROCK
Dark, post-apocalyptic psych-folk with a slightly metallic edge. Music for ancient rituals and ridding oneself of possession via spirits.

Alabaster DePlume – To Cy & Lee: Instrumentals Vol. 1

(INTERNATIONAL ANTHEM)
Find it in: JAZZ
Patient, spacious, spiritual jazz with hints of folk. An interesting combo, and a rewarding listen.

Awkward Corners – Dislocation Songs

(SHAPES OF RHYTHM)
Find it in: ELECTRONICA
Dubby electronic head-nod jams with tablas. Groovy...

Azu Tiwaline – Draw Me A Silence (IOT)

Find it in: ELECTRONICA
Tunisian producer’s incredible debut album, packed with late-night tribal electronic grooves! I love her work...both this and the EP on Livivity Sound are excellent.

Clap! Clap! – Liquid Portraits

(BLACK ACRE)
Find it in: ELECTRONICA
Wow! I am fully onboard with this artist, who melds samples of all kinds of African music into percolating percussive dancefloor grooves for the body and mind. A voyage into the future via the past.

Cleo Soul – Rose In The Dark

(FOREVER LIVING ORIGINALS)
Find it in: SOUL
UK neo-soul artist who is also part of the fantastic Sault, so if you like that stuff then check this out too. Her voice is really great as well

D.K. – Live At The Edge (12TH ISLE)

Find it in: ELECTRONICA
Awesome organic sounding ambient electronic music from this French artist. This is mellower than his other recent work, which is also really cool... more percussive stuff that feels eastern in origin (think gamelan) with great tribal sounding rhythms.

Emily A Sprague – Hill, Flower, Fog (RVNG)

Find it in: ELECTRONICA
Warm bubbles of beautiful ambient synthesizers. Her other release on RVNG is really great too.

Ezra Feinberg – Recumbent Speech (RELATED STATES)

Find it in: ROCK
A really nice, folky rock album with some post-rock moves, including drumming from John McEntire. Ezra was in local SF act Citay, and this features a lot of great local/formerly local artists including Chuck Johnson, Tim Green, Jonas Reinhardt, and Diego Gonzalez.

Fools – Fools Harp Vol. 1

(MUSIC FROM MEMORY)
Find it in: ELECTRONICA
Wonderful solo debut from the drummer of Grizzly Bear. A nice fusion of ambient jazzy rock, and percussive electronic grooves. Definitely curious to hear more work from this project down the road.

Golden Retriever and Chuck Johnson – Rain Shadow

(THRILL JOCKEY)
Find it in: ELECTRONICA
Local Oakland artist Chuck Johnson collaborates with the synth/bass clarinet duo Golden



Retriever, resulting in this ambient album full of interesting textural interplay, with Chuck's lovely pedal steel drift as the highlight for me.

Green House – Six Songs For Invisible Gardens (LEAVING)

Find it in: ELECTRONICA

An organic garden of sprouting synth vines, wrapping themselves around your consciousness until you become one with the playful plants in your plot. I do wish it were a little longer, but these six perfect tracks will have to do for now.

Greg Foat – Symphonie Pacifique (STRUT)

Find it in: JAZZ

Ambitious album that fuses jazz, soul, classical, and ambient music in a cinematic swirl of cosmic goodness. Deep stuff that flows as a record, and all the instruments sound great too.

Heliocentrics – Telemetric Sounds (MADLIB INVAZION)

Find it in: SOUL

Fuzzy, funky psychedelic rock / soul, and excellent as is to be expected from this crew. Sounds both modern and classic, in a timeless sort of way.

Julianna Barwick – Healing Is A Miracle (NINJA TUNE)

Find it in: ROCK

Beautiful new release filled with her trademark layered vocals, built on top of the little ambient symphonies she creates with a few key collaborators (Mary Lattimore, Nosaj Thing, and Jonsi of Sigur Ros).

Kiln – Astral Welder

(GHOSTLY INTERNATIONAL)

Find it in: ELECTRONICA

One of my all-time favorite acts returns after seven long years, and of course it is incredible as always. Kiln's trademark sound is intact, with a warm palette of mellow, organic ambiance and effervescent electronic rhythms. Music for making your brain happy, an audio antidepressant? Works for me, anyway.

K-Lone – Cape Cira

(WISDOM TEETH)

Find it in: ELECTRONICA

Another 2020 top favorite for me, an excellent album of percussive electronic music with overtones of gamelan, plus a pretty and pleasant vibe all the way through.

Kutiman – Wachaga

(SIYAL MUSIC)

Find it in: WORLD

A truly incredible collaboration between this Israeli artist and various musicians from Tanzania. Deep, spiritual afro-jazz grooves with rich vocals and percussion from ancient African traditions... AMAZING!

Let It Come Down – Songs We Sang In Our Dreams

(JOYFUL NOISE)

Find it in: ROCK

What a wonderful song-oriented album this is. Xan Tyler has a really nice voice, and her songs remind me of modern greats such as Broadcast and Stereolab, as well as older classics like The Beatles, among many others. Kramer (of Shimmy Disc and Bongwater) is behind the board and his production ties it all together, with everything sounding great.

Luke Jenner – I (MANONO)

Find it in: ROCK

The frontman for The Rapture is back with his first ever solo album. It's a real journey, both sonically and thematically. The lyrics chronicle his personal and spiritual growth to create a moving portrait of a modern family man making the best of himself and helping others around him to grow as well.

Mary Lattimore – Silver Ladders

(GHOSTLY INTERNATIONAL)

Find it in: ROCK

Harpist Mary Lattimore is back with another quality release that moves further beyond her

main instrument to incorporate even more guitars and keyboards, to great effect. Slowdive's Neil Halstead handles production duties, and it works really well.

Matthew Halsall – Salute To The Sun (GONDWANNA)

Find it in: JAZZ

Excellent new album from this UK saxophonist and flautist featuring a really pleasant kind of jazz, mellow and groovy with very little skronk. There are hints of Alice Coltrane (there's harp!) and other classic artists, but it's also very modern and the instruments all sound divine.

Mourning [A] BLKstar – The Cycle (DON GIOVANNI)

Find it in: SOUL

Innovative sonics and urgent, poignant lyrics from this sizable Ohio collective. The tracks here, with both male and female vocalists, fall somewhere between soul, hip hop, rock, and electronica while actually sounding a bit different than all of those things normally do on their own. Unique and compelling stuff.

Nihiloxica – Kaloli (CRAMMED DISCS)

Find it in: WORLD

Powerful African drumming ensemble from Uganda, with some added electronic touches. Futuristic tribal rhythms propelled into outer space, a very intense experience well worth exploring.

Ocoeur – Everything (NSMD)

Find it in: ELECTRONICA

Spacey ambient electronica on this local label that is still going strong after 20 years. Much of their catalog is really good, this one is even better and easily one of my favorites.

Penya Na Msafiri Zawose – Penya Safari EP (ON THE CORNER)

Find it in: WORLD

Cosmopolitan UK band Penya make fantastic hybrid music here with Tanzanian musician Msafiri Zawose. This mixture of contemporary grooves and ancient African traditions is innovative and inspiring.

Run The Jewels - RTJ4 (BMG)

Find it in: HIP HOP

Another fine album of raw, fiery, socially conscious hip hop with an edge. Top notch production courtesy of El-P and friends, and he and Killer Mike both seriously kill their verses



all throughout this latest masterpiece, from one of the most consistent duos in the game over the last decade.

Sault – Untitled (Rise) (FOREVER LIVING ORIGINALS)

Find it in: SOUL

This initially mysterious ensemble from the UK now appears to be unmasked as Cleo Sol and producer Info, with perhaps a few other collaborators. Modern soul with a host of cool classic influences and important subject matter lyrically. Dig in, this is really good stuff.

Late Music – Cantus Descant (LATE MUSIC)

Find it in: EXPERIMENTAL

Canadian artist now based in LA turns in another fine album that straddles ambient and modern classical music. Lovely work, and it even features a couple of tracks with her vocals, a first (and hopefully not a last) for her, as they really add another dimension to her already captivating music.

Siti Muharam – Siti of Unguja: Romance Revolution on Zanzibar (ON THE CORNER)

Find it in: WORLD

Terrific Taraab music from the eastern coast of Africa, featuring a magnificent voice making her first album. The production from the UK's Sam Jones (notable for working with Msafiri Zawose on his fantastic album on Soundway a few years back) is glorious and serves as the perfect backdrop for Muharam's golden vocal cords to soar with these familial songs in Swahili, some of which date back generations within this remarkable musical family.

The Sorcerers – In Search Of The Lost City Of The Monkey God (ATA)

Find it in: SOUL

Outstanding “soundtrack” to an imaginary film, but that doesn’t mean the music isn’t awesome, because it really is. Imagine a funky soul band playing lounge/exotica inspired grooves along with some exotic jazzy and ethiopian style harmonies and you’re almost there. Add a dash of extra percussion and voila! Seriously though, this stuff is marvelous.

Wanderwelle – A State of Decrepitude

(A STRANGELY ISOLATED PLACE)

Find it in: ELECTRONICA

Another majestic album from this German duo, after several previous releases on Silent Season. This one finds them going fully ambient, with no beats to be found, and it’s a success to hear them use some more subtle ambient textures as the main focus of these pieces. A pleasant drift through a fluttery cocoon of sublime beauty.

Lee ‘Scratch’ Perry with Seskain Molenga & Kalo Kawongolo – Roots From The Congo

(ROOTS VIBRATION / PLANET ILUNGA)

Find it in: REGGAE

A classic 1979 session and the final record made at Perry’s original Black Ark studio before it burned down. Working with two African artists from the Congo, this is a forward-thinking fusion of reggae and African musical traditions that works incredibly well. Lovely reissue via these two European labels, which I find preferable to the US edition of the same album due to better sound quality (this one is pressed at 45rpm instead of 33) as well as the in-depth liner notes and additional pictures and artwork contained within the gatefold LP.

Orchestra Baobab – Mouhamadou Bamba + Viva Bawobab SI/Si Bou Odja

Find it in: WORLD

Dependable French label Syllart has focused on African music since beginning in 1978, releasing hundreds of delightful albums over more than 40 years now. These two classic albums by Senegalese legends Orchestra Baobab appear on LP for the first time since their initial issue in the early 1980s. They are one of the all-time great African groups, and these gems were made just

before their 1982 masterpiece *Pirates Choice*, so fans of that album should enjoy these as well. They both sound spectacular on vinyl too!

Priscilla Ermel – Origens Da Luz

(MUSIC FROM MEMORY)

Find it in: WORLD

Tremendous reissue from Brazilian musician, filmmaker, and anthropologist Priscilla Ermel. Originally recorded between 1986 and 1994, these exceptional tracks go to a number of interesting places sonically, incorporating elements of musical styles from both Brazil and from elsewhere around the globe, making for a truly unique synthesis that is quite captivating.

Ranil – Ranil y su Conjunto Tropical (ANALOG AFRICA)

Find it in: WORLD

Superb collection of guitar-led Cumbia from this celebrated Peruvian instrumentalist and bandleader. High energy and catchy stuff, all with that unbeatable rhythmic bounce that is cumbia...

Hiroshi Yoshimura – Green (LIGHT IN THE ATTIC)

Find it in: NEW AGE

Finally reissued for the first time since being released in 1986 (on vinyl, CD, and cassette!), this legendary Japanese ambient / new age album is a mellifluous musical experience that helps the listener to unwind and relax, so if you’re in need of some aural tonic, this record is a great choice.

Various Artists – Guasa, Cununo y Marimba: Afro-Colombian Music From The Pacific Coast (VAMPI SOUL)

Find it in: WORLD

Outstanding compilation of music from Colombia that mixes folkloric and popular styles to great effect. Lots of marimbas as well as some more typical cumbia grooves, these top-notch tracks were made mostly in the 1970s. A welcome addition to the growing canon of Vampi Soul’s ever-expanding series of exceptional reissues from Colombia.

Various Artists – 12 Bombazos Bailables

(VAMPI SOUL)

Find it in: WORLD

One final reissue, again from Vampi Soul, this compilation takes one track from each of twelve different Colombian albums that they

have reissued over the last few years. Lots of marvelous cumbia and salsa tracks that are chock full of upbeat danceable rhythms. All of these cuts were originally on the esteemed Discos Fuentes label, and it features many of the most successful and important ensembles from the historic golden era of the 1970’s.

LUNA

*New (mask-covered) face,
virgo, comrade.*

Fiona Apple – Fetch the Bolt Cutters (EPIC)

Find it in: ROCK

Fiona Apple has accomplished, in this fifth masterpiece of a record, becoming the unapologetically honest and articulate prosecutor of the dark secrets of our society. Unafraid to put into words what adversities many female-identifying individuals overcome, she has produced a phenomenal collage of anger, closure, depression, existential dread and female solidarity in an album that one could listen to while walking on the street and ignoring the male gaze or in the middle of the desert screaming to the abyss. These are two perfect places to listen to this album, but I would recommend a listen even if you can’t seem to find yourself in either of these situations.

Apple begins the album with this gut-wrenching ballad that introduces the novel, unpredictably electrifying version of Apple that we will see evolve in a wave of emotions throughout the course of the album. “I Want You To Love Me” immediately divorces Apple from the version of herself in Tidal, for example, that yearns for a specific individual and ruminates over sentiments of rejection. No. Here, Apple knows precisely what it is she wants -- and recognizes the fact that the object of this affection might remain fictional. This album is about wanting to fetch the bolt cutters to escape the prison of one’s own mind -- whether the prison bars be made from the plight of crippling anxiety, overthinking, living through escape, etc. That brings me to the third song on the record, which bears the titular burden. “Fetch The Bolt Cutters” is a montage of Apple contemplating past judgements, altercations, friendships, expectations, and disappointments. This record is undercut with a discourse on gender dynamics and I can’t help but think (maybe I want to think) that there is a Kate Bush allusion with the line “And I need to run up that hill; I need to run up that hill...” Even if it’s not intentional, I think that

Bush opened up this conversation about gender expectations with the idea of “switching places” and Apple picks up this thought, runs with it and yells at it. Every line is packed with emotion and confession and you realize throughout a listen to the record that the tracks on this album itself are Apple’s bolt cutters. The thoughts are set free from her mind and allowed to find their companions in ours.

This album feels equally as if I have just been confirmed in the Church of Fiona Apple and she herself is the preacher (the first part of “For Her” could be our opening prayer) but also feels as an intimate conversation between friends. I have determined that Apple definitely read my diary in the past eight years since her last studio release, also found time to read the diaries of others, highlighted our shared feelings and put these emotions into words. There is incredible value in having a shared experience be put into words and to have the door opened for people who need to feel heard to scream the lyrics and know that Apple is speaking to them AND speaking for them. Many songs in the repertoire of *Fetch the Bolt Cutters* attacks and calls out social and individual misogyny. ‘Under the Table’ is an incredibly fun take at patronizing comments and being told to know one’s place. “Newspaper” and “Ladies” work as a pair to comment on the societally-induced tendency to paint all women as inevitable enemies in pursuing men. (Or at least, this is what all 1980s-2000s rom-coms have tried to teach.) Apple embarks on the battle against this messaging promoted by the war on feminism’s resort to antagonizing women to prevent any solidarity. Many men become the vehicle for accomplishing this division as Apple comments “I wonder what lies he’s telling you about me to make sure that we’ll never be friends.” We’re obviously living in this new wave of feminism, in a post- #MeToo world, but rather than categorize Apple in this category of Western Feminism, I think she’s trying to point out that it’s more than that. Hearing each other’s stories, even if through a hashtag, is incredibly important. However, each individual has to grapple with internalized misogyny and divorce oneself from the way they’ve been taught to think. The beautiful, beautiful ‘Ladies’ calls on these women that have been divided to not compare or compete, but to uplift each other, share with each other and to listen to each other (and to let Apple ‘get through’ to them).

The symphonic noise of Apple’s *Fetch the Bolt Cutters* reimagines her sound in a way that creates something unlike anything I have ever listened to. The humorous element of the playful

noises of her home studio (i.e. dogs barking at the end of “Fetch the Bolt Cutters”) is juxtaposed with the unrelenting intensity of her lyrics. Yet this creates an exciting and dynamic element to the sound; authentic accidental noises and even cursing makes the listener feel as an equal. Apple recorded this in her living room with her friends. The approachability of that component makes the record all the more alluring, for it defines the importance of the product rather than the production. There is a feature of this almost aggressive articulation of syllables, in songs like “Drumset” and “Ladies” that makes it sound like she is gasping to get words out in time. The soft, unexpected acoustic at the end of ‘Newspaper’ and the playful conversation between gospel-like voices at the end of “Relay” are just more examples of the exciting musical elements Apple incorporates into this record. One of the last things she says on “On I go” (the last song on the record) is “Aw, f*ck,sh*t” as she stumbles over her words. An authentic ending to a beautifully authentic record. I might get “Shameika said I had potential” tattooed... Stay tuned and take a listen.

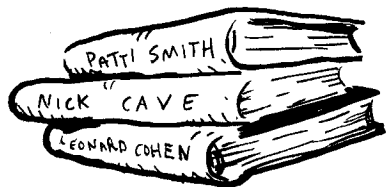
Haim – *Women In Music Pt. III* (COLUMBIA)

Find it in: ROCK

The quintessential LA sisters explore new depths, musically and thematically, in their third studio album. The songwriting is immediately recognizable as more intentional and self-aware, as they confess and articulate experiences with trauma, hardship, depression and loss. Yet the tone of the album is marked with optimism and ever present notes of resiliency. Danielle Haim admits that the song “I’ve Been Down” is a bit of a cry for help, but we can see how it is exemplary of the album’s capacity to offer the sisters a way to expel these feelings and push forward. Then they remind themselves of their strength, as is expressed in the lyrics of “I’ve Been Down,” saying: “But I ain’t dead yet.” Other demonstrations of such intensified emotions are shown in “Hallelujah” and “I Know Alone.” I think we all know alone after these past months of quarantine, and this song speaks to that very feeling. There is this feeling of nostalgia to the song —

echoes of a dusty UK garage sound and the lyric “screaming every word of ‘Both Sides Now’” give it a groovy energy I particularly enjoy. The Haim sisters, as San Fernando Valley natives, may just be honorary Ladies of the Canyon (but who am I to make that judgement). That brings me to my next topic -- calling out music industry misogyny! There is a delightful, folk-like storytelling and Mitchell-esque quality to the way in which ‘Man from the Magazine’ is presented. This song provides a candid perspective into the patronizing behavior Danielle, Este and Alana (and many more) have dealt with. It is infuriating, yet energizing and inspiring that this music is able to so effectively capture this feeling and offer solidarity. The humorous element emerges with the lyric of Danielle recounting how the man from the music shop handed her a “starter guitar” only for her to shred an insane Prince-esque opening in “FUBT” in this record. (And that guy should feel like an idiot right about now, but that’s not the point!)

The sisters pull us into this fog of their emotion and feeling but the fluidity of their musical capabilities highlights their ability to capture nuanced lyricism in dynamic ways throughout WIMIII. Combining folk-like storytelling, demonstrations of masterful musicianship, girl group R&B elements, and an overall Lilith fair vibe makes the album something worth honoring. My last comment is on the opening song, “Los Angeles.” Ah, that opening riff from baritone saxophonist Henry Solomon sets the tone for a complex love song towards Los Angeles—maybe a confused poem rather than a self-assured love song. As an LA-native, I can also express mixed feelings about this “hometown of mine.” I hold a deep appreciation for the art, activism, and energy that has emerged from LA but I am not so allured by the way in which the city has been co-opted by capitalist, self-development, influencer culture that does no justice for the history that has made the city worth living in. (I would recommend a read of Luis Rodriguez’s “Love Poem to Los Angeles” for more thoughts on this). And yet, I love Los Angeles and I will add this song to my repertoire of what to play when I am there (the saxophone riff playing during a drive on an empty 405 is euphoric). “Los Angeles” fits wonderfully with the exciting “Summer Girl,” another homage to the city of angels that interestingly enough interpolates a Lou Reed-type sound (think the “doot-doo-doo...”) Overall, this multidimensional record simultaneously showcases the Haim sisters’ cool confidence and their immense capacity for growth and mature self-awareness. They can be summer girls, but they are so much more. They are women in music.



Adrianne Lenker – *Songs and Instrumentals* (4AD)

Find it in: FOLK

Adrianne Lenker made this record in a one-room cabin in the woods of Western Massachusetts during the beginning days of the pandemic while mending a broken heart. The first 11 songs (on *Songs*) were written and recorded by Lenker on the spot and this brought authenticity to the sound through small background noises, birdsong and even comforting wind chimes. There is a timeless simplicity in these albums that comment on grief and heartache -- they focus on healing and growth and appreciating the little things. The Big Thief singer shows how it is valid to mourn the current moment, but onward reflection prompts onward movement. The introspection enveloping and radiating from these two paired albums encourages indulgence in even the smallest joys. Onwards and forwards, but maybe I will rewind backwards and listen to these just one more time...

Joni Mitchell – *Archives Volume I: The Early Years 1963-1967* (RHINO RECORDS)

Find it in: ROCK

Once again Joni Mitchell manages to hypnotize the listener as they hear glimpses of her first moments on the stage and listen to the first occasions in which listeners or friends were able to witness her magical aura flourish. With nearly six hours of music, this painstakingly thoroughly organized collection of archival moments from Mitchell’s early career shows a younger Joni at her most vulnerable and in her most authentic form. A Mitchell fan will undoubtedly enjoy the introductions Mitchell gives her songs, and the explanations she begins to songs she is “just beginning to write.” I can’t even begin to express the chills that run through my spine hearing her introduce (sometimes for the very first time) songs I have adored all of my years; notably so “Cactus Tree,” “Conversation,” “Song to a Seagull,” “Born to Take The Highway” and “The Circle Game.” I think it is comical, too, to hear the male radio host completely butcher the name of ‘Both Sides Now.’ Yet both the newer listener or peripheral Mitchell fan can find enjoyment in this collection. It is an intimate musical experience, as you really get the privilege of hearing Mitchell explore her love for storytelling (and really establish a name for herself in the Folk scene) as she frequents cafes and folk clubs. Not only is it refreshing (especially in the days of COVID) to hear the background noises of a coffee shop that remind one warmly of the days of live music, but it is

so nice to hear Mitchell speak directly to you. This collection is in essence a conversation, an exploration and a review of the early years of one of the music world’s most important songwriters. And you get to be lucky enough to listen to her magic, to her sublime qualities that make her the powerful figure we know today, slowly grow and materialize. I could (and I have) gotten through months of quarantine with this record by my side, and that should tell you all you need to know.

Yusuf/Cat Stevens – *Tea for the Tillerman 2*

(CAT-O-LOG)

Find it in: ROCK

I want to talk about some songs I (and many, many others) grew up listening to: “Wild World,” “Where do the Children Play,” “Father and Son” are songs I know by heart and that evoke unbelievable nostalgia. In *Tea for the Tillerman 2*, released 50 years after the original, Yusuf has reimaged and re-recorded all of these songs we know and love. As a seasoned artist exploring familiar and established themes, the result is fantastic. The “Wild World” we know so well is given a jazzy oomph, “On the Road to Find Out” is adorned with an R&B and African rhythm, and “Father and Son” becomes a duet between Yusuf of 2020 and Cat Stevens of 1970. These novel and bold elements in his work remind us of the change happening all around us—even as it changes the original Tillerman to a spaceman on the cover. Not only is it exciting to re-experience the lyrics in a new and dynamic way, but the album is symbolic in offering Stevens an opportunity to reclaim his most famous record under a new identity: Yusuf. Stevens converted to Islam in the late 1970s, so I like to think it fair that he record his most known work under his true identity. He is owed this opportunity to reclaim his works under his true name, Yusuf, and to do with the music whatever he wants, honestly. And he really does, and guess what? Beyond the symbolic value of the record, it also is a fantastic listen.

Okay Kaya – *Watch This Liquid Pour Itself* (JAGJAGUWAR)

Find it in: ELECTRONICA

Thee Sacred Souls – *Can I Call You Rose? 7”* (DAPTONE)

Find it in: SOUL

Celeste – *Not Your Muse*

(BOTH SIDES)

Find it in: SOUL



Kurt Vile – Speed, Sound, Lonely KV

(MATADOR)

Find it in: ROCK

Maggie Rogers – Notes from the Archive: Recordings 2011-2016

(DEBAY)

Find it in: ROCK

E. LIT

*Methodical Music Listening and
How It Helped Me Survive a Pandemic*

Dark Time Sunshine – LORE

(FAKE FOUR INC.)

Find it in: HIP HOP

I've been praising Dark Time Sunshine's first two albums as some of my favorite hip hop releases of the last decade, but with nine years having passed since their sophomore album I may need to revise my timeframe. The studio magic of Onry Ozzborn and Zavala is still very much present on this latest collaboration, with Onry's creative cadences floating nonchalantly over Zavala's celestial production. This album finds the duo at their most peaceful and empathic, as they channel their collective powers into healing sounds that might mend some of the many wounds inflicted by 2020. Lots of beauty and upliftment throughout, though not without a few trips into the darkness of anxiety and human turmoil. Zavala is one of hip hop's finest modern producers and rarely puts out music, so hearing his production over the course of a full album always feels like an immense privilege. Sadly, to my knowledge, the promotional soap that was marketed with the initial release of this album has since sold out.

Moor Mother & Billy Woods – BRASS (BACKWOODZ STUDIOZ)

Find it in: HIP HOP

This is one of those albums that I didn't see coming, but that makes perfect sense once you hear it lurking through your speakers. Moor Mother and Billy Woods both enjoy dancing on the fringes of the hip hop genre and shaking things up with their signature brands of wild experimentation. Parts of this album sound like ancestral poetry channeled through old African field recordings, while others sound like the echoes of lost souls as captured in television static. Moor Mother flexes her deep voice and thoughtful lyrics with ease through rapping, singing, spoken word and everything in-between. Billy Woods remains hip hop's poet laureate, and has been dropping the best crafted verses in the genre for the better part of a decade. This album should give you a lot to think about.

Rasheed Chappell & Buckwild – Sinners and Saints (GET ON DOWN)

Find it in: HIP HOP

Buckwild impressed the hell out of me last year, with two super solid full length production showcase albums featuring tons of talented guest rappers and a couple of instrumental projects to boot. Instead of slowing down in the slightest, he ended 2020 on a high note with this excellent collaboration with MC Rasheed Chappell. This is a powerful album that deals with the frightening times that we're living in, with Rasheed's perceptive and poetic bars highlighting police brutality, the prison system, the struggles of the inner-city, and mass media's influence on pandemic politics. Buckwild's stellar production is very dark and cinematic throughout, with beats that will send chills down your spine while tugging at your heart strings. Plays like a movie that's worth its weight in Oscars.

Breeze Brewin – Hindsight

(MATIC)

Find it in: HIP HOP

I can't lie, my jaw pretty much hit the floor when I saw Breeze Brewin drop a solo album drop out of nowhere in 2021. For years, I've been telling friends how much of a crime it is that one of the most talented MCs on the planet doesn't have a proper solo album to his name... until now. Granted, this album is far from perfect, with some questionable production choices throughout, but Breeze Brewin is still about as perfect a rapper as you're likely to hear anywhere. His distinct voice, uncanny flow, and smart lyrics and concepts haven't missed a beat since the Juggaknots dropped their debut in '96, and I'm stoked that he still sounds so great on

the mic 25 years later. I hear he's been working on more new music since the completion of this project, so hopefully this is a sign of many great things to come.

Señor Kaos & Illastrate – Kings of Vice (ULTRA BEAST UNITED)

Find it in: HIP HOP

Señor Kaos has long been a slept on talent of Atlanta's hip hop scene, with his 2011 solo album "The Kaos Effect" only getting a fraction of the attention it should have gotten when it dropped. It's been great to see Kaos resurface in the last few years with a rejuvenated hunger in the group Ultra Beast alongside fellow talented ATL rapper 4-IZE. This latest collaboration with producer Illastrate showcases Señor Kaos' passionate delivery and razor-sharp wordplay over dusty soul loop beats that'll get your head nodding. Be sure to check out Señor Kaos' work in the Ultra Beast group albums as well. And don't sleep on 4-IZE's solo album *Look Into My IZE*" which came out of nowhere early last year and cemented a place in my top 10 albums of 2020 with its distinctly Southern charms.

Mestizo & Controller 7– Couch (HANDSMADE)

Find it in: HIP HOP

San Francisco producer Controller 7's reemergence in 2020 was one of the most exciting musical surprises of last year, with not one but three amazing releases in the span of 5 months. This collaboration with MC Mestizo is a very creative exercise in experimental musical styles that hits all the right notes for me. Mestizo's melodic and candid delivery is paired perfectly with Controller 7's quirky samples and distinctive production chops. Whenever I listen to Controller 7's music, I can always feel the depth of the crate digging that went into finding his particular sounds. Great to see this locally pressed on vinyl with two awesome variant album covers. Look forward to seeing more of Controller 7's music pressed in 2021, especially his collaboration with Buck 65, which was easily one of my favorites releases of 2020.

Jazz Spastiks – Camera of Sound

(JAZZ PLASTIK)

Find it in: HIP HOP

With the crazy amount of strange and experimental music dropping these days, it can be nice to hear an album that gives an old school hip hop head like myself something pure to appreciate. High quality jazzy hip hop beats, propulsive drums that knock, ill scratch hooks,

and a colorful cast of MCs make this album one of the more enjoyable tributes to traditional hip hop you're likely to hear this year. The guest list of rappers on the album speaks for itself: Count Bass D, The Artifacts, Kool Keith, The Procuissions, Wee Bee Foolish, Craig G and Soundsci all drop by to spit verses amongst others. These two gents out the UK continue to keep it fresh with their timeless sound.

