

Reviews

COMPILED BY MIKE GREENHAUS

YO LA TENGO

FADE MATADOR



The Replacements once loudly sang, “We’ll inherit the earth, but we

don’t want it,” imploding and freezing their legacy in the 1980s. **Yo La Tengo**, at the other end of the alternative rock club, quietly picked up the mantle and have crafted a long, tireless career with highlights that a louder group given to showmanship would’ve milked like a crossfire hurricane. YLT have done a *Simpsons* theme, performed as the Velvet Underground in *I Shot Andy Warhol*, become the house band for the legendary underground radio station WFMU—where they play any cover they can fake for charity—and collaborated with musical outsiders, Daniel Johnston, Jad Fair and Yoko Ono.

Their record catalog is deep and wide. *Fade* is their 13th full-length, says their bio, and it favors their quieter side, with a tune like “Well You Better” sounding like former labelmates Belle & Sebastian on a sunny day and the five-minute “Stupid Things” evoking the idea that Simon & Garfunkel have learned to harmonize to a rhythm section. Only “Ohm” and “Paddle Forward” stumble on the distortion pedal. True to form, neither singer **Ira Kaplan** nor **Georgia Hubley** ever behave as if they want the spotlight and no one will ever mistake them for rock stars. Yet, they’ve come, they’ve seen and they’ve conquered—remaining relevant



27 years since their first single leaked out to record collectors, and never outsourcing their responsibilities in the process.

Tortoise member and in-demand producer **John McEntire** balances the horn section for the light swing, “Is That Enough,” the understated “Cornelia and Jane” and the grander-in-scope album closer, “Before We Run.”

The band, however, hang on to creative control. “Two Trains” whispers and mumbles while the electric guitar splashes on a stone, and the folk formatting of “I’ll Be Around” and the modest electric power of “The Point of It” sound as if McEntire eavesdropped on the sessions and snagged a bit for us to hear.

YLT’s reticence to play riff-

mad, chorus-hungry rock and roll extended their artistic shelf life. It’s insured that their music never reveals itself too quickly or climaxes prematurely, and that it always has onlookers wondering what the fuss is about. They’ve grown as musicians, perfecting genres that they never dreamed would be within their reach.

Rob O’Connor

Jim James

Regions of Light and Sound of God ARO



On his solo debut, **Jim James** wrote, produced and engineered all of the songs and played just about every instrument on the album (minus some strings and drums), and in doing so, he brings into focus all of the elements that make his band My Morning Jacket one of the most progressive, powerful and interesting acts of its generation. Though the Americana roots of James' early days are mostly obscured by future funk jams, deep electro soul and hazy, dreamy soundscapes with echoes of R&B, talk of "stardust," layers of reverb-drenched vocals, strange samples and Middle Eastern sax solos, the songs are still somehow rooted in pop with memorable hooks. They're experimental and psychedelic, like something that our kids' kids might enjoy at a classy late night party. Free of genres or self-doubt, Jim James is not only expanding the scope of popular music, he's also building bridges to entirely new terrain. **Aaron Kayce**

The London Souls

Here Come the Girls TK



The latest effort from now-duo **The London Souls** is worthy of consideration among history's finest examples of the dirtiest rock. **Chris St. Hilaire** and **Tash Neal** have assembled a collection of songs full of swagger and accidental perfection that perfectly encapsulates their intuitive approach to making music. Not that the album isn't without its tender moments—the Zeppelin-y "Isabel" and **Alecia Chakour**-assisted album closer "Run Zombie Run" are particularly gentle tunes. By and large though, this record is rife with boozy swing, crunchy guitars and thunderous drums. Credit is due to producer **Eric Krasno** (who split bass duties with the duo) and mixer **John Davis** for helping to harness and refine the raw power of the band, best evidenced in comparison between the original 2006 "Steady Are You Ready" single and the slower, nastier version included on this album. Rarely does the unadulterated power of rock make the transition from instrument to tape so perfectly. **Wayan Zoey**

Ra Ra Riot

Beta Love BARSUK



During the course of their three albums, New York indie rock group **Ra Ra Riot** has embodied the spirit

of evolution. Although the band's angular pep has always been the underlying marker of their music, it's shifted from each disc to the next—a sensibility that is notably apparent here on their third album, *Beta Love*. The record is the band's first without cellist Alexandra Lawn and there is evident movement from the orchestral element of the musicians' earlier work to a more electronic-based sound. Synth beats stand out through the album, showcased on the bounding title track and blip-laden mid-tempo number "What I Do for You." Is this a positive shift for Ra Ra Riot? That depends on whether you like your indie rock to arrive sounding pre-remixed. There's some catchy stuff here ("Binary Mind" is a great dance number), but at times the evolution feels too severe.

Emily Zemler

Aaron Neville

My True Story BLUE NOTE



Great concept, even better execution. For his Blue Note Records debut, the stalwart New Orleans vocalist reaches back to his youth to deliver a dozen covers of doo-wop and primal R&B hits—co-produced, no less, by new label head **Don Was** and **Keith Richards**. It's obvious from the first notes of "Money Honey"—one of four tunes on the album originally by the Drifters ("Under the Boardwalk" is another)—that the entire team is having a blast. Neville's voice lends itself particularly well to the familiar (The Ronettes' "Be My Baby," Curtis Mayfield and The Impressions' "Gypsy Woman") and lesser known (The Clovers' "Ting A Ling," The Jive Five's title track) classics, and to hear that instantly recognizable warble interact with Richards' pointed licks is a real treat in itself. **Jeff Tamarkin**

Camper Van Beethoven

La Costa Perdida 429



Before Stephen Malkmus, there was **David Lowery**. As chief songwriter in **Camper Van Beethoven**, Lowery reigned as the early indie era's manifestation of golden California laconicism. In the band's 21st century alignment, Lowery's bottomless drollness that remains the group's most impervious resource, an undiluted insurance against the deprivations of rock reunions. On the collectively written *La Costa Perdida*, the Camper Vans expand on their perennial fascination with their Northern California environs, a rich vein as far back as 1986's *We Saw Jerry's Daughter*. Lowery turns in near-perfect cosmic-politan ballads "Come Down the Coast"



The London Souls

and "Northern California Girls," but the jam session songwriting sometimes falls into faux-Zep boogie ("You Got To Roll") or jamband folkska masquerading as eclecticism ("Peaches in the Summertime"). Even so, one imagines that when civilization finally collapses and goes post-literate, Lowery's eternal wryness might unite what Esperanto never could, whole sects springing forth from *La Costa Perdida*. **Jesse Jarnow**

Johnny Marr

The Messenger SIRE

Johnny Marr has spent so much time playing other people's music that it's a wonder he ever got around to making a solo album. The Smiths broke up in 1987 and aside from Electronic with New Order's Bernard Sumner and Marr's band the Healers, he's happily strolled along as friend and gunslinger-for-hire for The Pretenders, Modest Mouse and The Cribs, among the many. When he finally tucks himself away in studios in Manchester and Berlin, it's to craft an album of bright pop with plenty of guitar riffs flying through the tunes. His voice is serviceable but the songwriting is brilliant. "I Want the Heartbeat" and "Lockdown" are deserving of his legacy, capturing the feel of alternative rock from the '80s. Perhaps he should consider ringing up Robyn Hitchcock and seeing if a new band isn't in the offering. **Rob O'Connor**

Buddy Miller & Jim Lauderdale

Buddy & Jim NEW WEST

When the U.S. Postal Service gets around to a Heroes of Americana stamp set, you can guarantee that both **Buddy Miller** and **Jim Lauderdale**

will be among those honored. Both have been shaping the genre for a good couple of decades and their own friendship goes back longer than that; they even co-host a SiriusXM radio program. So it's crazy that it took this long for them to make a record together but *Buddy & Jim* was worth waiting for. Harmonizing closely in Everlys/Louvins style and otherwise alternating on lead vocals, the pair runs through 11 country/rockabilly/honky-tonk tunes that touch down on song topics both familiar ("The Train that Carried My Girl from Town," "Down South in New Orleans") and quirky ("Vampire Girl"), all of which are tightly composed and expertly performed. **Jeff Tamarkin**

Ben Harper

Get Up! STAX



There's always been a bluesman bottled up inside slide guitarist **Ben Harper**. Subtle elements of the blues can be found even in his most hook-laden rock songs. With harp virtuoso **Charlie Musselwhite**, Harper uncorks ten tracks of blues, gospel, soul and R&B that occasionally revisit that earlier rock esthetic. Mostly, Harper just explores the blues. "We Can't End This Way" is riveting gospel send up, while "I Don't Believe a Word You Say" is pure power blues—a hard-nosed stomper with powerful, overdriven slide work amid blowback intensity. "You Found Another Lover (I Lost Another Friend)" and "Get Up!" are more reminiscent of Harper's soulful solo work, as "I Ride At Dawn" becomes a spiritually moving haunting dirge. Musselwhite is the perfect foil for Harper with harmonica phasing running from delicate to locomotive. If anything, Musselwhite's a bit understated, but his presence lends gritty authenticity for Harper's journey into the blues. **Glenn BurnSilver**

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Local Natives

Hummingbird FRENCHKISS/INFECTIOUS



Los Angeles group **Local Natives** received great acclaim for their debut album *Gorilla Manor*, which came out in 2009 in the U.K., and in early 2010 in the States. The disc's lush, pulsating indie rock revealed a band that could evocatively translate dream-like haze into musical form. Their second album, *Hummingbird*, takes that sensibility to a further extreme, allowing the tracks to expand into opulent soundscapes that rise and fall with orchestral effect. The disc—co-produced by The National guitarist and songwriter **Aaron Dessner** in Brooklyn—shimmers and resonates, each song aptly blending into the next to urge a cohesive feel throughout. “Breakers,” the first track to be released from the album, is a clear standout, balancing indie pop hooks with spacious sonic grandeur. There’s a lot going on in each number, but the clutter works, shifting to make space and pause when it benefits the song—and the album as a whole. **Emily Zemler**

