

# o u t t h i s w e e k . . . . .

## albums of the week

**sonic youth : the eternal** (cd/2lp) now major label & starbucks free, this is the band's "celebration of newfound freedom". it's still as arty as ever with songs referencing or inspired by the yves klein, the nomads, gregory corso, berlin 60s model/activist uschi obermeier, the wipers, the dead c etc. so, lyrically & inspirationally all present & correct but what's particularly great about this album is that they've got their old fire & drive back. whilst the production is slightly cleaner, this is very much in the mould of 'evol', 'sister' & 'daydream nation' but with the pop hooks of 'dirty' & 'goo'. it's not like they've ever made an album that wasn't worth owning but this could well be their first truly great album in years. if you're a hardcore fan, you'll probably buy this anyway but if you've become daunted by the vastness of their back catalogue, this is a great place to get back into them or even start. there are 1000s of great bands around using the sonic youth template – the whole brooklyn & la art rock scene couldn't exist without them – but the originals are still the greatest. [matador](#)

**city center : city center** city center is the first record under this moniker from the prolific fred thomas, who has been busy making skewed pop music under various guises for years. it is hard to believe that anything else he has done could better this, for this record is astonishing. echoes of panda bear/animal collective & ariel pink are the first thing that strike you, but rather than their joyful abandon, this music feels somehow desolate, filled with longing. whilst sonically quite distant, this record shares the bleak yet somehow hopeful spirit found in arthur russell's solo cello work. there seem to be no boundaries here – rather the sole controlling factor is the sheer quality of the sounds. as such, you will find classic vocal harmonies sitting comfortably with distorted shards of gamelan, plastic sounding drum machines, shimmering multi-acoustic instrumental strums & lo-fi drone. the ease with which thomas jumps between beautiful vocal harmonies to droning interludes to layers upon layers of heavenly tones, makes this a simply stunning record & a must have purchase. [type](#)

**dirty projectors : bitte orca** (limited indies only 2cd version / lp) yet another indie-rock-pop gem from brooklyn! this album isn't a straight ahead pop record by any stretch of the imagination but it is, by some distance, their most pop record yet. led by singer/songwriter & multi-instrumentalist dave longstreth, the group produce a distinctive sound of electronic experimentation, melded with traditional instruments & harmonically complex vocals. new york art rock meets nico-esque chamber pop meets adiyah/ timbaland r&b meets...well you get the picture. it's not immediate (in fact at first, it can seem almost unfathomable in its inventiveness) but given a few listens, it reveals a multitude of hooks & there are passages that are quite simply breathtaking. if you like your music to keep you guessing with its imaginative & intelligent restlessness, then you should absolutely check this lot out. for fans of animal collective, grizzly bear, mount eerie or akron/family. "holy shit....this record is incredible!" - david byrne. we couldn't agree more. [domino](#)

**cave : psychic psummer** (cd & limited lp) chicago's cave take us on a rolling, mainly instrumental, expertly crafted journey that embraces maximum minimalism, repetition, can cloud-bounce & full on heavy chant. at times their diverse brand of burly & blissed-out space-rock sits alongside wooden shjips' suicide/loop inspired grooves & at other times is more akin to the schizo frenzied pulse of holy fuck or battles – how can they possibly go wrong? as a result, they have created a record that is loaded with tension & release & healthy doses of repetition that is tighter, funkier, spacier & more driving than anything they've done before. awesome neo-krautrock grooves that demand to be played loud! highly recommended. "it takes an immense amount of structuring & sweat on their end for you to drift away on yours & the result is so seamless they make it look easy" 7.6/10 – [pitchfork](#). [important](#)

## rock / indie / modern classical

**little boots : hands** little boots (aka 24 year-old blackpool native victoria hesketh) releases her highly anticipated debut. what started as a bit of fun (recording 'funtimes' covers in her pyjamas) eventually led to unprecedented exposure on youtube, racking up more than 250,000 views overnight & now after all the excitement & activity of the past 18 months, little boots' debut is finally ready for devouring. 12 tracks & 42 minutes of pulse-racing, heart-felt crystalline dance pop resulting in a pop album that sits up there with the those of pop divas kylie minogue, lily allen & annie but with the edge that both ladyhawke & la roux bring to their electro-pop assault. "little boots sounds impressively poised, built to withstand - indeed, even deserve - the hype" 4/5 – [guardian](#), "an inspiring story of self-realisation & a brilliant album. frankly, amazing" – [nme](#). [679](#)

**kasabian : west ryder pauper lunatic asylum** (standard cd, cd/dvd version in hardback cover with 10 live concert tracks, 2 videos & a "making of" documentary) kasabian have always had an electronic element but their 3<sup>rd</sup> album showcases this part of their sound more than ever, at times even threatening to invade mgmt's territory (but in a less poppy, more downbeat way). the album is definitely more psychedelic & less straight up than previous efforts & although they still closely mirror the output of their friends & touring partners oasis, rather than plough the fields of the beatles, they draw more from the kinks' fertile land. produced by dan the automator, who is best known for his work with the gorillaz & handsome boy modeling school, this album has a really vibrant, propulsive energy but in a surprisingly understated way, that proves this leicester quartet are much more than your average sing-a-long stadium rock band. [columbia](#)

**black moth super rainbow : eating us** (initial copies come with an additional disc of extra tracks, available in selected indies only) pittsburgh's mysterious vocoder wielding brain melters seem to have chilled out somewhat on their new record, their 1<sup>st</sup> to receive an official release outside of the us. whilst 2007's beauty, 'dandelion gum' offered up some seriously stoned-sounding business with analog-synth clouds billowing around barely intelligible vocodered vocals, this one moves into slightly different territory. the record has been produced by dave fridmann (flaming lips, mgmt, mercury rev), which makes perfect sense as there are many similarities between the output of bmsr & the colourful psychedelia of the flaming lips. fridmann highlights the tingly interplay between acoustic & electronic instruments & the processed vocals, resulting in sweet, cotton candy melodies that suggest a wonkier version of the likes of air, caribou or boards of canada. "elegant psychedelic synth / folk" – [mojo](#), "a trippy marvel" – [omm](#). [memphis industries](#)

**jason isbell & the 400 unit : jason isbell & the 400 unit** ex-drive-by truckers man, jason isbell, gets a new band behind him. the 400 unit is derry deborja (keyboards), jimbo hart (bass) & browan lollar (guitar). matt pence (centro-matic/south san gabriel) lends his talents as co-producer, drummer & engineer. much like arthur alexander, eddie hinton & spooner oldham, isbell mixes a soulful vocal style with songs that are passionate & unrepentant in their sense of place & direct in their stubborn southernness. for fans of drive-by truckers, neil young, bonnie 'prince' billy. "a gorgeously whisky-soaked country-soul masterpiece" – [spin magazine](#), "combine the sounds of otis redding, wilson pickett & aretha franklin & you've got jason isbell, a 28-year-old reviving southern musical history" – [esquire](#). [lightning rod](#)