Roughneck Jihad – The Red Sentence (EXPANDED ART)

Find it in: HIP HOP

Jihad the Roughneck MC has low key been killing sucker MCs since the early 90s, where he wrecked shop in the Bay Area hip hop group Third Sight alongside D-Styles and Du-Funk. He's released a steady stream of side projects and solo work over the years, but has been on fire with his output recently and dropped a number of top quality albums last year. *The Red Sentence* is loosely based around a socialist crime-fighting hero of Jihad's invention, and invites you along for a dramatic ride full of anti-fascist anthems and punchlines that'll strike fear into the hearts of lesser MCs. Jihad's peculiar old school delivery and twisted battle vernacular have honestly never sounded better, and this project is straight up raw. Light one up for Karl Marx and toss this in your mix.

Tip:

Much love to Bandcamp for supporting musicians through the pandemic with their monthly fee-waiving. RIP MF DOOM, Double K and Scorcese Lord Jones. Take care of yourselves, everyone!

RAMO

Patron Saint of Bandcamp Day

SAULT – Untitled (Black Is)

(FOREVER LIVING ORIGINALS)

Find it in: SOUL

A declaration, a plea, a command. Their third album in about a year's time, the UK band fronted by Inflo and Cleo Sol blends genres and vibes of Blues, Soul, Funk, Disco and more to create an atmosphere of protest and celebration. Celebration of Blackness. Protest of the treatment of that Blackness. You'll groove to the music, and when the lyrics hit you'll question if you should be grooving, or if you should be crying. Powerful stuff. Highest recommendation.



Blu & Exile – Miles: From An Interlude Called Life (DIRTY SCIENCE)

Find it in: HIP HOP

Exile's production always hits a sweet spot for me. Blu lays out a sketchbook of uplifting and conscious rhymes as an answer to our current societal fuckery. Looking inward as well as out.

Cleo Sol – Rose In The Dark

(FOREVER LIVING ORIGINALS)

Find it in: SOUL

Honey and sunshine voice dancing over soft and beautiful orchestral flights. The vocal powerhouse behind the band SAULT, both here and there, is able to deliver strong, important messages with the grace and wisdom of a mother's love, or the sultry touch of a lover's embrace. Highly Recommended.

Chester Watson – Past Cloaks

(POW RECORDINGS)

Find it in: HIP HOP

This 2020 vinyl reissue of Chester's 2016 mixtape deserves a spin or two or three. The self-proclaimed monotone samurai paints weed-laced worlds of a thoughtful and well-spoken individual with a unique view of their reality. Mellow delivery of vivid backdrops over equally mellow but effective production (by Chester and Pymun, respectively). Hoping for a vinyl pressing of his 2020 effort, A Japanese Horror Film, which also deserves some love.

ShrapKnel – ShrapKnel

(BACKWOODZ STUDIOZ)

Find it in: HIP HOP

PremRock and Curly Castro join forces to create a project that sounds like its namesake. Dark, earthy production provides the bedrock for their deft and confident and necronomical rap styles, producing an atmosphere of folkloric storytelling. Shredded weaponry in all directions. Highly Recommended.

Armand Hammer – Shrines

(BACKWOODZ STUDIOZ)

Find it in: HIP HOP

Elucid and billy woods, both as solo artists and as AH, along with other artists like Moor Mother and R.A.P. Ferreira (fka Milo), are making some of the most vital and important music in rap and beyond. Shrines has a visceral meatiness to it that feels both accessible and elusive. Their dense lyrics and urgent vocal delivery act as loose reigns around production that plays as off-kilter but in the pocket. I hear and discover something new with every listen. Highest Recommendation.

Jazz Spastiks – Camera of Sound (JAZZPLASTIK)

Find it in: HIP HOP

UK beatmaking duo provides a deep boom bap background for a heavy selection of emcees to flex over. Kool Keith, Count Bass D, Craig G, Artifacts, The Procussions, and more crush this variety show. Feels old skool with a modern sensibility.

Open Mike Eagle – Anime Trauma + Divorce (AUTO REVERSE)

Find it in: HIP HOP

OME's most personal project to date, he delves headfirst into the deep end of the trauma and struggles of relationships, trying to age gracefully as a rapper, the fashion sensibility of said aging rapper, and the absurdity of life – all with his signature humor and deference for experience. Another album where I discover things missed on previous listens. Highly recommended.

Fly Anakin & Pink Siifu – FlySiifu's Records & Tapes

(LEX RECORDS)

Find it in: HIP HOP

Urgent rap styles over drifting jazzy rhythms and samples. Weed smoke and neck snaps all around.

Rasheed Chappell & Buckwild – Sinners and Saints (GET ON DOWN)

Find it in: HIP HOP

Gritty, hard-hitting production with heavy drum kicks and hard-life raps from the likes of 38 Spesh, Che Noir, Ransom, Planet Asia, and more. Really dope album.

DJ Muggs The Black Goat – Dies Occidendum (SACRED BONES)

Find it in: HIP HOP

Hip Hop horror cinema. Shadowy figures in dilapidated crypts. Unheeded warnings of dark magic and forest haints. Instrumental mayhem.

Preservation – Eastern Medicine, Western Illness (MONDIEU)

MUSIC / NATURE SOUNDS)

Find it in: HIP HOP

Producer/DJ extraordinaire, Preservation serves up a buffet of really amazing beats that have a hint, or large dash in some cases, of Asian melodies, samples/backbone, but sound solidly like a rap song. The rap cats filling out the sound of this album include Quelle Chris, Mach-Hommy, Navy Blue, billy woods, Roc Marciano, Ka, A.G., Your Old Droog, and more. Heavy hitting, indeed. Highly recommend.

Him-LO & Giallo Point – Ugonmakemekillyoazz

(GRILCHY PARTY)

Find it in: HIP HOP

\Mafia-meet type beats with threatening street raps. You ordered the Baked Ziti and received the Dirt Nap Special. Great Sunday listening.

Moor Mother & billy woods – BRASS (BACKWOODZ STUDIOZ)

Find it in: HIP HOP

The team-up I didn't know I needed. Ritualistic rhythms and sound chants hang over the baritone poetry of Moor Mother and the intricate and vastly interesting verse construction of billy woods. Full of grandiose visuals and thought-provoking dictums.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Freddie Gibbs & Alchemist – *Alfredo* (ESGN/ALC Records/Empire), Moodie Black – *Fuzz* (Fake Four Inc.), Knxwledge – *1988* (Stones Throw Records), OXP (Pomrad & Onra) – *Swing Convention (& instrumental version)* (Nothing But Net), Estee Nack & Superior – *Baladas* (Tuff Kong Records), Nolan The Ninja – *Talk Soon* (Sport Cast), Egyptian Lover – *1986* (Egyptian Empire Records), The Jahari Massamba Unit (Karriem Riggins & Madlib) – *Pardon My French* (Madlib Invazion), Madlib – *Sound Ancestors* (Madlib Invazion), Genevieve Artadi – *Dizzy Strange Summer* (Brainfeeder), Sofie – *Cult Survivor* (Stones Throw Records), Various Artists – *Jazz Is Dead series* by Adrian Younge & Ali Shaheed Muhammad (w/ Marcos Valle, Roy Ayers, Doug Carn, Gary Bartz, Azymuth, respectively) (Jazz Is Dead), Various Artists – *La Locura de Machuca 1975–1980* (Analog Africa), Various Artists – *Funky Coup: Korean Soul, Funk & Rare Groove Nuggets 1973–1980 Vol. 1* (Cobrarose Records), Hallelujah Chicken Run Band – *Take One* (Analog Africa), Ranil Y Su Conjunto Tropical – *Self-Titled* (Analog Africa)

Tip:

Music is a form of travel. Use it until we can move freely again. RIP Scarce Lord Jones. RIP Double K. RIP Prince Markie Dee. RIP the METAL FACE VILLAIN.



SAULT – Untitled (Rise)

(FOREVER LIVING ORIGINALS)

Find it in: SOUL

Spiritual. Power. Funk. Community. More amazing protest groove from a band that put out two masterful albums in three months in 2020, culminating in four outstanding efforts in 15 months with 2019's 5 and 7, respectively. Highest recommendation.

Small Bills (Elucid & The Lasso) – Don't Play It Straight

(MELLO MUSIC GROUP)

Find it in: HIP HOP

Organized, pressing erraticism over eclectic, mechanized production delivering overtly clear messages with hidden meaning for ones disciplined enough to listen with intent. Important music in times of pushback. Highest recommendation.

Cambatta – LSD: Lunar Solar Duality (Parts 1 & 2)

(MELLO MUSIC GROUP)

Find it in: HIP HOP

Aggressive intelligence mixed with pain and hope, interlocking verses with puzzle-precision. A personal journey rife with struggle and perseverance. Full album is two separate LPs or one CD.

Aesop Rock – Spirit World Field Guide (RHYMESAYERS)

Find it in: HIP HOP

Another stellar offering from the super-human living futuristic thesaurus. Dude just keeps leveling up.

Kaytranada – Bubba (RCA)

Find it in: ELECTRONICA

Kaytranada teams up with a variety of artists to spread out the vibes of Bubba. Slick electronica blends into pop-esque club hits into soulful house hip-shakers.

■ **Crash (2004) [Criterion] – Directed by David Cronenberg**

David Cronenberg's treatment of J.G. Ballard's material is simply stunning. Criterion gives the 35mm film the remastering it deserves and Howard Shore's brilliant score beautifully complements the visual. They even have a great interview with Cronenberg and Ballard dissecting each others work. *Crash* has become one of my favorite movies. I have often found myself questioning my relationship to technology and the uncaring indifference it has towards me. *Crash* takes our fetish of technology, especially with our desire of the automobile to dark places. It asks the viewer questions that you may find to be uncomfortable. It may even cause you to feel aroused. However, this is not a movie for pure entertainment nor titular speculative porn for the brain. It is a melting pot of psychosexual pomp, violence and beauty all rolled up into a haunting masterpiece. Highly recommended.

Deadly Games aka 3615 Code Pere Noel aka Dial Code Santa Claus (1989) – Directed by Rene Manzor

I do not want to spoil this movie with a plot synopsis, you can read about it on IMDB (I just want to add that it was made and written before that other holiday film starring Macaulay Culkin). This is an intelligent film, with great visuals and is highly imaginative. Do not worry, it is not an arty film. *Deadly Games* definitely has a foot planted in the grind house tradition of cinema with a director that is competent and creative, making a very memorable movie experience.

Emperor – no title (PEACEVILLE)

Find it in: METAL
From *Wrath Of The Tyrants* to the *Reverence* e.p. Emperor was one of the best black metal bands in the world. The sophistication of songwriting and imagery they used showed a maturity beyond their ages. This e.p. still sends shivers down my spine when I listen to it.

Emperor – In The Nightside Eclipse (PEACEVILLE)

Find it in: METAL
Recorded in 93 and unleashed in 94, *In The Nightside Eclipse* is one of the cornerstones in Norwegian black metal. Take a step back from

the infamous evil oneupmanship from a very insular scene and you are left with a black metal album that stands up as a pinnacle of metal masterpieces over 27 years later.

Winterfylleth – The Reckoning Dawn (CANDLELIGHT)

Find it in: METAL
This was a great pandemic album to listen to this summer. It transported me to a different place in my imagination and allowed me a journey outside the four walls of my apartment. Great riffs, and a wonderful balance between aggression and melody. Excellent vocal work and overall a strong release from Winterfylleth.

ACxDC (Anitchrist Demoncore) – Satan Is King (PROSTHETIC)

Find it in: PUNK
Breakneck power violence done right. Two horns up!

Pig Destroyer – The Octagonal Stairway (RELAPSE)

Find it in: METAL
This album has bit of noise, a bit of Sepultura industrial metal blended up in the grindcore to produce yet another great album by Pig Destroyer.

Raven – Metal City (SPV/STEAMHAMMER)

Find it in: METAL
I don't know if I just needed some great escapist bullshit, but this stalwart NWOBH was just what my ears needed to hear. Great songwriting with plenty of energy and fun, without being phoned in or hokey. It's a damn good record!

Vader – Solitude In Madness (NUCLEAR BLAST)

Find it in: METAL
Thirty-three years of making great death metal is no easy feat. Vader delivers the goods, brutal, no filler polish death metal. What's not to like?

Today Is The Day – No Good To Anyone (THE END)

Find it in: METAL
Bleak, scary, depressing, danger, pain to your psyche, sickness, helplessness, weakness, anger, harsh dissonant landscapes- these are just some of the terrain that you will visit with Today Is The Day. Steve Austin has been fighting Lyme disease

for the last six years and still managed to make an incredible album. Did I mention the artwork is by Jef Whithead! A very timely release for these pandemic days.

Danzig – Sings Elvis (CLEOPATRA)

Find it in: ROCK
This is actually good. I like the reverb soaked boozy smoke filled hazy music. You can feel the respect and love for how influential Elvis is on Danzig. I just can't believe this album didn't happen sooner.

Archgoat – Black Mass XXX (DEBEMUR MORTI)

Find it in: METAL
An excellent live recording. Bestial and unholy, raw black metal that has one cloven hoof in war metal. Fantastic retrospective of their work played with gusto and conviction. This has been on regular rotation since I picked it up last year.

Spirit Adrift – Enlightened In Eternity (20 BUCK SPIN)

Find it in: METAL
Spirit Adrift has managed to capture their influences without sounding like a complete retro throwback band. Speed, urgency, great guitar leads and competent musicianship to create a heavy metal record that is worthy of your time and money. I am already looking forward to their next album.

Cauldron Black Ram – Slaver (20 BUCK SPIN)

Find it in: METAL
Cauldron Black Ram plummets the listener to submission with its barbaric unique blend of brutal death and black metal. Heavy atmosphere and great production ooze from the grooves of the record, simply put this is an album with no filler. I give it a very high recommendation.

Xibalba – Anos En Infierno (SOUTHERN LORD)

Find it in: METAL
I once saw these guys at Gilman (you know, when there were actual live events you could go to. You could hang out and interact with a bunch of people you don't know, see a band you don't know about, sigh...), and they destroyed the audience. If you are a fan of hardcore that has a heavy dose of slam metal, then you will like this record.

Paysage d'Hiver – Im Traum (KUNSTHALL)

Find it in: METAL
I am never quite sure what I am going to get with Tobias Mockl's project Paysage d'Hiver. Each release is like a chapter, and each release is part of a larger story. Some albums are heavy on ambient and some are heavy on the black metal. This is a purely ambient album. I have very much enjoyed listening to this. As a listener I get lost in the world created by Wintherr and the cold beauty of Paysage d'Hiver. I'm already eagerly awaiting *Geister* which should be released by the time this gets printed.

Spire – Temple Of Khronos (SENTIENT RUIN LABORATORIES)

As bleak and unforgiving as the outback that has spawned this unholy mystical black metal outfit. A truly imaginative metal album that is already a favorite of mine for 2021.

Chaos Echoes – Ecstasy With Nonexistents (SENTIENT RUIN LABORATORIES)

Find it in: METAL
I have always enjoyed music that I have a hard time writing about because it usually means that this is a piece of art that has managed to transcend my limited vocabulary of 26 letters in the English alphabet. What I can say is that this album is an immersive experience in an auditory ritual, a ritual that will burrow into your brain and worm it's way into your heart. According to Chaos Echoes *Ecstasy with the Nonexistents*, is a soundboard recording of a full live set from 2018. Assembled with great care, this set list was only performed in concert once. The concept was to reinvent the songs, re-arranging pieces from Transient and Movement into a continuous three-part suite. The first section is slow, more self-centered than introverted, and obsessive. The second section is atmospheric, dominated by improvisations with bells, flutes, shamanic drumming, and mantra-like vocal patterns. The final section is carnal, wild and intuitive, completing the journey from an aggressive, selfish state to one of abandonment and sharing." In this reviewers opinion they were every successful in this mission, and many thanks to Sentient Ruin for making this available in a beautiful physical package that allows us to revisit this magical moment over and over again.

Skaphe – Skaphe3 (MYSTISKAOS)

Find it in: METAL
This is a punishing record of severe dissonance and weird time signatures. There are hints of



psychedelic rock being fueled by the gasoline of hate, terror and evil glory. Rest assured that this is a black metal record, no matter how strange it gets. Skaphe manages to pull it all together to create truly unique piece of misanthropic art. Highly recommended.

Enslaved – Utgard (NUCLEAR BLAST)

Find it in: METAL

This is not a pure metal record by any stretch of the imagination. This reminds me of King Crimson with metal tendencies. I have been impressed that Enslaved have followed their own vision and have managed to keep me interested in their art, release after release, even when the metal is not as obvious as their earlier releases. Enslaved have some serious music abilities and it really comes through with the production of the album. An excellent extreme metal album chock full of progressive leanings and intelligent design.

Spectral Voice – Necrotic Demos

(DARK DESCENT)

Find it in: METAL

Grimy, dirty, total rotting death metal with some doom leanings. This album collects their demo and tracks from out of print e.p.s. into one package. Get ready to have your face peeled off.

Oranssi Pazuzu –

Mestarin Kynsi (NUCLEAR BLAST)

Find it in: METAL

Oranssi Pazuzu have managed to capture my attention with this release. It is a terrifying release of Lovecraftian soundscapes and horrors that are yet unknown to your mind, but you will get to know them. You will walk with them, they may become your friend or they will consume you. You may find yourself wanting out or even worse you may not wish to escape at all.

Aborted –

La Grande Mascarade

(CENTURY MEDIA)

Find it in: METAL

Another great release by Aborted. Brutal Death metal with technical tendencies. My only complaint, this is an e.p. and not a full length.

Botanist –

Photosynthesis (FLENSER)

Find it in: METAL

Avant garde black metal with concepts about plants and nature. Not everyone's cup of tea but I highly recommend Botanist. Another great release from a unique artist.

Goatpenis/

Demonic Apparation – United In Demonic Warfare

(NUCLEAR WAR NOW)

Find it in: METAL

YES! This is what I'm talking about, when I talk about a great split release. Both bands bring it. These are not throw away tracks, nor a lazy cash grab split. This is war metal to destroy the christian ideology and human kind. Production is top notch, the art is killer and both bands bring a distinctive and authentic approach to their take on black metal. Two horns up!

Beherit – The Oath Of Black Blood [Reissue]

(NUCLEAR WAR NOW)

Find it in: METAL

This is how you do a proper reissue of essential black metal. You need to own this.

Lord Foul –

Demo Collection 1993-1994

(NUCLEAR WAR NOW)

Find it in: METAL

Excellent underground USBM. On par with any of the European 2nd wave bands but distinctly American sounding.

Witchcraft/Aske – Dead Christ Prayer

(NUCLEAR WAR NOW)

Find it in: METAL

Leave it to the Finnish to give me the kind of black metal that reeks of rot, death, and grave dirt. True black metal warriors. Drips belief and mood from every groove. I highly recommend this release.

Vulpecula –

Fons Immortalis-Phoenix of Creation (NUCLEAR WAR NOW)

Find it in: METAL

A unique blend of death metal, a little bit of doom and the spice of Greek/Italian black metal make this a very interesting release. A side project Of Chuck Keller (Ares Kingdom) and Chris Overton (Ligeia/Nepenthe). Heavy on atmosphere and thoughtfulness, exploring the idea of celestial space, cosmology and the esoteric. This reissue includes both the Phoenix Of Creation demo and Fons Immortalis e.p.

Ulthar – Providence

(20 BUCK SPIN)

Find it in: METAL

Justin Ennis, Shelby Lermo, and Steve Peacock have created a modern masterpiece of death metal with Providence. This is an album that not only has great riffs but has enough other time signatures, leads and twists to keep you interested after a fourth listen. I eagerly await what Ulthar will do next. Highly recommended.

Terminal Bliss –

Brute Err/Ata (RELAPSE)

Find it in: PUNK

Excellent hardcore punk done by a whose who of Virginia punk rock veterans. But these musicians have not rested on their laurels. They have crafted a hell of a great album full of energy, social critique and personal angst.

Gauze –

Equalizing Distort (SELFISH)

Find it in: PUNK

An essential record of Japanese punk rock. Stop reading this and get yourself a copy now.

Abigor – Totschlager

(A Saintslayer's Songbook)

(WORLD TERROR COMMITTEE)

Find it in: METAL

Abigor does not fuck around. This is a continuation of their vision of black metal and their philosophy of black metal. Year after year, Abigor has made exceptional music. From their choice of art work, layouts and production, Abigor stands out in a sea of mediocrity and wanna be's. Totschlager (A Saintslayer's Songbook) is no exception. Highly recommended.

Armand Hammer – Shrines

(BACKWOODZ STUDIOZ)

Find it in: HIP HOP

Ever since I took a chance on Armand Hammer, I have been hooked. *Shrines* is another masterpiece from Elucid and Billy Woods (plus a handful of other top tier musicians delivering the goods too). One of the albums that helped me get through the loneliness and isolation of being trapped in my apartment due to Covid-19, helped me feel less insane and to focus on issues of the soul. To quote one of my favorite lines "Fumes noxious, we are bored of the apocalypse". Armand Hammer asks you hard questions, they want you to think and to be uplifted, there are multiple meanings and layered nuance and ambiguity. No easy answers are to be found, but instead endless possibilities and the search for the beyond. I am just thankful that art like this exists.

Public Enemy – What You Gonna Do When The Grid Goes Down? (ENEMY RECORDS/DEF JAM)

Is this good? Of course it is. It's Public Enemy. This album is relevant, with great production that matches the truthful fiery prophecy of Chuck D, and of course the x factor that is Flav. The collaborative efforts of all those involved have given us a news broadcast that is honest, and has more accuracy than a CNN report. Steadfast and full of energy, everything I love about P.E. Highly Recommended.

Aesop Rock – Spirit World Field Guide

(RHYMESAYERS ENTERTAINMENT)

Find it in: HIP HOP

Being only familiar with Aesop Rock's work with Homeboy Sandman, this is the first solo album of Aesop that I have listened to. This will not be the last. The music and production compliment Aesop Rock's lyrical approach perfectly. There is joy and pain, masterful word play and a philosophical/spiritual vibe through out this album. Everything comes together and you get a richly rewarding album.

AC/DC – Power Up

(COLUMBIA/SONY MUSIC)

Find it in: ROCK

50 years of making great rock n roll. *Power Up* is no exception. There are no ballads or other surprises on this album, this is unapologetic rock n roll cranked up to 11, sounding just like you would expect from AC/DC. Thoroughly enjoyable and a perfect counter to the unpredictable times we are living through. \m/

Revenge – **Strike.Smother.Dehumanize**

(SEASON OF MIST UNDERGROUND ACTIVISTS)

Find it in: METAL

Filthy, blown out speakers, distorted, heavy, guttural, grown out, break neck beats and disgust for humans...everything you love about Revenge.

Primitive Man – Immersion

(RELAPSE RECORDS)

Find it in: METAL

Primitive man is my go to when I want to hear some doomy sludge metal that is very pissed off. I can actually feel the anger seeping out of my head phones and burrowing it's way into my skin. This is not nice music and it is not meant to make you feel warm and fuzzy, but it is honest and cathartic. They have not let me down with any of their previous releases, and "Immersion" is no exception.

🎬 **Color Out Of Space (2020) – Directed by Richard Stanley**

Richard Stanley's Color Out Of Space is one wild ride. It is worth seeing. The CGI is used intelligently and it has enough practical fx to keep it out of the 3D video game look plaguing so much film. Great return for Richard Stanley and I hope this will allow him to make another movie in the future.

🎬 **The Irishman (2019) [Criterion] – Directed by Martin Scorsese**

Quite frankly it is easy to skip over this. For one, Netflix released this baby on its streaming platform in 2019 but it didn't get physically released until November 23, 2020. Secondly it's another gangster film by Scorsese! Does this guy ever get enough of telling the same story over and over, with the usual act of De Niro, Pesci, and the endless rotating New York actors that appear in all his films?

YET - This is one of Martin Scorsese's best films in a long time. It is on par with his god like genius of *Taxi Driver* and *Raging Bull*. It shows his maturity and mastership of his craft. I highly recommend this film. This is a story that takes time to tell with a healthy dose of Shakespearean betrayal, tragedy and violence to satisfy all. The Cinematography by Rodrigo Prieto is classy, Robbie Robertson delivers a great soundtrack and the acting, especially from Joe Pesci is actually good. So reserve yourself an afternoon and enjoy one hell of film.

Dropdead – 2020

(ARMAGEDDON LABEL)

Find it in: PUNK

Dropdead 2020 is nothing short of greatness. Thank you for keeping me a believer and for delivering one of my favorite hardcore albums in a long while.

HONORABLE MENTIONS:

2020 was the year movie theaters shut their doors and streaming became the only game in town. So I am going to cheat a bit and also recommend the following movies - how much of these will actually be available in physical media I don't know. We will have to wait and see, but I am going to recommend them anyway. "The Disciple" dir. Chaitanya Tamhane, "The Invisible Man" dir. Leigh Whannell, "Borat Subsequent Movie Film" dir. Jason Woliner, "The Inheritance" dir. Ephraim Asili, "Mank" dir. David Fincher, "Kajillionaire" dir. Miranda July, "Da 5 Bloods" dir. Spike Lee, "Irresistible" dir. Jon Stewart and "Tenet" dir. Christopher Nolan.

Tip:

In closing, Thank you for taking the time to read my ramblings and for supporting Amoeba. Amoeba is an extraordinary place. It is as much a community as it is a record store. Amoeba has opened ears to so much great music, it has given me the opportunity to see so many great films and I have been privileged to meet some of my best friends there. In short, I am glad to have the opportunity to be able to write another chapter for the MWL, and to still be able to work at this magical place.



SAN FRANCISCO



HUFFLE

Psychedelic Furs –

Made of Rain (COOKING VINYL)

Find it in: ROCK

This sounds like it could have come out in 1983. In fact it's their first new LP in 27 years.

Jonathan Wilson – Rare Blur

(BMG)

Find it in: ROCK

RSD 2020 release of outtakes/ leftovers from *Dixie Blur*, his full length release from March 2020. Fave track: a cover of Graham Nash's "And So It Goes" with Dawes.

Lothar & The Hand People – Machines-Amherst 1969/ Come Along-The Exodus 1966

(BEAT ROCKET)

Find it in: OLDIES

Two separate live releases, documenting their last gig ever and their earlier, pre East Coast incarnation as a grungy garage rock band in Denver. After 50 years, both welcome additions to their all too short recording history. A band both of and far ahead of the times in which they operated.

Rolling Stones – Goats Head

Soup (POLYDOR)

Find it in: ROCK

I picked this for one reason. Criss Cross, perhaps their best previously unreleased song of the seventies and the inspiration for my first Amoebapalooza cover band, the Hemoglobins of Montreaux. The rest of the bonus disc is quite good also...no bullshit contemporary overdubs/ vocals by Jagger, just the original demos/ alternate mixes as done in 1973. "I got some knots in my hair I can't seem to straighten out." After 21 months without seeing a barber, I can relate.

Michael Cruz Society – In The Land Of Brians

[Cassette]

Find it in: ROCK

Everybody wants some Pumpkin Pie. Yes my brother, indeed they do. Seek this out and sink your teeth into the sounds Grandma used to make when she was a young Gary Numan groupie. Fresh and familiar, my favorite musical moment during these freaked out times. More please!

BOX SET WHORE

Overpriced but enough new thrills to be worth your time & money.

Joni Mitchell – Archives Volume I (RHINO)

Find it in: ROCK

Embryonic development of perhaps the greatest singer/ songwriter of her generation, or maybe ever. From folkie/ Joan Baez type beginnings to rapidly churning out startlingly original compositions. Can't wait for Volume 2!

Frank Zappa – Halloween 1981

(ZAPPA RECORDS)

Find it in: ROCK

The Zappa Universe is a vast expanse of styles and sounds but this *You Are What You Is* early 80s period has always been one of my very favorites, probably because I was 18 and actually had to register when I don't wanna get drafted was released, and that gave me the key that unlocked the door. Sounds goofy now, but hey at least it wasn't valley girl. Bonus mask and cape for spooky excess.

EDGARDO

*Just because you put a cat in the oven
doesn't make it a biscuit.*

Boillat Thérace Quintet featuring Benny Bailey – My Greatest Love (WE RELEASE JAZZ)

Find it in: JAZZ

A lovely reissue featuring keyboardist Jean-François Boillat and wind instrumentalist Raymond Thérace with trumpeter Benny Bailey. A long out-of-print mid-70s gem of groovy Swiss modal hard bop. Accessible, soulful and satisfying. Good stuff! Also released is their self-titled debut album "Boillat Thérace Quintet." Both contain a great mix of original compositions and excellent covers. Most highly recommended!! [Available on CD & limited-edition LP.]

Lee Morgan – The Rajah

(BLUE NOTE TONE POET SERIES)

Find it in: JAZZ

Blue Note's Tone Poet Series are just like the superb Music Matters releases. This title was an overlooked Lee Morgan treasure recorded in 1966 but not actually released until 1984. Features sidemen Hank Mobley, Cedar Walton, Paul Chambers and Billy Higgins. Mastered from the original tapes by Kevin Gray, pressed on 180 gram quality vinyl by RTI and housed in a glossy Stoughton gatefold cover with rare recording session photos. It doesn't get much better than that!

Gregorio Paniagua – Batiscafo

(MUNSTER)

Find it in: EXPERIMENTAL

Spanish classical/early music specialist Gregorio Paniagua recorded this unique album in 1980 as a solo project that boldly combines classical, electronic, pop, experimental and psychedelia. A really original and imaginative record that will initially surprise but intrigue with further listening. Reissued for the first time, remastered from the original tapes and pressed on 180 gram vinyl with original artwork and extensive liner notes. A musical adventure!