The Stone Foxes

Small Fires INGROOVES FONTANA

Hailing from San Francisco, **The Stone Foxes** buck psychedelia in favor of hard-nosed swagger, offering their own gruff vision of the time-tested rock formula. While far from monotonous, almost every song on the band’s third album *Small Fires* revolves around the overblown drum and guitar timbres crafted by brothers **Shannon** and **Spence Koehler**, who reach back to the sonic conventions of classic rock’s golden years. Attentive listening reveals the smoky, whirling textures of **Elliott Pletzman**’s organ and Fender Rhodes, which drape a dramatic veil over the spoked-ness verses and simple, persistent choruses. Sometimes buried under layers of bombast, the Foxes’ lyrics ring clear on slower numbers like “Battles, Blades and Bones,” showing their thoughtful side and casting the band as well-rounded, eager students of rock and roll craftsmanship. **Jack McManus**

Ducktails

The Flower Lane DOMINO

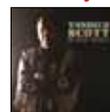


With both **Ducktails** and his better-known outfit of beach bums Real Estate, **Matthew Mondanile**’s calling card has long been all things laid-back: well-constructed rock music with a tossed-off sound. And that juxtaposition has never been

clearer than on Ducktails’ latest, *The Flower Lane*, with 10 beautiful and surprisingly catchy dream-rock jewels. His magic is packing full-band arrangements into delicate, soft-glow beauties without losing that lo-fi looseness. The songs are musically rich, but feel effortless and free, similar to Dan Bejar’s Destroyer. The echoing sax that concludes the midsummer night’s dream “Under Cover” or the warped synth that weaves through the muted-funk duet “Letter of Intent” are all part of Mondanile’s flowing musical fabric. Influences of C-86 shimmer, The Zombies’ step-by-step melodies and the sun-bleached guitar of Real Estate all poke through. While he gets help from friends like **Daniel Lopatin**, **Joel Ford** and **Madelline Folin**, Mondanile spins down this flowery lane proudly by himself. **Justin Jacobs**

Yonrico Scott

Be in My World BLUE CANOE



Yonrico Scott, longtime drummer and percussionist for the Derek Trucks Band, enlists some old bandmates and other top-flight players for his most impressive album as a leader (*Turning the Corner* was released in 2004). Early DTB is evoked on “Hear Me Now,” a gospel blues instrumental with Trucks and tenor saxophonist **Mace Hibbard** turning in soaring solos. Scott’s infectious vocals are out front on warm soul-funk tunes like “Feel The Glow,” and the spiritually inclined “Open Spirit,” “Not Alone” and “Gotta Get Back.” Speedy fusion lines color “When You Click You Clack,” while smooth jazz textures define

“A Day in Nice,” enhanced by Scott’s vibraphone and **Grant Green Jr.**’s zippy guitar lines. Meanwhile, “To The Land” is an engaging percussion feature. **Philip Booth**

Guided By Voices

The Bears for Lunch GUIDED BY VOICES



If anyone could crack the rock-and-roll genome—unlocking the secrets to replicating the music in its endless variety—then it would be **Robert Pollard** of **Guided By Voices**. (Give that man a MacArthur Genius grant!) For a quarter-century, Pollard and his bandmates have been churning out lo-fi gems—some that harken back to chamber pop, some that spit and snarl like a garage-band monstrosity, some that beguile with inscrutable psychedelic mysteries. A bit of *Small Faces* here, a bit of the Left Banke there. The protean GBV have released more than 30 studio albums, EPs and box sets. This was their third record of 2012. Pollard released two albums that same year.) A band this maniacally prolific is sometimes wobbly. But this isn’t post-Golden Era GBV. Anyway, they’ve always excelled at ultra-brief sketches, the kind of nuggets that most bands would polish and elaborate on. “Waving At Aeroplanes” and “The Corners Are Glowing” would be at home on *Bee Thousand* or *Alien Lanes*. **John Adamian**

Ryan Bingham

Tomorrowland AXTER BINGHAM



“Risk-taking” is the sort of boilerplate PR language that gets slapped onto acts positioned as an alternative to mainstream fare. But it

would actually be justified in the case of **Ryan Bingham**’s latest; he took *Tomorrowland* as far away as he could possibly get from the leathery troubadour fare that won him acclaim (even an Oscar). The countrified textures are mostly confined to the final few tracks. A combination of pummeling guitar riffs and slicing strings on album opener “Beg for Broken Legs” makes for rock as big and bruising in scale as the late ‘90s album that Metallica recorded with a symphony. Bingham uses his super-sized sound and raw-throated singing to convey a sense of blunt-edged, populist anger. Sometimes it registers as self-righteous, as opposed to rousing. But there’s also a fire in his belly that wasn’t there before, and that counts for a lot. **Jewly Hight**

Honkytonk Homeslice

Just Passin’ Thru SCI FIDELITY



Honkytonk Homeslice’s sophomore effort *Just Passin’ Thru* is full of songs about people who are on the move. But even with all the talk of cars, trains, flyin’ and runnin’, many of the tunes themselves don’t really go anywhere. That’s not to say it’s all dull either. *Just Passin’ Thru* is at its best on tracks like “Love Is Like a Train” and “Cats,” when singers **Bill** and **Jillian Nershi** find ways to harmonize. The spacey, drawn-out jam at the end of “One Dark Corner,” and the bluesy riffs that close out the title track are highlights as well. Yet, between these peaks, the listener is still



left hoping that something a bit fresher will be waiting for them down in the valley.

Sam D'Arcangelo

Wooden Wand

Blood Oaths of the New Blues

FIRE



James Jackson Toth has a given name that sounds like a cross between a Civil War general and a Norse god. It's hard to understand why he needs any other. But he also records under the name **Wooden Wand**, and sometimes just Wand. The songs on the newest Wooden Wand release are stocked with Biblical portent, guns, Wal-Marts, blood, gasoline, gloom, suckerfish and strange grace. Wooden Wand occupies that dark place where pill-popping hippies, boozy rednecks and rampant sociopaths converge. There are shards of prophecy on the glacial 12-minute ghost-waltz opener, with lines about "diluvial wreckage" and "psychic foreclosure." For six or seven years now, at least, Toth has been writing the kind of brooding tunes that Leonard Cohen would have written had he been raised in a Southern Pentecostal

church before backsliding into the role of troubadour. *John Adamian*

Tyvek

On Triple Beams IN THE RED



Four full-lengths in, **Tyvek** hardly have the art of joyous anarchy down to a science—because that would be antithetical—but the Detroit quartet certainly know a few arrangement tricks when it comes to conveying it. Oversaturation continues to serve the band well, applied to vocals ("Little Richard"), guitars ("City of a Dream") and general ambience ("Efficiency"). Leader **Kevin Boyer** continues to tap a strategic melodic reserve somehow yet unsucked by his indie-punk brethren, slop-rock blasts coming unmoored amid deep fuzz and purest song-gunk. Boyer's voice is cool in the pre-hipster sense, possessed of an innate, knowing amusement that transforms pop profundities like "don't say 'no' / just say 'yeah' / yeah, yeah, yeah" ("Say Yeah") and stoner remembrances ("Midwest Basements") into elegant realizations of far deeper rites.

Jesse Jarnow

Ricky Skaggs

Music to My Ears SKAGGS FAMILY



On 14-time Grammy Award winner **Ricky Skaggs's** *Music to My Ears* the bluegrass legend's music goes way beyond his much-lauded instrumental virtuosity. The man who swapped his high-voltage, mainstream country music career to shift to bluegrass truly knows his way around any number of formats as evidenced by his extensive catalog. *Music to My Ears* only serves to underscore his musical genius. Standout tracks include "What You Are Waiting For" co-written with **Gordon Kennedy**, who co-produced Skaggs' 2010 album *Mosaic*, and "Soldier's Son," written by Bee Gees' **Barry Gibb**, who shares vocal duties with Skaggs on this rendition.

Nancy Dunham

Lisa Germano

No Elephants BADMAN



It's hard to imagine that **Lisa Germano** ever played fiddle onstage with John Mellencamp. Her own music is so dark

and personal—a fall down the rabbit hole, that it seems as if her entire being is molecularly incompatible with the broadside crowd-pleasing populism of Indiana's famous son. **Sebastian Steinberg** adds acoustic bass and producer **Jamie Candiloro** throws in drum loops and surreal effects, but this is Germano's tunnel. She wove these songs together to play as a song cycle with little motifs popping up in various positions while she attempts to grow closer to the earth. Don't think for a second she's looking to reach out. She wants you to reach in. If you've ever imagined Joni Mitchell scoring *Twin Peaks*, then you'll become addicted to these piano and orchestration numbers—try "Diamonds" and "...And So On," for starters—that can scare the living to death. *Rob O'Connor*

El Ten Eleven

Transitions FAKE RECORD LABEL



Relying on acoustic and electronic drums, loop pedals and **Kristian Dunn's** double-neck bass/guitar hybrid, **El Ten Eleven** craft precise, structured songs that employ an alchemical

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recipe of hypnotic repetition and gradual evolution to hold listeners' attention without the need for vocals or lyrics. On *Transitions*, Dunn and drummer **Tim Fogarty** show that they haven't lost their experimental spirit. Especially on the 10-minute title track, this album's compositions

feel more ambitious, sprawling and elusive than ever before, juxtaposing their trademark melodic builds with abrupt, jarring tempo changes that test the duo's agility through the songs' unpredictable dips and twists. Five albums into their career, it's exciting to see that the band still

Ear Crystals BY RICHARD GEHR

THE SEARCH FOR OTHER WORLD AUDIO GEMS

Lost sailor. **Mike Watt** is the ancient mariner of Los Angeles punk's first feisty flourish. Still struggling to fill the absence left by the late Minutemen guitarist D. Boon (1958-85), Watt joined Italian drummer **Andrea Belfi** and guitarist **Stefano Pilla** a few years ago to form **Il Sogno di Marinaio** ("Sailor's Dream") for a tour and recording session. The trio's promising album, *La Busta Gialla* ("The Yellow Envelope," "Clenchedwrench") consists mostly of innovatively rocking instrumentals, including the Dead-like "Zoom," the spaghetti Western tribute "Partisan Song" and "Funamor Jig," which begins like "Third Stone from the Sun" and ends like a pan steel calypso party.