**the wavves : the wavvves** (cd & lp – uk edition) on his 2<sup>nd</sup> album, nathan williams, 22-year-old slacker punk from san diego, continues to bury melodies in layers of distortion. drawing from the legacy of the velvet underground, mbv, sonic youth & the pixies & from the continuous creativity of the smell scene that has spawned the likes of no age & times new viking, he writes lo-fi bedroom punk pop songs & then records them directly to 4 track. the resulting sound is communicated perfectly through the cover art - his melodies suit that sunny california atmosphere perfectly, the lo-fi grain of the recording matches the lo-res grain of the photo & the whole thing is done with the slacker attitude that old-school skateboards & homemade ramps would suggest. this may be a slightly less abrasive offering than last year's 'wavves' (with 2 'v's) but it's no less urgent or exhilarating – extraordinary! this uk version includes 2 tracks that were previously only available on 7" singles. "thrilling, compelling, thoughtful craftsmanship" 8.1/10 – [pitchfork](#). [bella union](#)

**crocodiles : summer of hate** for the uninitiated, crocodiles' songs began slinging across the interweb after their friends in no age named the band's song 'neon jesus' as one of their top ten shredders of 2008. the san diego duo of charles rowell & brandon welchez, holler some seriously fine tunes that earnestly nod towards the equally velvet underground inspired echo & the bunnymen & jesus & mary chain. poppy vocal melodies are crushed with harsh electronic drums or lifted & left floating in spaced-out noise & echo. loud, wiry guitars jab wildly like mutant synapses skirting along a tightrope drone. this record is definitely worth checking out if crystal stiltz, wavves or times new viking do it for you. "the velvet underground swinging jesus & mary chain" – [stereogum](#), "heady garage rock & spaced out pop" – [the fly](#). [fat possum](#)

**v/a / kath bloom : loving takes this course - a tribute to the songs of kath bloom** (2cd) since the mid 70s, kath bloom has beguiled listeners with her haunting voice & powerfully honest songwriting. now, 16 artists from around the world come together to pay tribute to the arresting, gorgeous songs of the connecticut folksinger. compiled over 2 years by chapter music's guy blackman & san francisco filmmaker caveh zahedi, this collection features artists such as bill callahan, devendra banhart, mark kozelek, meg baird, the dodos, corrina rep, mia doi todd, josephine foster, scout niblett & more - a dream-team selection of players, many of whom are noted for spearheading the current alt-folk / psych-folk movements. disc 2 features bloom's original recordings, some tracks either long unavailable or previously unreleased. worth having for callahan's take on 'the breeze/my baby cries' alone but the whole compilation provides a brilliant & necessary introduction to the under-recognised cult songwriting figure. [chapter music](#)

**codes in the clouds : paper canyon** the cinematic post-rock pop quintet from greater london/kent have found a firm place in the vast growing instrumental rock scene. with their harmonious & blissful sound, they weave guitar melodies that sound like they are liable to explode any minute. their epic take on the post-rock formula incorporates the emotive tug of sigur ros, the finely constructed guitar interplay of explosions in the sky & the unfeasibly immense crescendos of mono, all in 1 package. energetic & charming at once, surprising & unpredictable at all times, their record has been completed under the experienced eye of justin lockey (bloc party, yourcodenameis:milo, enter shakari). the record comes with a free download voucher for the 11-track erased tapes 'i label' compilation. [erased tapes](#)

**nicola ratti : ode** the 3<sup>rd</sup> album from italy's nicola ratti, the former guitarist with self-described 'math-jazz-rock trio' pin pin sugar. the multi-instrumentalist & sound sculptor sets out to transform the instantly familiar timbres of guitar & piano into something slightly more concealed & subtractive, leaving a more vague, impressionistic approach to instrumentation. his sound is deceptively languid, built from disarming small & gentle gestures & looping rhythms, often repeated & subtly shifting in an impressionistic vision founded on traditional elements. merging guitar, piano & double bass with percussion, environmental sounds & occasional voice, nicola constructs songs that by turns float, swell & envelop in magnetic fashion. a piercing tenderness remains at the core of his work, though on 'ode' there is a more expansive palette at play. [preservation](#)

**placebo : battle for the sun** (limited cd+dvd / standard cd) with a 13 year history that takes in 5 studio albums, 10 million album sales, breakdowns, clean ups & the dizzy swell of global success, placebo are amazingly, still brimming with new ideas. this is their 1<sup>st</sup> full studio album with new drummer steve forrest & it's heavier than more recent efforts, recalling their original harder sound. however, there are more complex string arrangements, as well as trumpets & saxophones, showing the band is still growing musically & expanding their sound. a vital, boundary vaulting addition to their catalogue. *"this is placebo at their breathtaking, irresistible best - a velvet glove of sonic sensuality guaranteed still to enrage dad-rock traditionalists"*—mojo. [dreambrother](#)

**blackbud : blackbud** the wiltshire band's much anticipated 2<sup>nd</sup> album follows the massive critical acclaim they received for both their ep 'heartbeat' & their debut album 'from the sky'. this is a wonderfully warm & ambitious album which pieces together a patchwork of emotional & bluesy, modern infused folk, epic & ambitious mile high melodics & driving guitar work. the album brings to mind 'pink moon' era nick drake, 'rumours' era fleetwood mac, early cream. it's a mature piece of work that takes a few listens to fully appreciate because there is so much going on (symphonic strings, electronic beats, distant vocals, folk guitar strummings & much more), but they're usually the best ones. *"blackbud create a sound that ranges huge & symphonic to quirky & leftfield in a single song"* – word, *"stunningly inventive"* – times. [independente](#)

**cesarians : flesh is grass** vocalist charlie finke was the singer in penthouse many moons ago. looking like a band formed in the mind of george grosz, the cesarians capture the urban zeitgeist via the junk shop instruments of old europe. in their hands, a clarinet, trombone, piano & drums beaten in waltz time, make elaborate, flamboyant rock 'n' roll that sounds like a night out at the cabaret with patrick wolf, nick cave, jacques brel & a klezmer orchestra. this is a highly creative record that merges the epic & the intimate, the sublime & the ridiculous & the old with the new to great effect. [imprint](#)

**master musicians of bukkake : totem one** (cd & lp) master musicians of bukkake began in the fertile music scene of the pacific northwest in 2003. originally founded as a collective of musicians from the overflowing community of seattle, master musicians of bukkake have now solidified into a 7 piece cosmic psyche force : milky (earth), don mcgreevy (earth), randall dunn (sunn o)), grails, kinski, earth), jim davis, brad mowen (burning witch), dave abramson (the diminished men) & bill horist. in 2005 they released 'visible sign of the invisible order', a recording of improvised ritualistic musical gatherings by the collective. their new album forms the first part of a northwest trilogy, relying more on the electric power of psyched guitars, analog synth chants & exotic heavy percussion, echoing dusty fuzz rock in epic form. guests include alan bishop (sun city girls, alvarius b) & timba harris (secret chiefs 3). [conspiracy](#)