Kelly Lee Owens – Inner Song

(SMALLTOWN SUPERSOUND)

Find it in: ELECTRONICA

This second full-length release by Welsh DJ/producer Kelly Lee Owens continues her expertise at seamlessly melding techno with elements of other genres. Dreamy and introspective, this album features beautiful soundscapes with delicate vocals, playful loops

and driving beats that combine to produce a very attractive collection of electronica. John Cale guests on one song for an interesting contrast. An ethereal indie techno-pop jewel! [Available on CD and double LP.]

Fanny – Fanny (REPRISE)

Find it in: ROCK

Fanny is one of the original all-female rock bands (pre-dating the Runaways, The Go-Go's, The Bangles) signed by a major record label who composed and performed their own music. And these gals ROCKED—as good as any male group! (Don't believe me? Check them out on YouTube.) David Bowie admired them and was a big fan. This was their self-titled debut record for Reprise and is finally reissued on vinyl. A terrific blues-inspired hard rock album!

Yellow Rose (2020) – Directed by Diane Paragas

Tony Award nominee Eva Noblezada plays Rose Garcia, a Texas teen who longs to pursue her love of Country music. A crisis hits when her mother is taken away by immigration officials and faces deportation. Rose makes the difficult decision to stay to pursue her dreams, embarking on a journey of self-discovery. Lea Salonga, Princess Punzalan, Liam Booth and Dale Watson, who wrote the soundtrack, also star. Certified Fresh on Rotten Tomatoes! [Available on Blu-ray and DVD.]

Tip:

Meditation + Music + Coffee/Tea = :-)

DYLAN B.

Archeologist and ice cream eating motherfucker

Altin Gün – Yo! (ATO RECORDS)

Find it in: WORLD

Everything this band does rules! Turkish folk, psych, & funk rippers to blast you into another dimension!!!

Various Artists – Habibi Funk: An Eclectic Selection Of Music From The Arab World (HABIBI FUNK)

Find it in: WORLD

One of the most satisfying comps I've encountered. This has been daily listening since the "rona" has swept the planet. "Ayonha" has become one of my top 10 favorite songs of all time!!!

The Attack – Hi Ho Silver Lining - The Decca Recordings

(DECCA)

Find it in: ROCK/OLDIES

Super catchy freakbeat stuff from the 60s. "We Don't Know" totally rips!!!

Spirit Possession – Spirit Possession (PROFOUND LORE)

Find it in: METAL

Peacock & Sungin's absolute ripper of a debut. Listen to this when you kill your landlord

Kit Sebastian – Mantra Moderne (MR. BONGO)

Find it in: WORLD

Beautiful '60s inspired tropicalia & psychedelic pop songs about falling in/out of love.

Various Artists – Sad About

The Times (ANTHOLOGY RECORDINGS)

Find it in: FOLK/ROCK

A perfect comp with songs to make you happy when you're alone and sad and songs to make you sad for feeling happy in the first place.

Various Artists – Royal Jesters: English Oldies (NUMERO GROUP)

Find it in: OLDIES

The comp with some of your favorites from the East LA Lowrider comps and more. Beautifully sad love songs and straight bootyshakin soul cuts!!!

VS Maple – Long Hair In

Three Stages (SKIN GRAFT RECORDS)

Find it in: ROCK

Our old manager showed me this when I first started six years ago, still rules. A quarantine comfort record.

OLIE B.

Hello, Internet!

This is Olin from What I'm Listening To!

Daniel Avery & Alessandro Cortini –

Illusion of Time (ROUGH TRADE)

Find it in: ELECTRONICA

Quite possibly my favorite album release of 2020. Both artists have made excellent ambient and electronica albums on their own, so it was exciting to see them collaborating for this project. On this album, you get the best of both

worlds: Daniel's trance-y beats and eerie ambience along with Alessandro's bass-y drones and distorted electronics. All these elements make for a haunting experience shrouded in haze. For me, it was the perfect album to disassociate to while I sheltered in place during the entire month of March. While my days dragged on and my perception of time became warped, this album helped me get through it all. To that I say, thank you both for such a magnificent piece of work.

The Bats – Foothills (FLYING NUN)

Find it in: ROCK

The Bats are one of New Zealand's most beloved bands. Even though their releases from the '80s and '90s are considered their best, their newer material sounds just as good. Foothills is a wonderful collection of catchy hooks, bouncy rhythms, and a relaxing atmosphere that'll easily satisfy their long-time fans. The song "Scrolling" was one of my most listened to tracks of 2020 and is quickly becoming one of my favorite songs of all time. Any fan of indie pop should not miss out on this one.

Hum – Inlet (EARTH ANALOG)

Find it in: ROCK

Holy shit, they're back! It's been over 22 years since we've heard anything from these guys but they sound better than ever. Inlet is by far the heaviest, spacey-est, shoegazey-est album they've done and it's absolutely killer. Welcome back Hum, we missed you!

Maya Hawke – Blush

(MOM + POP MUSIC)

Find it in: ROCK

Most folks who are familiar with Maya Hawke either know her for her role on the third season of *Stranger Things* and/or being Ethan Hawke and Uma Thurman's daughter. But what should also be known about her is that she's a lovely singer. The songs on *Blush* are warm and mellow, being influenced by jazz, country, pop, and soft rock and even worked with Norah Jones' producer to get it sounding just right. It's an overall immensely cozy album that's perfect to put on while relaxing at home with a cup of coffee and a good book. To this day, I can't believe nobody paid attention to it when it first released. It's criminally underrated and deserves much more love.

Tess Parks & Anton Newcombe – Tess Parks & Anton Newcombe (A RECORDS)

Find it in: ROCK

If you're into jangly psychedelic rock then this is an album for you! Both of these musicians



SHTEVE SF

I'm the receiving guy at Amoeba SF

New Order – *Music Complete* (MUTE)

Find it in: *POPI/ROCK*

This album is five years old and I only recently “discovered” it. It’s very catchy.

Perez Prado – *Prez* (RCA)

Find it in: *LATIN/WORLD*

Get ready to mambo!

The Pretenders – *Pretenders III* (SIRE/WEA)

Find it in: *POPI/ROCK*

Chrissy & Co continue their hit streak with their original live line up

J.J. Cale – *Troubadour* (MERCURY)

Find it in: *ROCK*

Very sedate blues/rock with some rocking numbers as well.

The Strangeloves – *I Want Candy* (SONY)

Find it in: *POPI/ROCK*

Band includes legendary producer Richard Gattherer.

Car Seat Headrest – *Making A Door Less Open* (MATA-DOR)

Find it in: *ROCK*

For a lot of long-time Car Seat fans, this was a polarizing album. Most who knew them as a rock band were completely caught off guard by the more experimental electronica route they took on here. But I for one enjoyed the change. Everything sounds so new and so fresh yet the patented Car Seat Headrest pop structure and lyrical themes remain completely intact. Not only that, there’s a lot more vocal contributions from the band’s other members which we haven’t heard before in previous releases. To me, it’s the first album that sounds like “Car Seat Headrest: the band” rather than “Car Seat Headrest: Will Toledo.” At the end of the day, the album opened up so many possibilities for their sound and it’s exciting to think about what the band will come up with next.

Tip:

Check out my YouTube Channel: “What I’m Listening To” for more music I like!

RYAN

Emic-Etic

Muriel Grossmann – *Quiet Earth* (RR GEMS)

Find it in: *JAZZ*

four new tracks on her latest long player. riy! early-’60s coltrane, spiritual jazz etc.

Jane Weaver – *Flock* (FIRE RECORDS)

Find it in: *ROCK*

after last years ambient release and a movie score flock is a return to rock/pop music. expect danielle dax type vocals woven into a late-’70s/early-’80s vibe. psyche excess gives way to a more new wave disco sound, vaguely familiar but unique.

Don Cherry – *Om Shanti Om*

(BLACK SWEAT RECORDS)

Find it in: *JAZZ*

the first pressing was short lived but pressed again without postcard and download card. this was recorded for itallian tv around 1976. 4th world, spiritual jazz played buy a quartet. familiar faces moki “tambura” and nana “percussion.” a must have for fans of codona and this era of don cherry.

Amorphous Androgynous (fsol) – *We Persuade Ourselves We Are Immortal*

(FSOLDIGITAL)

Find it in: *ELECTRONICA*

not as much as a hold the rail on the coaster freak out as a cinematic “axlerod” affair. layered trippy soundtrack feeling, wide open spaces with occasional dark clouds and car chase thrills.

Flanger – *Lollop Dripper*

(NONPLACE)

Find it in: *ELECTRONICA*

burnt the master percussionist. atom the crazed knob turner. music for a dystopian world. dark streets, late night smoky bars cradled by fallen electric wires.

Mort Garson – *Music From Patch Cord Productions*

(SACRED BONES)

Find it in: *EASY LISTENING*

various recordings circa 1968-74. moog, electronic composer. this release accompanied the latest mort reissues also currently available. if you don’t have the original *lucifer: black mass* grab that as well.

📺 *Can’t Get You Out of My Head* [BBC] – Directed by Adam Curtis

this bad boy is around seven hours long so serious offers only. riy!: david attenborough, connections, in search of, library music, b roll. curtis weaves together historical footage and carefully chosen interesting music to an almost art collage while narrating his ideas on human behavior.



CRUZ CONTROL

I like to cruise but only if I have control.

Mort Garson – *Music From Patch Cord Productions*

(SACRED BONES)

Find it in: *LOUNGE*

Awesome Garson collection. Moog rules man! Of course, there is the nice, peaceful, meditative, moogy, trippy, planty sound that you get from “Mother Earth’s Plantasia” but there are also some dancy ones in there as well.

Martin Gore – *The Third Chimpanzee* (MUTE)

Find it in: *ROCK*

Solid electronic instrumental EP any Depeche Mode fan would appreciate. Dark of course. Appropriate for human/ape self reflection.

Various Artists – *Deutsche Elektronische Musik 4-Experimental German Rock and Electronic Music 1971-83*

(SOUL JAZZ)

Find it in: *PSYCH/PROG*

Number 4 sounds just as great as the previous Soul Jazz Records DEM compilations. Collect them all!

Young Marble Giants – *Colossal Youth 40th Anniversary [2-LP]* (DOMINO)

Find it in: *ROCK*

40 years! This beautiful and essential lo-fi indie post-punk album gets a neat new limited 2-LP/2-CD reissue including a live set DVD and a lyric booklet from Domino. Sweet!

Granddaddy – *The Sophtware Slump: 20th Anniversary Edition*

(DANGEROUS)

Find it in: *ROCK*

The best Granddaddy album now in limited 4xLP box set form. Jason Lytle’s new wooden piano version of the album is beautiful and the rarity recordings are fantastic.

📺 *Tremors (1990)* – Directed by Ron Underwood

This movie was a childhood favorite and obsession of mine. It has been thirty years since its initial release and Arrow video has

now put out a new limited two disc Blu-ray set featuring a wonderful 4K scan with some cool special features. Included in the set is a double sided poster, some postcards and rad Graboid artwork. It even comes with a Walter Chang's Market 50% off coupon. A must-have for any *Tremors* fan. Giant worms underground man!

The Sound – Propaganda

(DEMON MUSIC GROUP)

Find it in: ROCK

This was one of the four clear transparent vinyl reissues that Demon put out in 2020. The other three reissues are *Shock of Daylight*, *Heads and Hearts* and *In the Hothouse (Live)*. I would honestly recommend any album from The Sound. Of course, start with *Jeopardy* and *From the Lions Mouth*. This great band always helps me cope with life.

Tip:

Please sanitize your hands when you walk into the store and wear your mask over your nose and mouth at all times when you are in the store. Thank you. Now here are my top five *Godzilla* films.

1. *Godzilla (1954)*
2. *Godzilla vs. Hedorah (1971)*
3. *Terror of Mechagodzilla (1975)*
4. *Godzilla vs. Biollante (1989)*
5. *Shin Godzilla (2016)*

TARYN

Big-brained dweeb who can definitely write an awesome bio about herself.

Mort Garson – Mother Earth's Plantasia

(SACRED BONES)

Find it in: AMBIENT/LOUNGE

The long awaited re-release of Garson's 1976 masterpiece is awesome for both plants and humans!

Arca – Kick i (XL)

Find it in: ELECTRONICA

Venezuelan artist, Arca's newest album leaves behind her ambient ways, but sticks to her experimental roots as she tackles identity through pop!

Molchat Dome – Monument

(SACRED BONES)

Find it in: ROCK

Belarus-based band, Molchat Doma, show they've got some money now after their success through Tik Tok. This third album sounds so clean and true to the energy they've always had.

Charli XCX – How I'm Feeling

Now (ASYLUM)

Find it in: ROCK

Charli's surprise album made within the first six weeks of Covid lockdown expressed love and longing for our time before and a hope to party again soon.

Patrick Cowley –

Some Funkettes (DARK ENTRIES)

Find it in: POP DANCE/DISCO/ELECTRONICA

Dark Entries newest collection of unreleased Cowley songs continues the memory of the great SF producer with his take on classic funk, soul, jazz, and disco tracks!

JAMES DILLON

*Half of the world and squirrels,
half of the world are nuts*

Om Kalsoum –

various releases (SOUMA)

Find it in: WORLD

Om Kalsoum was an Egyptian singer, songwriter, and film actress who preformed from the 1920s to the 1970s. She had title Star of the East, The voice of Egypt and Egypt's fourth pyramid and she is one of the most popular Middle Eastern singers of all time. Souma Records has issued four records of her work that are amazing. Souma Records is a subsidiary of Radio Martiko records who issued Zamaan Ya Sukkar - Exotic Love Songs and Instrumentals from the Egyptian 60's Album which I also highly recommend.

Adrian Sherwood's On-U

Sound label (ON-U SOUND)

Find it on: REGGAE

Disturbing the comfortable and comforting the disturbed since 1979 to the present day. It was founded by Adrian Sherwood who produces all of the tracks. the music is genre bending wild party sound. He has worked with many popular bands along with obscure artists. On-U has always been one of my favorite labels and I always eagerly await their releases. The recent record he made with Lee Perry is stellar.

Laurel or Hardy: Early Films of Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy [Flicker Alley]

Flicker Alley continues their amazing series of silent film Blu-rays with this two disc set of 35 newly restored films starring either Stan Laurel

or Oliver Hardy before they were a comedy duo. These films are from 1914 to 1926 and they were restored in 2k and they look amazing. You should check out their other releases such as *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, Georges Méliès *Trip to the Moon* films, any many other previously obscure films.

Ultraman – Complete Series [Mill Creek]

Shout Factory has started issuing Blu-ray sets of Tsuburaya Productions Ultra Series from 1966's *Ultra Q*, to the 2018 *Ultraman Geed* film. *Ultra Q* is my favorite, the one that started it all. It is a Japanese version of *Twilight Zone* with no recurring characters. The second set is *Ultraman* which I saw as a child on Bob Wilkins *Captain Cosmic* show. Really great sci-fi with amazing Japanese location shots and miniature sets and special effects by the great Eiji Tsuburaya, who was also involved in the *Godzilla* series.

Godzilla: The Showa Era Films [Criterion]

Criterion has released a set of all fifteen early *Godzilla* films on Blu-ray. These are in Japanese with English subtitles. Along with the original 1954 Japanese version, it also contains *Godzilla*, *King of the Monsters*, the 1956 English language version with Raymond Burr. It also has both language versions of *King Kong vs. Godzilla* along with many great special features that we have come to expect from Criterion.

Godzilla: Showa Era

Soundtracks (WAXWORKS RECORDS)

Waxwork records have issued *Godzilla: The Showa Era Soundtracks*. fifteen *Godzilla* film soundtracks on eighteen 180 gram colored vinyl discs, featuring a turntable slipmat, booklet, packaged in slipcase box. Featuring music by Akira Ifukube, Masaru Sato, Kunio Miyauchi, and Riichiro Manabe. This is some of the greatest music ever recorded. Whenever I play and in the store multiple people will ask what it is.

Night of the Living Dead:

50th Anniversary [OST]

(WAXWORKS RECORDS)

Night of the Living Dead (1968) [Criterion] – Directed by George Romero

Waxwork's Records presents this special 50th anniversary original motion picture soundtrack of *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD* on vinyl. I saw this film as a child on Bob Wilkins creature features and it scared the bejesus out of me.

Also pick up the Criterion Blu-ray. Because of a mistake the film's copyright was not renewed and a lot of substandard public domain copies exist. But this version was restored by the Museum of Modern Art and The Film Foundation and looks amazing. I highly recommend this film.

Yabby You – Conquering Lion

(PRESSURE SOUNDS)

Find it in: REGGAE

Vivian Jackson, the man called Yabby You, was a reggae vocalist and producer who came to prominence in the early 1970s through his deeply spiritual self produced work. This is an expanded version of the Yabby You classic album *Conquering Lion* with its dub version included mixed at King Tubbys. Pressure sounds has released many Yabby You albums and I have all of them. You can never have too much Yabby You.

Tip:

This year has been a shit show for almost everyone and one of the only bright sides is that we had a regime change. But I need to mention R.I.P. Jim Dillon, my father, R.I.P. Jenny Dillon, my sister, and R.I.P. Alie the Cat (the worlds greatest cat). Let's look forward to better times.

KIANA

HELL YEAH, BROTHER

Bathory – Nordland I (BLACK MARK)

Find it in: METAL

Ok WOW. If you're looking for songs about dragons & s**t, if you're trying to listen to music with sword fight sounds in the background, if you just wanna feel cool as hell, this album is for YOU. Personally, I like to listen to this while wearing my chainmail coif to REALLY get in the MOOD but you can listen to this however you want ok!

Valium Agelein – Black Moon

(NUMERO GROUP)

Find it in: ROCK

Over the summer, I listened to this almost everyday while walking around my neighborhood and it is so beautiful and it is so perfect and it will calm you down and please everyone just listen to this ok. RIYL Duster because this band is actually Duster with a different name :)

Lush – Gala (4AD)

Find it in: ROCK

This debut comp makes me feel like I'm melting into a pastel-colored, cellophane-wrapped piece of hard candy. It's so dreamy and sweet and I wish I wrote all the songs ok!



Jenny Hval – Girls Against God (VERSO)

Jenny Hval is SO cool. Did you know she's a writer?! This is her second book to be translated into English (her first was *Paradise Rot* which I also HIGHLY recommend) and it made me feel crazy. It's about hate and blasphemy; it's about black metal and witches; it's about art. It's partly a political essay and partly a horror novel. Or maybe it's a fictitious screenplay? Honestly, this book was so crazy, I'm not sure what actually happened but I came out of it feeling like I'd experienced something really profound and insane. I loved every bonkers second of this book and I already want to read it again so please give it a shot ok!

Only Lovers Left Alive (2013) – Directed by Jim Jarmusch

So, I watched this movie like four times in a row the first time I saw it. It's the most sexy, romantic, atmospheric, depressing love story you've ever seen but ALSO the main characters are VAMPIRES and ALSO it's a Jim Jarmusch movie so you KNOW the cast and the story and the soundtrack are gonna kick ass. Tilda Swinton and Tom Hiddleston are both hot as hell in it so that's a plus. I've never wanted to live in a movie more than I've wanted to live in this one. Also, they made blood look super appetizing???. OK just please please watch this ASAP, you won't regret it ok!

JEFF

The Pogues – The BBC Sessions 1984-86

(POGUEMAHONEY)
Find it in: PUNK/ROCK
CD version has more tracks!

R.A. The Rugged Man – All My Heroes Are Dead

(NATURE SOUND)
Find it in: HIP HOP
This record got me through the first few months of lockdown!

Southpaw Chop – Far East Quality EP

(SOUTHPAWCHOP)
Find it in: HIP HOP
Proof that leaving fingerprints on records isn't a bad thing!

Margo Price – Perfectly Imperfect at the Ryman

(LOMAVISTA)
Find it in: COUNTRY
A live recording.

Ikebe Shakedown – Unqualified 7"

(COLEMINE)
Find it in: FUNK/SOUL
Instrumental jams. Check all their releases!

Rodrigo y Gabriela – Mettavalution (Live) (RUBYWORKS)

Find it in: ACOUSTIC FOLK/MEXICAN
Check all their releases

Hieroglyphics VA – Hiero Oldies Vol. 1

(HIERO IMPERIUM)
Find it in: HIP HOP
First time on vinyl!

Opio & Unjust – Mark It Zero

(HIERO IMPERIUM/ELEVATION NATION)
Find it in: HIP HOP
10 year anniversary! First time on vinyl!

VINNIE ESPARZA

Various Artists – The Key To Our Love (SYMPHONICAL (UK)

Find it in: SOUL
Ridiculously great compilation of obscure and tough-as-nails Lowrider oldies. Wicked cover art to boot!

Various Artists – Spiritual Jazz 13: Now! Parts 1 & 2 (JAZZMAN)

Find it in: JAZZ
Excellent collection of modern day deep jazz. A fine addition to this stellar series.

Ze Roberto – Lotus 72 D 7"

(MR. BONGO)
Find it in: WORLD
Reissue of an insanely rare Brazilian funk 45. Super funky and catchy. Originals fetch as much as a small island.

The Uniques – Gypsy Woman 7"

(LEE'S/DUB STORE JAPAN)
Find it in: REGGAE
Superb rocksteady cover of The Impressions classic. Circa 1968.

Alfredo Linares Y Su Sonora – The Mag Years 7" Box Set Vol. 1

(ROCAFORT)
Find it in: WORLD
Box set with three blistering 7-inches of pure Peruvian salsa/boogaloo goodness. Straight up fire!

Tip:
Artists are essential.

LOU

Head security cretin

Fluids – Ignorance Exalted

(MAGGOT STOMP)
Find it in: METAL
Nastiest release of 2020. Filthier than the most ardent Anti-Maskers and Non-hand washers

Undergang – Aldrig I Livet

(DARK DESCENT)
Find it in: METAL
Denmark's Finest are back at it. OSDM revival that somehow stays unique. Vocalist sounds like a creature that crawled.

Unurnment – Self-Immolation Suite

(MAGGOT STOMP)
Find it in: METAL
Maggot Stomp can't seem to put out a single bad release. Five song EP from this brand new outfit. Awesome production with blistering guitars and a dirt nasty bass tone.

Cosmic Putrefaction – The Horizon Toward Which Splendor Withers (I-VOIDHANGER)

Find it in: METAL
Sick one man band. Boggles my mind how one guy can write stuff like that. For fans of Blood Incantation.

HATE STREET CREEP

L.A. face with an Oakland Booty

S.S.C./Grim Roar Presents – Debauched: Witchery & Devilry (FJ99)

G.I.S.M. – Detestation

(RELAPSE)
Find it in: PUNK

Crucifix – Dehumanization

(KUSTOMIZED)
Find it in: PUNK

Various Artists – Speech After The Removal Of The Larynx

(EC68)
Find it in: EXPERIMENTAL

Earthdogs – Outside Of Society

(DISTORTED STATIC ADDICTS)
Find it in: METAL/PUNK/EXP

JOE GOLDMARK

Roots Music Maven

Elvin Bishop & Charlie Musselwhite – 100 Years Of Blues

(ALLIGATOR ALCD 5004)
Find it in: BLUES
The old dogs show us how it's done. Two masters of the blues idiom along with Bob Welch and Kid Anderson are live and rocking. Elvin's lyrics are always amusing, and my favorite is "Old School."

Asleep At The Wheel – New Routes (BIXMEAU)

Find it in: COUNTRY

AATW has now been around for 50 years. That dates me and is hard to believe. They've long championed Western Swing music as well as other C&W idioms, both of which they feature on this album. This album sounds great. The playing is tight and rehearsed and the tunes are a nice mixture of originals and standards. Love vocalist/fiddler Katie Shore.

The Band – The Band [50th Anniversary Edition]

(CAPITOL)

Find it in: ROCK

David James turned me on to this treasure. There's a second disc of live at Woodstock recordings plus alternate takes on many of their other classic tunes. The Woodstock tunes are smoking! If you're a Band fan, it's intriguing to hear variations to songs you've heard all your life. At first glance, the CD doesn't look any different than other issues, but if you look at the backside, you'll see the second disc listed.

Various Artists – The Soul Of The Memphis Boys

(ACE)

Find it in: SOUL

This is a snapshot of a creative slice of time (1967-1970) from American Studios in Memphis. The legendary Reggie Young did a lot of the guitar work and Chips Moman produced. They recorded the Box Tops, BJ Thomas, Elvis, Dusty Springfield and many others. This is the same studio scene that later spawned Big Star.

Stan Rogers – Between the Breaks.....Live! (FOGARTY'S COVE)

Find it in: FOLK

SEA SHANTIES! Those who like folk music don't overlook Canadian, Stan Rogers. On this album are two of the best sea shanties ever written and performed "Barrett's Privateers" and "The Mary Ellen Carter." Stan was a rising star who died in an auto accident in his prime. Such a tragedy.

Jim Campilongo & Luca Benedetti – Two Guitars

(BLUE HEN)

Find it in: JAZZ

Jim never disappoints. On this album he and Luca tackle some jazz standards plus some of Jim's always interesting originals. Jim's is a unique voice on the telecaster, finding new ways to

squeeze out melodies and sounds, and Luca compliments him beautifully. We usually file Jim in "country," but he is very hard to pigeonhole. If I had to categorize, I'd say this is more of a jazz album.

Tip:

Check out my website VinylBeat.com. Record Collecting 101...

TONY

Appropos of sumthin'

Death Valley Girls – Under The Spell Of Joy

(SUICIDE SQUEEZE)

Find it in: ROCK

More "up" than their previous stuff, this one has all kinds of influences from Mazzy Star to Sonic Youth to Broadcast to late-period Siouxsie...love the title track & "Bliss Out"...all over the place but all good!

Sun Ra Arkestra – Swirling

(STRUT)

Find it in: JAZZ

Their first new release in yonks is consistently groovy & goes just far enough "out" that it's a giddy relief when they kick back into their big band funk from outer space...wow, old folks kicking it! Love the cover too!

Waxahatchee – Saint Cloud

(MERGE)

Find it in: ROCK

Katie Crutchfield may be all sober now but her latest LP as Waxahatchee is a kind of (sorry) "natural high"...all summery and Americana-y, much simpler in tone than earlier LPs and with nods to vintage female c'n'w heroines...check out "Fire" and "The Eye" for evidence of her songwriting chops...

Roison Murphy –

Roison Machine (SKINT)

Find it in: ELECTRONICA

The former Moloko singer's 2020 LP has a gorgeous disco sheen that can obscure the fact that her songs & melodies are bloody good! There's some edgy psychedelia intruding on the house-y grooves and softcore Moroderisms at times (not surprising as producer Parrot worked with Richard Kirk of Cabaret Voltaire), giving the record much more depth than earlier releases. "Murphy's Law" is the standout, but it's a record that definitely works as a whole.

☞ The Invisible Man (2020) – Directed by Leigh Whannell

This one caught me by surprise...it's so freakin' great! Not only is Elizabeth Moss her usual can't look away acting powerhouse, but about halfway through the re-write of the sci-fi classic hits you with one of the single scariest moments I've seen in years...the big "reveal"...not gonna give anything away but this is creepy and super smart movie making throughout...re-watchable as all get out too!

Tip:

That one Taco at Mi Familia on Haight that's like the old Taco Zona Rosa rules!

SHERYL

George Szell – The Warner Years 1934-1970

(WARNER)

Find it in: CLASSICAL

This 14-CD box set covers the conductor's recordings from his early career in Europe and his last years with the Cleveland Orchestra. Hall of fame lin-up of soloists join Szell on these performances, including Casals, Oistrakl, Rostropovich, and Gilels. Highly recommended.

The Tallis Scholars – Josquin Masses (GIMELL)

Find it in: CLASSICAL/EARLY MUSIC

The Tallis Scholars are MASTERS of Renaissance Choral Music. They bring a beautiful blend of voices to enlighten the listeners. If you like relaxing and calm music, this is for you.

DAVID JAMES

HERE ARE MY FAVORITE CAETANO VELOSO CDs FROM THE '80s AND '90s:

Caetano Veloso – Estrangeiro

(NONESUCH)

Find it in: WORLD

Okay, this album WAS made in 1989—the drums and synth sounds tell you that. But these songs are ridiculously good! From goes from dark to

light to dark to light to pop to achingly beautiful to ... okay I'll stop. His first in a series of albums to be produced by Arto Lindsay (in this case, with Arto's Ambitious Lovers partner, Peter Scherer).

Caetano Veloso – Circulado

(NONESUCH)

Find it in: WORLD

This second Arto Lindsay-produced Caetano album, has reined in the gated reverb a little on the drums, and it's not as dark as *O Estrangeiro*, but it's a solid follow-up! The knife-and-plate percussion swing of Boas Vindas; the Milton Nascimento co-penned tune; Caetano tangling with—then floating melodies over—an Arto improv-skronk; Dang!!

Caetano Veloso – Circulado Vivo (UNIVERSAL BRASIL)

Find it in: WORLD

For real! It might seem like I'm trying to be funny, but no! Much like Gilberto Gil's 1993 album *Acoustic* (which was his "MTV Unplugged" recording), this was my introduction to Caetano's back catalog, and it's a beauty! A double-disc set that focuses on his '70s and '80s output, with a strong song selection, and of course, he's in absurdly good voice.

He covers MJ's "Black or White" AND Dylan's "Jokerman", but the highlight might be the acoustic mini-set wherein he plays, in succession, a classic Carlos Gardel tango, "Chega de Saudade," a Carmen Miranda clap back, an Ary Barroso number, that Nascimento tune, and a Djavan song. Devastating! And then there's disc two!