Haight is enough. **Electric Shepherd** zones in on the oft-forgotten protopunk origins of classic NoCal acid rock on the trio's great leap of a second album, *The Imitation Garden* (Electric Shepherd). Where East Coast improv rockers tend to fetishize virtuosity, the West Coast scene of Howlin' Rain, Comets on Fire, and now Electric Shepherd (whose drummer, I feel obliged to disclose, used to date my niece), tend to play looser, gnarlier and rattier—in a good way, of course. With its suites within suites, *Garden* resembles a more Zeppelin-esque *Anthem of the Sun*, with subtle echoes of early Country Joe/Fish, Big Brother and even Iron Butterfly. Apparently, you can go home again.

Tubular spells. German DJ-producer **Hendrik Weber**, aka **Pantha du Prince**, creates blissful electronic club music that's both intelligent and conceptually challenging. After following 2008's perfectly titled *This Bliss* with the darker *Black Noise*, Weber returns with *Elements of Light* (Rough Trade). Inspired by the concerto of bells heard hourly from Oslo's city hall, Weber had a 50-bell carillon shipped from Denmark to Germany, where he added tubular bells, xylophone and other percussion. Electronic manipulation ensued, transforming metal magic into an ebbing and flowing 43-minute, five-part suite that bridges the gap between nature and artifice, sight and sound.

Cumbia, my Lord. Arguably no single country has as much unheard great dance music to spew around the world as Colombia; and arguably no single compilation has so neatly introduced a nation's music as *Diablos del Ritmos: The Colombian Melting Pot 1960-1985* (Analog Africa). A rhythmic revelation from beginning to end, this 32-track, double-disc treasure (plus chunky booklet) explores how Colombia's unique blend of tropical folk sounds (including Puya, Porro, GaÓta, and Cumbiamba) mixed it up with Terapía, Afro-beat and other hybrids. Some of the hemisphere's more adventurous labels captured it, and Analog Africa's **Samy Ben Rejeb** has dug through the crates for their vinyl remains on our collective behalf. Highly recommended.

Neo griot. Historian, storyteller, praise-singer, genealogist, advisor, diplomat, interpreter, witness, entertainer, composer, teacher, pop star—Guinean griot **SÉkouba "Bambino" DiabatÉ** wears all of these hats. A hereditary griot of the West African Mande people, Bambino has also worked with two important Afro-pop groups—Guinea's Bembeya Jazz National and Afro-Cuban roots revivalists Africando. *The Griot's Craft* (Stern's Africa) will introduce you to Bambino's beautifully and authoritatively sung world with cascading waterfalls of guitar, kora harp, ngoni lute and balafon xylophone. An enthusiastic female chorus provides responsive emotional italics and real-time footnotes.

testing the limits of their creativity and impressive that they succeed in doing so triumphantly.

Jack McManus

Free Energy

Love Sign FREE PEOPLE



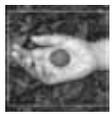
Crunchy guitars straight out of Cheap Trick's playbook? Check. "Whoa-whoa" choruses? Check.

Cowbell? You got it. Handclaps? Yep. The only thing keeping **Free Energy** from actually touring with Thin Lizzy in 1975 is a time machine. When the Philadelphia band burst out with "Stuck on Nothing" in 2010, fans loved their unashamed enthusiasm—an island of excitement in an indie sea of too-cool-to-care—and big, chunky rock and roll hooks. The second time out sees Free Energy expanding their palate with varying success. "True Love" updates the sound to an '80s arena rock, lighters-up ballad. The track is wonderfully catchy, but it's hard to cut through the cheese when singer **Paul Sprangers** spells out "T-r-u-e-l-o-v-e" over programmed drums. Ultimately, *Love Sign* is another bright, vintage rock blast, balancing the line between real fun and cheap shtick. **Justin Jacobs**

Various Artists

Imaginational Anthem, v. 5

TOMPKINS SQUARE



In the decade since guitarist John Fahey's death, the proverbial Takoma School of acoustic freethinkers named for Fahey's DIY label has grown from a one-room meeting house to a small university, with Tompkins Square's *Imaginational Anthem* series serving as yearbooks. While hardly all reverent Faheyites (and hardly all new, either), the fifth class of Imaginational Anthemists possesses a similarly ingrained sense of folk and blues, unifying the album's dreamy flow with a sense of self-assurance in the mission of using the acoustic guitar as an entry-point into grander places. They refract it through flowering 12-string kaleidoscopes (**Alexander Turnquist's** "Standing at the Entrance of a Hidden City"), spare and surprising chord changes (**Will Stratton's** "Hermet Pine Singer") and raga-drone drifts (**Danny Paul Grody, Eric Carbonara, the Israeli wunderkind Yair Yona, Harry Pussy founder Bill Orcutt** makes a case for himself as class president with his slyly beautiful and perfectly named "John Fahey Commemorative Beercan."

Jesse Jarnow

Ivan & Alyosha

All The Times We Had DUALTONE



Ivan & Alyosha's churning, acoustic-driven folk-pop sound is prevalent from

the start on their on the rousing "Be Your Man," a tune serving as a welcome mat to the debut LP *All the Times We Had*. Each tune (or tale) packs a hefty lyrical punch while philosophically exploring the lofty and timeless themes of faith, inner struggle and separation. Hints of similarly moody '90s bands like Nada Surf surface during "The Fold" and the notably soaring instrumental build out of "God or Man." The album's standout track "On My Way" exudes melodic joy tied around markedly tattered-and-frayed fret play and the lead duo's lustrous, familial harmonies. The alluring camaraderie is perhaps their signature feature. Finally, guest vocalist **Aimee Mann's** recognizable soprano on the title track is another prominent performance from a promising debut. **Wesley Hodges**

Goat

World Music ROCKET



It's difficult to decide whether **Goat**—a mysterious Swedish band that plays heavy Afro-beat-tinged

psychedelic kraut-ish rock—is some kind of Scandinavian high concept, or if one's sense of Goat's peculiarity is a matter of fruitful (and artful) cross-cultural miscommunication. The band's promotional materials allude to ties to a town of West African voodoo practitioners (in Sweden!). Those claims could be a McGuffin, a publicity stunt or just an unnecessary distraction. In any case, this record—with its hypnotic grooves, snarling guitars, abrasive organ textures and ecstatic female vocals—has plenty of merits of its own, independent of any oddball origin stories. It's true, there are call-and-response sections, polyrhythms, off-beat phrasing and asymmetrical percussive time-keeping patterns found in West African traditions, but this music has more in common with Shocking Blue and Can than with Fela Kuti. **John Adamian**

Various Artists

....First Came Memphis Minnie

STONY PLAIN



Maria Muldaur has touted....*First Came Memphis Minnie* as her recording—her 40th in fact—but her name

is only one of several on the front cover, along with those of **Bonnie**

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Raitt, Alvin Youngblood Hart, the late **Koko Taylor** and **Phoebe Snow** (with **David Bromberg**), and others. They're all here to pay tribute to the pioneering blueswoman **Memphis Minnie**, an undeniable influence on both Muldaur and Raitt (who sings and plays guitar on "Ain't Nothin' in Ramblin'") and, presumably, the rest. Minnie wrote or co-wrote most of these songs, and Muldaur does take the lead vocal on the majority, summoning her bawdy, sometimes salacious delivery on tracks like "Tricks Ain't Walkin'" and the opening "Me and My Chauffeur Blues." **Ruthie Foster** and **Rory Block** are among the other notable contributors. *Jeff Tamarkin*

Soule Monde

Soule Monde CORNMEAL



Soule Monde (SO-lay MON-day) is the duo of organist **Ray Paczkowski** and drummer **Russ**

Lawton, both longtime members of the Trey Anastasio Band, among other venerated Vermont bands. The eight tracks on this eponymous debut were born of jam sessions performed throughout New England and take the names of influential musicians and/or the surrounding environment. This is free-form jazz and groovey,



organ-based funk, most akin to the sounds of Medeski Martin & Wood. Opener, "Bernard" is a toe-tapping, soul shifter that will lift you from your doldrums and get your booty shaking.

"Bootsy Bonham" highlights the Hammond as a lead instrument while a thumping, steady beat holds time. "Slide B," named after a bar in rural Vermont, features the low-end bass rhythms played through Paczkowski's Hammond. *Bill Clifford*

University of North Texas's lauded jazz program. Featuring a cast of more than 20 stellar musicians revolving around a core of drummer **Robert Spurlight**, keyboardist **Shaun Martin** and bassist **Michael League**, they create jumped-up intricate jazz over a razor-sharp rhythm section. Recorded in front of a live audience over 3 days in Brooklyn at Matt Garrison's Shapeshifter Labs, *Ground UP* is a testament to musical consistency. Fans of the band won't find anything groundbreaking in this eight-song collection, though the band continues to expand their already-wide palette of sounds with an increased presence of distorted guitars, but newcomers to the band will find a solid group of performers masking the advanced nature of their compositions in the ease with which they execute them. Standouts include heavy rocker "Thing Of Gold" and the upbeat funk of opener "Bent Nails." *Wayan Zoey*

Indians

Somewhere Else 4AD



When Copenhagen's **Soren Lokke Juul** sings his album's name in the title track, "Somewhere Else,"

his melody fractures like a crack in a pearl-white frozen pond. "Some-where E-lse." The rising synth lines actually sound like whipping wind. It's pristine and freezing cold. As *Indians*, Juul's ten-track debut is full of these moments, balancing beauty and buried danger. Much like Youth Lagoon's sleeper hit *The Year*

The New Mastersounds

Out On the Faultline ONE NOTE



On *Out On the Faultline*, **The New Mastersounds** strut toward a viable claim as the most progressive funk band out there. Hints of, and homage to, an old-school jazz-funk sound are prevalent throughout, but the development of an edgier, more imaginative direction is the overriding takeaway while listening to this well-paced and varied record. From the slinky mid-tempo Hammond-funk opener "You Mess Me Up" toward the frenetic and choppy, punk-paced "Ding A Ling" (a greased-down track that's heavy on signature jazz guitar playing and has a markedly sepia-toned production quality), the variance from track to track keeps the listen compelling and engaging throughout. After the spoken word homage on "Welcome to NOLA" (featuring **Papa Mali**), a huge gearshift is apparent during the LP's apex on "Summercamp." This psychedelic and lustrous rave-up showcases **Joe Tatton's** thrill-riding keyboard arrangements and each player's solo abilities. By looking backward and moving pointedly forward, this funk force delivers a modern statement that is both exploratory and remarkably accessible.