**years : years** do make say think & broken social scene member, ohad benchetrit, casts his multi-instrumental talents & studio wizardry on years, his first solo effort. 'kids toy love affair' begins this instrumental album with a wistful playfulness, before we are swept along a shimmering acoustic guitar stream with 'don't let the blind go deaf'. bursts of glitch interspersed with digitally sequenced orchestral arrangements build into rousing walls of sound that in turn subside to a gentle brook of acoustic guitar melody. ohad benchetrit is a true visionary of composition soundscaping - his accomplished production & guitar proficiencies align him with the most respected in the field (i.e. dmst, squarepusher, jim o'rourke / gastr del sol) & he has also contributed to albums by feist ('the reminder') & the hidden cameras ('awoo'). [arts & crafts](#)

**cursive : mama i'm swollen** 3 years on from their last album, this is the sound of a more reflective & mature cursive & dare we say it, more melodic. this record proves yet again why the quartet remains one of the most exciting & inventive rock bands today. kasher is a storyteller, a weaver of songs that can read more like short stories or fables than the standard verse-chorus-verse. here we find him at his literate, lyrical best. musically, cursive are as smart & sophisticated as ever, the songs' rousing, cerebral content complemented by moments alternately hushed & exhilarating - moments that often occur within the very same song. a fluid amalgamation of the band's sound past, present & future. *"wracked with doubt, contradiction & existential despair, 'mama, i'm swollen' strikes out as a weighty, superbly realised endeavour which, for all its oppressive nature, is as eminently listenable & brave an album as any the band have produced"* 9/10 – dis. [saddle creek](#)

**ryan driver : feeler of pure** toronto's ryan driver has been a key member of a number of the most interesting ensembles in the city, including deep dark united, the reveries, the silt, the guayaveras & more. he plays guitar & sings but he's also an accomplished improviser & he can break your heart improvising on a twangy ruler or blowing onto the surface of a rubber balloon. his 1<sup>st</sup> solo record features some songs he's been singing for a while, mostly folk/country ballads, recalling the likes of nick drake, john martyn or devendra banhart. the pace changes for live favourite 'spinning towers', which is given an anthemic rock treatment & 'why the road?' slowly shifts from folksong to hazy 'rock bottom' period robert wyatt mysticism. toronto's alt.folk queen jennifer castle duets on the beautiful opener, 'you are beside me'. [fire records](#)

**geraint watkins : in a bad mood (expanded edition)** (now includes 5 extra tracks & comes in new packaging, at a cheaper price). last year's impressive, smoky, romantic sleeper hit of an album now gets a re-release as an extended edition. with a voice described by nick lowe as the sublime & soulful missing link between paolo conte & howlin' wolf & backed by a band of top shelf middlesex based players (including the jesus of cool himself), watkins' latest album is a poppy, bluesy, jazzy & folk record that is a truly compelling listen. *"the richness & quality of these songs & performances is every bit as compelling as latter-day revivalist richard hawley"* - the telegraph, *"simply cannot stop listening to this geraint record which is so well produced. really beautiful sound"* - the word. [goldtop](#)

**datarock : red** the 2<sup>nd</sup> album from the irrepressible norwegian duo sees both 80's & modern day influences intertwined. whilst their 2005 debut 'datarock datarock' mixed relentless punk-funk with warped talking heads meets devo humour, their sophomore ups the musical ante considerably. 'give it up' is the opening single from this record & is a perfect reintroduction to the band...a short sharp shock, reminiscent of the post punk musicality of acts such as the associates & achieves the fine balancing act of sounding both current & retro....& funny to boot. talking heads & devo are still clearly their major influences & this trio are likely to appeal to fans of friendly fires, the klaxons, new young pony club or shitdisco. [netwerk](#)

**dave matthews band : big whiskey & the groogrux king** the group's 7<sup>th</sup> studio album is celebratory in its spirit & lyrical ruminations on fragile mortality, paying tribute to the band's saxophonist, leroi moore & features some of his last recordings. moore passed away in the summer of 2008, halfway through the making of the album. "pure muscle - it's got a bulletproof groove & the type of bounce that has marked the band all along" – new york mag, "their heaviest album yet, both musically & emotionally...throughout, carter beauford beats out elaborate, propulsive grooves; bassist stefan lessard lays down flea-style funk bass lines; violinist boyd tinsley plays cresting, intense runs; & matthews mirrors moore's saxophone lines with scatlike singing" – rolling stone. [warner bros](#)

**the gay blades : ghosts** the gay blades are a 2-piece from somewhere in or near new york city & they play an acerbic brand of trash pop, making up for their missing bass player with consistent tnt like performances & a heaping spoonful of swagger. here they present 10 great succinct pop songs that could appeal to fans of green day, eagles of death metal & everywhere in between. [something in construction](#)

**anti-flag : the people or the gun** the seventh full-length anti-flag release starts off fast, furious, impassioned & before it's over, they string together timely quotes from woody guthrie & joe strummer & sing the praises of a workers revolution, firing off a number of their most explosive political broadsides yet. they may have lost their old arch nemesis in january, when he handed down the oval office to barack obama but the bush administration's legacy should keep these guys in songs for years, from the war in iraq to what his friends have done to the economy. [sideonedummy records](#)

**big business : mind the drift** jared & coady, the two-headed monster behind sludge-rock titans big business (& rhythm section for the melvins) are at it again, this time adding guitarist toshi kasai into the mix for their new album 'mind the drift'. make that a three-headed monster then! the growth to a trio has allowed them to augment the sludgy, low-end, drum & bass buzz of the band's 'here come the waterworks' sound, with a serious melodic turn toward big floating psych riffs & three-part harmonies. producer phil ek (the shins) has again evolved the band's grandiose sound & taken the biz into new sonic territories! guitarist & newest band member toshi kasai adds new voice & dimension resulting in an ambitious, metal-choral oeuvre. [hydra head](#)

**g.e.s. : circulations** gesellschaft zur emanzipation des samples (g.e.s. : society for the emancipation of sampling) presents 'circulations', the 2<sup>nd</sup> album on jan jelinek's label. essentially this is a collection of noises : bleeps, clicks, bangs, crashes, whirls, glitches, plinks, plonks, twangs & the likes of, interspersed with processed field recordings of a canteen, the fairground, conversations, bird song & much more, along with the occasional choral or big band interlude. apparently the idea for this audio collage emerged from random recordings of pop songs played through the pa of a fairground carousel & also projector sounds in the cinema or the sine generators of a sound installation. the cd contains 20 miniature collages that will appeal to fans of the bbc radiophonic workshop output & releases on the trunk label. [faitiche](#)

**the men they couldn't hang : devil on the wind** tmtch return with their first album in 6 years on the eve of their 25th anniversary. 'devil on the wind' combines a legendary live ferocity with a still undiminished lyricism to create an essential rock folk hybrid. long considered one of the finest live experiences thrown up by the british music scene, tmtch have harnessed their passionate live power to create a kaleidoscopic, fully realised album of folk, rock & country influences. ably steered by producer pat collier, the material ranges from international panoramas to intimate personal vignettes, all played with a seasoned sureness that still erupts into adrenalin pumped ferocity. [irregular](#)