Caetano Veloso/Gilberto Gil
– **Caetano e Gil – Tropicalia 2**
(NONESUCH)

Find it in: WORLD

You probably already have this celebration of the 25th anniversary of the first “Tropicalia” group LP. What!!! The opener, “Haiti”, is just terrible (in a good way, read the translation of the lyrics as it goes along) and the closer, “Desde Que o Samba e o Samba” instantly became a classic in the Brazilian songbook. Plus, there’s “Wait Until Tomorrow” as a carnival-style number, and plenty of other treats. Get it!

Caetano Veloso – Livros (NONESUCH)

Find it in: WORLD

Bahian percussion, plus Gil Evans-influenced arrangements? Absolutely!

Caetano Veloso – Noites do Norte (NONESUCH)

Find it in: WORLD

Okay, this one is from 2000, but it’s just as good, maybe better than the last one. Dealing with the facts and the effects of slavery in and on Brazil, this record makes beautiful art out of dark materials.

ALLEN

Lockdown would be a lot easier if someone else would just do my dishes.

☐ **The West Wing, Seasons 1 & 2– Created by Aaron Sorkin/Thomas Schlamme/John Wells**

How I got through a pandemic year dominated by an incompetent government: Bingeing on a TV series where competent officials talk in Aaron Sorkin dialogue and passionately fight for doing their best in the name of public service. I highly recommend it.

☐ **30 Rock – Created by Tina Fey/Robert Carlock**

I binged *Parks and Recreation*, too, but I prefer *30 Rock*’s edgier humor. Mind you, that risky edge had its drawbacks, resulting in episodes you won’t be able to stream on Peacock because of their controversial content. So if you want to see Jon Hamm in blackface, DVD is the only way to go.

Maria Schneider Orchestra – Data Lords (ARTISTSHARE)

Find it in: JAZZ

Every few years, Maria Schneider releases an album, and each time I try to write about how she transcends the big band tradition, and even the jazz idiom itself. Every time, I fail. Perhaps it’s because her writing, and the performances she cajoles out of the soloists in her orchestra, are sui generis—without genre, or free from clichés. And yet, they embody her themes—this time, *The Digital World* and *The Natural World*—so fully, it’s as if they’re defining the shapes of these songs, even as they invent the language. It’s that vivid and spontaneous.

John Scofield/Bill Stewart/Steve Swallow – Swallow Tales

(ECM)

Find it in: JAZZ

Scofield has been playing the trio format on and off—usually with bassist Steve Swallow, and lately with drummer Bill Stewart—for some forty years, saving it for his most intimate and expressionistic guitar runs and smears. This program of tunes, all written by Swallow, is stuff he learned as a student at Berklee, back in the ’80s; he’s applying his life’s experience through these songs he knows by heart. Swallow always knew how to write tunes that were fun to play over, and his voice on bass is unique and unmistakable. Stewart keeps it loose, swinging, and musical.

Artemis – Artemis

(BLUE NOTE)

Find it in: JAZZ

Okay, you had me at Renee Rosnes and Anat Cohen. But then you add Melissa Aldana, Ingrid Jensen, Allison Miller, Noriko Ueda, and Cecile McLorin Savant!! This band could wipe out everyone else without even trying. But they’re trying, and hard. The writing is challenging and brings out the best in everyone (did I mention that everyone is writing and arranging, too?), and now there’s yet another great version of “The Sidewinder.” If these bandleaders can keep this project going, the mind boggles at the potential.

Haim – Women In Music, Pt. III

(COLUMBIA)

Find it in: ROCK

Ahh, now the songs are starting to sound like actual tunes, expressing doubts, low points, and personal statements. A third album maturation point? Likely. Still catchy as hell, too.

Mr. Mister – Pull

(LITTLE DUME)

Find it in: ROCK

I’m not a fan of Mr. Mister’s first two albums, when they mistook noise for energy. I preferred the earlier days when they were Pages, a yacht-rock outfit that was closer to Kenny Loggins than, say, New Order. But this fourth album, recorded in 2010 (twenty years after they recorded it—it was rejected by their label for lack of commercial potential), stands up as well produced and tuneful, like a lost Peter Gabriel or Tears For Fears disc. Not revelatory, but if you like this stuff...richardpagemusic.com

TOM LYNCH

☞ **Michael Belfer with Will York – When Can I Fly?**

(HOZAC)

The golden dope days of the San Francisco Punk scene as experienced by Michael Belfer and his two groundbreaking, mold-breaking bands, *The Sleepers* and *Tuxedo Moon*.

Charlie Parker – The Savoy 10 Inch LP Collection

(CRAFT RECORDINGS)

Find it in: JAZZ

At last! All the master takes and none of the endless alternate takes. It only took, like, sixty-five years!

☞ **Black Moon (1934) – Directed by Roy William Neill**

Voodoo themed island adventure, 1934, pre-code. Not for the easily offended.

☞ **The Suspect (1944) – Directed by Richard Siodmak**

1944 gothic noir; Charles Laughton gets into a tight situation after meeting and befriendng the young and lovely Elizabeth Rains. What to do with that pesky shrew he’s married to?

☞ **Shoplifters (2018) – Directed by Hirokazu Kore-eda**

Charming film set in modern Tokyo’s underclass. Full of warmth and pathos.

SHONA

Sho’nuff they call me

Various Artistis – Greg Belson’s Divine Funk: Rare American Gospel Funk & Soul

(CULTURES OF SOUL)

Find it in: GOSPEL/SOUL

This is a gospel get down for real! Rare sides from the ’70s that are so deep, so funky, so powerful.

Om Kalsoum – Alf Leila Wa Laila [Reissue]

(SOUMA)

Find it in: EGYPTIAN/WORLD

The Egyptian superstar is superb on this reissue (as she is on her many, many records) showcasing why she is still revered all over the Middle East, and the world. Built on a classical arabic foundation, Kalsoum’s music is stunning, achingly beautiful, timeless.

☞ **Mikey & Nicky (1976) [Criterion] – Directed by Elaine May**

A gangster film from 1976 like no other, this flop sweat filled tale of a dead man walking takes place during one long tense night. Written and directed by Elaine May, *Mikey & Nicky* stars Peter Falk and John Cassavetes as small-time mobsters whose friendship has long since crumbled. Falk and Cassavetes were long-time friends and collaborators, and they are pushing each other, building emotionally, and relishing the edges they go to together.

Jeff Parker – Suite For Max Brown

(INTERNATIONAL ANTHEM)

Find it in: JAZZ

Layered with many influences, beats, loops, and ideas, this wide ranging album from guitarist, Jeff Parker could be a mess. It ain’t. It’s modern and present, soulful and swinging.

Jazmine Sullivan – Heaux Tales

(RCA)

Find it in: SOUL/R&B

If you’re already a Jazmine Sullivan fan, then you know she can sing. Those well-placed runs Jazmine makes sound so effortless, almost like she just exhales them, are no joke...This is an EP full of women’s tales, both spoken, and



sung, about agency, grown folks business, and the power we give some men over us. H.E.R., Ari Lennox, and Anderson.Paak guest. Hopefully this will be available in physical form by the time this is printed.

DOC

Ow.

Spirit Possession –

Spirit Possession (PROFOUND LORE)

Find it in: BLACK METAL

Absolutely ripping debut from this West Coast duo! Spirit Possession have a sound that is furiously raw, yet adventurous and at times borders on the psychedelic. Kinda like Aura Noir on a bad DMT trip. Cool!

Dearth –

To Crown All Befoulment (SENTIENT RUIN)

Find it in: METAL

An extremely ugly record that sounds like the members may live in a cave deep underground, never having known sunlight. I can attest that's partially true; I lived with the drummer for years in a basement apartment known amongst our friends as "Spiderland." Anecdotes aside, if you're looking for something that's gross and weird and never lightens up, this is for you.

Malokarpatan –

Krupinské Ohne (INVICTUS)

Find it in: BLACK METAL

The little Carpathians return with a big record! Well, actually no, it's a normal 12" LP. And no, it's not gonna get any airtime on Live 105. But, it's a big hit with me and my friends. And we're super cool. Well, no we're not, but whatever. You should still check this record out if you've ever wondered what would happen if guys who grew up on equal parts Master's Hammer and Amon Duul II made a band without falling into any of the lame trappings of "progressive black metal." Na zdravie!

SEAN

Irish drinker, Jewish thinker

Coriky – Coriky

(DISCHORD)

Find it in: ROCK/PUNK

Fugazi fans rejoice! Ian MacKaye and Joe Lally have joined forces once again along with evens drummer Amy Farina under this new moniker. A little older and a little more mellow but still just as culturally relevant as ever, with songs like "Clean Kill" addressing the ongoing problem of systemic police violence and unaccountability. A must have!

Kevin Morby –

Sundowner

(DEAD OCEANS)

Find it in: ROCK

This album could have been called just "Downer" and it might have been more appropriate. (I mean that in a good way.) Mopey, I mean Morby, is really channelling his inner Leonard Cohen on this one, and the results are spectacular. Put this record on and pour yourself a tall glass of whiskey and go have a good cry ya sad bastard.

Fuzz – III (IN THE RED)

Find it in: ROCK

The third time truly is the charm for these gents. Be sure to see a doctor for your melted face after listening to this one. A banger!

Spirit Possession –

Spirit Possession

(PROFOUND LORE)

Find it in: METAL

Steve Peacock (Pandiscordian Necrogenesis, Pale Chalice, Apprentice Destroyer) is kinda starting to piss me off. No one man should have this much talent. I'm not being hyperbolic when I say this is the best Black Metal release of the last decade.

Mr. Bungle –

**The Raging Wrath Of
The Easter Bunny Demo**

(IPECAC)

Find it in: ROCK

Bungle is back, baby! The additions of Scott Ian and Dave Lombardo have turned them into a bona-fide supergroup and the new lin-up does not dissappoint. Crank this one up and break some shit.

GUILLERMO

Electronic buyer

Il Quadro Di Troisi – Il Quadro

Di Troisi (RASTER)

Find it in: ELECTRONICA

Kaitlyn Aurelia Smith –

The Mosaic of Transformation

(GHOSTLY INTERNATIONAL)

Find it in: EXPERIMENTAL

Garrett – Private Life III

(MUSIC FROM MEMORY)

Find it in: ELECTRONICA

Jneiro Jarel –

After A Thousand Years

(FAR OUT RECORDINGS)

Find it in: ELECTRONICA

Suzanne Ciani –

A Sonic Womb: Live Buchla Performance at Lapsus

(LAPSUS)

Find it in: NEW AGE

Byron The Aquarius –

Ambrosia (AXIS)

Find it in: ELECTRONICA

Larry Heard –

**Sceneries Not Songs,
Volume One** (ALLEVIATED)

Find it in: ELECTRONICA

K-Maxx – Selections (ACENOTE)

Find it in: ELECTRONICA

MARK PITTMAN

Just waiting for a shot.

Girl Called Eddy – Been Around

(ELEFANT)

Find it in: ROCK
Jazzy pop from 2020

First Cow (2019) –

Directed by Kelly Reichardt

Another great film from the amazing Kelly Reichardt

Orange Juice – all albums

Find it in: ROCK

Great band out of Scotland. Helped me feel better during lockdown.

Fleetwood Mac –

Heroes Are Hard To Find

(REPRISE/WEA)

Find it in: ROCK

Despite the goofy album cover, the music is awesome.

Spandau Ballet – "Gold"

(on True) (CRYSLIS/WEA)

Find it in: ROCK

Must have watched on you tube or listened to this song forty times last year. Classic!!

THOMAS

Rolling Blackouts Coastal

Fever – Sideways To New Italy

(SUB POP)

Find it in: ROCK

Slick jangle with guitar hooks for days out of Melbourne, Australia that recalls the days when record companies threw money at this kind of act. It's so refreshing to hear a band so clearly enamored with the Go-Betweens release a fancy, well-produced LP like this. Oh did I mention the songs are really, really good? Can the pandemic end already – I wanna see these guys play at the Fillmore or wherever they're selling out these days.

Snails – Hard Wired

(GLASS MODERN)

Find it in: ROCK

British café-core fleshed out with beautiful, delicate arrangements and a lead vocalist who recalls Nick Drake or Richard Thompson. Referential yet idiosyncratic, fans of latter day Pastels and Belle and Sebastian will surely dig, but there's a sensitivity here missing from much of the modern Stephen McRobbie acolytes' output. Hey Joe Boyd! Produce a record for these folks already!

Mark Mulcahy – *The Gus*

(MEZZOTINT)

Find it in: ROCK

Well this unfairly brilliant record came out in 2019, but the warmth and joy it brought me throughout the hellish past year+ makes it at least as relevant on this list as any true 2020 LP. For the unaware, Mark Mulcahy is an American treasure with a career dating back to the early '80s with the near-holy Miracle Legion. In the decades since he's composed and performed a masterful soundtrack for a cult '90s children's TV shows as Polaris, carved out a name for himself as a solo artist and captured the hearts of devoted followers like myself. This latest LP is my favorite of his solo work and is an incredible showcase of his swooning vocals, sharp songwriting and playful, affecting lyrics. The world can't be all bad as long as Mr. Mulcahy continues existing and creating.

Cindy – *Free Advice*

(PAISLEY SHIRT/MT.ST.MTN./TOUGH LOVE)

Find it in: ROCK

Yes! A local favorite of mine made good on the promise of their eccentric and beguiling live sets in libraries and under bridges and created one of the best records of 2020. With production that perfectly captures the enchanting peculiarities of the arrangements and highlights the subtle perfection of Karina's vocals, *Free Advice* achieved the rare feat of breaking out of "local rock" purgatory and caught the attention of careful listeners with an ear for impressionistic pop around the world. A heartening success story and a wholly deserved one.

Shabaka and the Ancestors – *We Are Sent Here By History*

(IMPULSE!)

Find it in: JAZZ

I was recommended this record by an esteemed co-worker a few months back and it was one of those discoveries that opens up a whole new world of music. I'd been blind to the beautiful and inspiring explosion of creativity of London's young jazz scene and in particular, the work of one Shabaka Hutchings—a man with a seemingly bottomless pool of imaginativeness. In groups such as the Sons of Kemet and his South Africa-based combo, Shabaka and the Ancestors, Hutchings explores the terrain laid out by masters such as Pharoah Sanders, John and Alice Coltrane and Gary Bartz and comes up with material that sound wholly new and entirely exciting.

SHAHAN

5 ALBUMS THAT SOUND THE SAME EVERY TIME YOU HEAR THEM:

Echo & The Bunnymen –

Ocean Rain (SIRE)

Find it in: ROCK

Incredible cover-to-cover baroque pop masterpiece with gorgeous string arrangements and the inimitable vocals of Ian McCollough. I can barely believe that every time I hear this album it never changes whatsoever.

True Widow –

Circumambulation (RELPASE)

Find it in: ROCK

Expansive guitar music that sounds unimaginably loud, yet extremely far away. Gritty, slow and drenched in reverb. Sounds like Texas. No matter how many times I hear this album, the songs never change. They're always in the same order!

Donald Byrd – *Stepping Into Tomorrow*

(BLUE NOTE)

Find it in: JAZZ

Everytime you hear this album, no matter where you are or who you're with, it always opens with a crack of thunder. From there on out it never lets go, bringing some of the best jazz studio arrangements of the mid-seventies. Donald Byrd's trumpet is consistently impressive, producing the exact same performance each time you play the record.

Silver Jews – *Starlite Walker*

(DRAG CITY)

Find it in: ROCK

David Berman's vocals sit front and center. Unobscured, his lyrics have sunk their way into a generation of fans. Hearing "It's been evening all day long..." or "On the last day of your life, don't forget to die" or my favorite "There is a house in New Orleans/Not the one you've heard about, I'm talking about another house" Always brings you back to the last time you heard the same words sang the exact same way, which was the last time you listened to this record.

Thin Lizzy – *Sarah/Got To Give It Up 7"*

(VERTIGO)

Find it in: ROCK

Something special about this record is that everytime you place the needle at the beginning,

it never fails to reproduce the same series of sounds in the exact same sequence as it did before. If the past is any indicator of what the future could hold, then if you pick this up at Amoeba today, tomorrow it'll still be exactly the same as it was when you first played it which would be today.

RODRIGO

DJ @ Silver and Black Soul Club.

The Vapors – *Together*

(MANMADE SOUL)

Find it in: REGGAE

Great comeback album. Feels like it was recorded in 1982 and kept in a time capsule until now. It has everything you'd expect to hear in a Vapors album.

Little Ann –

Detroit's Secret Soul

(KENT)

Find it in: SOUL

Another solid Kent/Ace release. A compilation of unreleased tracks and alternate takes compiled by Legendary producer Dave Hamilton.

Various Artists –

Dave & Lee Singles Collection

(REMINDER)

Find it in: PUNK

Spanning 1969 to 1980, and from hard rock to punk, to power pop. This is an awesome singles collection from these Aussies. The original 45s are nearly impossible to find these days, so make sure to get yourself a copy of this one.

The Jacks – *Make 'em Cry*

(REMINDER)

Find it in: ROCK

It is hard to believe that this material remained unreleased for so long. Awesome '70s top quality power pop a la Dwight Twilley 20/20 and the nerves.

Once and Future Band –

Deleted Scenes

(CASTLE FACE)

Find it in: SOUNDTRACKS

Gotta love those ELO melodies. Once and Future Band delivers this incredible blend of Prog and pop brilliantly performed.

MORGAN!

hello! @theumbrellassf debut full-length out July 2021 on Slumberland Records!

You'll buy it... Won't you?!

Snails – *Hard-Wired*

(GLASS MODERN)

Find it in: ROCK

Hidden gem of a record here. Well, not here actually. This band is from Bristol and I like to imagine they frequent all of the neighborhood cafes with these lovely, contemplative songs... Sigh. R.I.Y.L. Arthur Russell, The Pastels, Yo La Tengo.

Dear Nora – *Three States: Rarities 1997-2007*

(ORINDAL)

Find it in: ROCK

Probably no surprise this made its way onto my 2020 list, but it sure was a happy surprise for me when I found the vinyl pre-order on bandcamp! This band has my whole dang heart. Wholesome, home-recorded, good songs. Can't recommend Katy Davidson's work enough, but this collection spanning her growth as a songwriter is truly is special.

Ribbon Stage – *My Favorite*

Shrine 7" (K RECORDS)

Find it in: ROCK

A perfectly packaged 5-song EP that strings together all of the lo-fi, jangly inspirations that make up the great K Records... In 2020?! I'll take it. Can't wait for more from this punky trio!





The Reds, Pinks and Purples —You Might Be Happy Someday

(TOUGH LOVE)

Find it in: ROCK

Yes, “Richmond Pop” is now a genre. Listen to this SF record and you’ll understand. Thoughtful songwriting with layers of guitars that fill every inch of the apartment livingroom at golden hour. For fans of The Bats, East River Pipe, Tobin Sprout.

Dolly Mixture – Demonstration Tapes

(SPA GREEN)

Find it in: ROCK

Another reissue I was DELIGHTED to get my hands on! I’ll tell ya, if you’re ever feeling low just blast the ‘60s-rock-does-’80s-new-wave tunes by these three wonderful ladies and dance all around your room... You’ll feel better in no time!

Various Artists – Strum & Thrum: The American Jangle Underground 1983-1987

(CAPTURED TRACKS)

Find it in: ROCK

This compilation caught me by surprise with how many bands I didn’t know! 28th Day are easily at the top of my list of all-time favorite bands from the ‘80s SF-adjacent scene... But because of this release I found so many more. Plus, there is a booklet that comes with some incredible photos and interviews that will knock your socks off!

The Snogs – Boyfriend’s Dead

(PAISLEY SHIRT)

Find it in: ROCK

This band has that “we do it because it’s fun” feeling to them that everyone can love, and this tape was released by the current heart of SF’s DIY music scene, Paisley Shirt Records. Back-and-forth vocal stylings by Ross and Sequoia that overlay chiming acoustic guitars and simple riffs, these songs will surely knock around your head a little bit. RIYL: Beat Happening (no, really.) and campfire sing-songs with some pizzazz!!!

LUCIANO

Various Artists – Somewhere Between: Mutant Pop, Electronic Minimalism and Shadow Sounds of Japan 1980-1988 (LIGHT IN THE ATTIC)

Find it in: JAPAN/WORLD

A collection of Japanese avant pop and beats from the scene’s darkest, most thrilling corners

Molchat Doma – Monument

(SACRED BONES)

Find it in: ROCK

Belarusian trio fuses post punk, new wave and synth pop to create a moody but compulsively listenable record. An apocalyptic dance party.

Il Quadro Di Troisi – Il Quadro Di Troisi (RASTER)

Find it in: ELECTRONICA

Italian electronic musicians Donato Dozzy and Eva Geist team up on a bewitching album of opulently appointed songs rooted in the country’s disco and synth pop traditions.

Kali Uchis – Sin Miedo

(EMI/INTERSCOPE)

Find it in: SOUL/LATIN POP

Kali Uchis new album blends the R&B crooning she’s known for with Reggaeton’s hard hitting dembow, in a very sultry and soothing manner.

Grace Sings Sludge – Christ Mocked & The End Of A Relationship (EMPTY CELLAR)

Find it in: ROCK

A collection of visceral, haunting and extremely beautiful songs to listen to while you relish in your own darkness.

DYLAN T-J

*I make music as Polytherian
(formerly FRONDS).*

*The album Role Play is currently
available at Amoeba Music.*

*You can check it out on Bandcamp,
or wherever you stream music.*

<https://polytherian.bandcamp.com/album/role-play>

Vestals – Holy Origin

(DUST EDITIONS)

Find it in: EXPERIMENTAL

If you were in San Francisco on the 27th of October, 2020, you remember the day—it was the day the sun never came out. Our dystopic reveries had become manifest, the sky glowing an ominous dark *Blade Runner*-orange. California was on fire, a pandemic swept the globe, our President was a cartoon caricature of a sadistic con man... and there was a flea infestation in my apartment. This was the record I put on, and it made everything seem—not ok—but kind of meant-to-be. Utterly lovely, dark atmospheric echoscapes that stretch time and make the uncannily nightmarish feel sensual - almost eerily indulgent. “I feel so strange in my lipstick.” RIYL: HTRK, Grouper, Portishead

Sarah Davachi – Cantus,

Descant (LATE MUSIC)

Find it in: EXPERIMENTAL

Mournful, minimal drones - good for winding down in the evening, as background for reading, or just soaking in a somber sense of compassion for the sadness of one’s self. The vocal pieces are particularly moving.

Kate NV – Room for the Moon

(RVNG INTL.)

Find it in: EXPERIMENTAL

On the other end of the mood spectrum, this singularly playful record opens the gates and lets the serotonin flood through, providing an easy uplift into realms of innocent joy. RIYL: Sterelab, OOOO, *Standards*-era-Tortoise...

Kelly Lee Owens – Inner Song

(SMALLTOWN SUPERSOUND)

Find it in: ELECTRONICA

This, too, gave me a jolt of levity when it came out in the middle last year. A balancing act between body + mind, introspection + dance, hard won spiritual wisdom + hedonistic abandon. Delicious techno for bath taking.

Mary Lattimore –

Silver Ladders (GHOSTLY
INTERNATIONAL)

Find it in: ROCK

Very gentle, melancholic harp music that yearns achingly for connection. Synths + strings join in the play between light + shadow. Would put on the stereo while driving off into the sunset.

Tip:

Please be good to yourself + each other.

LAUREN

short skirt long jacket

Lana Del Rey – Norman Fucking Rockwell!

(POLYDOR)

Find it in: POP VOCAL

Lana Del Rey makes the American Dream sound like some type of twisted romance fever dream that you’ll find yourself feeling nostalgia for. Jack Antonoff is an absolute pop genius. His work with the majority of the songs on this album combined with Lana’s high and angelic voice makes for a masterpiece I can listen to over and over again and somehow appreciate it just as much as the first time. Some of the best piano I’ve heard with lyrics that will make you cry for some narcissistic tortured artist you may have never even met.

Lauryn Hill – The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill (RUFFHOUSE)

Find it in: HIP HOP

Even if you’ve listened to this album before, you haven’t listened to it enough. Her voice is beautiful, she can make you get up and dance, and most importantly, there’s no denying that if everyone saw love the way Lauryn sings about it there would be no such thing as divorce settlements.

Alex G – Rocket (DOMINO)

Find it in: ROCK

I can confidently say I wouldn’t have gotten through 2020 without the soothing sound of Alex G! Through a folksy type of indie rock, I can best describe his songs as sweet, comforting, and experimental. *Rocket* is a beautiful album that will fill your heart up.

Grimes – Art Angels (4AD)

Find it in: ELECTRONICA

Have you ever felt like you have an itch in your brain that can’t get scratched while listening to

music? This album is gonna scrattttchhh that itch. She's the only artist that I could seriously see as a soundtrack for my daily life. Try walking around a crowded city with this album and you'll see what I mean.

📺 Tom Robbins – *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues*

(HOUGHTON MIFFLIN HARCOURT)

If you have ADHD like me and have a hard time sitting down to read, you won't with Tom Robbins. He knows how to make a story progress while simultaneously going off on completely unrelated tangents every other paragraph for the sole purpose of keeping you on your toes, unsure of anything before the ending of the book.

📺 The War On Drugs – *Lost In The Dream*

(SECRETLY CANADIAN)

Find it in: ROCK

Great album for driving down an empty road thinking ill thoughts about society and experiencing teen angst.

Lana Del Rey – *Ultraviolence*

(POLYDOR)

Find it in: ROCK

I could really go on and on about this woman for hours. Every song on this album hits home. Her artistic perspective is a gift to us all.

Black Sabbath – *Master of Reality*

(VERTIGO)

Find it in: ROCK

This album is one of my favorites because I find it a little more chill than other Black Sabbath albums, more on the stoner rock side.



GABRIEL W.

2020 is gone, but I'm still here.

Mr. Bungle – *The Raging Wrath of the Easter Bunny*

Demo (IPECAC)

Find it in: METAL

Mr. Bungle returns after a 20 year hiatus. With this re-recording of their first demo *The Raging Wrath of the Easter Bunny*, the core trio of Trevor Dunn, Mike Patton and Trey Spruance bring in thrash masters Scott Ian on guitar, and Dave Lombardo on drums to round out the band. This album is a true throwback to thrash metal and we get to hear the full demo re-recorded with some of unreleased songs that were written around the same time. Heavy, brutal and fucking awesome. Don't sleep on this.

📺 RAD (1986) – Directed by Hal Needham

Made at the height of the '80s BMX craze and way before X-Games comes Rad. A story about a small town kid with big dreams. Cru Jones (Bill Allen) is the best freestyle BMX rider in his small town. As luck would have it the most insane BMX race ever is coming to town in the form of Helltrack. After the local leaders pressure Helltrack's mustache twirling promoters to hold open qualifications for local BMXers, Cru knows what he must do. Unfortunately, the qualifying race is the same day as his college entrance exams. Cru's mom (Talia Shire, *Rocky The Godfather*) forbids him to go because she wants Cru to go to college. Well, Cru ditches his test and qualifies for Helltrack and in turn pisses off the promoters who will stop at nothing to sabotage his dream. Can Cru and his friends overcome all obstacles to face the fury of Helltrack? Watch and see! Featuring Americans sweetest jailbird Lori Loughlin (*New Kids*, *Secret Admirer*) and Olympic gold medalist Bart Connor. Directed by *Smokey and the Bandit* director and stunt man extraordinaire Hal Needham. Full of thrills, spills and bicycle dancing! Don't sleep on this fine slice of '80s awesomeness.

📺 Hot Dog The Movie (1984) – Directed by Peter Markle

Before *Rad* came *Hot Dog The Movie*. A freestyle ski comedy like no other. Starring David Naughton (*An American Werewolf in London*) and Shannon Tweed (1982 Playmate of the year and the queen of '90s erotic thrillers). Definitely the impetus for 1990's *Ski School* for all you *Always Sunny In Philadelphia* fans. *Hot Dog* has some of the best freestyle skiing ever caught on celluloid.

Soaked in snow, beer and boobs *Hot Dog* is a movie you have to ski to believe. And Synapse even brings you the directors cut of the film. Who knew their even was such a thing!

📺 Ghost Dog (1999) – Directed by Jim Jarmusch

Ghost Dog is a unique take on the gangster film. Forrest Whitaker is amazing as, Ghost Dog, a hired hit man who follows the code of the Samurai. When a hit has an unforeseen complication the mob want Ghost Dog to pay the ultimate price. But, have they bitten off more than they can chew? Ghost Dog may turn out to be their ultimate undoing. Riveting and poetic, Jim Jarmusch delivers one of his best films ever. Also stars Henry Silva (*Ocean's 11*, *Johnny Cool*, *Sharkey's Machine*). RZA provides the incredible soundtrack and has a small role too.

📺 Uncommon Valor (1983) – Directed by Ted Kotcheff

You know about *Rambo II* and *Rambo III*. You may even know about the Chuck Norris series *Missing In Action*. But do you know *Uncommon Valor*? *Uncommon Valor* is a more serious take on American POW's directed by Ted Kotcheff who did indeed bring us *First Blood*. Gene Hackman stars as Colonel Rhodes, a man obsessed with bringing his MIA son back from Vietnam. With funding from super rich oil tycoon, MacGregor played by Robert Stack (*Unsolved Mysteries*, *Airplane*), who's son is also MIA. Colonel Rhodes enlists the help of his son's fellow soldiers: Fred Ward (*Secret Admirer*, *Tremors*), Tim Thomerson (*Trancers*, *Dollman*), Reb Brown (TV's *Captain America*), Harold Sylverster (*An Officer and a Gentleman*) and Randall "Tex" Cobb (*Raising Arizona*, *Ace Ventura*) star as the vets who return to Southeast Asia to rescue their buddies they left behind. *Uncommon Valor* is a great ensemble film that feels a little bit like the *A-Team* minus the cheese. It also stars a young ripped Patrick Swayze.