Wesley Hodges

Eddie Roberts's West Coast Sounds

It's About Time TALLEST MAN



Funky music isn't broken, so with *It's About Time*, New Mastersounds guitarist **Eddie Roberts** isn't trying to fix it. Brought to life by a crack band including organist **Wil Blades**, the music on *Time* is light on innovation but heavy

on groove, the latter of which is all that's needed to make your ears cheer. "Break the Fast" is a tough cut of '70s R&B bolstered by Afrobeat guitar and drums. "A Day, a Week, a Month, a Year" whiles away the hours with a deep, spooky organ bass line and noisy sax-and-trumpet commentary. "Aguacate" is a slick slice of James Brown juice, replete with a static drum solo a la "Funky Drummer" and a punchy, percussive horn chart that would make Fred Wesley smile.

Brad Farberman

Nels Cline/Elliott Sharp

Open The Door PUBLIC EYESORE



One usually associates the acoustic guitar with mellowness and subtlety. But on *Open The Door*, the duo of guitarists **Nels Cline** and **Elliott Sharp** takes those preconceptions and restrings them, placing generally feverish free improvisations where campfire sing-alongs used to roam. Entirely acoustic, *Open The Door* can be gentle at times, too, but there's always an undercurrent of menace. *Door* opens with "Blue Particles," a moderate melee of plunks and plinks. "Isotropes" begins in blues territory—its sad, sighing slide guitar meshing with an ever-changing array of backwoods chords. "Pietraviva" summons up spiky, Monkish melodies and yappy, rhythmic tapping. And "Five Tastes of Sour" is, for the most part, spare and contemplative, as its lines are more concerned with leaving space than filling it. *Brad Farberman*

Snarky Puppy

Ground UP ROPEADOPE



Snarky Puppy is already a household name in musicians' circles, yet another great product of the

of *Hibernation* last year, *Something Else* is lonely, insular music—similarly laying bedroom electronics on top of Elliot Smith-level singer/songwriter solitude—but there’s a heartbeat inside this winter dream. In “Cakelakers,” a lullaby on strummed acoustic guitar, when Juul sings “There will always be a place in my heart for you, my dear,” you get the feeling that his love is a feather flying by, and he’s caught in the ice, unable to reach her. **Justin Jacobs**

Telesma

Action In Inaction

STRANGELY COMPELLING



Two tropes of what is universally recognized as jamband music are the tendency to clearly demonstrate one’s influences—and to make those influences “happier” sounding. Both commonalities are on full display on the latest full-length from Baltimore, Md.-based sextet Telesma. These jamband tendencies can be extremely effective—for example, Phish’s take on jazz. However, it is a more difficult exercise when dealing with inherently dark and minor-keyed styles. Telesma are clearly fans of Tool and Primus, but succeed to a greater degree in defining their own sound when they aren’t putting a pretty spin on things—such as on the compact and dissonant “Tycho.” There are also glimpses of something truly unique, such as on the well-constructed “Groovinda,” but whenever they’re trying to be the jamband version of heavy art rock, it ends up sounding like just that. **Wayan Zoey**

Scott Walker

Bish Bosch



Musical trajectories don’t come much odder than **Scott Walker’s**, in both arc and destination. Taking the name “Walker” when joining the vanilla boy-pop trio the Walker Brothers in 1964, the man born Scott Engel discovered, by turn, Jacques Brel, discophonic surreality (see 1978’s *Nite Flights*) and, by the mid-’90s, epically unfolding theater for the ear. **Bish Bosch** begins with an insistent doom-rock tom-roll and Walker’s *a cappella* Van Dyke Parks-like wordplay about “plucking feathers from a swan song,” and it’s off to wonderland. Mostly, the drums come in short bursts or not at all, the album’s otherworldliness remaining undiminished through horn cascades and finger snaps (“Epizootic”), redemptive dream-floats (“Dimple”) and 21-minute half-symphonic WTFs (“SDSS1416+13B (Zercon, A Flagpole Sitter)”).

Jesse Jarnow

Jay Collins and The Kings County Band

Rivers, Blues and Other People



Jay Collins and The Kings County Band’s latest album *Rivers, Blues and Other People* sounds like the kind of

record that someone listening to The Band might have written on a road trip to New Orleans. That shouldn’t be too surprising coming from Collins, who was once a member of the Levon Helm Band. Maybe it’s the funky kind of blues in songs like “Mighty Mississippi” and “Mary Ann’s” that bring up that comparison. Or maybe it’s the prominent horn section on the cover of Bob Dylan’s “Tonight I’ll Be Staying Here with You.” No matter what the reason is,

Collins and his band have done a great job creating a Southern sound despite their geographic handicap. The second half lags a bit, but this record is still worth a listen.

Sam d’Arcangelo

Kurt Rosenwinkel

Star of Jupiter



Star of Jupiter, the tenth album from the irrepressibly fluid jazz guitarist **Kurt Rosenwinkel**, was

inspired by a spiritual awakening the bandleader had while dreaming. So there’s a vibe of ethereality to the proceedings. But the best music on *Jupiter* is grounded and earthy, tethered to a sturdy beat or simple melody. Opening on harp-like washes from pianist **Aaron Parks**, “Heavenly Bodies” swims

through the night sky in 6/8 time, nourished by Rosenwinkel’s singing guitar leads and **Justin Faulkner’s** no-nonsense drumming. Egged on by steady rimshots and crisp, urgent soloing from Parks, “kurt1” is sly and determined. “Under It All” opens with a gorgeous minute focused on just Rosenwinkel, his guitar and his wordless vocals, a bold trio alone at the top of the world.

Brad Farberman

Dopapod

Redivider



After a busy summer and fall spent touring, **Dopapod** has released its most fully realized recording yet. *Redivider*,

released on doomsday, 12/21/12, continues the band’s mix of rock, improvisational funk, electronic dance music and even pop. Recorded at the renovated barn at Tyrone Farm in eastern Connecticut. These nine tracks represent the band’s most progressive songs (“Weird Charlie,” “Stada”) and most youthful (“Braindead,” “Trapper Keeper”)—the latter two have jubilant, layered vocal harmonies embraced by circular, chugging guitars a la a lost Weezer track. “Vol 3. #86” blends synthesized bleeps and blips with reggae Hammond swells, and starts and stops time and again throughout its seven minutes, coming across like Umphrey’s McGee. The slow build and hammering rhythms of the epic instrumental “My Elephant Vs. Your Elephant” is a late night rager for sure.

Bill Clifford

Jim Lauderdale

Carolina Moonrise



For all of the excitement over the musical partnership between Robert Plant and Alison Krauss

or The Steep Canyon Rangers and Steve Martin, the pairing of much-lauded Nashville songwriter **Jim Lauderdale** with Grateful Dead/Jerry Garcia lyricist **Robert Hunter** could top them all. The two esteemed songwriters are back with their fifth collaboration, the 13-track *Carolina Moonrise*. The songs shift from the fiddle- and steel guitar-filled bluegrass ballad “On the Level”—complete with classic lyrics about dying love—to the up-tempo, banjo-filled, newgrass leaning “Iodine” about “the meanest man in Tennessee [whose] woman is even meaner.” Not only do the songs showcase the two virtuosos’ strengths, but they also combine to breathe fresh life into the format. As they say in Nashville, it’s a match made in Hillbilly Heaven. **Nancy Dunham**

Books

Light & Shade: Conversations with Jimmy Page

By Brad Tolinski



Brad Tolinski, as the editor of *Guitar World* for the past 20 years, has interviewed the notoriously taciturn, if not willfully enigmatic, **Jimmy Page** dozens of times—definitely many more than any other journalist extant. In *Light & Shadow*, Tolinski puts together the best of those sometimes tense encounters to create an illuminating and cohesive collection that explains exactly how and why

Led Zeppelin became the monolithic rock juggernaut that dominated concert stages from more than 12 years. While other tomes on the rock behemoth have concentrated on the drugs, debauchery and excess, Tolinski’s *Light & Shade* uses Page’s own words and ruminations to focus a laser beam on the band’s mighty sound. He expertly extracts Page’s long-held secrets on what made his band the biggest in the world—deconstructing that peculiar alchemy of force of will, extraordinary talent, drive, presence, personality and yes, Crowley-esque magic. Even more important, Page allows Tolinski to see the human side of the Zep myth, revealing himself to be as much visionary, musical futurist and studio architect, as he was rock’s darkest and most dangerous overlord.

Jaan Uhelszki

Led Zeppelin: The Oral History of the World’s Greatest Rock Band

By Barney Hoskyns



This is the perfect companion to **Brad Tolinski’s** *Light & Shadow*, providing evidence of the Dionysian excess and the reckless spoils that accompanied the outsized success that Led Zeppelin had for most of the 1970s. With graphic and unimpeachable evidence, Barney Hoskyns squarely affixes this notorious band atop rock’s mighty Valhalla; four rock gods without regard for rules or consequence.