**mocky : saskamodie** musician, composer, producer mocky is joined by gonzales, jamie lidell & feist for a new studio recording that marks a return to his jazz & acoustic roots. his electro/hip hop/soul releases & outstanding production & arrangement work (for jamie lidell, feist, gonzales, nikka costa & jane birkin) have cast him as an irreverent, chameleon-like cult figure in leftfield music. his new album is a step into uncharted waters, no longer bound by the electronic music scene. at different points you'll hear a vintage soundtrack suite, a sophisticated jazz record or a golden era 60's soul ballad recording... yet, as if these eclectic stylistic sorties weren't enough, cut 'saskamodie' through the middle & you'll find that sweet, inescapably infectious melody is the lifeblood trickling through its core. recorded in a vintage soundtrack studio in paris, previously inhabited by serge gainsbourg, the record clearly reflects the influence of his surroundings. [crammed](#)

**the aggroflites : iv** the aggroflites have taken the world by storm over the past few years with their brand of funky old-school ska & reggae, lovingly representing the classic sounds of 70's jamaica to a generation that has never heard of studio one. 'aggroflites iv' comes on the heels of the band backing rancid's tim armstrong on his debut solo album. working & touring alongside great songwriters continues to push the band's skills & aggroflites iv presents their most accomplished set yet - more soulful settings to feature singer jesse wagner's motown-inflected voice. a rhythmic & soulful journey that will get you dancing & keep the fire burning. [hellcat](#)

**the brian jacket letdown : darling bit me** the brian jacket letdown have finally emerged from studio hiding with a highly varied & creative album. recorded ingeniously on bits of clapped-out vintage equipment with every instrument you can think of from bassoons, tubas, flutes, ukeleles, kitchen utensils & theremins to the usual guitars & drums, it makes for an exploratory listen that frequently recalls the eels or beck's less introspective moments. *"taking influences from everything from rock'n'roll to opera to brazilian dance beats to 1920s swing & back to rock'n'roll their music shows a kaleidoscope of genres"* – artronker, *"the lazy cosmic skits & dreamlike harp sounds have a touch of pink floyd grandeur, even a little bit of early verve too"* – disorder, *"as if the beach boys swapped surfing for farming"* – guardian (???) . [genepool](#)

**lissy trullie : self-taught learner ep** a native of washington, dc but now calling new york city home, lissy trullie is both the name of the front woman & the band she sings in. in a year characterised by female fronted electro-pop (with more than a passing eye on the 1980s), lissy's timeless, fuzzy guitar pop also evokes the sound of new-wave, new york in the late '70s & early '80s. the band is knitted together by the water tight rhythm section of josh elrod's drumming, ian fenger's melodic bass lines & lissy's stabs of rhythm guitar, with lead guitarist eben d'amico providing the flourishes. *"sassy, guitar power pop"* – observer, *"her dangerously cool tunes, which mash up dancey new wave, 60's girl-group sounds & the softer side of the velvet underground, hit upon the core aloofness that typifies most great new york rock"* - time out. [wichita](#)

**torngat : la petite nicole** montréal quebec's ambient power trio torngat create majestic instrumental music. 'la petite nicole' is the follow up to their critically acclaimed 2007 effort, 'you could be'. this time around the band is sporting a grittier, propulsive sounding record that more closely resembles the bands live sound. on this record they offer up forays into dub-heavy elements of post rock as well hints of kraut rock, jazz, cabaret & the occasional miniature freak-outs. while cinematic references may be considered standard when describing instrumental music, torngat's creations are particularly evocative of the medium & you definitely get the feeling that the band is creating music for yet-to-be-made films. for fans of belle orchestre, hanged up or clogs. [alien8](#)

**the melvins & brian walsby : pick your battles / manchild 4** (cd & book) once again brian walsby & the melvins have teamed up to produce a uniquely collectable, rare & limited book/ cd release. in 'manchild 4' (brian's 4th book), walsby inks his legendary comic satire, wit & illustrative skill over 100 pages. his illustrations continue to rile people up, make them laugh & keep them wanting more. the cd captures the rock gods, the melvins, at 2 periods in their career. 'pick your battles' is a 15 song cd of live melvins tunes recorded in 1989 at the 924 gilman st. project in berkeley, ca. & also in 2008 at the paradise rock club in boston. [bifocal media](#)

**merzbow : 13 japanese birds volume 5** (limited) merzbow's 13 japanese birds is a 13 month series of releases inspired by olivier messaien's catalogue d'oiseaux. beginning in january 2009 one volume of '13 japanese birds' will be released each month. the 13th & final volume will be released january 2010. each volume will be a one time pressing of 1000 copies with cover art by jenny akita. the author, activist, painter & sound artist masami akita, aka merzbow, has been at the foreground of experimental music for over 25 years. inspired by psychedelic rock, free jazz, early electronic composition as well the physical arts, especially kurt schwitters' merzbau, akita has created a musical language all his own. [important](#)

**amute : infernal heights for a drama** new album & band from belgium based jérôme deuson who has been operating in the same field of sound as guitar soundform experimentalists such as akira rabelais, fennesz & keith fullerton whitman. however, he has slowly been building on his sound over the years, going from solo electronic instrumentals to today's full band & now amute is 4 people (plus collaborators) & the resulting music mixes electronic processing with more song-based offerings. the oddball sounds & distorted structures employed here, make the record sound like it would be quite at home on the fonal label alongside the likes of paarvoharju but then at other times there are more post-rock approaches that recall epic 45 & the make mine music output & then there's the lo-fi rockier tracks that wouldn't be out of place on a brian jonestwon or warlocks demos record. unpigeonholable then! [still](#)

**gavin osborn : meeting your heroes** the 1<sup>st</sup> studio album from the witty folky-acoustic singer-songwriter, produced by former hefner frontman darren hayman. gavin's plan for this album was to make something upbeat, filled with positive songs to perk us all up in these troubled times - but the plan failed & 'meeting your heroes' is essentially about love, heartbreak & nostalgia. which is far better. for fans of getcape.wearcape.fly. *"funny & touching. osborn walks a similar tightrope to loudon wainwright iii but remains perfectly balanced"* – sunday times, *"simultaneously hilarious & heart-rending songs about the difficulties of love in a modern world"* -the independent. [banquet](#)

**wand : hard knox** all of the songs on this collection have been, at one time or another, considered by james jackson toth for inclusion on a wooden wand album. most of these tracks were recorded between 2002 & 2007, just prior to the retirement of the wooden wand name. certainly, collections of demos, outtakes & home recordings are often bogus but all of the cuts contained herein are 'songs' in the traditional sense (toth's experiments in "surf harmonica" & "doom zydeco" have not been chronicled here, no matter how deep & plentiful those archives may be). everything here was recorded on either a roland br-8 digital 8-track or it's flashier, more cosmopolitan cousin, the br-1600, with assistance from jexie lynn, who accompanies toth on many of these songs. you wouldn't know you were listening to a collection of supposed rejects unless he'd told us – this could so easily have existed as another quality wooden wand album in it's own right. [ecstatic peace](#)