AUDRA WOLFMANN

Meaning junkie. Master of disguise.
Marketer of Amoebas.

Death Valley Girls – *Under The Spell Of Joy*

(SUICIDE SQUEEZE)

Find it in: ROCK

Death Valley Girls unleash their most transcendent album yet. *Under the Spell of Joy* is embedded with chants, choirs, and choruses against the

backdrop of their rich and droning wall-of-sound. It encourages listeners to sing along as they would in a place of worship, engaging with their own spiritual experience. The musical form urges participation with the lyrics, which also speak to engagement with your dreams, hopes, and desires. Partake in the ritual and joy shall be yours.

📺 Sandra Niemi – *Glamour Ghoul: The Passions and Pain of the Real Vampira, Maila Nurmi*

(FERAL HOUSE)

This devastating biography on the Godmother of Goth stands apart from all other attempts to chronicle the bizarre, beautiful, and tragic life of Vampira. Written by her niece, Sandra Niemi, the book draws heavily on Vampira's own journals and family letters, giving new insight to the pioneering horror host's world.

📺 Mitch Horowitz – *The Miracle Month: 30 Days to a Revolution in Your Life*

(G&D MEDIA)

This is punk rock self-help with roots in philosophy, occult history, and positive thinking for independent-minded people. Skeptical? Good, this is the book for you.

📺 Rachel Kushner – *The Mars Room: A Novel*

(SCRIBNER)

I'm a late-comer to the Rachel Kushner party, but I never want to leave. She writes about a bygone seedy San Francisco in a way that's both cutting and celebratory. I'm very much looking forward to her upcoming book of essays, *The Hard Crowd*.

📺 Susan Aberth and Tere Arcq – *The Tarot of Leonora Carrington*

(FULGUR PRESS)

A book as beautiful as Leonora Carrington's spellbinding surrealist art.

Tip:

My podcast, "Speakeasily vs. the '80s," is right for you. Check it out: [Speakeasily.tv](#)

KERRY YARBROUGH

Hip Hop buyer.

My list is a few of my favorite albums that came out while the store was closed during lockdown, plus one of the greatest things ever.

Ahwee – VII

(RAP VACATION)

Find it in: HIP HOP

Ahwee's third solo instrumental LP came through just like the first two. Reliable sources tell me there is a *Final Fantasy* theme going.

Showbiz & AG – Runaway Beats (D.I.T.C.)

Find it in: HIP HOP

Instrumentals from the *Runaway Slave* LP, plus some extras. Absolutely timeless, classic production.

Esbe – Late Night Headphones Vol. 2

(COLD BUSTED)

Find it in: HIP HOP

Even better than *Vol. 1*. Be on the lookout for his instant classic *Bloomsday* to repressed very soon.

D-Styles – Noises In The Right Order

(BEAT JUNKIE SOUND)

Find it in: HIP HOP

As head-noddy of a turntablism project as I've heard in quite awhile, with the trademark D-Styles weirdness.

❑ ESPN 30 For 30: Al Davis vs. The NFL – Directed by Ken Rodgers

Genius football man drags a bunch of rich squares kicking and screaming into the modern era of sports business. They thank him by trying to run his son out of the league.

NOTES:

HOLLYWOOD



RICHIE

A veteran with a love for vinyl.

Codenine – Below Sumerian Skies

(BELOW SYSTEM)

Find it in: HIP HOP

Soul Assassins radios on Sirius XM drops new underground singles daily. I try supporting directly from the artist so I go through Bandcamp. Check it out.

MARK B.

I really didn't consume much new music as I hunkered down and figured out ways to occupy myself during lockdown. I worked my way through my 600-or-so CDs that I've accumulated through my years in music retail, and here's an incomplete list of the brightest spots that helped me weather the storm.

Anomoanon – Asleep Many Years In The Wood

(TEMPORARY RESIDENCE LIMITED)

Find it in: ROCK

For my birthday this year, a friend gifted me a copy of Jack Carneal's memoir *Destroy Your Safe And Happy Lives*. Carneal was the drummer for a few iterations of Will Oldham's PALACE projects, and for the band ANOMOANON (rhymes with "phenomenon") led by Will's brother, Ned Oldham. A long-time fan of ANOMOANON's output, I tore through this charming, sad,

troubled recollection of touring life and doubled back through my ANOMOANON collection. This is my favorite of theirs, but everything they did was really very good.

Ivor Cutler – Velvet Donkey (VIRGIN)

Find it in: EXPERIMENTAL

How to explain IVOR CUTLER and the joy he brings to a quarantine? This collection of his decidedly Scottish, slightly-addled, very funny story songs and poems is from 1975. Associated with the BEATLES (appeared in the *Magical Mystery Tour* film), ROBERT WYATT and FRED FRITH, CUTLER creates fantastic little scenarios that are strange and silly and absurd and often very musical and pleasant while being simultaneously unsettling.

(Los) Dug Dug's – Cambia, Cambia (RCA)

Find it in: OLDDIES

The last concert I saw before the lockdown was LOS DUG DUG'S at the Zebulon, on January 31. In truth, it was just the lead singer/songwriter (Armando Nava) of this astounding Mexican Garage Rock/Pop/Psychedelic phenomenon of the late '60s-'70s and a hand-picked touring band of younger rockers. The quality level of LOS DUG DUG'S prolific output is pretty mind-boggling in hindsight. Their albums are marked by superb track after superb track, from the happiest of hippy flower pop to hard heavy rockers and angular Zappa-esque pounders. You can't miss with an LDD album. I may very well listen to them more than any group in my collection, and I own everything they've done. Nava turned 75 while doing this "reunion" tour, and he laid it all on the floor.

Funkadelic – Maggot Brain (WESTBOUND RECORDS)

Find it in: SOUL

The title track of FUNKADELIC's 1971 masterpiece is one of electric music's very greatest adagios. One, a long time ago in Oakland, I went to a dance performance by a young choreographer named Robert Henry Johnson. A section of the performance was a gorgeous duet set to "Maggot Brain." The track is funky, the rock guitar is blistering, the rhythm section bubbles on simmer. This album is perfect and makes being surrounded by the walls not so very bad.

Gultskra Artikler –

Kasha Iz Topora (MIASMAH)

Find it in: EXPERIMENTAL

Sometimes I need to hear something that I cannot fathom. GULTSKRA ARTIKLER is a project of Moscow-based sound artist, ALEXEY DEVYANIN. Looped and layered with beautifully recorded cello and junk-percussion, bowed metal and samples of static and creaking hinges, *Kasha Iz Topora* (2007) is just about the most immersively listenable document that I've ever heard under the "Experimental Music" header. As far ranging as it is in its almost ravenous creativity, it is never off-putting or repulsive to the ear. In fact, my ears consistently try to burrow deeper into its cinematic collage, trying to understand what he's doing down in all those layers.

Baaba Maal & Mansour Seck – Djam Leelii

(MANGO/ISLAND)

Find it in: WORLD

There have been moments during this last year when the walls have felt way too close for comfort. During the presidential campaign, the election itself and the following month, many times that I needed to check my breathing pattern, get a bead on where I was and who I was with and whether everything was really bad or if everything, at the moment, was actually ok. When in doubt, I knew that one source I could turn to was this recording. Two guitars, two voices simultaneously grounded and celestial, human and etheric. A simple and effective tonic.

Jackie Mittoo – Champion In The Arena

1976-1977 (BLOOD AND FIRE LTD)

Find it in: REGGAE

Sometimes you need to just bubble along with some laid-back organ tones and your phasers set on "Dub." There's no stress on this collection, melodies as recognizable as they are shifted and stretched, as alien as they are comfortable.

The Whispers – Headlights

(SOLAR)

Find it in: FUNK

I was a Soul/Funk kid in High School. Angel Flights, platform shoes and Soul Train Saturdays. The first concert I attended "unaccompanied," was Cameo/ConFunkShun/Fatback at the San Diego Sports Arena. I never got to see the Whispers live, but I don't think I listened to any album as many times as *Headlights* during grades 11-12. The album is still a serious jam and never fails to slip me into a happy, nostalgic state of mind.

Xmal Deutschland –

Fetisch (4AD)

Find it in: ROCK

In retrospect, many fans of the 4AD label tend to focus on the more lyrical end of the spectrum, though the label gave birth to some decidedly dark sounds: BAUHAUS, MASS, REMA-REMA, The BIRTHDAY PARTY all hung out on the meaner side of the playground. Even the first two COCTEAU TWINS releases have an almost SIOUXSIE-esque darkness about them. XMAL DEUTSCHLAND was an outlier. Most of their lyrics were in German and they had a decidedly angry, sepulchral mood to their early output. The SIOUXSIE comparisons were fair if you didn't listen too closely, but XMAL was angrier, more homicidal than suicidal. They provided solace this last year whenever I needed to indulge my angry isolation and just sway around in the dark.

Various Artists – Nigeri 70: The Definitive Story of 1970s

Funky Lagos (STRUT RECORDS)

Find it in: WORLD

The artist Robert Irwin famously said, "Seeing is forgetting the name of the thing one sees." In this same vein, I would say that really funky music is found where the work FUNK hadn't really taken hold, yet. Herbie Hancock's *Mwandishi/Crossings/Sextant* trilogy is, to me, WAY funkier than the Headhunter material, when they had solidified into a FUNK decision and had shed the organic experiments that led them to it. This collection of Lagos, Nigerian "Funk" likely precedes a definition of the term, and was more a trend of electrifying organic Nigerian pop towards a Rock/Soul future. In any case, it satisfies very deeply and is funkier than Funk.

Tip:

SCARED TO DEATH podcast junkie. Ghost stories for the hell of it.

WYATT

RIP Alexi Laiho

Dark Tranquillity – Moment

(CENTURY MEDIA)

Find it in: METAL

:Of The Wand And The Moon: – Tainted Tears

(HEIDRUNAR MYRKRUNAR)

Find it in: GOTH / INDUSTRIAL

Falconer – From A Dying Ember

(METAL BLADE)

Find it in: METAL

Anohni – It's All Over Now, Baby Blue 7"

(SECRETLY CANADIAN)

Find it in: ROCK

Necrophobic – Dawn Of The Damned

(CENTURY MEDIA)

Find it in: BLACK METAL

Rome – Parlez-Vous Hate?

(TRISOL)

Find it in: GOTH / INDUSTRIAL

Horn – Mohngang

(IRON BONEHEAD)

Find it in: BLACK METAL

Bodom After Midnight – Paint The Sky With Blood

(NAPALM)

Find it in: METAL

The Crown – Royal Destroyer

(METAL BLADE)

Find it in: METAL

A.J. BRIGGS

I spent quite a bit of time going through my old records during the quarantine and found some records I totally forgot I had and some records I simply hadn't listened to in a very long time. Here are my 10 most pleasant rediscoveries:

The Swanee Quintet – New Walk (1973)

(CREED)

Find it in: GOSPEL / CHRISTIAN

I forgot I even had this record. In fact, I wasn't really sure if I had even listened to it yet. It was one of many dollar vinyl finds that seemed to pile up sometimes and I forget to listen. Anyway, I put it on and right away, I felt the spirit! This is some serious funky, soulful gospel. Very intense, roaring vocals praising Jesus and the glory of God. It's a very powerful record to say the least.

Peter Tosh – Mama Africa (1983)

(EMI)

Find it in: REGGAE

It was really nice to revisit this one after not listening for so long. I love how profound and intelligent Peter Tosh is lyrically, and musically I just love the sunshine vibe this record creates for me. "Mama Africa," "Glasshouse" and "Stop That Train" are my favorite tracks here.

Paul Simon – Paul Simon (1972)

(COLUMBIA)

Find it in: ROCK

I'm really happy I revisited this one as well. I love the vibe of this record and I find myself starting out my day with it very often. From the first song, "Mother and Child Reunion," this album gives me a peaceful feeling. Lyrically it is a pretty heavy and deep record for the most part but, I find the music to be light hearted and very beautiful. Some favorite tracks are "Duncan" and "Peace Like a River."

Graham Nash – Songs For Beginners (1971)

(ATLANTIC)

Find it in: ROCK

What an incredible record. I swear, every song makes me feel like I am hanging out in Laurel Canyon in the late '60s/early '70s. I love it! This album is a true classic rock/psychedelic/folk sound from 1971. Some great guests on this record too. David Crosby, Jerry Garcia, Neil Young and Dave Mason just to name a few.

Elton John – Elton John (1970)

(DJM)

Find it in: ROCK

Beautiful album! The hits "Your Song," "Take me to the Pilot" and "Border Song" were great to hear again but, it was the lesser known songs for me that really did it. The song, "First Episode at Hention", is just gorgeous. Other songs like "Sixty Years On" and "The Greatest Discovery," again, just gorgeous. Some up beat tunes like "No Shoestrings on Louise" and "The Cage," to me, sounded like they could have been on some classic Stones records. This is truly a classic album of Sir Elton John's that I'm really happy I've started listening to again.

Tina Britt – Blue All The Way (1968)

(MINIT)

Find it in: SOUL

This album is soulful and very bluesy. Tina Britt's voice is awesome. I'm not sure how many people know about her so, I feel the need to say that to

me, she is very reminiscent of Aretha Franklin but, definitely her own style. I actually want to quote the back of the album for it says it best. "This lady loves the blues. You know, the blues the way Bessie and Billie used to cry them: deep, soulful, a little angry—life itself in 32 bars." The author was not noted but, those words describe it best.

Ethel Ennis – Ethel Ennis (1965) (PICKWICK)

Find it in: JAZZ

Ethel Ennis' voice is sweet, soft, sexy and elegant. The album is very romantic and is a real nice record to listen to as the night winds down. Every song is a gem.

Jerry Garcia – Garcia (1971)

(WARNER BROS.)

Find it in: ROCK

Love, Love, Love this record. Classic songs on this record are "Deal," "Sugarree" and "To Lay Me Down." There is an upbeat, fun yet mellow vibe to this album. There are also moments of dissonant yet pleasant and beautiful psychedelia. It really is one of my favorite albums to listen to right now.

Bob Dylan – Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid (1973) (COLUMBIA)

Find it in: SOUNDTRACKS

This is another one of those records I like listening to as the night winds down. The album is mostly instrumental and paints kind of a "riding off into the western sunset" picture for me. It's a very pretty soundtrack.

Neil Young – Comes A Time (1978) (REPRISE)

Find it in: ROCK

Another extremely pretty record. Real mellow vibe and a very peaceful listen. Every song is great but, "Going Back," "Peace of Mind" and "Four Strong Winds" are my favorites.

CHRIS CURTIS

Dent May – Late Checkout

(CARPARK)

Find it in: ROCK

LA-based singer/songwriter shares more ultra-melodic, emotive observations on life and loving. Less immediate (and a bit more homespun) than his most recent albums, it took a few spins to grow on me, but several of the tunes are among his best work. If composers like Paul Williams and Brian Wilson speak to you, and you like your pop as soft and comforting as a warm blanket, Dent is your man.

Various Artists – Saint Etienne Present Songs For The Fountain Coffee Room

(ACE RECORDS)

Find it in: ROCK

Saint Etienne, besides being one of the greatest British pop bands ever, has been killing it on the compilation tip for the last few years, mostly released on the excellent archival Ace Records label. Many of the comps are put together solely by member Bob Stanley (who is also a superior music writer/critic), some by Bob and keyboardist Pete Wiggs, and others, like this one, compiled by the entire band including singer Sarah Cracknell. Previous collections have focused on early '70s post-Beatles UK proto-prog, melancholy synthpop, late-'80s/early-'90s Native Tongues-style positive hip-hop, and various soundtracks for imaginary bars and eateries. The latter is where this one falls, intending to be the background music of a fantasy mid-'70s Los Angeles watering hole. Focusing mainly on soft rock and mellow soul, this mellifluous collection of aggro-free sounds goes down smooth and easy. A few well-known tracks sit amongst some great deep cuts, providing a pleasant flow and conjuring a lost time and place.

Derk Backderf –

Kent State: Four Dead in Ohio

(ABRAMS COMICARTS)

The author of the graphic novels *My Friend Dahmer* and *Trashed* (both outstanding) presents a deeply researched and riveting account of one of America's sorriest episodes. For someone like myself who had only casual knowledge of the events, the book really filled in lots of details and helped explain how things went so tragically awry. The story builds to a devastating conclusion, and is one of the few books where I actually teared up while reading it.

Spicy (Tabletop Game) – Györi Zoltán Gábor (Designer), Jimin Kim (Artist)

(HEIDELBÄR GAMES)

This is a hilarity-inducing bluffing card game with great illustrations inspired by classic Korean tiger art. The cards also have gold foil details that provide amazing table presence. The easy-to-learn gameplay is full of sneaky moves and calling out your fellow players when they attempt to deceive. Highly recommended!

Tip:

LAPL During early days of the pandemic, one of the most upsetting losses was the closure of the Los Angeles Public Library. Though as a hoarder/collector I have a decent home library of books, it's never enough to satisfy my reading cravings. Thankfully, LAPL launched the Library to Go program, whereby one could order books online and pick them up at designated branches, which has proven to be a godsend for me and my family. It's so great to have access to hundreds of thousands of books (as well as DVDs, CDs, and streaming services like Kanopy). As a special bonus, when picking up items at the Echo Park branch, I've been greeted by former Amoeba colleague Daniel Tures! Pandemic or not, the LAPL is an amazing resource. If you don't have a library card already, what are you waiting for?

BRIAN DAVIS

Here are some things that almost succeeded in keeping me sane over the past year...

Gillian Welch & David Rawlings –

All The Good Times (ACONY)

Find it in: COUNTRY

X – Alphabetland (FAT POSSUM)

Find it in: ROCK

Bonny Light Horseman –

Bonny Light Horseman (37D03D)

Find it in: ROCK

Whitney – Candid

(SECRETLY CANADIAN)

Find it in: ROCK

Rustin Man – Clockdust

(DOMINO)

Find it in: ROCK

Jess Cornelius – Distance

(LOANTAKA)

Find it in: ROCK

Flying Colours –

Fantasy Country (POISON CITY)

Find it in: ROCK

Country Westerns –

Country Westerns (FAT POSSUM)

Find it in: ROCK

Ohmme – Fantasize Your Ghost

(JOYFUL NOISE)

Find it in: ROCK

Anna Burch –

If You're Dreaming (POLYVINYL)

Find it in: ROCK

Molly Sarlé – Karaoke Angel

(PARTISAN)

Find it in: ROCK

Real Estate – The Main Thing

(DOMINO)

Find it in: ROCK

Mamalarky – Mamalarky

(FIRE TALK)

Find it in: ROCK

Kacy & Clayton &

Marlon Williams –

Plastic Bouquet (NEW WEST)

Find it in: ROCK

Rolling Blackouts

Coastal Fever –

Sideways To New Italy

(SUB POP)

Find it in: ROCK

Various Artists –

Too Late To Pray:

Defiant Chicago Roots

(BLOODSHOT)

Find it in: ROCK

Moaning –

Uneasy Laughter

(SUB POP)

Find it in: ROCK



Sarah Shook & The Disarmers

– **Years** (BLOODSHOT)

Find it in: COUNTRY

Ratboys – Printer’s Devil

(TOPSHELF)

Find it in: ROCK

Pia Fraus – Empty Parks

(SEKSOUND)

Find it in: ROCK

Stereolab –

Electrically Possessed

(Switched On Vol. 4)

(DUOPHONIC UHF / WARP)

Find it in: ROCK

Various Artists –

The Bakersfield Sound:

Country Music Capital Of

The West 1940-1974 [Box Set]

(BEAR FAMILY)

Find it in: COUNTRY

Various Artists –

Bob Stanley & Pete Wiggs

Present The Tears Of

Technology (ACE)

Find it in: ROCK

Various Artists –

Bob Stanley & Pete Wiggs

Present Occasional Rain (ACE)

Find it in: ROCK

Various Artists – C90

(CHERRY RED)

Find it in: ROCK

Various Artists –

Tea & Symphony:

The English Baroque Sound

1968-1974 (ACE)

Find it in: ROCK

SANDORK.

andorkappen.bandcamp.com

Witches of Malibu –

Twisted In Ritual (LOVE EARTH MUSIC)

Find it in: EXPERIMENTAL

Really great solo album from Skott Rusch, former member of pioneering US industrial/power electronics band Hunting Lodge. Originally from 2016, reissued in 2019. It plays out like a well composed horror/sci-fi soundtrack. A concise, focused record with very strong dynamics and excellent production. I played it over and over and over in my car stereo driving around aimlessly in covid-era zombieland LA. Fit the bleak mood perfectly. So many people shy away from experimental music because they can't get into it due to the supposed "lack of structure", "lack of composition" or "lack of memorable musical parts"—well those feeble yelps stop right here. Yes it can be a bit sonically harsh but it's like adding some pepper or hot sauce to your dish. Embrace the flavor!!!

Smokey Emery –

Things Done Changed

(CHONDRITIC SOUND)

Find it in: EXPERIMENTAL

Probably the greatest work yet by the highly prolific LA based, Texas-raised sound artist/experimental musician Daniel Hipolito. He specializes in creating long form moody, meditative soundscapes via analog tape manipulation & looping, primarily utilizing multiple 4-track machines. Strongly recommend it to all fans of *dark ambient* & all atypical dark sonics. 6 captivating tracks in over an hour that will take you to murky, forlorn & dreamlike places in the aural imaginary realm.

Lee Landey –

The Long Morning

(and other stories)

(CHONDRITIC SOUND)

Find it in: EXPERIMENTAL

This is actually a book of six Sci-Fi short stories by Lee Landey (AKA Oil Thief, also in WAND) with a misc. artist CD soundtrack by himself and other like minded experimental/electronic artists. A beautiful release - the cover alone brings back glorious memories of '60s/'70s sci-fi paperbacks. A wonderful example of multifaceted creative genius with intellectual prowess and unlimited imagination. I highly recommend you treat yourself to this one.

Zebulon Kosted –

Torches Behind The Waterfall

(& other recent works)

(HAMMERKRIEG PRODUCTIONS)

Find it in: BLACK METAL

Here's a (wrongly) not very widely known experimental/avant-garde/outside solo black metal project from Missoula, Montana. The man behind this long-running chameleon-like project is one Rashid Abdel Ghafur, also an accomplished visual artist/painter (responsible for most of his album covers as well). The fairly mysterious Zebulon Kosted has been active in the BM underground since the early 2000s. I'm familiar with several releases from his extensive discography and no two works sound alike. But they all sound bizarre, morbid and inspired. His works are highly eclectic and genuinely explorative. From extended ambient electronic meditations to harsh black noise eruptions to classical-inspired acoustic guitar meditations he covers more ground on a single record than many in an entire career. Besides his physical releases he puts out countless uniquely focused works on his zebulonkosted.bandcamp.com page. Worth exploring.

Necrot – Mortal

(TANKCRIMES)

Find it in: BLACK METAL

This is DEATH METAL perfection. I have been a fan for years. Primitive, punky, yet precise and focused. They slay'n' pummel live every time. Even their 2017 debut full length *Blood Offerings* was a genre standout, but this one simply leaves no stones unturned and brains unabashed...into finely mushed pinkish pulp. If you want totally merciless & blissful musical savagery - look no further. Not so sure if it can even be done any better than this.

Among the Rocks and Roots

– Raga

(PURPLE TAPE PEDIGREE (2XLP) / ORB TAPES)

Find it in: ROCK

Here's a release that completely surprised me & left me dumbfounded as I had zero expectations going in. I review cassette tapes/demos on my instagram blog called @Underground-TapeReview and this came in a package with several other releases. I randomly picked this from the lot and threw it on the player to see/hear what lies within. What lies within is a two-piece from Richmond, Virginia who created one of the most monstrous and monolithic albums in recent heavy rock history. *Raga* originally came out in 2018 but should see infinite reissues on all possible formats and platforms til

the end of times as this is far more creative, powerful and imaginative than most others in the broader doom/sludge/heavy realm of rock. Crushing Experimental/psychedelic/sludge/drone rock with bass/drums/vocals and electronics. I can best describe in a nutshell as OM meets GODFLESH. Four songs in over an hour in play time. Find this and take the heavy pill aurally to the dome.

Spiritual Exit –

Themes Of Ruminaton

(SPIRITUAL EXIT RECORDS)

Find it in: EXPERIMENTAL

This is a very fresh release that just came out in early March of this year. A four track 45rpm EP of wonderfully captivating and emotionally impactful ambient electronic music by Portland, Oregon's Aaron Davis (formerly known as ACRE). Such a strong & focused release. Every track is a stand out in its own way - makes you wish this were an hour long full length! This material will certainly appeal to fans of classic electronic ambient music in the Eno-ian tradition! Makes sure to seek out this outstanding release and artist (including his previous releases as ACRE - slightly more minimalist and monolithic sonically but equally worthy).

Tip:

netnetradio.com for true underground music & culture

RICK FRYSTAK

Chick Corea – Solo Piano (ECM)

Find it in: JAZZ

Let's give Chick some: this icon of modern jazz passed away last month. He made countless great albums, but I favor his solo and classical improv and writing, his soul patch years. This is a 3-CD box of fine improvisations and what he calls "Children's Songs". Wonderful music for all jazz and classical tastes. Dig it.

Wayne Shorter – Jazz at Lincoln Center: The Music of Wayne Shorter (BLUE ENGINE)

Find it in: JAZZ

A GREAT 2-CD set of Wayne's Music arranged by various folks featuring Wayne's magnificent soloing. Big band with Wynton Marsalis. Some cuts I'm not familiar with, which makes it even more exciting.





Max Richter – *Voices* (DECCA)

Find it in: EXPERIMENTAL

My brother Peter turned me onto this. A wonderful, further extension of Max's probing into minimalist chordal inversions. Lots of use of substitutions and ear-bending music that you think you know where it's headed, but it veers away, and creates tension and surprise. It works for me. How much of it is the voice? Don't know. A 2-CD with a disc of remixes included, which seems to be a current trend now. I dug the remix disc even more. Never mind-it's just good music.

Allan Holdsworth – *Leverkusen '97* (MANIFESTO)

Find it in: JAZZ

Another killer, scorching power trio in the jazz-rock vein live in Germany. Brings back memories of British prog-rock of long past. This cat can really, really go. Eddie Van and Zappa's favorite guitarist. Dave Carpenter on bass swings it viciously playing chords on the bass along with single notes-sounds like four people! Nobody plays like these guys. One disc is a DVD of a Chad Wackerman interview. You feel like you've done 10 rounds in the ring after playing this! Smoke it!

Vince Mendoza/DR Big Band – *The Phoenix* (RED DOT MUSIC)

Find it in: JAZZ

Superb big-band "jazz" music written and arranged by my favorite-Vince Mendoza. He's won Grammys, worked with Joni Mitchell, the Breckers, Scofield, Sting, Bjork, Zawinul, Charlie Haden, plus 10 solo albums and much more! He is a phenomenal writer, arranger and keyboardist. Everything he does is of the highest quality, and this is no different. A joy to listen to. Submerge yourself into this world of sound and bask in it's glory!

Arve Henriksen – *The Timeless Nowhere*

(RUNE GRAMMAFON)

Find it in: EXPERIMENTAL

A 4-LP box set. A triumph of variety and inspiration. Some live at the Punkte festival, some studio, some solo. A wondrous collection of Arve doing what he does best—a form of trumpet playing that transcends the instrument and brings new meaning to "brass" as a section of the band. F/X, electronics, compositions, wow- we've got 4 LPs worth of it here and I get enchanted listening over and over. Reminds one of Jon Hassell a little. One of the discs is my favorite; simply mesmerizing. Lots of fun if you can find it!

John Cage – *Mushroom Book:*

A Mycological Foray: Variations on Mushrooms

(ATELIER EDITIONS; ILLUSTRATED)

A beautiful 2-volume set reflecting Cage's love of collecting, composing, photographing, cooking, writing, all the aspects of his life, really...quite a piece of ephemera of Cage.

Steve Fitch – *Vanishing Vernacular*

(GEORGE F THOMPSON PUBLISHING)

Magnificent and soul-stirring medium-format photographs of signage and public graphics from the 1940's to now. Tons of motel signs, night shots of the naive art that sent a message. Buildings and services. A few cool essays digging into and behind Fitch's work. I love this stuff.

Edward Burtynsky – *Natural Order*

(STEIDL)

Large expensive book. A thing of beauty consisting of things of beauty. Natural things. Plants, shrubs, etcetera, coming to life through Burtynsky's homemade large-format camera at the cusp of winter and spring. Ravishing.

Kenny Wheeler – *Gnu High*

(ECM)

Find it in: JAZZ

A brilliant quartet record featuring Kenny's flugelhorn along with Keith Jarrett, Dave Holland and Jack DeJohnette. We lost Kenny last year, but his legacy lives, especially this record, one of only 2 "sideman" sessions that Keith claims credit. Kenny has such a unique, personal style. What a great record!

Nils Frahm – *Empty*

(ERASED TAPES)

Find it in: ELECTRONICA

Wonderfully quiet piano sounds merge from track to track-quietly mesmerizing. Recorded with soft pedal making the piano sound far away. Minimal chording makes it foggy, silvery, smoky-great morning or evening sounds that hold the interest-even though it does sound improvised-helping you empty your mind. One of Frahm's best efforts.

Ryuichi Sakamoto – *The Staggering Girl* (SONY)

Find it in: SOUNDTRACKS

Sakamoto-san's current soundtrack to a film I've yet to see. Ryuichi is always creating, through health problems that would put down most artists. This one is a beautiful mix of electronics, strings and other sounds of mystery and manipulation. Continuing his own path of chords, themes and tension/release, it's a winner. Green vinyl.