He telegraphs that intention in the quote from rock impresario **Kim Fowley** that opens the 489-page oral history: “What did Led Zeppelin prove? That great music is always the best excuse or bad behavior.” Throughout the next 31 blockbuster chapters, Hoskyns provides rather graphic and searing evidence of a cadre of Zep intimates, enemies, former employees and hangers-on that allow the reader to peer behind the backstage door, and assess why **Jimmy Page**, **Robert Plant**, **John Bonham** and **John Paul Jones** continue to loom so large and dangerously in our rock imaginations. Hoskyns is a smart, tireless and thorough interviewer but even given that, it’s surprising that after more than three decades of resolute silence, so many of the Zep insiders decided to be so forthcoming with their remembrances. **Jaan Uhelszki**

Reviews

Eels

Wonderful, Glorious VAGRANT



Well-documented loner **Mark Oliver Everett** shaved away his Unabomber-look and established a working relationship with his touring group. His relationship with his touring ensemble is so strong he's even allowed his drummer to write songs with him. Recorded at "The Compound," his multi-floor recording studio, *Wonderful, Glorious* is still plenty desperate and dire, with a mania bordering on insanity. Thick, nasty keyboard lines crash the mix when necessary ("Kinda Fuzzy," "Stick Together") and throw the sound off its rocker. Everett's lyrics settle on characters who've been kicked to the gutters of society with their fertile imaginations and thirst for revenge intact. So, "Bombs Away," "On The Ropes" and "The Turnaround" sound like messages that would give intelligence agencies pause. "True Original" drifts gently as an **Eels** ballad until we hear that there's a gun being pointed. "Open My Present" expresses joy, but it's with a touch of Tom Waits-like aggression. Everett counts his blessings, but it's because he's an obsessive. **Rob O'Connor**

Unknown Mortal Orchestra

II JAGJAGUWAR

Kiwi expatriate **Ruban Nielson** continues to perfect his fine fondue of abstract breakbeat science and bedroom psych pop charm as **Unknown Mortal Orchestra**, joining the ranks of Soft Machine, Led Zeppelin and Bob James by naming his second LP after the number two. But UMO's first release with Jagjaguwar certainly earns his dust on the shelf among such great wax. Across a taut 10 songs, Nielson advances his search to find a way to Wu-Tang Clan's "Killa Hill" by way of *Abbey Road*, chronicling the anxiety and isolation he experienced while on tour supporting the Portland, Ore.-based band's 2011 debut, evidenced on such key tracks as "Swim and Sleep (Like a Shark)," "Monki" and "Secret Xtians," despite their trippy Zombies-with-an-MPC bounce. And with *II*, Nielson gives the world his *Odyssey & Oracle*. **Ron Hart**

Tegan and Sara

Heartthrob WARNER BROS.



Though these sisters got their start opening for Neil Young, **Tegan and Sara** don't have much in common

with their fellow Canadians. With six albums in the last 13 years, the duo documented their neuroses and heartbreaks over indie beats, but their creative stamina eventually stalled. In need of a change, Tegan and Sara wrote the songs together but brought in three producers to amp up the energy. *Heartthrob* is chock-full of heavily produced, dance club-worthy tracks, obviously influenced by Robyn and Madonna, with synth-y keyboard melodies and vocals that are a flashback to the female pop of the 1980s. They still create the smart, witty, thoughtful music they made when they began, but with a bit of a mainstream makeover. **Grace Beehler**

Guards

In Guards We Trust BLACK BELL

When **Guards** dropped their eponymous first EP as a free download, it scored the New York City indie trio far more exposure than it would have by means of brick and mortar. But now, the group is ready for record shop domination given the fevered anticipation for their full-length debut. And *In Guards We Trust* certainly lives up to its hype, as **Richie Follin**, **Kaylie Church** and **Loren Humphrey** ride the shoegaze movement into a new level of high ended gleam. Key songs like "Coming True" and "Silver Lining" sound like the Jesus and Mary Chain if they were produced by Mickie Most. This is throwback alt-rock of the highest order, emitting a measured balance of bubblegum and shotgun that appears more ready for prime-time than any of their peers on the scene. **Ron Hart**

Sinkane

Mars DFA

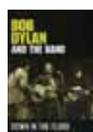


Sinkane, the moniker of **Ahmed Gallab**, traces its routes back to Gallab's home country of Sudan via deep grooves and soulful Afro-beat. His newest release, *Mars*, feels like a whirlwind trip around the world. The eight tracks on the album—which total only 34 minutes—aren't exactly catchy; rather, they're ambient and experimental, mixing a variety of Caribbean, dub and Afro-beat influences. Gallab is credited to at least four instruments on each track, but he does enlist help from Twin Shadow's **George Lewis Jr.** and Yeasayer's **Ira Wolf Tuton**. Twangy guitar lines in "Jeep Creeper" tie the song back to Africa, while the percussion on "Love Sick" sends the listener to Brazil. Though the album is full of consistent talent, his music will most likely be tossed into the vast, vague genre of "world music." **Grace Beehler**

DVDs

Bob Dylan and The Band:

Down in the Flood SEXY INTELLECTUAL



Bob Dylan's collaboration with The Band altered American music. After alienating fans by going electric, Dylan retreated, working in 1967 with members of The Band on covers—old time, blues and country—while penning a batch of strange, silly and haunting songs eventually released as *The Basement Tapes*. Set against the Summer of Love, Dylan's material sounded radical—stark, traditional, visionary and spooky. Dylan's songwriting in this period pointed to many of his future shifts in direction—his Nashville phase, his religious phase and his family-man phase. The collaboration established The Band as progenitors of Americana, giving the group authority as Dylan interpreters, and inspiring **Robbie Robertson** to tackle ambitious story songs. Fans might hope to learn more about things like, say, the role of **Rick Danko**, and the recording of 1974's *Planet Waves*, but the film serves as a reminder of the power the sporadic, and relatively brief pairings Dylan and The Band had on both parties and on popular music. **John Adamian**

Brian Wilson Songwriter 1969-1982



The saga of **Brian Wilson** has been told often enough that even the most casual of rock fans should know it inside out: Sidelined by nervous exhaustion, he stopped touring with the **Beach Boys** in 1964, crafted his masterpiece *Pet Sounds* two years later, attempted to follow it up with the doomed *Smile*, and then, withdrew into a solitary life of mental illness and inactivity as his former group carried on without him. *Songwriter 1969-1982*, the sequel to a volume that covered Wilson's early years, makes a somewhat convincing case for much of that narrative being hogwash. Through statements from a series of associates and experts, and various clips, the program, for more than two hours, cites examples of Wilson's continuing—albeit changed—songcraft as he slowly regained the strength and confidence to revive his artistry in the '80s. **Jeff Tamarkin**

The Beatles Magical Mystery Tour



Widely dismissed at the time of its 1967 release as a rambling, psychedelic hodgepodge, the charm of *Magical Mystery Tour* four-and-a-half decades later lies in the fact that it is a rambling, psychedelic hodgepodge—one that just happens to have been conceived by and stars **The Beatles**. That there's not much of a story is beside the point: This glorified 53-minute Merry Pranksters-inspired home movie captures the Summer of Love spirit not by going for the hippie-trippy but by letting The Beatles be The Beatles, absurdist humor at the fore. And, of course, there's the music—songs like "The Fool on the Hill," "I Am the Walrus" and "Blue Jay Way" become even more poignant when presented with original visuals attached. Extras include "the making of," period TV clips and more. Roll up! **Jeff Tamarkin**

The Rolling Stones

Under Review: 1975-1983, The Ronnie Wood Years, Pt. 1



Considering how riveting the recent HBO **Rolling Stones** documentary *Crossfire Hurricane* was—covering the first 15 explosive years of the band's career—it might seem unreasonable to expect an equally lengthy look at **Ron Wood's** first eight years in the band to hold much interest. And it doesn't. When Wood replaced Mick Taylor on lead guitar in 1975, the Stones had just come off an unparalleled creative run that resulted in such classic albums as *Sticky Fingers* and *Exile on Main Street*. While Wood undeniably reenergized the band, the years covered here, 1975-83, simply were not as exciting or newsworthy. The live footage and videos included simply can't hold a candle to the earlier footage in the HBO doc, and there's only so much rhapsodizing by critics and cohorts that can convince otherwise. And this is only part one. **Jeff Tamarkin**

The Amazing

Gentle Stream PARTISAN



The throwback and thoroughly psychedelic heartbeat of *Gentle Stream* explodes on the first

and title track—a spongy, jammy fusion of rock, folk and pop that eventually pours into a full on Crazy Horse-esque jam. Singer/songwriter **Christoffer Gunrup**'s magnificent voice is comforting and nostalgic, accompanying the music seamlessly and never encroaching on a jam. *Gentle Stream* is also a bit of everything; take the flute on the slower, groovy “Flashlight,” or the percussion that sneaks into the end of “International Hair.” The dreamy, protruding riffs that power “Dogs” may be the best part of this magnificent album, but the entirety of *Gentle Stream* is steeped in brilliance, with the kind of musicianship that folks would sell their souls for. **The Amazing** is aptly named; this album takes hold and never lets go.

Mike Thomas

Rusted Root

The Movement SHANACHIE



With its eclectic mix of rock, acoustic and world music, **Rusted Root**'s irresistible songs quickly propelled them to prominence with 1994's breakout, *When I Woke*. Half a dozen albums later—and nearly as many lineup changes—Rusted Root returns to celebrate their 20th year with their seventh release, *The Movement*.