**telegraphs : we were ghosts** finally, the eagerly anticipated debut album from brighton's alt-indie-rock titans, telegraphs, hits the shelves. the album has been produced by dave eringa (idlewild, manic street preachers). for fans of fighting with wire or biffy clyro. *"for a band that revels in pop-rock structures, telegraphs' debut could have been a limited, restrained affair. fortunately, 'we were ghosts' laughs in the face of that foolish concern, threatening to break its edges at every turn. the real strength is the performance of lead singer darcy harrison, whose frenzied, breathy, emotive delivery evokes memories of frank turner's time with million dead, elevating the telegraphs' sound from well-trained house pet to furious beast bashing around in a cage. this is an intelligent, feisty debut that lives up to all the band's early promise"* 8/10 - rocksound. [small town](#)

**crazy arm : born to ruin** it's been 3 long years in the making but at last the leading plymouth quartet unleash their debut album. bursting with ideas, musically & lyrically, 'born to ruin' combines a cornucopia of influences & defies its massive melodies & bolder song structures present everything in a highly accessible package. punk, roots, country, classic rock & hardcore jostle for position here (some styles emerging in certain songs more prominently than others) but basically it's a thrill-a-moment gallop from the trail-blazing 'asphalt' to the epic closer 'christ in concrete', with the occasional welcome let-up in between. 4/5 - [kerrang](#). [xtra mile](#)

**pisces : a lovely sight** by the late 60s, radio-delivered psychedelia had saturated even the heartland of the usa. 'a lovely sight', pisces' only attempt at an lp, never made wax but the fuzz guitar phrases & tambourine shuffle of 'dear one' instantly illustrate the band's woozy realm. deeper inside, bass scales borrowed from 'sgt. pepper' give way to who moves wrecked by bad fidelity & harsh intrusions of found audio. jefferson airplane's swirled, lysergic haight street utopia melds with the urban narcosis of the velvet underground's east village...but pisces hailed from another ghost town altogether : rockford, illinois. the unsettling balance of their unissued lp combines homespun psychedelic vision & second-hand studio trickery with naive readings of the rock sound of the day, resulting in a diverse, haunted rock headspace few coastal bands ever flew through, let alone over. [the numero group](#)

**mike oldfield : tubular bells (deluxe edition)** this new deluxe edition version of mike oldfield's 1973 groundbreaking album has been repackaged into a 2cd & dvd set, featuring a newly remastered version of the original album by mike oldfield plus a new 5.1 mix. *"arguably the finest conglomeration of off-centered instruments concerted together to form a single unique piece. a variety of instruments are combined to create an excitable multitude of rhythms, tones, pitches, & harmonies that all fuse neatly into each other, resulting in an astounding plethora of music... a divine excursion into the realm of new age music"* 5/5 - [amg](#). [mercury](#)

**the rolling stones : some girls (2009 remaster)** 'some girls' introduced a whole new generation to the music of the stones. opening with the disco-blues thump of 'miss you', this is a tough, focused & exciting record, full of more hooks & energy than any stones record since 'exile on main st'. their rockers sound harder & nastier than they had in years. 'some girls' may not have the back-street aggression of their 60's records, or the majestic, drugged-out murk of their early-70s work but its brand of glitzy, decadent hard rock still makes it a definitive stones album. [universal](#)

**the rolling stones : emotional rescue (2009 remaster)** first issued in 1980, produced by jagger & richards under their glimmer twins guise. coasting on the success of 'some girls', the stones offered more of the same on 'emotional rescue'. comprised of leftovers from the previous album's sessions & hastily written new numbers, the record may consist mainly of filler but it's expertly written & performed filler. the stones toss off throwaways like the reggae-fuelled, mail-order bride anthem 'send it to me' or rockers like 'summer romance' & 'where the boys go' with an authority that makes the record a guilty pleasure, even if it's clear that only 2 songs - the icy but sexy disco-rock of 'emotional rescue' & the revamped chuck berry rocker 'she's so cold' - come close to being classic stones. [universal](#)

**the rolling stones : tattoo you (2009 remaster)** another undisputed classic. like 'emotional rescue' before it, 'tattoo you' was comprised primarily of leftovers but unlike its predecessor, it never sounds that way. instead, 'tattoo you' captures the stones at their best as a professional stadium-rock band. divided into a rock & roll side & a ballad side, the album delivers its share of thrills on the tight, dynamic first side & a set of effortless, excellent ballads on the later part of the record. 'start me up', remains one of the band's best loved songs & a mainstay of their live set. *"an essential latter-day stones album"* - [amg](#). [universal](#)

**the rolling stones : undercover (2009 remaster)** produced by the glimmer twins & chris kimsey, 1983's 'undercover' highlights the nastier side of the stones. as the rolling stones' most ambitious album since 'some girls', 'undercover' is a weird, wild mix of hard rock, new wave pop, reggae, dub & soul. even with all the careening musical eclecticism, what distinguishes 'undercover' is its bleak, nihilistic attitude - it's teeming with sickness, with violence, kinky sex & loathing dripping from almost every song & it makes for a fascinating record. [universal](#)

**spectrum : war sucks** this ep features 2 covers - a re-worked version of the red crayola classic 'war sucks' & laurie anderson's overlooked gem 'walking & falling', plus 2 originals 'over & over' & 'azzle dazzle mind'. between the 4 tracks it covers the whole gamut of spectrum's take on pop, psychedelia, rock & experimental sounds, hinting at the variety of songs that will feature on the album due for release at the later in the year. [mind expansion](#)

**neil young: archives volume 1- 1963-1972** (very limited, 10xdvd / 8xcd) the set features 128 tracks, 43 unreleased recordings, 3 live concerts, a 236-page full-colour hardcover book (dvd version only) & young's debut feature film 'journey through the past' (dvd only), which is being released for the first time since its 1973 theatrical run. this is the 1<sup>st</sup> volume of the 'archives series' of box sets, produced by neil young himself. volume 1 covers the period from his earliest recordings with the squires in winnipeg, 1963, through to his classic 1972 album harvest & beyond, including studio & live tracks with buffalo springfield, crosby stills nash & young & crazy horse. if you're at all interested in this, you'll probably already read acres of press telling you how great it is (of course) & have been waiting with anticipation through its many release date delays, saving up / thinking of suitable justification for spending all that money. you won't need us to tell you any more, except this : it's ridiculously limited, so if you want one, buy it now. it's not like you'll regret it. [reprise](#)

**status quo: picturesque matchstickable messages from the status quo (deluxe edition)** (2cd) the 1968 debut album by status quo comes re-mastered with a bonus disc of unreleased material, new notes by david wells & a booklet full of rare photos & memorabilia. this record featured none of the band's better-known boogie rock of the mid-70s. instead, 'picturesque...' is a psychedelic effort that operates in the same sound worlds as the bee gees or the beatles at that time. even if this is not the most representative album from status quo, it is a great psychedelic pop exercise that includes very imaginative guitar phrases ('ice in the sun') & some brilliantly unusual sounds (the epic 'paradise flat'). worth having for the unbeatable 'pictures of matchstick men' alone but the whole album's ace. [sanctuary](#)