Keith Jarrett – *Any or all solo records* (ECM)

Find it in: JAZZ

If there was ever a diary is a man's soul with his instrument, then this is it. ECM and Manfred Eicher have seen this special something in Keith's spirit and technical prowess and have given him carte Blanche to play wherever that spirit takes him and discuss what to release as time goes by. I guess that's true of many major jazz artists, but Jarrett's journey I find especially satisfying. Get his take on the standards books or watch as he flies away out to his own "special place".

Tip:

Goodbye record business! It's been 42 years (!) and it's time to kick back and live

Be sure to check out the red tag stuff. Many good deals there.



DAVID W. GOMEZ

Part-Time Amoebite!
Part Time Tour Manager!
Fully Grateful

Marinero – *Hella Love*

(HARDLY ART/SUB POP)

Find it in: ROCK

Hella Love is a love letter to San Francisco by Jess Sylvester, who goes by the moniker Marinero. It's also his goodbye to the city, as he recently relocated to Los Angeles. Marinero takes you on a tour of his favorite spots and memories of the city. The sweetness of his songs evoke the warmth of the best Brian Wilson and Arthur Lee compositions along with the romanticism of '70s Mexican pop, with lush orchestration and layered vocals. The sweet sounds are juxtaposed with stories of goodbyes and the loss of culture and community due to the advent of gentrification that has continued to suck the soul out of the bay. *Hella Love* makes me nostalgic for the days when I would hang out in the Mission District, fueled by strong coffee, a couple of Anchor Steam's and a five dollar Mission Burrito at Dolores Park with my friends, soaking in the soft sun until the fog rolled in.

Nermin Niaz and

Feisal Mosleh –

Disco Se Aagay

(DISCOSTAN RECORDS)

Find it in: WORLD

Two Pakistani teenagers influenced by British New Wave and the pop sounds of Pakistani singer Nazia Hassan, recorded *Disco Se Aagay* (*Beyond Disco*) during a summer break from school. The result was an album released in Pakistan on EMI yet ignored in England where they grew up, this despite sounding much like their English electro-pop temporaries. Thanks to the newly formed Discostan label that sprung from a Los Angeles DJ night of the same name, *Disco Se Aagay* gets it's day in the sun for all to hear. Despite the lyrics being sung in Urdu, the universal feeling of joyous electro-pop can not be ignored. I can see fans of early Depeche Mode, The Human League and Madonna really enjoying this. Note to DJs: Play this during your next Aquanet set and watch the heads turn!

**Eddie Chacon –
Pleasure, Joy and Happiness**

(DAY END)

Find it in: ROCK

Eddie Chacon, formerly of 90's one-hit wonder Neo-Soul group Charles & Eddie (Would I Lie To You) released his first record in over two decades. Eddie's collaborator on this album, John Carroll Kirby has worked with some of the best modern soul artists of today (Frank Ocean, Solange, Blood Orange) -thus updating the neo-soul singer's vision. The result is a modern, honest record, one that can only be made by someone with the life experience of being forgotten and heartbroken- yet coming through the other side with wisdom over resentment. The layers of synths and schematic beats that serve as a perfect canvas for Eddie's voice that has matured to a smooth "I Want You" era Marvin Gaye. This is probably one of the best soul albums I've heard in decades.

**Kid Congo &
The Pink Monkey Birds –
Swing From The Sean De Lear**

(IN THE RED)

Find it in: ROCK

As someone who continues to walk on this earth as many friends and relatives pass on, I find myself having dreams about those who left us too soon. At first it used to bum me out, because for a brief moment I believed my dead friends & relatives were alive again, only to wake up disappointed that it was just a dream. But now I see it as a blessing, a visieral experience where I get to reminisce with those who passed. Kid Congo shares my sentiment with songs about friends and former bandmates that he knew in the physical world and celebrates them now that they are in the spiritual world. The song, "He Walked In" a tone poem with No Wave Jazz roots, is where his former Gun Club bandmate Jeffery Lee Pierce pays a visit to Kid Congo in a dream. *Swing From The Sean DeLear* celebrates the life of Los Angeles trans-punk icon and socialite, Sean DeLear, a celebratory song about passing on to the next life. This record is raw and fun one moment, cerebral the next and just about as beautiful as having dreams that bring back our dearly departed, even for just one moment.

**Various Artists –
Saturday Night-Disco Pop Hits-
1981-1987**

(CULTURE OF SOUL)

Find it in: ROCK

**Stereolab –
Electronically Possessed
(Switched On Volume 4)**

(WARP)

Find it in: ROCK

**Buyepongo Vs. Quitapenas –
Cantarito / Inspiración 7"**

(PEACE & RHYTHM)

Find it in: WORLD

HILAND.

**Johnnie Frierson –
Have You Been Good
To Yourself**

(LIGHT IN THE ATTIC)

Find it in: SOUL

**Peter Stampfel –
Peter Stampfel's 20th Century**

(LOUISIANA RED HOT RECORDS)

Find it in: ROCK

**David Shrigley + Régis Laugier
– Play Something Awful**

(THE VINYL FACTORY)

Find it in: ROCK

**Grauzone –
40 Years Anniversary Box Set**

(WRWTFWW RECORDS)

Find it in: ROCK

**The Whit Boyd Combo –
Dracula (The Dirty Old Man)
Original Motion Picture
Soundtrack**

(SOMETHING WEIRD / MODERN HARMONIC)

Find it in: SOUNDTRACKS

**Gary Panter –
Crashpad**

(FANTAGRAPHICS)

**Kliph Nesteroff –
We Had a Little Real Estate
Problem: The Unheralded Story
of Native Americans & Comedy**

(SIMON & SCHUSTER)

JUNGALERO

*Did I ever tell you about the time I
shoplifted a frozen turkey out of a Piggly
Wiggly wearing only a tube top and
daisy dukes?*

**Essential Fellini
[Criterion Box Set]**

A master of mixing the surreal with the humane, Italian director Federico Fellini is given the deluxe box set treatment he deserves on what would have been his 100th birthday. Lots of newly remastered prints are presented amongst the 15 discs, in addition to two books of essays and information about the films; this set is currently the only place to get my personal favorite Fellini film, *Le Notte di Cabiria* (Nights of Cabiria), on the Blu-ray format.

**Roman Holiday (1953) –
Directed by William Wyler**

Paramount launched in 2020 a "Paramount Presents"-branded series of Blu-ray reissues of classic titles from its catalog, with 1953's *Roman Holiday* making its debut on the format as one of the first titles offered. This classic romance starring Gregory Peck and the always luminescent Audrey Hepburn in her star-making role is indeed one for the ages.

**Daughters of Darkness (1971) –
Directed by Harry Kümel**

We are in the midst of a golden age of horror film appreciation and exhumation. The latest film to get a loving 4K remaster is this 1971 cult classic vampire film, restored from a long lost print to a magnificence probably not even seen during its initial release. This lurid lesbian affair may not be everyone's cup of (blood?) tea, but those that like their films languid and luxurious looking should give this one a viewing. The release comes with a CD of the appropriately moody fuzz guitar-heavy soundtrack, which sounds like it could have been an inspiration for Portishead's classic first album.

**The Alfred Hitchcock Classics
Collection [Universal Box Set]**

Four of the master of suspense's most iconic films (*Rear Window*, *Vertigo*, *Psycho*, *The Birds*) are given pristine 4K remasters in this glorious set. Noteworthy is the inclusion of some censored footage in *Psycho* that hasn't been seen in the U.S. since its original 1960 release. Now has

never been a better opportunity to be seduced by the charms of *Vertigo*, frequently considered to be one of the best films of all time by critics and fans alike.

**Parasite (2019)
[Criterion] – Directed by
Bong Joon Ho**

It's unusual to be given the opportunity to view a film in both color and black & white, which offers up what could potentially be vastly different reactions to the same piece of visual art. Criterion serves up just that, with its reissue containing both original and b&w versions of Bong Joon Ho's Best Picture Oscar/Palme d'Or winner in a lovely package.

**Bugs Bunny 80th Anniversary
Collection
Tex Avery - Screwball Classics
Volumes 1 & 2**

Classic animation fans were given a lot of potential presents this year, with these sets bringing a whopping 100 total combined shorts to fans' screens. When the kids get aged out of what's on Disney+ blow their minds with this next level adult hilarity.

**Drop Dead Gorgeous (1999)
– Directed by
Michael Patrick Jann**

One from the "they don't/can't make 'em like this anymore" department, *Drop Dead Gorgeous* is the epitome of what a hilarious, dark, politically incorrect comedy should be, with a cast to, er, die for: Kirsten Dunst, Denise Richards, Kirstie Alley, Sam McMurray, Ellen Barkin, Brittany Murphy, Amy Adams, Mindy Sterling, Matt Malloy, Will Sasso and a scene-stealing Allison Janney! For double your pleasure, make it a Miss Richards-themed double feature with the also recently resurrected Tammy and the T-Rex, in which Richards' boyfriend's brain is implanted by a mad scientist into the body of the titular mechanical dino. Gory chaos ensues.

**Jaws (1975)
[4K 45th Anniversary Edition]
– Directed by
Steven Spielberg**

Forty five years later and it's still guaranteed to cause someone not to go into the water while at the beach. The film/cultural phenomenon that launched the "summer blockbuster" has never looked or sounded better.



PETE MAJORS (DOOMDEATH)

Husband / Son / Brother / Musician /
Cat Dad / Mountain Man

The Elephant Man (1980) [Criterion/Studio Canal] – Directed by David Lynch

The Elephant Man may not be as immediately mentioned as some of David Lynch's other iconic films, but that doesn't mean it's not as worthy. Quite the contrary, Lynch's second film is beautifully shot in black & white and quite poignantly acted by an amazing name cast. There's never been a better time to get (re)acquainted. (If you have a compatible all-region player, the full 4K restoration is available as part of a lovingly packaged UK set from Studio Canal; otherwise stick with the equally worthy Criterion edition.)

All About My Mother (1999) [Criterion]

Pain And Glory (2019) – Directed by Pedro Almodovar

Pedro Almodovar is one of my favorite directors, and early 2020 brought two of his best films to Blu-ray. 1999's *All About My Mother* is a moving story of a mother dealing with the loss of her son, while 2019's *Pain And Glory* is the semi-autobiographical story of a film director reconnecting with various parts of his past. Anyone who has seen one of Almodovar's films knows how colorfully art directed they consistently are, an aspect the Blu-ray format displays to its fullest potential. Either film makes a great entry point to Almodovar's unique oeuvre.

Flash Gordon (1980) [4K UHD Special Edition] – Directed by Mike Hodges

FLASH! Ahhhhhh! It's difficult not to admire the grandness of the immense Italian sets (and star Sam J. Jones' physique) in this gorgeous 4K restoration. Turn up the Queen soundtrack loud and go, Flash, go!

Note:

4K releases require both a 4K television as well as a 4K UHD player.

Blood Incantation – Hidden History Of

The Human Race (DARK DESCENT)

Find it in: METAL
debut album from QAALM dropping 202...slow
DOOM!

Necrot – Mortal (TANKCRIMES)

Find it in: METAL

Rope Sect – The Great Flood

(IRON BONEHEAD PRODUCTIONS)

Find it in: GOTH / INDUSTRIAL

Bohren & Der Club Of Gore –

Patchouli Blue (IPECAC)

Find it in: JAZZ

Hum – Inlet (EARTH ANALOG)

Find it in: ROCK

Hive Mind – Elysian Alarms

(DIFFICULT INTERACTIONS)

Find it in: EXPERIMENTAL

Ulver – Flowers Of Evil

(HOUSE OF MYTHOLOGY)

Find it in: ROCK

Jesu – Terminus (AVALANCHE)

Find it in: ROCK

Rafael Anton Irisarri –

Peripeteia (DAIS)

Find it in: ELECTRONICA

Smokey Emery – Things Done Changed

(CHONDRITIC SOUND)

Find it in: EXPERIMENTAL

Mark Lanegan –

Sing Backwards And Weep

(HACHETTE BOOKS)

Trent Reznor & Atticus Ross –

Watchmen Vol. 1-3

(THE NULL CORPORATION)

Find it in: SOUNDTRACKS

Departure Chandelier – Anti- christ Rise To Power

(NUCLEAR WAR NOW!)

Find it in: BLACK METAL

SAKEVI YOKOYAMA

(G.I.S.M.) –

OPPRESSIVE LIBERATION

SPIRIT Vol. I

(BEAST ARTS INTERNATIONAL)

Joseph Szkodozinski –

Misfits Halloween Show Irving

Plaza, NYC 1980 (THE FOUND IMAGE)

Lamp Of Murmuur –

Remnants Of A Bewildered

Ache (DEATH KVLТ PRODUCTIONS)

Find it in: BLACK METAL

MGLA – Age Of Excuse

(NORTHERN HERITAGE)

Find it in: BLACK METAL

Failing Lights – Spirit Obscured

(CHONDRITIC SOUND)

Find it in: EXPERIMENTAL

Colin Stetson –

Color Out Of Space

(WAXWORK RECORDS)

Find it in: SOUNDTRACKS

Andorkappen –

Transmissions From

The Netherworlds (SKIN TRADE)

Find it in: EXPERIMENTAL

Vorpal Sword –

Live Rehearsal Demo #6

(RISING BEAST)

Find it in: BLACK METAL

Hexandagger –

Nine Of Swords 7”

(RISE ABOVE)

Find it in: ROCK

M.S.W. – Obliviosus

(GILEAD MEDIA)

Find it in: BLACK METAL

Ulver – Wolves Evolve:

The Ulver Story

(HOUSE OF MYTHOLOGY)

Darkthrone –

Shadows Of Iconoclasm

[Box Set] (PEACEVILLE RECORDS)

Find it in: BLACK METAL

Old Tower – The Last Eidolon

(PROFOUND LORE)

Find it in: BLACK METAL

Failure – 1992-1996 [Box Set]

(FAILURE RECORDS)

Find it in: ROCK

Drown – Subaqueous

(PROPHECY PRODUCTIONS)

Find it in: METAL

BRIANNE

Deftones – Ohms (REPRISE)

Find it in: METAL

Hum – Inlet (EARTH ANALOG)

Find it in: ROCK

Menahan Street Band –

The Exciting Sounds of

Menahan Street Band (DAPTONE)

Find it in: SOUL

Pallbearer – Forgotten Days

(NUCLEAR BLAST)

Find it in: METAL

Protomartyr –

Ultimate Success Today

(DOMINO)

Find it in: ROCK

Soft Kill – Dead Kids R.I.P. City

(CERCLE SOCIAL)

Find it in: ROCK



Various Artists – What Is This That Stands Before Me?

(SACRED BONES)

Find it in: ROCK

Compilation of Sabbath covers from Sacred Bones artists!

(SONGS BY) THOM

FURLOUGHED ROCK VINYL VET & CD PRICER WRITING / RECORDING AS SONGS BY THOM SAFELY AT HOME !

Eric's Trip– Warmgirl & Peter

(BLUE FOG)

Find it in: ROCK

ERIC'S TRIP WERE ONE OF THE BEST CANADIAN BANDS OF THE '90S. A STRANGE MIX OF SONIC YOUTH NOISE, MBV BOY / GIRL VOCALS & SEBADOH LO-FI STONER ROCK. WARMGIRL WAS A 10-SONG CASSETTE SELF RELEASED BY THE BAND IN 1992. IT WAS RECORDED AT HOME ON 4-TRACK MOSTLY LIVE. THE PETER LP WAS ORIGINALLY A 6-SONG EP RELEASED IN 1993. HERE THE BANDS SOUND BECAME MORE EXPERIMENTAL WITH LAYERS OF ACOUSTIC GUITARS, FUZZ & VIOLIN. BOTH OF THESE REISSUES HAVE BEEN EXPANDED WITH BONUS TRACKS & REMIXED / RE-MASTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL TAPES ON COLOR VINYL !!!

Pale Saints – The Comforts of Madness & Mrs. Dolphin (4AD)

Find it in: ROCK

THE PALE SAINTS WERE A LEEDS, UK BASED EXPERIMENTAL NOISE POP BAND FROM THE '90S. THEY BLENDED COCTEAU TWINS WITH PIXIES TO MAKE A SOUND THEIR

OWN. THE COMFORTS OF MADNESS (1990) FEATURES 11 SONGS THAT ARE ETHEREAL & CHAOTIC. THE 2XLP REISSUE FEATURES DEMOS, ALTERNATE VERSIONS & PEEL SESSIONS. THE SINGLES COMP MRS. DOLPHIN WAS A JAPANESE ONLY CD IMPORT. HERE IT APPEARS FOR THE 1ST TIME ON VINYL. FEATURING MY FAVORITE SONG OF THEIRS "HALF-LIFE, REMEMBERED". BOTH REISSUES WERE LTD ED & COME ON COLOR VINYL ...

Magnetic Fields – Quickies

(NONESUCH)

Find it in: ROCK

THE MAGNETIC FIELDS LATEST ALBUM THEME / GIMMICK IS SHORT SONGS. THESE 28 TRACKS CLOCK IN BTW 0:17 & 2:35. THEY'RE LESS DENSELY LAYERED THAN THEIR OTHER WORK. SOME FEATURE JUST A FEW INSTRUMENTS PLAYED LIVE THROUGH A WHOLE SONG. THE LYRICS & WORD PLAY ARE IN FINE FORM AS USUAL. I BOUGHT THE LTD ED 5X7" SINGLE BOX SET VERSION. IT'S ALSO AVAILABLE ON ONE LP OR CD.

Free Country –

The Life Of Riley EP (EYES CLOSED)

Find it in: ROCK

FREE COUNTRY IS A ONE MAN BAND LED BY JASON RIBADENEYRA. HE IS A L.A. TRANSPLANT VIA BROOKLYN / NORTHAMPTON, MA. THIS LTD ED 6-SONG CASSETTE ONLY EP WAS RECORDED ON A 4-TRACK IN HIS GRANDPARENTS BASEMENT. IT'S A VERY LAID BACK AFFAIR WITH ACOUSTIC GUITARS, KEYBOARDS, DRUM MACHINE & SAD MELODIC VOCALS. R.I.Y.L.: ELLIOT SMITH / POSTAL SERVICE.

Tip:

GO TO SONGSBYTHOM.BANDCAMP.COM TO HEAR HIS NEW 5-SONG RECORD: THE BEFRIEND EP

GREGG

Training ravens for the apocalypse.

L.A. Witch – Play With Fire

(SUICIDE SQUEEZE)

Find it in: ROCK

Minuit Machine –

Don't Run From The Fire

(SYNTH RELIGION)

Find it in: GOTH / INDUSTRIAL

ALEXA

Snot Puppies – Snot Puppies 7"

(NO MATRIX)

Find it in: PUNK

Amazing new release from No Matrix Records. The Snot Puppies shared a member with the Scremers, and played at the Masque in Hollywood, LA's most legendary punk venue of the '70s. Recorded in 1978 and produced by Geza X.

Herbie Hancock – My Point Of View

(BLUE NOTE)

Find it in: JAZZ

Incredible quality new reissue from Blue Note. Mastered from the original tapes. The sleeve is made with materials similar to the original Blue Note gatefold sleeves. Beautifully done! Includes never before seen photography.

Doug Hammond & David Durrah – Venus Fly Trap 7"

(CLAP CITY RECORDS / TRIBE)

Find it in: JAZZ

Experimental Jazz from Detroit Michigan. Reissue of the 1975 Tribe Records release. Amazing quality vinyl with an impressive sleeve that includes an extensive 44 page booklet.

Gism – Detestation

(RELAPSE)

Find it in: PUNK

Long awaited Gism reissue. Japanese punk record originally released in 1983! Great sleeve design and high quality sound. Includes an insert poster and OBI strip.



Hammersmith Gorillas – Why Wait 'til Tomorrow 1974-1981

(JUST ADD WATER)

Find it in: ROCK

Early 1970s glam rock and bonehead crunchers! Lead by Jesse Hector and sometimes called Crushed Butler or Helter Skelter. Many tracks have never been released until now. Double LP!

BRI-RO

bikes, corn, beans and rice.

Elaine Radigue – Feedback Works 1969-1970 / Vice Versa

(ALGA MARGHEN)

Find it in: EXPERIMENTAL

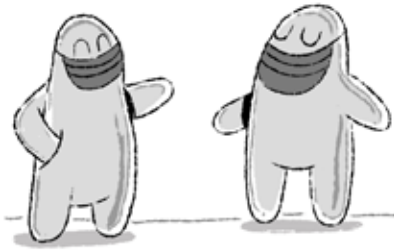
Through these long months of pandemic isolation I have been searching music to alter my space sonically. Sounds that can't always be contained and bound by musical convention, that aren't simply defined by a catchy hook or phrase. Recorded mostly at night in her Paris flat while her children slept Eliane created these recordings using an ARP 2500 synthesizer and multiple tape machines, manipulating feedback loops and altering their pitch and duration to produce new microtonal harmonics and frequencies offering an elemental tranquility and hallucinatory quality.

The Gun Club – Miami

(BLIXA SOUNDS)

Find it in: ROCK

It can often be difficult for a band or artist to follow a strong debut, and that can be said for The Gun Club and *Fire Of Love*. Even after 30+ years there is still nothing that comes close to sounding as good as *Fire Of Love* to me. With the band losing members and in a state of falling apart they headed to New York to record their follow up with Blondie's Chris Stein for his Animal Records label. Listening to *Miami* over the years now I feel that it is as strong an effort as *Fire Of Love*. In Jeffrey Lee Pierce's search for musical authenticity, inspired by punk and blues he created something all his own. On this *Miami* double LP gatefold reissue Blixa Sounds has included a bonus LP of demos of the complete album with the CD offering up a bonus disc with complete album demos and adding 6 more demos from *Las Vegas Story*.



Hélène Vogelsinger – *Contemplation (Modularfield)*

Find it in: ELECTRONICA

When I was forced into the confines of the internal spaces of home I found more time to read and search the internet. Within my new infinitely smaller reality one of the things I found were the videos of Site-specific singer / musician Hélène Vogelsinger. The French singer and sound designer has documented her explorations in various abandoned places in which she creates modular synth compositions, linked to the spaces. Ambient melodic and orchestral with both energy and thoughtfulness of the surroundings. This cassette only release gathers together the audio from some of the performances and includes a informative 30 page detailed booklet.

The Misunderstood – *Children Of The Sun (The Complete Recordings 1965-1966)* (GRAPEFRUIT)

Find it in: ROCK

This 2-CD collection brings together all known recordings from 1966-1966, remastered and with liner note by Mike Stax from (Ugly Things). The Misunderstood started in the early 1960s in the garages of Riverside, CA. After only a few local recordings the band relocated to the UK on the recommendation of a young John Peel where they signed to Fontana. John Peel claimed that seeing The Misunderstood in 1966 at Pandora's Box, Hollywood was one of the greatest performances he'd ever witnessed in his life. Unfortunately the band recorded a few songs before being forced to disband.

Nick Cave / Warren Ellis – *Carnage* (GOLIATH)

Find it in: ROCK

Carnage is the new album from Nick Cave & Warren Ellis, it was recorded over a period of several weeks during the pandemic lockdown of 2020.

Although Ellis has been a long term member of The Bad Seeds and they've worked together composing & recording soundtracks together, this is the first time they have released an entire album of songs as a duo. Cave describes the album as "a brutal but very beautiful record nested in a communal catastrophe."

On June 19th, 2020 as the world had falling into its reluctant ghostly silence Nick Cave performed solo from The Alexandria Palace in London. Setting alone at a grand piano and drawing from his extensive catalog of songs he performed with elegance and defiance into the void of uncertainty that encircled us in its strangeness.

On *Carnage*, Cave and Ellis continue with a defiant sense of hope this is a record for these uncertain times. After more than 40 years as a musician Cave continues to explore the edges of what has been defined as rock or pop, drawing more from cinematic settings and extreme emotional states.

Emily A. Sprague – *Hill, Flower, Fog* (RVNG INTL.)

Find it in: EXPERIMENTAL

On *Hill, Flower, Fog* familiar sounds of minimal electronics loop in and out of focus, like hazy dust particles in sunlight scattered and floating. *Hill, Flower, Fog* is accompanied by *Greetings from Hill, Flower, Fog*, a limited-edition book of her own photographs, which she says relate "moments of pause, peace, and communion experienced at home."

Tip:

Thank You to Nurses and Doctors everywhere, Altadena Library, and The Los Angeles Food Bank. Best new veggie spot: Taco Vega.

DOMINIK ROTHBARD

30 ALBUMS FROM 2020 THAT MADE THIS YEAR SUCK LESS

1. Spector – *Non Fiction*

(MOTH NOISE)

Find it in: ROCK

Spector's third album is actually a collection of EPs released following their split with Fiction Records, hence the title. Despite being cobbled

together from three releases, *Non Fiction* is actually the band's most cohesive effort yet. Every song is fun, thought provoking and life affirming. For me, Spector were THE band of 2020.

2. Momus – *Vivid*

(AMERICAN PATCHWORK)

Find it in: ROCK

Nick Currie aka Momus was 2 songs into recording his 34th album when he was stricken down with Covid-19. Down, but not out, he continued recording the album through his recovery and made the most striking album of his career. Somehow both relatable and abstract, *Vivid* was the perfect soundtrack for the isolation and paranoia that came hand in hand with 2020.

3. Pet Shop Boys – *Hotspot* (X2)

Find it in: ROCK

I will admit a personal bias here, the Pet Shop Boys are my favorite band, but I have been very critical of them when they make a mis-step (2012's *Elysium* is dreadful). *Hotspot* is not dreadful. Quite the opposite. The Boys sound as fresh as they ever have, and opening track "Will O The Wisp" proves they could fill a dance floor if they must. This album could've topped my list if it weren't for "Wedding In Berlin" the embarrassing mostly instrumental closer.

4. Richard Frenneaux – *Fuoxetine Dreams*

(RICHARD FRENNEAUX)

Find it in: ROCK

Richard Frenneaux has been operating under the radar for years, creating some of the best pop music never to grace the charts. A little more than ten years ago he was fronting UK would-be superstars Red Light Company, and continued on fronting the short-lived Another's Blood and Hope Park before finally recording under his own name. Every track on this album is a hit in an alternative universe where things actually make sense.

5. Paul Heaton + Jacqui Abbot – *Manchester Calling* (UNIVERSAL)

Find it in: ROCK

Following the demise of The Beautiful South, Paul Heaton and Jacqui Abbot buried whatever hatchet divided them in the first place and in 2014 began releasing albums so thick with brilliant lyrics, angry wry observations and songs, it began a dizzying new chapter in a career that began with the Housemartins in 1985. *Manchester Calling* is their fourth release as a

duo, and the fourth to reach the UK Top 5. Now reissued as a 25 track double CD because these two still have SO MUCH to say, this is an album that still has not finished revealing all its treasures. Endless fun.

6. Love Fame Tragedy – *Wherever I Go, I Want To Leave*

(GOOD SOLDIER)

Find it in: ROCK

The Wombats were on a break in 2020, but that didn't stop a three year old track of theirs from blowing up on TikTok. Front Wombat Matthew Murphy used the time off to complete a full length album of his side project Love Fame Tragedy. You'd be forgiven for thinking it's a proper Wombats record, as every song is still brimming with synthy hooks and anthemic choruses. 17 tracks and they're all good.

7. Morrissey – *I Am Not A Dog On A Chain* (BMG)

Find it in: ROCK

An unfortunately controversial pick, I'm aware, but as a lifelong Smiths fan, I'm compelled to check out everything Morrissey or Marr put their names on. I'm glad I did. Opening track "Jim Jim Falls" is as vital as Morrissey has ever sounded. His duet with Thelma Houston, the six minute "Bobby Don't You Think They Know?" is as bonkers as it is wonderful. Incidentally this is the first Morrissey album ever not to chart in the US and lost him his recording contract here. I still stand by this being his most consistent record in fifteen years. It stands among his best.

8. Emmy The Great – *April / 月音* (BELLA UNION)

Find it in: ROCK

Emmy The Great's first album in nearly five years manages to capture the intimacy of her first LP with playful modern production of her previous release. Emmy's voice retains a quiet beauty that belies her most sardonic lyrics and her songs plant themselves in your head until you're sure you've known them forever.

9. The Vapors – *Together* (MANMADE SOUL LTD)

Find it in: ROCK

Yes, the "Turning Japanese" guys. '80s fans and ex-mods will know that The Vapors were more than just that one notorious single, and if you haven't you should check out their two LPs from 1980 and '81. If you, like me, love them and are dubious of what this band could sound like 39 years later, don't be. The Vapors sound is a



timeless one, and this album sounds as much a product of today, as it is the perfect follow up to 1981's *Magnets*. A treat in every way.

10. Everything Everything – *Re-Animator* (INFINITY INDUSTRIES)

Find it in: ROCK

Despite the seemingly aggro title, UK's most hyper art rock band mellows out for their fifth outing. Almost sounding like it was produced by Nigel Godrich in his post *OK Computer* period, Everything Everything's songs finally have a moment to breathe. They still slip back into hyperdrive every so often in the way only they can, and it makes for a more dynamic album that rewards upon further listening.

11. The Strokes – *The New Abnormal* (RCA)

Find it in: ROCK

Like McDonalds, The Strokes give you exactly what you're looking for from them every time. It's easy to say you haven't paid attention to them since the mid 2000s, but if that's the case you've missed some sporadically wonderful music. After a seven year absence, their sixth album is absolutely overflowing with melody. Every song ends too quickly, and begs to be explored in some extended six minute form. It's the perfect teaser to get you to go see them live, where, despite what some of my friends say, they are VERY exciting. *The New Abnormal* makes me miss concerts. I have a feeling that if I'd seen these tracks performed live, the album would've cracked my top ten.