And as the songsmiths of a veritable soundtrack to the '90s, the Pittsburgh natives have become good at embracing their musical past, even while moving ahead. Throughout *The Movement*, classic sounding grooves (“Monkey Pants”) sit comfortably alongside modern, pop-leaning cuts (“Sun & Magic”) giving the album an overall sense of rooted, but forward trajectory. “Cover Me Up” weaves the metallic glint of rock guitar with breathing Afro-Caribbean rhythms in the albums most remarkable blend of past and present. And though Rusted Root's heyday may have come and gone, it's albums like *The Movement* that will keep this band forever relevant. **Fady Khalil**

Jason Isbell and The 400 Unit

Live From Alabama

LIGHTNING ROD



These live tracks are taken from a run of shows in **Jason Isbell**'s home state of Alabama over the summer. The melodic, raspy voice and narrative



Missing Cats

singing style that brought him recognition with the Drive-By-Truckers is easy to get used to. These songs fall under an Americana style, but vary in subject and in speed. There's the more country-influenced ballad “Tour Of Duty,” about a veteran coming home from war, and then there's the funky, horns-drenched cover of “Heart on a String,” showcasing **The 400 Unit** and Isbell at their collective best, exploring R&B and blues as well. More of the latter would be better and it wouldn't hurt to let loose a bit more, but Isbell is one great storyteller, no matter what he's doing. **Mike Thomas**

Toler Tucci Band

Doc's Hideaway HIDEAWAY MUSIC



“**Dangerous**” **Dan Toler** knows a thing or two about vintage rock. The lead guitarist has played with the legendary

Allman Brothers Band, including stints supporting Gregg Allman and Dickey Betts. And when Toler teamed up with vocalist, guitarist **Doc Tucci**—who himself had received a Grammy nomination for co-engineering “High Falls” (Allman Brothers)—their musical synergy proved undeniable. With a well-seasoned backline whose members had shared the stage with the likes of Earl Scruggs, Merle Haggard and Foghat, the **Toler Tucci Band** was ready. Their most recent release, *Doc's Hideaway*, is a lush 10-track

journey through the blues, seamlessly transitioning from the traditional emotion of Memphis-blues (“Without You,” “Play by the Rules”) to a modern, danceable blues-rock (“Coming Home Tonight”) to straight out rock and roll (“Ali Shuffle”). Female singer, **Verceal Whitaker**, adds her sultry vocals, further giving *Doc's Hideaway* an appeal that spans the spectrum of classic rock. **Fady Khalil**

Various Artists

Just Tell Me That You Want Me – Tribute to Fleetwood Mac

HEAR MUSIC



More than almost any band, Fleetwood Mac's catalog has touched all areas of *New York* magazine's approval matrix during the years: highbrow, lowbrow, brilliant and despicable. The latest tribute to the group, *Just Tell Me That You Want Me*, falls squarely into the band's young highbrow corner, aiming for the lo-fi and psychedelic-loving indie set that has come around to the band in recent years. The album's covers are often brilliant, especially the cross-generational pairing of ZZ Top guitarist **Billy Gibbons** with **Blake Mills** and **Matt Sweeney** on the '60s Mac track “Oh Well.” But the album's true strength is how it emphasizes just how much Fleetwood Mac has already influenced these artists—from singer **Antony**'s delicate,

decidedly non-mom-rock reading of “Landslide” to surf combo **Best Coast**'s Rockaway Beach doo-wop reworking on “Rhiannon” and psych-posh band **Tame Impala**'s acid washed take on “That's All for Everyone.” **MGMT**'s nine-minute, distorted take on “Future Games” even hints at an alternate reality where Stevie Nicks shared the stage with Suicide. It's for highbrow Mac fans who spent time on the lowbrow DIY circuit. **Mike Greenhaus**

Donna Jean Godchaux Band

IridiumLive 004: 7-12-2012

THE IRIDIUM



There is a confident sense of veteran purpose that belies the preconceived nostalgic notions on this rather unexpected gem. Recorded and produced by **Doug Yoel**, the album is full on inspired performances. Vocalist **Donna Jean Godchaux Mackay** sounds absolutely inspired with a band that also features such Dead family alumni as guitarist and vocalist **Mark Karan**, sax man **Kenny Brooks** and **Mookie Siegel** on keys and vocals. On Dead classics that bookend the album (“Sugaree,” “New Speedway Boogie” > “The Other One”), the band is tight and focused on the live improv gold, while respecting the, well, spirit of the Dead. The newer material (“Don't Ask Me Why”) serves to enhance the

Off The Tracks ON THIS MONTH'S CD

Toivo

Toivo SELF-RELEASED



Toivo's self-titled debut is hard to pin to any one genre, enabling the five Wisconsin natives to cover a lot of terrain in 10 songs while still producing a work consistent in both mood and sound. The indie pop vibe is reminiscent of the New Pornographers and the slurred lyrics and the sense of understated cool sounds like early Modest Mouse, and yet, the undercurrent of the record is true rock and roll.

Ryan Urquhart's voice suggests that tones—and the precise way one manipulates that great instrument can sometimes be more emotive than lyrics themselves. If the album lulls at points, then it never lets you leave its wavelength. It'll have you dancing and hoping that the bluesy voice on "I Ain't Mr. Wonderful" echoes for years to come.

Kiran Herbert

dramatic arc of the gig. *Randy Ray*

Rupa and the April Fishes

Build ELECTRIC GUMBO RADIO



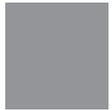
Perhaps they should have called it *Built* instead. San Francisco's

Rupa and the April Fishes

spent their first two albums fashioning a hybrid sound that reveled in its inclusiveness: **Rupa Marya** sings in several languages and the band delights in blurring stylistic lines to the point that attempts at categorization become exasperating. On *Build*, those elements are still in place but there's a new cohesiveness and a sharper sense of direction than on the previous efforts. Co-produced by Marya and jazz bassist **Todd Sicksafoose**, the new set takes on a more pointed lyrical bent (the sole cover is The Clash's "Guns of Brixton") that, rather than reining them in, gives Marya and her bandmates a ticket to explore and expand even more. *Jeff Tamarkin*

Overmountain Men

The Next Best Thing RAMSEUR



Ancient music, passed down from generation to generation, can influence and sustain a community. But

with modern music like the **Overmountain Men's** second release, one hears wise minstrels longing for a truth nearly gone. Elsewhere, the charming collective seems unaware of anything but the historical ambience of the room; the music breathes new life into the space between the musicians. *The Next Best Thing* also attempts to stand outside of time and clearly succeeds on its own humble yet self-assured terms. One feels the depth of so many generations moving forward as a single persistent voice on this

album—that's what the best music *should* do. No sophomore slump here—just an echo of some rather poignant ancient music crafted in the often troublesome 21st century.

Randy Ray

Bill Laswell

Means Of Deliverance

INNERYTHMIC



It's a rare bassist who can turn out a true solo recording that's as full-bodied and gripping as the

music he makes in the company of others. But **Bill Laswell**—one of the most prolific and inventive masters of the bass guitar to come along in the past few decades—proves with *Means Of Deliverance* that he's more than capable of pulling off that feat. Playing an acoustic Alien bass manufactured by Warwick, Laswell is at turns lyrical, assertive, experimental and even orchestral on these 10 tracks. Each sports its own personality (one features an ethereal vocal by Laswell's wife, Ethiopian singer **Ejigayehu "Gigi" Shibabaw**), but what makes Laswell's creations that much more alluring is his knack for coaxing sounds from his bass that—while retaining all of the instrument's natural depth—often sound so, well, alien, that they could emanate from another instrument all together. *Jeff Tamarkin*

Joy Formidable

Wolf's Law

CANVASBACK MUSIC/ATLANTIC



Don't let **Joy Formidable's** quieter songs fool you: The North Wales group is a straight-up rock band, particularly

on their sophomore album *Wolf's Law*. The disc, a follow-up to 2011 *The Big Roar*, features raucous guitar riffs that rival Led Zeppelin ("Maw Maw Song") and grandiose surges



of static noise (“The Leopard and the Lung”). The group excels at releasing emotions through heavy riffs and pounding drums rather than hushed introspection—all propelled by singer Ritzzy Bryan’s crooning yelp. The songs are replete with layers of sound, each track slightly more elevated and evolved than those on the group’s debut. It’s a good album, but it’s a collection of songs that will likely be better live. **Emily Zemler**

Jonathan Wilson

Pity Trials & Tomorrow’s Child

BELLA UNION

Jonathan Wilson’s *Gentle Spirit* was one of 2012’s best records, with its soft but deep textures, mix of mystic exploration and solid songcraft. Wilson capped the year off with this three-song EP, tipping his hat to Japanese psych-rockers Apryl Fool, and the quiet Beatle, among others. **Graham Nash** joins Wilson—an accomplished sideman and studio whiz who’s worked with Elvis Costello, members of Wilco and Phil Lesh, along with scores of others—on a fittingly introspective and slow-burning cover of George Harrison’s “Isn’t It a Pity,” which conveys the appropriate spiritual yearning. (It also includes one of the best snare rolls you’ll hear this season.) Add this to his surprising covers of tunes by Gordon Lightfoot and Madonna, and Wilson has emerged as an insightful interpreter and revivifier of others’ material. Wilson’s own originals reflect his sensitivity and deep immersion in wide-ranging styles and bygone eras.

John Adamian

The Little Ones

The Dawn Sang Along

BRANCHES RECORDING COLLECTIVE

The Little Ones are not as much the translucent choirboys of sun soaked Los Angeles as one might initially think. This five-person indie-pop band’s sophomore album *The Dawn Sang Along* has some definitive influences and determined hooks that run the gamut from The Kinks to The Shins

to inquisitively jammy dalliances. African beats among compulsively placed handclaps and footnoted overdubs result in a cohesively blinder-focused “indie” sound similar to Phoenix or Matt and Kim, instead of the infectiously individual cores of charm that made the Beatles and the Rolling Stones iconic. That being said, they’ve certainly carved up impressionable rhythmic grooves that are unquestionably uplifting and fun. Songs like parading track opener “Argonauts,” pointedly optimistic/nostalgic “Boys On Wheels,” and down-home humble “AWOL” summon orchestral waves of endorphins with delicately intelligent skill. But it’s the unassuming “Catch The Movement” that encapsulates their perfect Rubix cube of influence-meets-inspiration without any sense of contrivance.

Hannah E Ghorashi

Christopher Owens

Lysandre FAT POSSUM

“What if everybody thinks I’m a phony?” asks **Christopher Owens** on “Love is in the Ear of the Listener.”