**status quo: spare parts (deluxe edition)** originally released in september 1969, this was the band's final exploration of psychedelia. urged by pye's request to reach the charts at any rate, the songs in the record reflect the band's frustrated attempts to please the company. however, a friendly & deep listening reveals that 'spare parts' is an underrated effort in some aspects with many of the songs sounding really inventive & it deserved more attention than people were willing to afford it when it was released. the album covers a number of songs by carole king, including 'you're just what i was looking for today' & 'velvet curtains'. this deluxe 2-cd edition comes re-mastered with a bonus disc of unreleased material, new notes by david wells & a booklet full of rare photos & memorabilia. [sanctuary](#)

**the faces : best of - good boys when they're asleep** to mark the 40th anniversary since the faces were first formed, this compilation has been reissued. this wonderful 19 track collection includes all their hits & favourites including 'stay with me', 'cindy incidentally', 'you can make me dance sing or anything', 'pool hall richard' & 'ooh la la' (used recently as music for the national lottery tv ad campaign). for those unfamiliar with the faces, this best of collection will provide a snapshot to some of the early work of 2 of the most iconic figures in british rock history (namely rod stewart & ronnie wood). [rhino tv](#)

**cake : motorcade of generosity** cake's debut gets a remastered reissue, featuring previously unreleased rare live performance footage from their first headline tour. cake epitomized the post-modern, irony-drenched aesthetic of 90's geek-rock. their sound freely mixed & matched pastiches of widely varying genres white-boy funk, hip-hop, country, new wave pop, jazz, college rock & guitar rock - with a particular delight in the clashes that resulted. their songs were filled with lyrical non sequiturs, pop-culture references & smirky satire, all delivered with bone-dry detachment by speak-singing frontman john mccrea. "there are enough standouts here to easily qualify 'motorcade' as a keeper" - [amg](#). [upbeat](#)

**janis ian : janis ian** recorded when she was just 15 years old, 'janis ian' was released in 1967 & captured the frustrations, awkwardness, & inner turmoil of teenaged existence with a clarity & maturity well beyond her tender age. a dozen labels rejected it before it found release on verve & it might have sunk without trace were it not for leonard bernstein's endorsement of 'society girl', the controversial, shangri-las-esque recording about interracial romance. a radio station in atlanta was burned to the ground for playing it & janis received death threats for writing it. but like they say there's no such thing as bad publicity & with shangri-las producer, shadow morton, at the helm & a crack team of session musos this baroque folk-pop masterpiece was destined for cult status at the very least & as it turned out the higher reaches of the billboard chart. [now sounds](#)

**chapterhouse : whirlpool - the original recordings** hailing from reading in the late 80s/early 90s, chapterhouse were a key part of the british shoegaze scene. rehearsing for well over a year before committing anything to demo for record companies, they quickly reached the top of their game with their peak arguably being a performance following nirvana at the 1991 reading festival. releases from chapterhouse have been very hard to track down, due to being out-of-print for many years but space age recordings have rectified this with a re-issue of the original 'whirlpool' recordings. featuring 3 extra tracks, including the never before released 'thrasher' & longer/alternate mixes of 'something more', 'rain' & 'guilt'. [space age recordings](#)

**gavin bryars : the sinking of the titanic - live bourges april 1990** often cited as one of the seminal works in 20th century composition, this piece took a giant evolutionary step with this recording. performed at the chateau d'eau in bourges over the course of 2 days in 1990, the composition gained a number of new elements that greatly informed its more recent incarnation, as heard on the touch-released version with philip jeck & alter ego. the strings were reconfigured from the piece's original arrangement (the earliest version of the sinking of the titanic dates back as far as 1969) & new percussive elements were introduced. this is a stunningly evocative & moving realisation of bryars' music & one that shouldn't be missed - even by those of you already familiar with its various other recordings. [ltm](#)

**v/a : auteur labels factory records 1984** previous releases in ltm's splendid auteur labels series have managed to condense the key works on new hormones, crepuscule & factory benelux on to single discs, this was never going to be the case with factory itself, so here's a year in the life of manchester's greatest ever label. 1984 brings you new order (of course), as well as long term labelmates durutti column & section 25 but also features lots of factory's lesser known but still great smaller acts, mainly produced by the label's new multitasking in-house production team, new order, under their be music alias. only 2 tracks cross over with the factory box set, so this is a valuable addition to the factory catalogue on cd, especially for great songs like quado quango's 'atom rock', featuring a classic johnny marr guitar riff. let's hope ltm get to do the same for the rest of the factory catalogue. [ltm](#)

**philip glass : the essential** a budget priced introduction to the modern composer. born in baltimore in 1937, glass discovered music in his father's radio repair shop. he began the violin at 6 & took up the flute at 8 & also became an accomplished pianist. over the years, he has composed a large collection of original music, much of it for use by theatre companies & his own performing group, the philip glass ensemble. this cd collects together just a small selection of some of these pieces & serves as a bite size introduction to the incredible genius of philip glass' mesmerising compositions. [sony](#)

## dance/electonica

**traject : birting** traject is the working name of icelandic minimal ambient techno & electro acoustic experimental composer gisli thor gudmundsson, whose only previous solo release was the 2004 mini-album 'strengir hrynja'. this is an incredible record that starts out with dark bass tones that wouldn't have been out of place on burial's debut before moving into the kind of murky soundscapes that murcof creates & exploring the more beaty & glitchy idm end of things, recalling the likes of autechre, gescom & aphex twin but somewhat starker. with 14 tracks of ice cold electronics, ritualistic ambient techno & obscure rhythmical experiments, 'birting' is seriously some of the most epically impressive left-field electronica we've heard for ages. high recommended. "*abstract, deep sea techno, recalling the golden moments of 90s intelligent dance music...there's an immense sonic depth & range on display in these pieces*" – [the wire](#). [creative space](#)

**alva noto/ryuichi sakamoto with ensemble modern : utp** (cd & dvd) on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the city of mannheim, alva noto (carsten nicolai) & ryuichi sakamoto were invited to develop an audio-visual performance together with ensemble modern. the music devised by noto & sakamoto for their audio-visual tribute deviates considerably from the formulae set out by their prior releases 'vrioon', 'insen' & 'repev', embracing not only the electronic & piano-based palettes of old but also an expanded array of avant-garde chamber instrumentation & a host of natural timbres. the album that lies ahead is a restless & multilayered stream of ideas & beautifully realised composition. [raster noton](#)

**freeland : cope** breakbeat don dj/producer adam freeland returns with a genre-masher with feet in both the rock & breakbeat camps in a prodigy or unkle fashion. this time he's brought along a few friends to help out too including joey santiago (pixies), twiggy ramirez & jerry casale (devo), as well as chief vocalist kurt baumann who aims for a ragged mark e smith style on the lcd soundsystem-eque 'under control'. as the album progresses freeland's production grows more assured, with 'silent speaking' seeing new york shoegaze crew soundpool crop up in terrific droning fashion & 'best fish tacos in ensenda' providing as sturdy a piece of dancefloor excellence as simian mobile disco or underworld would churn out. "*an ambitious work, executed with the precision & flair to be expected of its skilled producer*" – [bbc](#). [marine parade](#)