12. The Buttertones – *Jazz Hound*

Find it in: ROCK

Mysteriously absent from Spotify where I first discovered it (though you can still find it on

YouTube) I treasure my physical copy. Local heroes (aka Los Angeles residents) aren't anywhere near as jazzy as their name implies. Closer to The Gun Club in dinner jackets, The Buttertones fourth album is inarguably their best. Check out "Denial, You Win Again" and then curse me, because it will never leave your head.

13. Fiona Apple – *Fetch The Bolt Cutters* (EPIC)

Find it in: ROCK

Maybe it's because everyone loves it so very very much, or maybe it's because it'll never top the dizzying heights of (the original, un-over-produced version of) *Extraordinary Machine* that caused this undeniably brilliant album to just barely make my top fifteen of the year. It could also be that I over played it. I will obviously be listening to this deep into my old age, and just mere mention of the title will forever cause the refrain to pop in my head for twenty minutes, and just looking at the cover will probably always bring me back to that scary time when we were all learning that six weeks might not be enough to stop the spread. It's an album for a certain mood and I hope not to be in that mood very often. There, I've cracked it. That's why it's ONLY at #13.

14. Sparks – *A Steady Drip, Drip, Drip* (BMG)

Find it in: ROCK

From the sublime to the ridiculous all in one track, fourteen times over. It's almost overwhelming how many jokes you can miss your first, second, third go around listening to this album. Sparks are like that friend that's determined to brighten your day no matter how many times you tell them to fuck off. There are some tracks I would remove ("iPhone" instantly springs to mind) as I've found later era Sparks albums are better when they're brief. Still not many bands are delivering quality product like this after 24 albums.

15. Mystery Jets – *A Billion Heartbeats*

(MYSTERY JETS LTD)

Find it in: ROCK

A friend once told me that the Mystery Jets are known overseas as that band that chucked out their dad. And it's true, but they kept him around as a lyricist, and that counts for something. This album is an overblown dystopian vision of the Jets, it's as alluring as it is impenetrable. An intriguing shift in direction after their last, countrified album.

16. Real Life – *Sirens*

(REAL LIFE MUSIC)

Find it in: ROCK

Australian synth maestros Real Life have come a long way from "Send Me An Angel" and this, their first album in seventeen years is easily their most ambitious. The focal point being the sprawling sixteen minute plus title track, a song suite in 5 parts.

17. Popular Music – *Popular Music Plays In Darkness*

(SANITARIUM SOUND)

Find it in: ROCK

I am not a fan of cover albums, but to open your career with a cover album is so audacious, it shouldn't be ignored. Popular Music are Prudence Rees-Lee and Zac Pennington formerly of the much missed Parenthetical Girls. Zac's flamboyant vocal acrobatics are so much of an acquired taste, it's only makes sense to give them a test drive on some time honored film classics like *The Crying Game* and *Philadelphia*. Outrageous, obnoxious in its opulence and over-the-toppedness? (I ran out of O words) Popular Music are currently writing their follow up, said to be chock-a-block with new material. I can't wait.

18. Future Islands – *As Long As You Are*

(4AD)

Find it in: ROCK

More fun, throaty synthpop Baltimore's hunkiest viral sensation. More is the key word here, as their sound hasn't developed very much, if at all, but that's a slight criticism, because no one else comes close to doing what they do. So if we're to get eleven tracks that sound strikingly similar to the eleven tracks they served us three years ago, I'm not going to complain. Next album they better mix it up a little tho.

19. BC Camplight – *Shortly After Takeoff*

(BELLA UNION)

Find it in: ROCK

An album about mental illness that borrows from the Beach Boys, Ben Folds, and Dexy's Midnight Runners, but returns those items borrowed in unrecognizable shape. This is a weird, difficult, angry, funny, wonderful album. It's not the most accessible album in BC Camplight's catalog. In fact he seems to get less welcoming with every release, and that's what makes him so special.

20. Marc Almond – *Chaos And A Dancing Star* (BMG)

Find it in: ROCK

There was a period where Marc Almond lost the plot. He'd gotten into a motorcycle accident and stopped recording with the urgency his fans are accustomed to. It wasn't until about five years ago that Marc Almond teamed up with producer Christopher Braide and had a real career resurgence. His albums are sharper than ever and this one is no exception. And somehow he roped Ian Anderson into playing on this! Brilliant.

21. Bombay Bicycle Club – *Everything Else Has Gone Wrong* (MMM RECORDS)

Find it in: ROCK

After bursting out of the gate with four albums in five years, Bombay Bicycle Club laid dormant for six years, now returning with their tightest set of songs since their debut. Hope they don't wait too long to make the follow up.

22. Jarvis Cocker – *Jarv Is Beyond The Pale*

(ROUGH TRADE)

Find it in: ROCK

Is it as good as the best Pulp stuff? No, but it's definitely better than *We Love Life*. Is it better than his first two solo albums? No again, but those were stone cold classics, and this, well it's a completely different beast. I do love it, however, it just fits in a category I wasn't expecting Jarvis to fall into. Electronica. Is that even a word anymore? Jarv Is essentially a Jarvis Cocker side project from himself, if that makes sense. It's as weird and wonderful as it sounds, but it's hard to imagine a crowd at Glastonbury shouting along to "Must I Evolve?" but it's also hard to imagine a crowd these days.

23. The Dears – *Lovers Rock*

(DANGEROUS)

Find it in: ROCK

If you wish you could like Morrissey, but the politics appear too perilous, might I suggest the new LP from The Dears. The Dears ask the question what if Morrissey was black, Canadian, and in a tumultuous marriage with his keyboard player. The inner turmoil of The Dears has fueled them for twenty years, and despite frontman Murray Lightburn's recent solo outing, it shows no signs of letting up. Dramatic fuzzy guitar rock sung soulfully from start to finish. This is the best album the Dears have put out since 2001's *No Cities Left*, so if you liked that one, skip ahead and grab this.



24. Nation Of Language – *Introduction, Presence*

(NATION OF LANGUAGE)

Find it in: ROCK

Nation Of Language finally get their first full length album released after futzing around for four years and it was worth the wait. Ten tracks of meticulously programmed synthpop, with six of them being released as singles. It's arrival in May was almost enough to distract from the world ending around me!

25. Sufjan Stevens – *The Ascension*

(ASTHMATIC KITTY)

Find it in: ROCK

This is a long album. But every part of it is great. Except the long parts. And there are a few. The fifteen songs here greedily gobble up a full 80 minute long CD. If you're a completist, you'll need to track down the ten minute plus b-side "My Rajneesh" which brings the runtime of this album to a place where it can rival major motion pictures. But when it comes to drama and story-telling, Hollywood has nothing on Sufjan. You can just tell Sufjan Stevens will never run out of things to say, and we as a nation should be appreciative and patient when sometimes his songs about "America" last a super long time.

26. Pauline Murray – *Elemental*

(POLESTAR)

Find it in: ROCK

Perhaps you know Pauline Murray from her time fronting punk legends Penetration back in 1976. Or maybe you're familiar with her work in 1980 with legendary Joy Division producer Martin Hannett on her debut solo album Pauline Murray and the Invisible Girls? There was a sporadic smattering of singles in the '80s as Pauline Murray & The Storm, but then there was a thirty year silence. Somehow, in the midst of a pandemic, one of the singular talents of the post punk age has reemerged with a beautiful pop album. Don't let this treasure of an album slip through the cracks.

27. Destroyer – *Have We Met*

(MERGE)

Find it in: ROCK

Canadian indie pop stalwarts Destroyer released their twelfth (and best) album in late January but it feels like it came out several decades ago. It's sound however, is as fresh as can be. Classy, timeless, debonaire somehow, this is smooth irresistible indie pop.

28. The Psychedelic Furs – *Made Of Rain*

(COOKING VINYL)

Find it in: ROCK

If you ask me, a fan, I'd say the Psychedelic Furs ran out of ideas in the mid-eighties, even though they continued to make music until the early nineties. Then came *Love Spit Love* which was a return to vitality, and even better Richard Butler's solo album which showed the "Pretty In Pink" songsmith's skills in tact. I was not prepared for *Made Of Rain* to be so full of the memorable hooks that made the Furs essential listening in their heyday. Complex, layered, and addictive, I hope this isn't the last we've heard of the rejuvenated Furs.

29. White Door – *The Great Awakening*

(PROGRESS PRODUCTIONS)

Find it in: ROCK

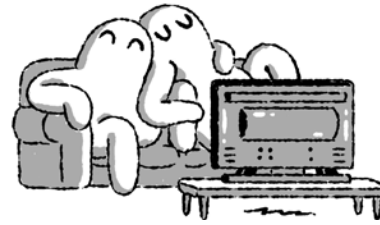
Quite a curiosity here. White Door was a British new romantic band who released one beautiful album in 1982 and then more or less disappeared without a trace. Eventually the album was reissued on CD by Cherry Red and a renewed interest began to grow. Out of nowhere, White Door has returned, thirty eight years later, sounding EXACTLY the same. No joke. Same synths, the same drum sounds. Same everything. Vocalist Mac Austin must have preserved his lungs in tupperware because it sounds like not a day has passed.

30. The Magnetic Fields – *Quickies*

(NONESUCH)

Find it in: ROCK

Twenty-eight songs in under 50 minutes? Sounds like a Magnetic Fields experiment in songwriting to me! It's a hoot, though not as successful as previous attempts (notably the ambitious *69 Love Songs*, and *50 Song Memoir*) but it fits right alongside *I* and *Distortion* as some of the Fields' more playful and enjoyable albums.



BRAD

Spirit of the Beehive – *Entertainment, Death*

(SADDLE CREEK)

Find it in: ROCK

Like a combination of all my favorite genres mixed up into one dream band. Like Stereolab, My Bloody Valentine, Dinosaur Jr. & Mac Demarco all had a baby. Dreamy and catchy and weird pop.

SG Lewis – *Times*

(CASABLANCA)

Find it in: ELECTRONICA

We all need albums like this to help us get through these crazy times. Super fun dance music to get you moving and forgetting your troubles. Perfect album to escape into. And it features Robyn on one of the best tracks!

TiKA – *Anywhere But Here*

(NEXT DOOR RECORDS)

Find it in: SOUL

A beautiful R&B record that I didn't know how much I needed until I heard it. A gorgeous debut album that feels somehow retro and futuristic all at once. Includes a breathtaking cover of "I Would Die 4 U."

Aerial East – *Try Harder*

(PARTISAN)

Find it in: ROCK

This album sounds like some long lost country-folk record from a different time. Similar to your favorite female folkies like Jessica Pratt and Joanna Newsom. A beautiful and dreamy album.

Another Michael – *New Music & Big Pop*

(RUN FOR COVER)

Find it in: ROCK

Another great debut album of 2021! For fans like me of bands like Pinegrove & Big Thief. Emotional indie rock country music.

SIMONE SIREN

Fantasy author & Turning Violet singer

Classics of Love – *Classics of Love*

(INDEPENDENT)

Classics of Love – *World of Burning Hate EP*

(ASIAN MAN RECORDS)

Find it in: PUNK

Find it in: PUNK

I discovered Classics of Love, one of Operation Ivy frontman Jesse Michael's later bands, when he released a great new EP this year under the same name. It led me to listen to their 2012 self-titled release, which I really love even better.

Lilly Hiatt – *Walking Proof*

(NEW WEST)

Find it in: ROCK

Lilly Hiatt has the best sweet/tough alt-country voice and incredible lyrics. Her new album is a little less rockin' than *Trinity Lane* but it's still great.

Second Still – *Violent Phase*

(FABRIKA/SENTIMENTAL RECORDS)

Find it in: ROCK

The second album from this local band that makes beautiful darkwave with chilly, ethereal vocals.

The Vigils – *Forevermore*

(INDEPENDENT)

Find it in: ROCK

The first official full-length from this energetic punk/goth local band.

Bodega – *Shiny New Model*

(WHAT'S YOUR RUPTURE)

Find it in: ROCK

I just discovered this quirky, post-punk band from Brooklyn.

China Miéville – *The City & The City / Perdido Street Station*

(DEL REY)

I never read China Miéville before this year but I randomly picked up *The City & The City* and loved it, so now I'm absorbed in *Perdido Street Station*. Awesome worldbuilding and strong characters.

📖 **Brandon Sanderson –**

Mistborn Trilogy (TOR)

This is a solid fantasy action/adventure trilogy: *The Final Empire* (2006), *The Well of Ascension* (2007), and *The Hero of Ages* (2008). Likeable characters and one of the most unique magical systems ever.

📖 **Jamie Thomas – Asperfell**

(UPROAR BOOKS)

An enjoyable story that combines high fantasy with paranormal/gothic elements and a little romance.

☐ **The Mandalorian –**

Created by Jon Favreau

I kept seeing images of “Baby Yoda” and not being interested, but then when I finally watched the show, it was fantastic. Really recaptures the feel of the original trilogy.

☐ **The Expanse –**

Created by Daniel Abraham, Mark Fergus, Ty Franck

Truly impressive and riveting sci-fi space series. So many great characters and unpredictable storylines.

☐ **Lovecraft Country (2020) –**

Directed by Misha Green

An electrifying, emotional series with a strong cast. The first episode had me on the edge of my seat.

☐ **The Dragon Prince – Created by Aaron Ehasz and Justin Richmond**

Kids’ fantasy adventure series with awesome animation and great storytelling. The cutest baby dragon ever.

☐ **Diablero – Created by Pablo Tébar and José Manuel Cravioto**

A fun, irreverent Mexican series about a priest who falls in with demon hunters to save the daughter he didn’t know he had.

🎧 **Sound of Metal (2020) – Directed by Darius Marder**

The intense story of a musician & recovered addict who loses his hearing while on tour. Excellent performance by Riz Ahmed.

🎬 **Born In Flames (1983) –**

Directed by Lizzie Borden

A clever, documentary-style film about a feminist uprising in an alternative U.S., dealing with issues of race, gender, social class and more.

🎬 **The Blackcoat’s Daughter**

(2015) – Directed by

Oz Perkins

Chilling, unpredictable horror film about demonic possession at a Catholic school closed for the winter holiday.

🎬 **Turn It Around: The Story of**

East Bay Punk (2017) –

Directed by Corbett Redford

An enjoyable documentary with stories from a lot of good bands and those involved in the 924 Gilman Street collective.

ELEANORE STUDER

Artist, photographer,
writer and indie publisher
(@afterword.books)

📖 **Melissa Broder – Milk Fed**

(SCRIBNER)

Whether you know of Broder from her @sosadtoday Twitter feed (or the accompanying book of essays), her earlier poetry work, or her first novel, *THE PISCES*, she is still on a roll. Her latest examines the fraught tension between desire and hunger, the battle for control over attraction and food, and examines a lot of fascinating questions, all triggered by an initial meeting at a frozen yogurt shop: how can a dysfunctional family relationship lead to searching for mothering elsewhere? What role does faith play in the life of a lapsed Jewish girl attempting to find purpose and direction in life? How much does desire inform love? A sumptuous mix of erotica and disordered eating confessional, lovingly and achingly realized.

📖 **Jenny Hval –**

Girls Against God (VERSO)

If you’re fortunate enough to be familiar with Hval’s avant-garde art-pop discography, or have caught one of her live performances, you’re bound to enjoy her novels as well. Her debut,

PARADISE ROT (2018) introduced an otherworldly, nearly tangible, almost oozing writing quality, and her latest delves into the concepts of female anger and witchery, the history and influence of death metal, the constraints of societal oppression in Norway, and the near-impossible concept of realizing an ever-evolving artistic vision in the physical world. Some truly experimental horror work is seeping out of her wonderfully unique mind.

📖 **Chelsea G. Summers –**

A Certain Hunger

(UNNAMED PRESS)

There’s something in the air recently when it comes to women, food, and desire as subjects, and that’s very much up my alley, so I’m rolling around in it and having a great time. This debut is a striking one, diving into the life of a food critic who develops relationships with various men throughout her life, enjoys them, then deliberately kills and eats them. Probably goes without saying that any fans of the material in Harris’s *HANNIBAL* universe, you’re likely going to find the approach of describing enjoying both food and murder in the same luxurious language style, but the psychology of the protagonist is quite fascinating as well; something any crime fiction fan (particularly those who enjoy the flawed, violent women thriving in the Gillian Flynn model) can enjoy.

📖 **Ryan Gattis –**

The System

(MCD)

No one writes Los Angeles crime fiction like Gattis. He’s perfected a distinct style — covering the events of a period of time through the eyes of several characters, on all sides of the law, each from their own perspective, flowing easily with no need for overlapping narratives; his magnificent debut *ALL INVOLVED* covered a single night of the LA King riots with no character perspective appearing twice, an incredible feat — and continues to utilize it here to ever impressive heights. His latest covers the events of an arrest, a cover-up, and a trial from the perspectives of, once again (no pun intended) all involved, from the victims to perpetrators, parole officers to prisoners, lawyers to judges, and everyone in between. What transpires is a searingly thorough and unflinchingly honest examination of what the business of law enforcement truly entails, down to every life it touches with every crime it covers. Tremendously clear-eyed, effortlessly street wise, thoroughly eye-opening, deeply LA.

📖 **David Cohen –**

I’m Gonna Say It Now: The Writings of Phil Ochs

(BACKBEAT BOOKS)

My most listened artist of the extremely politically fraught year of 2020 was Phil Ochs, a long-gone singer and activist who far too few music fans still seem to be aware of. This collection, long in the works by surviving members of his family, is well worth the extended wait, and probably couldn’t have arrived in a more appropriate moment. This collects as many of Ochs’s surviving written works as possible, going as far back as his contributions to high school and college papers, and shows the vast breadth of his works and interests, from the film reviews of an avid movie lover, to the aching poetry of a troubled mind. His satirical protest songs have long been his most popular, and this collection showcases just how early in life his sharp wit and talent for satire began, throws in some beautiful archival photographs and painstakingly organized samples of his handwritten and typed songs, and much more. If you’re a fan, it’s a must.

📖 **Grady Hendrix –**

The Southern Book Club’s Guide to Slaying Vampires

(QUIRK BOOKS)

My absolute favorite contemporary horror writer is Grady Hendrix, and not a single novel of his has failed to deliver the goods (and his nonfiction history of the pulp and horror mass market novels of the ’80s and ’90s, *PAPERBACKS FROM HELL* is excellent, too). This one uses the horror lens and the specter of a vampire wreaking havoc on a community of women (and, yes, their book club) to examine the gaslighting of women by the society they exist in, even by husbands and family, and racism and classicism in the American south. It’s gripping and more than appropriately creepy, and frankly, if you’re a character who survives one of Hendrix’s novels, you’ve probably earned it. Can’t wait for his latest as well, due out later this year (*THE FINAL GIRL SUPPORT GROUP*, due out in July 2021).

Hum – Inlet

(EARTH ANALOG)

Find it in: ROCK

To put it mildly, when Hum surprise released their first album in 22 years last year, I lost my shit. The only thing better than the initial shock and excitement was the first listen, and realizing they had delivered something excellent. Despite only previously releasing four studio albums, they were one of the most influential alt-rock bands of the ’90s, and their latest did not disap-



point. They still sound like the future, and I won't be surprised if we end up hearing more than a few bands attempting to duplicate this sound in the coming years, just as with their earlier semi-underground classics. I desperately hope they'll be able to tour this, once touring finally comes back — I was only lucky enough to catch them once, back in 2016 out in Pomona — but until that day, I'll be keeping this one on heavy rotation, because it's both familiar and new, and just fantastic. The best sonic surprise of 2020.

Deftones – Ohms (REPRISE)

Find it in: ROCK

Perfect synchrony that we'd get amazing new albums from both Hum and the Deftones in the same year, as the latter would not exist without the former (and Hum's most recent concert was in fact at Dia de los Deftones down in San Diego in late 2019). There is not a bad album in the Deftones discography, but their latest — their first return to collaboration with producer Terry Date in 17 years — swings for the fences and does not miss. Another engrossing wall of alt-rock/metal hybrid sound to immerse yourself in and return to often that will not get stale, and immediately one of the best of their releases. Another future tour wish list entry for me, as well. Make it so, rock gods.

Fiona Apple – Fetch the Bolt Cutters (EPIC)

Find it in: ROCK

This one, I'm sure, is going to appear on more than one list, as it should. A new release from Fiona Apple was not something I expected to be enjoying last year, but it arrived as just the right moment. Apple was one of my earliest exposures to raw, uncompromising, unfiltered female anger in music, and one of the most important to me personally. Her latest album is as personal as ever, as incisive as you would hope, as soni-

cally adventurous as you might dream, and more. It's clearly a deeply cathartic expression for her as an artist, and she has rarely sounded more sure of herself and her voice. The images her lyrics paint alongside her multiple experiments with soundscapes, largely created inside her own home, are both a perfect answer to a moment finding millions around the world trapped in isolation from public life, as well as the building blocks for a solid classic for years to come.

Angela Munoz – Introspection

(LINEAR LABS)

Find it in:

If you follow the work of multi-faceted producer Adrian Younge, and particularly if you've caught any of his shows in the past few years, you probably remember Angela Muñoz, whose voice holds a depth of tone and quality of vibrato Adele frankly wishes she could match, packed into a petite 18-year-old. Even wilder, the first time I recall being blown away by her voice, she was only 16. Since then, under the watchful tutelage of Younge and his label's impressive slate of talent, she has unfolded like a butterfly into a phenomenal young artist with freshly gained confidence in her voice, lyrics, and musicianship. Her debut album features a lush and resplendent tapestry of R&B sound, appropriately released during the summer months, as it's the kind of record you want to queue up in the car and drive around with the windows down and no particular destination in mind. If she's capable of this level of artistry and skill before she even enters her 20s, I can only imagine what she'll be laying on us next.

Adrian Younge – The American Negro

(LINEAR LABS)

Find it in:

If you couldn't already tell, Younge is my favorite producer working today. He can score films and TV shows, from *BLACK DYNAMITE* to Marvel's *LUKE CAGE*, put together untouchable rap concept albums with Ghostface Killah, reinvigorate The Delfonics, launch a jazz duo with A Tribe Called Quest member Ali Shaheed Muhammad that's putting out the best sounding contemporary jazz next to Robert Glasper, and much more. If his name is on it — and that includes his finely curated Highland Park record shop The Artform Studio — I'm going to want to hear it, and he hasn't let me down yet. His latest is clearly his most personal project to date. Paired with the release of his podcast "Invisible Blackness" and a short film *T.A.N.*, it's definitely a work that is going to confront

listeners in uncomfortable but necessary places. I'm just hoping enough people out there choose to actively listen, because there are questions posed here, like half of a spoken word call-and-response, that must be sat with and considered and answered to the best of our ability. Add to that the staples we've come to expect from a Younge production — gloriously deep bass lines, flourishing string arrangements and orchestrations, harmonious vocals — and you end up with a challenging and considered artist's statement, channeling Scott-Heron and Gaye, on the deepest root issue of this country. As he opens with here, "The musician is the document [...] and the music is the message." Younge has always had plenty to say, and his newest work demands for that message to be heard.

Phil Ochs – The Best of the Rest

(LIBERATION HALL)

Find it in: FOLK

I returned to no other artist as often as I did to the work of Phil Ochs, dead now for 45 years, as no one else's work felt as prescient to me as his, the still under-loved protest folk singer of the '60s and '70s. If I really want to make a stranger mad, I'll tell them I think he was better than Dylan (and not just to be provocative; I genuinely do). He died young (and would've turned 80 last year), and I've often wondered, never more frequently than in the last handful of years, what he might have had to say, and sing, about where we find ourselves as a country. However, he was more than merely a protest singer, and the newly released demos and and previously unreleased live recordings found here help illustrate the underappreciated breadth of his talents, both as a poetic lyricist and as a live performer. Hearing any new (to us) takes on his lovely, expressive voice and his thoughtful compositions is a wonderful and timely treat for the ears. By those who know him, he is greatly missed; if you don't know him yet, get on that.

Peter Gabriel – Plays Live/Live in Athens/Secret World Live/Growing Up Live (REALWORLD)

Find it in: ROCK

I'm a bit biased here, as Gabriel is my favorite living musician, but the half-speed remasters he's been releasing in recent years have been worth (politely) yelling about. Spanning the years of 1983 to 2003, this quintet is not to be missed, whether you're a fan like me, or just a listener who enjoys some of the best sounding vinyl productions of recent years by one of the greatest live performers out there. Of particular interest here is the release on LP of *Live*

in Athens and *Growing Up Live*, both of which have never been available outside of the DVD/blu-ray releases of those concerts. The packaging for the records themselves is a treat as well, featuring stunning tour photography in the liners and inserts, and as always coming from Real World Studios, fantastic sonic quality. For a fellow fan, I'd call them new essentials.

Jim Williams – Possessor (Soundtrack) (LAKESHORE)

Find it in: SOUNDTRACKS

One of my favorite films of 2020 is greatly complemented by one of its standout scores. Williams's work on Brandon Cronenberg's body horror triumph features the best eerie mood-setting, atmospheric score with the just right touches of haunting, discordant, sudden kicks I've heard since Mica Levi's work for *UNDER THE SKIN*. If you're someone who enjoys a great film score as much as I do, and you're in the mood to get weird and like it, throw this one on and let it wash over you.

Seatbelts – Cowboy Bebop [OST] (MILAN)

Find it in: SOUNDTRACKS

The legendary soundtrack to the anime that even people who don't like anime love, one of the greatest jazz soundtracks of all time, finally came to vinyl. And what more is there to really say than that? Yoko Kanno, the phenomenally gifted and uniquely varied composer who's worked on a scale covering stunning orchestral scores and jumping bebop such as this, and her Seatbelts band speak for themselves. "Tank!" is certainly one of the most attention grabbing and catchiest opening theme songs to any show, but the series was packed with all manner of fantastic music, both uptempo and melancholic. If you know, you know.

Possessor (2020) –

Directed by Brandon Cronenberg

Visceral and absorbing, deeply ambitious. Borrows heavily from the themes among his father's work, while also expanding on them in its own ways; where David's work tends to focus on the remodeling or perverting the physical body, Brandon's concern here is with the separation from it, and the perversion of the mind. And this one has a lot on its mind: dissociation, dysmorphia, the shell of the body, the concept of whether there can ever be one true identity — the routine and performance of identity (what is the self?), female rage, the true physical effort

and the impressive, gory mess of the culmination of all that rage in murder. Featuring practical effects-based hallucinogenic sequences as its protagonist's consciousness begins to unravel and remold that put *MANDY* to shame, and featuring a far superior use of the fantastic Andrea Riseborough. Watch it uncut.

■ **Crash (1996) – Directed by David Cronenberg**

Not a new film, but at long last, a glorious glut of overdue and highly anticipated blu-ray releases of one of Cronenberg's very best, and one of his strongest literary adaptations. After so many years of one measly DVD, suddenly we're spoiled for choice, and each release is fantastic, featuring a stunning new 4K transfer supervised by the director, and packed with extras, so take your pick: Criterion release #1059 for the US, or — if you're one of our region-free player owning regulars — Arrow's glorious collector's edition 4K package featuring a booklet and poster, or even the exotic German 4K release from Turbine. Cronenberg's icy and erotic dissection of sex, death, and cars has never looked or sounded better.

■ **Portrait of a Lady on Fire (2019) [Criterion] – Directed by Céline Sciamma**

A near-immediate and much-deserved entry into the Criterion collection for this breath-taking, intimate, appropriately painterly study of women, sisterhood, love, desire, loss, observation, and art, and their various and shared expressions. Until this can hopefully be shown on the big screen here in the US again, this gorgeous release will tide us over fine at home.

■ **Come and See (1985) [Criterion]– Directed by Elem Klimov**

One of the last films I caught in theaters pre-pandemic, infamously considered perhaps the only true “anti-war” film, in that it offers no catharsis, and attempts no guise of patriotism or heroism, only depicts some survival, but mostly horrific death. Based closely on fact, showcasing a lone Soviet boy soldier's perspective on Nazi occupation and slaughter, it will, as the friend who introduced me to it last year described it, absolutely ruin your night when you watch it, but remains utterly necessary as a viewing experience. Beautifully restored in 2K for Criterion. Even if you might only be able to watch it once, it's still worth having.

■ **Bill and Ted Face the Music (2020) – Directed by Dean Parisot**

This project was coasting on so much built-up nostalgia, and released during a time where so many were seeking relief and escapism, it really didn't have to be this good to satisfy most. And yet, it rocks, dudes! Took a pretty hefty plot problem — just how do you compose the song that saves the universe? what happens if the years pass and you can't do it? — coupled with a lot of audience pressure, and miraculously manages to deliver something fun, sweet, funny, and genuinely of the same mold that argues the best advice remains: be excellent to each other.

■ **Collateral (2004) – Directed by Michael Mann**

Why isn't Michael Mann just allowed to make whatever he wants, with whatever budget he wants? I have no idea, but he should be. At least for now, there's a gorgeous new 4K release of one of his unmatched LA crime masterpieces available to revel in. Los Angeles never looks better than when Mann is behind the lens, and this features both the breaking out of Jamie Foxx as a star, and one of Tom Cruise's best and most surprising performances.

GEORGE

■ **Wings Of Desire (1987) – Directed by Wim Wenders**

If I had to name one film as “my favorite film”, it would be *Wings of Desire*. Wim Wenders' beautiful monochrome film about existence.

Daniel, played by Bruno Ganz in a career defining role, is an angel who lives in a world of observation within an invisible limited existence that an eternal life provides and has a desire to experience more. Daniel's desire for the everyday and no longer be an observer and who decides to finally engage with the mortal world is at the center of the film.

Wings Of Desire is an appreciation of the beauty behind the good, the bad, and the ugly of everyday life. It reminds us to live our lives and take pleasure in the everyday and if our lives aren't dramatic or epic or even world changing, that's okay. The film is a celebration of the everyday and the joys of simply being.

I hope that after watching this film it leaves you feeling the same way I do whenever I watch *Wings of Desire*. The feeling at being at ease with simply being... alive, here, now.