It’s a fair question. This is Owens’ solo debut after leaving his role as frontman of the highly regarded and short-lived band Girls. He announced his departure—and many other things—on Twitter. And Owens’ story, with tales of religious cults, has inspired equal parts buzz-band adulation and hipster-hate backlash. For those wondering whether Owens’ solo stuff will sound like his work with Girls, the answer is: Yes, it does. There’s the same evocation of girl-band longing and familiar melodic contours and harmonic structures. (Whether a dinky recurring medieval-ish minor motif constitutes some kind of overarching concept-album coherence is a different question.) Owens sings with a hushed voice, augmented occasionally by sax and flute, over slow soulful guitar arpeggiations. It’s all undercut, offset, counterbalanced or undermined—depending on your take—by Owens dark, lonely, love-sick and vaguely miserable lyrics.

John Adamian

Wayne Shorter

Without A Net BLUE NOTE

Even at the tender young age of 79, **Wayne Shorter** still plays as though he has something to prove. It might have been the occasion—he hasn’t released an album with Blue Note since 1970, the year after his incredible *Super Nova* tipped the jazz-fusion scales—but more than likely it’s because he doesn’t really know any other state of being besides constantly hurtling into the unknown. It certainly helps to have fellow travelers who are fit for the journey; after more than 10 years of playing together, pianist **Danilo Perez**, bassist **John Pattitucci** and drummer **Brian Blade** have created a restless, polyrhythmic language that allows Shorter to dip, dive and soar on his signature soprano sax with both feral abandon and unparalleled precision. The sense of freedom comes through immediately on the opening “Orbits”—a piece that feels more elliptical as each musician trades phrases over a gathering and gradually unifying pulse—while the epic “Pegasus,” stomping long and hard like a Gil Evans orchestral fugue from the bop era, finds Shorter at quite possibly his most lyrical since his early days with the Miles Davis Quintet. If you want to hear a true master at work in a live setting, *Without A Net* just keeps delivering thrills. **Bill Murphy**

Mogwai

A Wretched Virile Lore SUB POP

On this rewiring of their Sub Pop debut *Hardcore Will Never Die But You Will*, **Mogwai** bequeaths their wares to the modern age’s most able-bodied button pushers. Godflesh/Jesu mastermind **Justin K. Broadrick** draws out the damaged dream-pop of “George Thatcher Death Party,” while Philly space synth-duo Zombi turn “Letters to the Metro” into some lost incidental music from *Halloween III*. Elsewhere, **Tim Hecker** reconfigures “Rano Pano” into a buggy glitch-hop throwdown and guitarist **RM Hubbert** conjures the acoustical intricacy of “Mexican Grand Prix.” But it is Robert Hampson’s “La Mort Blanche”—a 14-minute mash-up of “George Square” and “White Noise”—that takes the cake, as the former Loop guru combines the songs into a seamless, spatial spiritual of intertwined intoxication. Such creative expansion wears well on the slow-burning Scots, and it would be great if we get to see more of Lore’s adventurousness on their next full-length. **Ron Hart**

Plundering the Vaults

Phish

December 6, 1997, The Palace of Auburn Hills, Auburn Hills, MI
Star Lake 98 JEMP

In the late-’90s **Phish** was evolving at warp speed, traversing the lines between art-rock, funk, jamband and all out arena-rock-like lightning bolts dashing across a divided sky. And while their lightning never struck twice—in so much as two shows were never the same—their thunder was held down by the continuum of identity, an ascribable sound despite the filter. That point is driven home on the two latest archival Phish releases—12/6/97 Auburn Hills, Mich., (offered as a *Live Phish* download) and 8/11/98 Burgettstown, Pa., (offered as the DVD, *Star Lake 98*).

While both of these shows are stand-alone gems from the Phish vaults, listening to them consecutively offers the additional reward of context. They took place just eight months apart, during a larger era that many consider to be the apex of the band’s golden age. And yet, the pairing showcases a band from two distinctive tours.

In Auburn Hills, an early first-set, 16-minute “Run Like an Antelope” quickly fires up the kind of cow funk that became the defining trait of December ’97 Phish. Later in the set, a vibrant “Bathtub Gin” dissolves majestically into a funky “Foam.” But the main course is the second set’s opening sequence of “Tweezer -> Izabella -> Twist -> Piper.” This “Tweezer” is a perfect artifact of something that could’ve only been played in Dec. ’97, as it twists and turns through deep grooves and wah-filled rhythmic interplay before **Trey Anastasio** finally unfurls his super-hero leads. Some 22 minutes into it, a segue into Jimi Hendrix’s “Izabella” furthers the cause with a stop-start jam that, again, is ever so emblematic of this particular tour.

Jump to the following summer. The band had been breaking out new covers on a nightly basis and surrounding them with summer rock anthems of their own, often composed on the spot and in the moment. At *Star Lake 98*, they open with Bob Marley’s “Trench Town Rock,” putting band members in good spirits from the start, verifiable

thanks to the DVD format. A scorching “Wolfman’s Brother” yields a notable segue into Little Feat’s “Time Loves a Hero”—but, again, the second set opening sequence steals the show with a 33-minute “Runaway Jim” that, as time has told, remains historic. Much like its trailblazing predecessor (the 59-minute version from 11/29/97 Worcester, Mass.), this “Jim” shapeshifts through spontaneous soundscapes, showcasing band abilities that seemingly didn’t know any limits. And, if the excursion somehow forms connective tissue with the previous fall’s star “Runaway Jim,” then *Star Lake 98* actually ends with the same number that opened Auburn Hills, “Golgi Apparatus.”

“We had a great time tonight,” says Anastasio at the end of *Star Lake 98*. “We appreciate it—thank you.” Rest assured: The feeling was mutual. *Benjy Eisen*

Jason Collett

Reckon + Essential Cuts

ARTS & CRAFTS



In the age of iTunes and Spotify, “Greatest Hits” records almost feel like lost artifacts, since their key tracks

can be found elsewhere, so it’s odd that Canadian cult hero/Broken Social Scene member **Jason Collett** has chosen to release not just a hits compilation (*Essential Cuts*), but also a new record, *Reckon*, simultaneously. Truth be told, there’s little revelatory material on either platter, but he’s

never shot for the stars. Rather, there’s a correlation between each album’s exploration of a slew of classic roots, though sometimes it’s unclear which of those roots he actually calls his own. Whether it’s the almost Petty-esque *Essentials* cut “Bitter Beauty” or *Reckon*’s kinda Talking Heads-ish “You’re Not the One and Only One,” Collett’s drawing from a well-worn—and unequivocally legit—bank. *Jeff Miller*

Various Artists

Nuggets: Original Artyfacts from the First Psychedelic Era, 1965-68

RHINO



Originally released in 1972, *Nuggets* has taken on hallowed status wherever vintage rock and roll is celebrated.

The 27 tracks compiled by Patti Smith Group guitarist **Lenny Kaye**—then, just a respected music writer—weren’t even old, considering the double album’s most recent tracks were released a mere four years earlier. Yet, the primitive aesthetic was light years from the gorgeously orchestrated Philly Soul, the navel-gazing mellowness of singer/songwriters and the screeching hard rock of the early ‘70s.

All you needed, it seemed, was a Farfisa organ and a dream. A fuzz pedal helped as well, but what these obscure groups really contributed was a sense of freedom within the tight confines of the 45RPM single. Some groups were bluesy (**The Blues Magoos**), some were poppy (**The**

Knickerbockers), some howled and others ached. None had an extensive, memorable career. Yet, they caught the proverbial lightning in a bottle as rockers of serious consequence for their three minutes of fame. For *Nuggets*’ 40th anniversary, it’s been issued as a standalone CD, LP and download—and not just as part of an extensive box set. Though, truth be told, should the primal goodness speak to your soul, then you’ve got a lot of catching up to do, with further *Nuggets* collections, the *Pebbles* series and *Back from the Grave* compilations. Garage rock’s immediate appeal was the feeling that *anyone* could play it. Time has taught us that the magic found so readily here is more elusive than it sounds. *Rob O’Connor*

Gov’t Mule

The Georgia Bootleg Box

EVIL TEEN/HARD HEAD



Five years after signing on with the Allman Brothers in 1989, guitarist **Warren Haynes** and bassist

Allen Woody joined drummer **Matt Abts** for an inspired side project.

Like the Allmans, **Gov’t Mule** were rooted in Southern-fried blues and rock and roll. But the Mule was more raw, stripped down but able to roar, with hard-whomping rhythm attacks and Technicolor molten lava guitar explosions. That sound, like an oncoming freight train, is in full effect on *The Georgia Box* six discs’ worth of classic material, recorded live and unfiltered in April 1996 in the

Peach State. It feels like all highlights, all the time. At the Georgia Theatre, the young Mule offers a particularly fierce pairing of signature cruncher “Mule” with Bo Diddley’s “Who Do You Love,” and, later, Lowell George’s “Spanish Moon,” with **Derek Trucks**, at 16, already playing slide guitar like a grown man. They kick off their show at The Roxy with the rolling riffs of “Blind Man in the Dark,” another signature song, and hint at their jazz and fusion influences on “Trane” and “Thelonius Beck.” And at the Elizabeth Reed Music Hall, Haynes digs deep on a particularly soulful version of Blind Faith’s “Presence of the Lord.” *Philip Booth*

Interpol

Turn on the Bright Lights: Tenth Anniversary Edition

MATADOR



Between 1998 and 2002, Interpol slugged it out for positioning on the pre-gentrified music circuit of Lower

Manhattan alongside the likes of The National, The Strokes and Radio 4. But that jockeying proved crucial to the 11 songs that would comprise their Matador debut, *Turn on the Bright Lights*, where beloved tunes like “NYC,” “PDA” and “Roland” were honed to perfection on the stages of such woebegone downtown venues as Brownie’s, Baby Jupiter and Luna Lounge. The tenth anniversary of *Lights* lovingly chronicles the evolution of these 11 songs from their humble beginnings as raw demos to the post-goth powerhouses that they grew to become under the production of Peter Katis—all featured on this 2-CD set and further punctuated by tracks from an exceptional 2001 Peel Session. It’s hard to believe that a decade has passed since the dark romance of *Lights* hung low above the skyline. But this beautifully hardbound set, which also includes a DVD of era-appropriate videos and live performances, is a fond, fulfilling remembrance of this New York City rock classic. *Ron Hart*

Toy Love

Live at the Gluepot 1980 GONER

Toy Love

Toy Love FLYING NUN/REAL GROOVY

Like psychedelia a decade earlier, punk transmitted itself around the globe, producing durable recorded canons in improbable, far-flung corners. One particularly fertile enclave emerged in

Dunedin, New Zealand, beginning with the 1977 establishment of



Reviews Plundering the Vaults

undocumented quartet The Enemy, who evolved into **Toy Love**, subject of a much-needed vinyl anthology of out-of-print singles as well as a new live album, *Live at the Gluepot 1980*, drawn from a beautiful and punchy soundboard tape. Fronted by the redoubtably irrepressible **Chris Knox** and bouncing with **Jane Walker's** organ, Toy Love bubble over with Beatles-y melodicism. A quartet of unforgettable songs gives the band deserved status as underground legends and "Photographs of Naked Ladies," "Swimming Pool," "Pull Down the Shades" and "Sheep" are represented on both new collections. Each comes on far lustier and more unstoppable than the band's self-titled album. Despite all the repetition, like pop itself, one can never really have enough.