**spyweirdos : ten letters** (cd & dvd) spyros polychronopoulos, aka spyweirdos, is arguably the best known contemporary greek experimental electronic producer, with 5 previous albums to his name since 2003 & has collaborated with or been remixed by some of today's most important sound artists, including alva noto, octex, b. fleischmann, traject & murcof. at present he is completing a phd on acoustics & noise control. 'ten letters' is his most abstract work by far, with distorted fields & high frequencies creating the melodic elements. also included is a dvd of 10 short films created to accompany the respective cd tracks, in the same mood as the audio with abstract layers & landscapes building geometrical shapes. 'ten letters' develops emotional sonic landscapes from a combination of minimal glitch electronica & acoustic instrumentation with the post-production provided by murcof. for fans of alva noto, kanding ray or lawrence english. [creative space](#)

**steve bug : collaboratory** german tech-house uberlord steve bug boosts his credentials with a set of collaboratory tracks roping his buddies in for some non-perspiring action. 'swallowed too much bass' with paris the black fu of detroit grand pubahs gets it rolling with a sleazy touch, before cassy steals the scene with the awesome slow acid of 'strong moment'. his collab with stringent soul minimalist donnacha costello is another good reason to check this out, as bug pits his big room friendly tech-house against costello's rich surface textures for a successful meeting of minds. a solid album for lovers of the deep tech sound. [poker flat](#)

**hecuba : paradise** hecuba is isabelle albuquerque & jon beasley & here they present 10 powerful, straightforward songs brimming with synthesizers, strings, horns & melodies - a vibrant record with broad strokes & intense details. as comfortable on the dance floor as in the concert hall, 'paradise' moves from sparse, introspective moments to harsh, violent crashes & syncopated beats; from ranchero trumpet blasts to full on orchestral pop & 50's crooner electro-bop. 'paradise' is fabulously weird & not in an ironic lets-piss-around-with-keyboards-&-call-it-art kind of way. for fans of roisin murphy & matthew herbert. [manimal vinyl](#)

### **william orbit : my oracle lives uptown**

this is orbit's 8th album & his signature sound - sleek & lush but leaving a cool slipstream in its wake - is immediately recognisable. most of the tracks feature vocals, even if they are only textures in the mix & their placement within the track is planned with a remixer's ear for shifts of perspective. *"this is more of a party record than the previous ones"*, says william orbit of his new album. *"it's not a serious, po-faced record, it's not ambient - although it has its ambient moments. i would say that it's upbeat with a bit of glitter on it"*. although this is probably orbit's most immediate album, it's so subtly layered that it only reveals itself fully after a number of plays & like his other solo albums, it will surely be resistant to the ageing process. *"the dreamy optical illusions washes over you in gorgeously drowsy electronic waves...orbit has no need to reinvent the wheel - this has become his sound & once again it's irresistible"* 4/5 - [mojo](#). [kobalt digital](#)

### **the emperor machine : space beyond the egg**

as the 1960s turned into the 70s, a generation of acid-fried hippy musos began creating their visions of inner & outer space with the help of the cutting-edge technology of the time - bloody huge synthesisers! tangerine dream, hawkwind, can & others retreated to the studio to fiddle with their knobs, & the emperor machine wishes he was there with them. this, his 3rd crack of the egg, owes as much to these prog pioneers as it does the balearic & nu-disco movement of today, with plenty of progressive beats, disco bass & tribal rhythms thrown in for ultimate dancefloor satisfaction. *"smacked-out, kraut-derived disco grooves layered with an embarrassment of whooshing, brain-frying analogue synths - the result is motorik psychedelia writ large, basically, & totally irresistible"* - [fact](#). [dc recordings](#)

### **black meteoric star : black meteoric star**

black meteoric star is the latest project from nyc's favourite bearded hippie gavin russom. the long-time dfa alumni has decamped to berlin & is making acid-house-esque stuff, inspired by equal parts eurodisco, wonky early electronic body music from america's midwest & a fascination with the outer reaches of global psychedelic rock. a channel for his interest in "dance music & dance culture", black meteoric star is a significant departure from the melancholic, mellifluous 'days of mars' lp that gavin recorded with delia gonzalez & instead pays dark-hued homage to the raw, rhythmic psychedelia of the late 80s chicago underground. on each track, russom creates rich sonic landscapes using minimal but intense arrangements & high-energy repetition. [dfa](#)

### **worriedaboutsatan : arrivals**

strangely, these guys have been referred to repeatedly in the realm of post-rock which made me double check what i was listening to when i first put this on the stereo. the references that come to mind are much more in the glitch-tronica area as worriedaboutsatan take elements of ambient drone, minimal techno, glitchy idm & dubstep & wrap them all in their own warm blanket. gavin miller & tom ragsdale take you into the depths of the night & immerse you in their weaving, beautiful beats & rhythms, resulting in a down-right captivating listen, with the tension & menace gradually building through each passage. highly recommended for fans of four tet, apparat, kettel or isan. *"there is no way this album was recorded on earth. it wasn't recorded in any place with an oxygen supply anyway"*- [comfort comes](#), *"creepy, organic, nearly always-tension-building electronic ambience"* 8/10 - [dis](#). [gizeh records](#)

### **v/a : my favorite things volume 2**

a great selection of deep, forward-thinking house music selected by label boss toshiya kawasaki. constructed more as opening-hour fare than a soundtrack for the last few stragglers, the compilation blends sticky house with pretty psychedelic minimal, each given plenty of room to stretch & recline as the light heavies with night. collecting mostly unreleased tracks from regular contributors & newcomers to the label, the tracklist is a modest marvel, loaded with upper-crusters like isolée, ame & dj koze, who delivers the highlight of the album with 'first snow', showing the rest of the field how it's done with a thick swipe of sub bass drive propping up intangibly floaty atmospheres & looped disco strings. fans of kompakt & freerange should check this! *"lush set, recommended"* - [boomkat](#). [mule electronic](#)

### **holger zilske : holz**

the artist better known as bpitch control's smash tv reverts to his birth name for a new long player on playhouse. this album moves further away from the party styles of his smash tv project with a dry & heavy house sound. tracks like 'roter rausch' leave the sweaty club vibes behind in favour of comforting waves of sub bass heave & intricate electronica crafted with a deep house attention to detail. 'druckraum' will certainly appeal to the dub house heads as it licks up dub-chord sequences with the later hours in mind, but it's tracks like 'golden' where zilske really makes his mark. featuring wispy tendrils of vox from august landelius & kai preussner's shimmering shoegaze guitars reminiscent of ulrich schnauss that should certify this as a late night must for lovers of all things post-minimal & berlin orientated. [playhouse](#)