■ **Jimmy Carter:**

Rock & Roll President (2020) – Directed by Mary Wharton

Carter's connection to the artists who've shaped American culture has often gone unsung until now. This intriguing CNN documentary tells the untold story of Jimmy Carter's deep musical knowledge of country, gospel, rock, classical et cetera, and the friendships he created with artists such as Bob Dylan, Willie Nelson and the Allman Brothers, Johnny Cash among others. Carter's genuine love and appreciation for those artists made him stand out to the artists who he admired. From early in his life music has shaped the man who would become our 39th president. This documentary chronicles his rise from governor of Georgia to the oval office, to winning the Nobel Peace prize, and all the musicians who helped, inspired and shaped his humanistic principles. It features interviews with Bob Dylan, Willie Nelson, Gregg Allman and others.

Stereo Total – Oh Ah!

(STEREO TOTAL)

Find it in: ROCK

A month into my job here at Amoeba I discovered Stereo Total's *Oh Ah!* It was on the in store playlist one evening and immediately fell in love with the album. The duo fronted by Françoise Cactus and Brezel Göring possess an endless supply of minimalist studio creativity that complements their direct but infectious style of their melodies. The album is a fun eclectic mixture of surf rock, Bossa nova, and shangri-la all sung in French, German, and English. Their single “Dactylo Rock” and the beautiful '60s pop inspired “Morose” deserve a listen to. My personal favorite is the Weimar cabaret inspired track “Johnny.”

Oh Ah! stands up on its own among all of their albums, and is enjoyable even for someone like myself who unfortunately will never see Stereo Total perform. On February 17, 2021, Françoise Cactus, singer, multi-instrumentalist and one-half of Stereo Total lost her battle with cancer.

Also check out their most recent and sadly Stereo Total's last release *Ah! Quel Cinéma!*

Khruangbin – Mordechai

(DEAD OCEANS)

Find it in: ROCK

The only thing retaining my sanity from the nightmarish and vile year that was 2020 was the music of Khruangbin. Since my discovery of their music one rainy day inside a Mexico City cafe, I have been obsessed with their style of music. Their latest *Mordechai* finds the band at their most grounded and energetic. *Mordechai* has more vocals than their previous records with all three band members providing their voice to the music suggesting a new interest in song craft. Like their previous records they blend a beautiful arrangement of different genres from around the world. Take the single “Pelota,” which pays homage to a genre of music from Latin America. The beautiful bittersweet “So We Don't Forget.” But my favorite from the entire album is the disco like “Time (You and I)” that can make you start dancing and grooving along with its mellow up beat tempo.

Belly – Star (4AD)

Find it in: ROCK

It was supposed to be The Breeders follow up to their debut *Pod*. Tanya Donnelly had already demos of songs ready to record while her brief stint with the band. But somewhere down the road she decided to go and form a band of her own, Belly. With *Star*, Donnelly was able to go places where she couldn't with her long career with Throwing Muses. The record was a more angelic version of the Breeders and a sugar crafted REM. The album consists of pop hooks and folk-rock, while rooted in dream pop melodies. Like Kurt Cobain Donnelly shared a desire to mix pop and punk. The album went Gold in the states and was nominated for a number of Grammys. Perhaps a forgotten and significant contribution to female alternative rock of the '90s. Belly's *Star* still shines bright all these years later.

CAROL

X – Alphabetland

(FAT POSSUM)

Find it in: ROCK

Lucinda Williams – Good Souls Better Angels

(HIGHWAY 20 RECORDS)

Find it in: ROCK

**Thee Windom Earles –
Mai Tai Pink Eye** (EARLES WORLD)
Find it in: ROCK

**Garbage –
No Gods No Masters**
(INFECTIOUS MUSIC)
Find it in: ROCK

**Marianne Faithfull –
She Walks In Beauty** (BMG)
Find it in: ROCK

**Billy Gibbons –
Hardware**
(CONCORD RECORDS)
Find it in: ROCK

**The Mumps –
Rock & Roll This, Rock & Roll
That: Best Case Scenario,
You've Got Mump**
(OMNIVORE)
Find it in: ROCK

**Black Pumas –
Black Pumas
[Deluxe Edition]**
(ATO RECORDS)
Find it in: SOUL

**Lucinda Williams –
Runnin' Down a Dream:
A Tribute to Tom Petty**
(HIGHWAY 20 RECORDS)
Find it in: ROCK

AC/DC – Power Up
(COLUMBIA)
Find it in: ROCK

**Hanni El Khatib –
Flight**
(INNOVATIVE LEISURE)
Find it in: ROCK

**Nick Waterhouse –
Promenade Blue**
(INNOVATIVE LEISURE)
Find it in: SOUL

Alan Vega - Mutator
(SACRED BONES)
Find it in: ROCK

**Tom Petty –
Finding Wildflowers
[Alternate Versions]**
(WARNER BROS)
Find it in: ROCK

KAREN

*So much good stuff came out of
this god-forsaken year!
A testament to the power of music
for healing and processing.
Amazing collaborations and
genre-breaking creations.*

**Black Pumas – Black Pumas
[Deluxe Edition]**
(ATO RECORDS)
Find it in: SOUL
psychedelic R&B? You know it.

**Valerie June –
The Moon And Stars:
Prescriptions For Dreamers**
(FANTASY)
Find it in: FOLK
her twangy broken-glass voice is other-worldly.

**Chet Faker –
Hotel Surrender** (BMG AUSTRALIA)
serene and languid but don't be fooled—
he packs a punch

Marcus King – El Dorado
(FANTASY)
Dan Auerbach produced this gem. gritty, bluesy,
country, and so much more.

**serpentwithfeet –
DEACON** (SECRETLY CANDADIAN)
Find it in: ELECTRONICA
weird and ambient and dark and textured.

**The Bamboos
(with Durand Jones) –
Hard Up**
(BMG)
Find it in: SOUL
raw funk with a swampy bass beat.

Dry Cleaning – New Long Leg
(4AD)
Find it in: ROCK
deliciously nasty post-punk for a new generation

Mdou Mctar – Afrique Victime
(MATADOR)
Find it in: WORLD
Nigerian guitarist who brings psychedelic
Saharan Rock to his moody echoing sounds.
transfixing.

Arooj Aftab – Vulture Prince
(NEW AMSTERDAM)
Find it in: CLASSICAL
Sufi poetry mixed with indie Rock sprinkled
with some Bollywood flavor..

**Devon Gilfillian –
What's Going On**
(CAPITOL)
FIND IT IN: SOUL
rich soulful vocals

**Genesis Owusu –
Smiling with No Teeth**
(OURNESS)
Find it in: HIP HOP
laid-back funky groove with a hip-hop beat

**The Weather Station –
Ignorance** (FAT POSSUM)
Find it in: ROCK
Canadian folkie with a jazzy flair.

**Silk Sonic –
An Evening with Silk Sonic**
(AFTERMATH-ATLANTIC)
Find it in: R&B
Bruno Mars and anderson.paak.

Wavves – Hideaway
(FAT POSSUM)
Find it in: ROCK
surfy, indie, lo-fi fun!

**Lous and the Yakuza –
Gore**
(COLUMBIA)
Find it in: HIP HOP
elegant hypnotic and soulful

**Lana Del Rey –
Chemtrails Over the
Country Club**
(POLYDOR)
Find it in: POP VOCAL
Classic Lana: sleepy sultry and addictive

**Sunny War –
Simple Syrup**
(ORG MUSIC)
Find it in: ROCK
“Folk-punk” with acoustic guitar

**Nick Waterhouse –
Promenade Blue**
(INNOVATIVE LEISURE)
Find it in: SOUL

**Aaron Frazer –
Introducing...** (DEAD OCEANS)
Find it in: ROCK
Another member of the Durand Jones crew.
retro-soul falsetto

Fleet Foxes – Shore (ANTI-)
Find it in: ROCK

Perfume Genius – Learning
(MATADOR)
Find it in: ROCK

Juliana Hatfield – Blood
(AMERICAN LAUNDROMAT)
Find it in: ROCK

St. Vincent – Daddy's Home
(LOMA VISTA)
Find it in: ROCK

Julien Baker – Little Oblivions
(MATADOR)
Find it in: ROCK

Dodie – Build A Problem (SME)
Find it in: ROCK

Indigo Sparke – Echo
(SACRED BONES)
Find it in: FOLK

**Shungudzo – I'm Not a Mother,
But I Have Children**
(INDEPENDENT)
Find it in: ROCK

ZACHARY BOUVION

Hulder – *Godslastering: Hymns of A Forlorn Peasantry*

(IRON BONEHEAD)

After a string of demo/rehearsal cassettes and limited vinyl singles (many collected on 2019's *De Oproeping Van Middelleeuwse Duisternis*), this Belgian transplant to the PNW has finally struck out with a true full-length debut. *Godslastering* is a mix of crushing Black Metal with riffy old-school touches, artfully incorporated synth work, and some intriguingly pastoral acoustic passages. Truly one of the most talented female creators in BM, Hulder is a skilled instrumentalist with a uniquely grim vocal style. Aggressive and powerful while being recorded far more cleanly than most of the modern wave of Raw USBM.

Aghast – *Hexerei Im Zwielicht Der Finsternis*

(ETERNAL PRIDE / INFINITE FOG)

Russian label Infinite Fog brings us this multi-format reissue of a long out-of-print Cold Meat Industry classic from 1995. Aghast were a Norwegian dark ambient duo with a haunted graveyard aesthetic. Their lone recorded legacy features disembodied vocal drift, synthesized string sounds, and some ritual-inspired percussion that capture an overall vibe of an overheard witches' sabbat.

Controlled Death – *Black Lucifer Rising*

The debut vinyl offering from rising Deathbed Tapes label is a pressing of Maso Yamazaki's (Masonna) third release under his Controlled Death moniker. Crushing industrial electronics emanating from a morbid darkness. So proud of this label's continued growth into one of the newest cornerstones of Post-Industrial/Noise culture.

Wallachian Cobwebs – *Hearken to The Moon Whisper*

(NAMAZU PRODUCTIONS)

Massively cinematic vampiric Dungeon Synth project first released on cassette, now appearing as an incredibly scarce vinyl reissue by Dutch Label, Namazu (each of the 100 copies inscribed with the owner's initials). Could easily serve as the score to a forgotten '70s Gothic Horror film. As much indebted to Popol Vuh's *Nose-fratu* (1978) score as Mortsii's "Dark Dungeon"

work, *Hearken to the Moon* is replete with eerie samples, chiming belltowers, howling winds and ethereal choral tones.

Kimihide Kusafuka (K2) –

Demise Symphonika (TRIBE TAPES)

Desperately limited cassette reissue of an early project from Kimihide Kusafuka, better known as harsh noise icon, K2. Demise Symphonika was recorded in 1983 and is far more atmospheric than his later noise works. Heavily death-obsessed, this recording is 40+ minutes of post-mortem dirge that would feel at home amidst the Italian death industrial works of Atrax Morgue and Maurizio Bianchi or possibly even Human League's "Dignity of Labour" EP. I'm especially fond of Side 2, which pushes through a movement of distortion before building to a crescendo of swirling organ. A massive surprise release – one of my year's grandest audio highlights.

Entrancement –

Morbid Reverie: Demo I & II

(GOATOWAREX)

LP collection of 2 demo cassettes from this project affiliated with the Perverse Homage label and circle of artists. The highly limited and impeccably packaged releases from Beijing's Goatowarex imprint have become some of the most sought-after documents of worldwide blackened sound over the past year – starting off at an already steep price point (import tariffs?) and skyrocketing into the secondary market. Which is a real shame because of the overall quality of so many of the records. Entrancement's demos present as a lower fidelity glimpse of associated project Orgy of Carrion. Keyboard imbedded riffs, rolling drum sounds (programmed?) and rasping vocals, anchored by plaintive piano interludes that escape all the stylistic pitfalls of Dungeon Synth.

Forest Temple / *Shadow Dungeon – Barbaric Visions Upon the Flesh of Time*

(GOATOWAREX / OUT OF SEASON)

Simultaneously released on cassette by pillar of the Dungeon Synth community, New England's Out of Season, and on vinyl by aforementioned Goatowarex. *Barbaric Visions* is an epic (in every sense) split release between Forest Temple, the synth project of Australia's Lepidus Plague (Kommodus) and Shadow Dungeon (hailing from Bosnia & Herzegovina). Shadow Dungeon's elegiac long-form track pairs greatly with Forest Temple's more curious and sub-bass heavy contributions. Never really been a fan of the 8-bit influenced wing of the DS scene (or

video games in general), but Forest Temple's tracks somehow evoke vintage side-scroll adventure to me. It was well worth the struggle to track down the dazzling vinyl release.

RJF – *Greater Success*

In Apprehension & Convictions (HARBINGER SOUND)

RJF (aka Kommando RJF) is an early 80's project featuring artists that would go on to create some of Sweden's darkest power electronics institutions; namely Alfarmania, Treriksröset, and the Segerhuva label. RJF move from harsher distorted tones to more rhythmic Cabaret Voltaire-styled synth-pop moves, while still possessing a disjointed atonal edge. Seeming to me far more confounding than what was going in the rest of Europe's minimal synth / proto-Industrial scenes, The Cabs and TG are clear touchstones, while the LP art's ghastly imagery goes far beyond these contemporaries' macabre streaks. Harbinger Sound (UK) has brought out another great archival excavation from the 1980's nascent Power Electronics movement to go alongside their Ramlah, and Broken Flag reissues (they also did some killer LA Free Music Society stuff).

Orphx – *Fragmentation [Expanded]*

(HOSPITAL PRODUCTIONS)

Lavish 4LP embellishment on Orphx's 1996 album, enhanced with bonus material from contemporary cassette releases (including the split with En Nihil), and live performances. Highly textured electronic ambiance and rhythmic noise sounds with some bracing Industrial junk percussion. Orphx have been a massively influential project throughout several scenes and eras; breaking boundaries for Decades.

Arckanum – *Fran Marder*

(ESSENTIAL PURIFICATION)

Austrian label Essential Purification made it possible for me to finally own a vinyl copy of Arckanum's 1995 classic. This 2020 press is a really clean-sounding reissue with a foil-stamped updating of the original cover and accompanying art/lyric booklet. Arckanum's Hardcore-indebted drum style, nature sound interludes and anthemic riffing still sound totally fresh and stand out from the rest of their Scandinavian Black Metal peers. Of course, I am drawn to the esoteric Pagan traditions and this album's tracks with gloomy synth work and witchy female vocals, but I still think the more Industrial/Noise-leaning Antikosmos is my personal pinnacle of Arckanum's catalog.

Wampyric Rites / Funeral Fullmoon – *Spectral Shadows of The Forgotten Castle*

(INFERNA PROFUNDUS)

Tons of great splits coming out lately. Lithuanian label Inferna Profundus pairs these two ghoulish South American entities hailing from the almost comically monikered, Pure Raw Underground Black Metal Plague Circle. Wampyric Rites have been emitting a ton of great super raw demos with atmospheric touches that have old-school Black Metal pacing and aesthetic, but still but fit right in with the current wave of International upstarts. Funeral Fullmoon are newer to me, and veer from blazingly fast up-tempo stuff, to one of the most ominous and orthodox takes on Old School Dungeon Synth I've heard in a while. Wish I could afford to check out more of the amazing new acts this label is putting to vinyl, alongside releases from towering institutions like Graveland, Abruptum and Armagedda.

*any number of releases

(JEMS LABEL)

Getting to know the force behind JEMS label has been another massive highlight of music in 2020 for me. A wildly ambitious and prolific label with diverse roster of sounds, JEMS first came to my attention for pressing a super limited lathe-cut 12" from Hulder (followed shortly thereafter by another!). Throughout 2020 they have continuously pumped out high-quality/small run releases from *Witches Moon* (wildly idiosyncratic Black Metal), *Balög Mörund* (one of my new favorite mercurial blackened DS projects), *Messiah in the Abyss* (Argentine melodic BM), *The Oracle* (a cassette release of Minimalist Drone majesty), and possibly their flagship act, *vide* (oppressive swamp gothic BM), on top of so many others. They have a massive stack of hot titles on deck for 2021 with bands originating from India to Indonesia, and some huge vinyl releases from much sought-after artists *Ieschure*, *Wampyric Rites*, *Old Nick* and *Saidan*. I hope I can keep up. JEMS won 2020.

Tips

WATCH: *Castle of Creeping Flesh* (Severin Films blu-ray)

LISTEN: *Noisextra Podcast* (always!)

READ: There is a *Graveyard That Dwells in Man*. The second compendium of arcane and archaic supernatural tales of bygone epochs – curated by *Current 93's David Tibet*.

As always this list is dedicated to beloved wife, Kerryanne and in memory of precious bulldog daughter, Penelope (2010-2020)



THE AMOEBBA COLLECTION CHECKLIST

Use this checklist of essential records to build your collection... but, of course, leave room for new "must haves" as it continues to grow!

Our criteria: \$50 bucks or under, nothing too rare or out of print, no greatest hits records and mostly studio albums.

How many do you have? What are you missing?

- AC/DC**
 Highway to Hell (1979)
- ADOLESCENTS**
 Adolescents (1981)
- THE ALLMAN BROTHERS BAND**
 At Fillmore East (1971)
- ANIMAL COLLECTIVE**
 Merriweather Post Pavilion (2009)
- APHEX TWIN**
 Selected Ambient Works 85-92 (1992)
- ARCADE FIRE**
 Funeral (2004)
- THE B-52'S**
 The B-52's (1979)
 Wild Planet (1980)
- ANGELO BADALAMENTI**
 Twin Peaks [OST] (1990)
- ERYKAH BADU**
 Baduizm (1997)
- THE BAND**
 The Band (1969)
 Music From Big Pink (1968)
- BAUHAUS**
 In The Flat Field (1980)
- THE BEACH BOYS**
 Pet Sounds (1966)
 The Smile Sessions (2011)
- BEACH HOUSE**
 Teen Dream (2010)
- BEASTIE BOYS**
 Licensed to Ill (1986)
 Paul's Boutique (1989)
- THE BEATLES**
 Abbey Road (1969)
 Let It Be (1970)
 Revolver (1966)
 Rubber Soul (1965)
 Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band (1967)
 The White Album (1968)
- BELLE & SEBASTIAN**
 If You're Feeling Sinister (1996)
- CHUCK BERRY**
 The Great Twenty-Eight (1982)
- BIG STAR**
 #1 Record (1972)
 Radio City (1974)
 Third/Sister Lovers (1978)
- BJORK**
 Homogenic (1997)
 Post (1995)
- BLACK FLAG**
 Damaged (1981)
- BLACK STAR**
 Mos Def & Talib Kweli Are Black Star (1998)
- BLACK SABBATH**
 Black Sabbath (1970)
 Paranoid (1970)
- MARY J. BLIGE**
 What's the 411? (1992)

- BLONDIE**
 Parallel Lines (1978)
- BLUR**
 Parklife (1994)
- BOARDS OF CANADA**
 Music Has the Right to Children (1998)
- BON IVER**
 For Emma, Forever Ago (2007)
- DAVID BOWIE**
 Hunky Dory (1971)
 The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars (1972)
- THE BREEDERS**
 Last Splash (1993)
- JAMES BROWN**
 Live at the Apollo (1963)
- THE DAVE BRUBECK QUARTET**
 Time Out (1959)
- JEFF BUCKLEY**
 Grace (1994)
- BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB**
 Buena Vista Social Club (1997)
- KATE BUSH**
 Hounds of Love (1985)
- THE BYRDS**
 Mr. Tambourine Man (1965)
 Sweetheart of the Rodeo (1968)
- CAN**
 Ege Bamyasi (1972)
 Tago Mago (1971)
- THE CARPENTERS**
 Close to You (1970)
- THE CARS**
 The Cars (1978)
- JOHNNY CASH**
 At Folsom Prison (1968)
- CAPTAIN BEEFHEART**
 Trout Mask Replica (1969)
- NICK CAVE & THE BAD SEEDS**
 Let Love In (1994)
- THE CHAMELEONS**
 Script Of The Bridge (1983)
- RAY CHARLES**
 The Genius of Ray Charles (1959)
 Modern Sounds in Country and Western Music (1962)
- CHRISTIAN DEATH**
 Only Theatre Of Pain (1982)
- CIGARETTES AFTER SEX**
 Cigarettes After Sex (2017)
- THE CLASH**
 The Clash (1977)
 London Calling (1979)
- COCTEAU TWINS**
 Head Over Heels (1983)
 Heaven or Las Vegas (1990)
- LEONARD COHEN**
 Songs of Leonard Cohen (1967)
- ORNETTE COLEMAN**
 The Shape of Jazz to Come (1959)
- JOHN COLTRANE**
 A Love Supreme (1965)
- ELVIS COSTELLO**
 My Aim Is True (1977)
 This Year's Model (1978)
- CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL**
 Green River (1969)
- THE CURE**
 Disintegration (1989)
- D'ANGELO**
 Brown Sugar (1995)
 Voodoo (2000)
- DAFT PUNK**
 Discovery (2001)
- MILES DAVIS**
 Kind of Blue (1959)
 Bitches Brew (1970)
- DEAD CAN DANCE**
 Within The Realm Of A Dying Sun (1987)
- DE LA SOUL**
 3 Feet High and Rising (1989)
- DEERHUNTER**
 Microcastle (2008)
- MAC DEMARCO**
 Salad Days (2014)
- DEPECHE MODE**
 Violator (1990)
- DJ SHADOW**
 Endtroducing.... (1996)

FROM THE AMOEBLOG

- THE DOORS**
 - The Doors* (1967)
- DR. DRE**
 - The Chronic* (1992)
- NICK DRAKE**
 - Five Leaves Left* (1969)
 - Pink Moon* (1972)
- DURAN DURAN**
 - RIO* (1982)
- BOB DYLAN**
 - The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* (1963)
 - The Times They Are A-Changin'* (1964)
 - Bringing it All Back Home* (1965)
 - Highway 61 Revisited* (1965)
 - Blonde on Blonde* (1966)
 - Blood on the Tracks* (1975)
- THE EAGLES**
 - Hotel California* (1976)
- BRIAN ENO**
 - Here Come the Warm Jets* (1974)
 - Another Green World* (1975)
- THE FALL**
 - This Nation's Saving Grace* (1985)
- ELLA FITZGERALD**
 - Sings The Cole Porter Song Book* (1956)
- FKA TWIGS**
 - LP1* (2014)
- THE FLAMING LIPS**
 - The Soft Bulletin* (1999)
- FLEET FOXES**
 - Fleet Foxes* (2008)
- FLEETWOOD MAC**
 - Rumours* (1977)
- ARETHA FRANKLIN**
 - I Never Loved a Man the Way I Love You* (1967)
- FUGAZI**
 - Repeater* (1990)
- FUNKADELIC**
 - Maggot Brain* (1971)
- SERGE GAINSBOURG**
 - Histoire de Melody Nelson* (1971)
- MARVIN GAYE**
 - What's Going On* (1971)
- GALAXIE 500**
 - On Fire* (1989)
- GANG OF FOUR**
 - Solid Gold* (1981)
 - Entertainment* (1979)
- STAN GETZ / JOÃO GILBERTO**
 - Getz / Gilberto* (1964)
- GORILLAZ**
 - Gorillaz* (2001)
- AL GREEN**
 - I'm Still in Love With You* (1972)
 - Let's Stay Together* (1972)
- GREEN DAY**
 - Dookie* (1994)
- GRIMES**
 - Visions* (2012)
- GUIDED BY VOICES**
 - Bee Thousand* (1994)
- GUNS N' ROSES**
 - Appetite for Destruction* (1987)
- GEORGE HARRISON**
 - All Things Must Pass* (1970)
- GENIUS/GZA**
 - Liquid Swords* (1995)
- THE JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE**
 - Are You Experienced?* (1967)
- JIMI HENDRIX**
 - Electric Ladyland* (1968)
- LAURYN HILL**
 - The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill* (1998)
- BILLIE HOLIDAY**
 - Lady in Satin* (1958)
- HÜSKER DÜ**
 - Zen Arcade* (1984)
- IGGY & THE STOOGES**
 - Raw Power* (1973)
- INTERPOL**
 - Turn on the Bright Lights* (2002)
- MICHAEL JACKSON**
 - Off the Wall* (1979)
 - Thriller* (1982)
- ETTA JAMES**
 - At Last!* (1960)
- JAY-Z**
 - The Blueprint* (2001)
 - Reasonable Doubt* (1996)

FROM THE AMOEBLOG

- JEFFERSON AIRPLANE**
 - Surrealistic Pillow* (1967)
- THE JESUS & MARY CHAIN**
 - Psychocandy* (1985)
- ELTON JOHN**
 - Goodbye Yellow Brick Road* (1973)
- ROBERT JOHNSON**
 - King of the Delta Blues Singers* (1961)
- JANIS JOPLIN**
 - Pearl* (1971)
- JOY DIVISION**
 - Unknown Pleasures* (1979)
 - Closer* (1980)
- KHRUANGBIN**
 - Con Todo El Mundo* (2018)
- KILLERS**
 - Hot Fuss* (2004)
- KING CRIMSON**
 - In the Court of the Crimson King* (1969)
- CAROLE KING**
 - Tapestry* (1971)
- THE KINKS**
 - Something Else By The Kinks* (1967)
 - The Kinks Are the Village Green Preservation Society* (1968)
- KRAFTWERK**
 - Computer World* (1981)
 - Trans-Europe Express* (1977)
- KENDRICK LAMAR**
 - To Pimp a Butterfly* (2015)
- LCD SOUNDSYSTEM**
 - LCD Soundsystem* (2005)
- LED ZEPPELIN**
 - Led Zeppelin* (1969)
 - II* (1969)
 - III* (1970)
 - IV* (1971)
 - Houses of the Holy* (1973)
 - Physical Graffiti* (1975)
- JOHN LENNON**
 - John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band* (1970)
 - Imagine* (1971)
- MADONNA**
 - Like a Virgin* (1984)
 - Like a Prayer* (1989)
- THE MAMAS & THE PAPAS**
 - If You Can Believe Your Eyes and Ears* (1966)
- BOB MARLEY & THE WAILERS**
 - Catch a Fire* (1973)
- MASSIVE ATTACK**
 - Mezzanine* (1998)
- MADVILLAIN**
 - Madvillainy* (2004)
- CURTIS MAYFIELD**
 - Superfly* (1972)
- M83**
 - Hurry Up, We're Dreaming* (2011)
- METALLICA**
 - Master of Puppets* (1986)
 - Ride the Lightning* (1984)
- CHARLES MINGUS**
 - Mingus Ah Um* (1959)
- JONI MITCHELL**
 - Blue* (1971)
- MODEST MOUSE**
 - The Moon & Antarctica* (2000)
- ENNIO MORRICONE**
 - The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* [OST] (1966)
- VAN MORRISON**
 - Astral Weeks* (1968)
 - Moondance* (1970)
- MOS DEF**
 - Black On Both Sides* (1999)
- THE MOTHERS OF INVENTION**
 - Freak Out!* (1966)
- KACEY MUSGRAVES**
 - Golden Hour* (2018)
- MY BLOODY VALENTINE**
 - Loveless* (1991)
 - Isn't Anything* (1988)
- NAS**
 - Illmatic* (1994)
- THE NATIONAL**
 - Boxer* (2007)
- NEU!**
 - Neu!* (1972)
- NEUTRAL MILK HOTEL**
 - In the Aeroplane Over the Sea* (1998)

FROM THE AMOEBLOG

- TELEVISION**
 - Marquee Moon* (1977)
- THROBBING GRISTLE**
 - 20 Jazz Funk Greats* (1979)
- T. REX**
 - Electric Warrior* (1971)
- A TRIBE CALLED QUEST**
 - The Low End Theory* (1991)
- TYLER THE CREATOR**
 - Igor* (2019)
- U2**
 - The Joshua Tree* (1987)
- VANGELIS**
 - Blade Runner [OST]* (1994)
- THE VELVET UNDERGROUND**
 - The Velvet Underground & Nico* (1967)
 - White Light/White Heat* (1968)
 - The Velvet Underground* (1969)
 - Loaded* (1970)
- THE VERVE**
 - Urban Hymns* (1997)
- VIOLENT FEMMES**
 - Violent Femmes* (1983)
- TOM WAITS**
 - Blue Valentine* (1978)
 - Swordfishtrombones* (1983)
- KAMASI WASHINGTON**
 - The Epic* (2015)
- WEEZER**
 - The Blue Album* (1994)
 - Pinkerton* (1996)
- KANYE WEST**
 - Late Registration* (2005)
 - My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* (2010)
- THE WHO**
 - Quadrophenia* (1973)
 - Who's Next* (1971)
- THE WHITE STRIPES**
 - White Blood Cells* (2001)
 - Elephant* (2003)
- WILCO**
 - Yankee Hotel Foxtrot* (2002)
- HANK WILLIAMS**
 - Ramblin' Man* (1955)
- LUCINDA WILLIAMS**
 - Car Wheels on a Gravel Road* (1998)
- AMY WINEHOUSE**
 - Back To Black* (2006)
- WIRE**
 - Pink Flag* (1977)
- STEVIE WONDER**
 - Talking Book* (1972)
 - Innervisions* (1973)
 - Songs in the Key of Life* (1976)
- WU-TANG CLAN**
 - Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)* (1993)
- XTC**
 - Skylarking* (1986)
- THE XX**
 - The XX* (2009)
- YEAH YEAH YEAHS**
 - Fever To Tell* (2003)
- YO LA TENGO**
 - I Can Hear the Heart Beating as One* (1997)
- NEIL YOUNG**
 - After the Gold Rush* (1970)
 - Harvest* (1972)
- THE ZOMBIES**
 - Odyssey and Oracle* (1968)



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