Jesse Jarnow

Isis

Temporal IPEACAC



It wasn't like prog-metal ceased hitting new levels of doomacious glory when **Isis** broke up in 2010, but the music certainly became a little less dynamic and unusual. This timely double-disc trove of rarities—most of them alternate takes or quirky covers (like Black Sabbath's "Hand of Doom," recorded for 1999's *Sawblade EP*)—opens up yet another multi-dimensional foray into the way-out, otherworldly sound of Isis. From the bowed strings, ambient washes and down-tempo tread of "Grey Divide" (a previously unreleased 17-minute fugue) to the acoustic guitar-based version of the head-stomping "20 Minutes/40 Years," *Temporal* is overloaded with evidence of what kept Isis consistently vital for most of the group's 13 years in the game: an unrelenting desire to experiment. Just ask their idols; when Isis sought out The Melvins to record a split LP in 2010 ("Way Through Woven Branches," which is one of the highlights included here), it turned out that they were already fans.

Bill Murphy

Ben Harper

By My Side VIRGIN



Ben Harper's always been an artist with many sides. He can coo you to sleep, raise your gospel spirits and get you rocking—all on the same album. That's why his recent career-spanning retrospective *By My Side* is a bit misleading. Here, we've got 12 hushed Harper tracks that paint the musician as this generation's Cat Stevens. It's the truth, but not the whole truth. Still, with a few obvious

exceptions (the devastating "Another Lonely Day," from *Fight for Your Mind*, among others), *By My Side* is as a lovely collection of Harper's best campfire-folk lullabies, including fan favorites "Diamonds on the Inside," "Forever" and "Gold To Me." The only new offering is "Crazy Amazing," a lazily beautiful love song. Strung together, these tracks create what could've been a great, if one-toned album. And on that note, *By My Side* is better than a greatest hits package, where songs are grouped simply by popularity. Though these songs span nearly 20 years, they all belong right here. *Justin Jacobs*

B.B. King

Ladies and Gentlemen...

Mr. B.B. King HIP-O



Ten CDs focusing on a single artist has the potential for serious overkill, and if that artist plays

the blues, then the possibility of repetition and tedium comes with the territory. But if that blues artist is **B.B. King**, then even a 10-disc boxed set only scratches the surface, and the exhaustive *Ladies and Gentlemen... Mr. B.B. King* will likely stand as the definitive word on this American icon long after he's gone. The set painstakingly outlines King's career, going back to the early sides for the Modern label, up through his ABC-Paramount and MCA Records output and fairly deep into the recordings of more recent decades, including numerous rarities and many of the high-profile collaborations that King has recorded. For those who would prefer a bit less, there's also a more compact version, collected on four discs. That pared-down version is also more readily available; the larger set is an Amazon.com exclusive. Either will serve handily as a primer on the man rightfully called the King of the Blues. *Jeff Tamarkin*

Tito Puente

Quatro—The Definitive Collection

SONY MUSIC LATIN



More than a dozen years after his death, **Tito Puente** remains the most celebrated Latin musician of all time—a dynamo who took what was still music with a limited audience and made it universally accessible. Dozens of Puente collections have been released, and while *Quatro: The Definitive Collection* doesn't quite live up to its subtitle—it mainly focuses on a five-year sliver of his multi-decade career—it undeniably contains some of the most enduring and influential work from the timbales master and

bandleader. During the latter half of the '50s, after leaving the independent Tico label for the major RCA, Puente cut the four groundbreaking albums presented here in their entirety—*Cuban Carnival*, *Night Beat*, *Dance Mania* and *Revolving Bandstand*—that established his primacy in the Latin jazz field. The handsomely packaged boxed set also includes a fifth disc of alternate takes and other rarities, some dating back as early as 1949.

Jeff Tamarkin

Duke Ellington and His Orchestra

The Complete Columbia Studio Recordings 1951-1958

COLUMBIA/LEGACY



What's your favorite decade for **Duke Ellington**? It's a silly question. The Ellington Orchestra made

landmark music steadily from the late '20s until the early '70s. Few recording artists have been as creative and prolific. Sandwiched between the celebrated pinnacles of the '40s and the '60s, the Ellington of the '50s sometimes goes underappreciated. This nine-disc set (nine albums and a number of bonus tracks and outtakes from 1951 to 1958) has several records every jazz fan should own—including *Such Sweet Thunder*, *Ellington Uptown* and *Masterpieces By Ellington*. It has a few that only serious Ellington completists will want, like the corny *A Drum Is a Woman*, a TV special soundtrack. Between the expected gems and the acknowledged low points, there are surprise moments. A version of "Mood Indigo" on Blue Rose, an album featuring vocalist **Rosemary Clooney**, showcases the classic but still radical and haunting "Ellington effect" of muted brass paired with clarinet, and a tumbling, abstract and ultra-brief piano solo from Ellington. The **Mahalia Jackson** version of "Come Sunday" from *Black, Brown and Beige* is deep and beautiful—seriously soul-stirring. These records have been re-issued individually before, each with the same extras and better, more comprehensive liner notes. But this grouping drives home just how restless Ellington's creative energies were. *John Adamian*

The Jam

The Gift (Deluxe Edition) UME



By the time **The Jam** released *The Gift*, their final studio album, in 1982, the **Paul Weller**-led trio had nearly shed the Mod revivalist/

new wave trappings of their earliest music in favor of a more R&B- and funk-based sound (with nods to psychedelia and mainstream rock along the way). Weller's writing had become increasingly sophisticated—the hit "Town Called Malice" from this album remains one of **The Jam's** most stunning—and it was time for him to move on. There are two versions of the 30th anniversary package: a double-disc set that includes 15 demos and alternate takes, most previously unreleased, and an expansive four-disc box, available only as an import. Despite the additional cost, the latter is the one that a serious Jam fan will want: Disc three is given over to the Jam's compete 1982 Wembley concert from their final tour, and the fourth is a DVD stocked with live and promo clips that illustrate just how far this band had come during their brief lifespan. *Jeff Tamarkin*

Grateful Dead

Dave's Picks, Volume 4: College of William & Merry, Williamsburg, VA, 9/24/76 RHINO

Winterland, May 30th, 1971 2xLP

RHINO

Dick's Picks, Volume 1: Tampa, Florida, 12/19/73 4xLP BROOKVALE

RHINO

The **Grateful Dead** never did quite figure out how to sell records directly to heads from their own branded ice cream trucks as they'd once planned, but they do continue to find new revenue streams for their massive archive. The *Dave's Picks* subscription series enters its second year and Rhino—and now Brookvale—Records have begun issuing vintage Dead shows on vinyl.

The fourth volume of *Dave's Picks*—recorded in Virginia in 1976—has the Deadhead-specific selling point of being a show not previously in circulation as a soundboard in taper circles. But, besides a buttery "Playing in the Band"> "Supplication"> "Playing in the Band," it remains a Deadheads-only affair, filled with Quaalude-slow rearrangements ("Tennessee Jed," "Around And Around") and joyously warm fusion slop.

Rhino's *Winterland, May 30th, 1971* is a lusciously mastered sequel to *Skullfuck*. Where it falls rather short on the psychedelic mind-melting front, those seeking **Pigpen's** chauvinistic humanism will enjoy the high-fidelity grease of a side-long match-making "Turn on Your Lovelight."

The first issue in Brookvale's pressing of the beloved *Dick's Picks* series is a mixed blessing, meanwhile, containing at least four sides of supremely improvising Dead, including an extraordinarily out "Other One," but also a direct-from-CD mastering job that leaves it without the vinyl depth that one might expect from its \$80 price-tag. Even so, the 14-minute "Here Comes Sunshine" is so kinetically synesthetic in any medium or sonic resolution that it makes one wonder what was so good about ice cream in the first place. **Jesse Jarnow**

Rage Against The Machine

Rage Against The Machine XX

EPIC-LEGACY

Perhaps one of the coolest moments on VH-1 Classic's *That Metal Show* in recent memory was seeing **Tom Morello** fawning over his fellow guests Doug Pinnick of King's X and master shredder Tony MacAlpine. Given the precedence levied on The Clash and Public Enemy influences that comprise **Rage Against The**



lorem ipsum

Machine, it was refreshing to see the guitarist salute the celebrated group's roots in hard rock and heavy metal all the same. And after listening to this beautiful deluxe box set of Rage's groundbreaking 1992 debut in celebration of its 20th anniversary, one is clearly reminded of just how much Sabbath and Maiden factored

into their distinct sound as deftly as Fugazi and Grandmaster Flash. Included alongside the long-overdue, re-mastered edition of the original LP is a bonus disc containing the first official release of the band's original demo tape from late 1991—that they used to sell at their shows for \$5—is included, as well as a pair

of DVDs teeming with archival footage spanning the entirety of the band's career, from their first-ever public performance to their "Battle of Britain" concert in June 2010 at London's Finsbury Park. This is an epic tribute to a band that guys like Paul Ryan can say they love but will never truly understand. **Ron Hart**