### **drumattic twins : hammer & tongs**

well i never knew! drumattic twins were previously early hardcore/breakbeat outfit shades of rhythm, which certainly explains why their work as drumattic twins knows a thing or two about dropping breakbeat dancefloor bombs. this is pure, over-excited fun, with plenty of cheesy vocal snippets, rave stabs, squelchy basslines & of course those rollin' breakbeats. fans of plump djs, freestylers & all things supercharged should check this out. *"as slick as you would expect from producers with 20 years' experience behind them"* - [bbc](#). [finger lickin'](#)

### **kevin saunderson : history elevate**

respected & acknowledged as one of the 3 detroit techno innovators, kevin saunderson is a legend in his own right who helped to reshape the future of dance music as we know it today. to celebrate his mammoth 20 years' worth of work in the game, this collection is a retrospective of his finest moments, including his remix work for the likes of pef shop boys, the presets, hercules & love affair, cameo & simian mobile disco club, as well as remixes of his own music by artists such as carl craig, mike shannon, joris voorn & john tejada. a great retrospective of a true house music veteran. [kms/fabric](#)

**v/a : shapes 0901** (2cd) tru thoughts bring us another instalment of the ever popular 'shapes' compilation series, showcasing their very impressive artist roster & covering the kind of jazz-funk-breaks-soul sound they've become renowned for. just a glance at the tracklist & you realize what a hotbed of talent the label is, with quantic, bonobo, the hot 8 brass band, belleruche, hint, the bamboos & more all getting a look in, & all at a budget price too. essential! [tru thoughts](#)

**minitel rose : the french machine** never judge a book by its cover, so they say, except if it's the cover of a minitel rose album. hailing from france, & with a mindset somewhere between 'blue monday' & 'flashdance', one glance at the trashy 'futuristic' 80s artwork will confirm what's in store, namely a hugely fun slice of electro-pop full of synthetic hooks & catchy vocals, with plenty of youthful vibrancy & pop pleasures. it certainly bears the hallmarks of fellow natives such as sebastien tellier & daft punk but is more entrenched in the 80's than a michael j. fox flick. catchy & more french than a well sported beret. [future](#)

**ada : adaptations - mixtape 1** following in the footsteps of her peer dj koze, kompakt deliver a compilation mixtape from cologne's ada, the hugely respected figurehead behind the areal & international records recordings labels. ada aka michaela dippel has represented the german house sound for the best part of a decade with a stereotypical cologne style of lush but minimal & manicured house electronics inspired by chicago. this mix presents a succinct overview of her finest remixes for the likes of tracy thorn, booka shade, alex smoke & andi teichman slotted in between remixes of her original material from dj koze, tobias thomas/michael mayer & dee pulse. [kompakt](#)

**kiki : kaiku** a longtime player with bpitch crew, finnish ex-pat kiki brings a solid flavour of his grooving elastic tech house & minimal styles to the label with his follow up to 2004's 'run with me'. kiki's sound is a well considered throb of pristine minimalism for the more glamorous side of the clublife, from the refined cello & frictionless groove of 'autumn leaves' to glinting metallic timbres & hints of slide guitar on 'after the storm' or mid-90's deep house reductions on 'good voodoo' featuring chela simone. the album's moodier moments like the badalamenti strings on 'twins' or pulsing berlin club tracks like 'mogadishu' swing the set into a darker contrast, making for a well rounded listen from end-to-end. [bpitch control](#)

**orbital : orbital 20** (2cd) unbelievably, it's been 20 years since the hartnoll brothers left their jobs as pizza deliverers to take up their highly successful & influential career in electronic music, kicking off with 'chime' in 1989. although they announced their retirement a few years back, this summer they're back for a run of their now legendary live shows coming to a festival near you. this collection rounds up their finest tracks, including 'belfast', 'satan', 'impact' & 'the box' along with live versions & remixes from hervé & tom middleton. [rhino](#)

## hip hop

**wiley : race against time** the ridiculously prolific 20 year old, richard kylea cowie, one of the original founders of grime, releases his new record on his own label. to boost 'race against time' he enlists a crew of his most trusted producers from danny weed to skream, providing substantial back up to his brand of rugged honesty. following his huge 2008 hit 'wearing my rolex' was never going to be easy but freed from the shackles of a major label deal, he produces a record loaded with hard-hitting rhymes & beats to match. [eskibeat](#)

**v/a : ynr present - feeding time at the zoo** ynr productions is undeniably one of the most respected uk hip hop labels & here they present a selection of the artists on their ever growing roster. jehst & co. have a renewed vigour & confidence that their wares are exactly the shot in the arm that uk hip hop needs - & it pretty much is. beats come from the likes of beat butcha, chemo & dj iq who all provide bumpy, progressive productions that still hark back to those beloved golden days & kashmere, sir smurf lil, joker starr, mystro, kyza, micall parknsun, jack flash & cappo all feature over its 15 tracks. the non-londoners put in sterling work with sonnyjim & kelakovski's 'flying to the moon' proving to be a stand out & double d dagger's track being sure to appeal to hip hop & grime fans alike. dubbledge's 'alphabets' is comically maverick whereas verb t's 'overworked' is on a serious tip. it's feeding time at the zoo - these animals are hungry! [ynr productions](#)

**dj zeph : batidas latinas** breakin bread continue their series of underground mix cds with a mix of latin, hip hop, beats & more made for the summer from one of cali's top beatsmiths dj zeph. featuring the likes of hector lavo, willie colon, ladybug mecca, quantic, nicodemus, ugly duckling, krs one, jay z, missy elliot, fila brazilia, kool keith, color climax, run dmc, antibalas, lateef the truth speaker, cut chemist, q tip, m.i.a., buena vista social club & loads more. for over 70 minutes, zeph takes you on a ride through beats, rhymes, rhythms & pure flavour, seamlessly mixing traditional latin with hip hop beats both old & new giving a whole new twist & vibe to the older tracks. sure to become the soundtrack to many a barbecue. [breakin bread](#)

**v/a : dj woody vs the bodysnatchers - mix series vol.1** one of the most creative minds to hit the scratch dj scene this millennium doesn't hail from the bronx or brooklyn but in fact burnley in the uk. lee woodvine, aka dj woody, has invented a whole host of groundbreaking scratch & turntable techniques, helped vestax to design the world's first ever musical turntable instrument & has 5 major uk & world dj titles to his name & he also made up one quarter of 'ninja tunes' supergroup one self. he was offered the chance to take all the previous bodysnatchers material, along with a host of exclusives from the band, to turn out a 60 minute mix that showcases his talent in 2009. containing exclusive freestyles with a host of rappers from the us & uk & a truckload of world class scratch routines, woody maderera will no doubt appeal to fans of dj q-bert. [passenger](#)

**black eyed peas : the e.n.d** fergie & co. have straddled the pop/r&b charts like a colossus for some time now & the title of their new record may suggest their time together is short but it actually stands for 'the energy never dies'. clearly will.i.am & fergie feel revitalised after their extra-curricular activities. will.i.am has stated that, if anything, the album is the beginning of a new concept, one reflective of the digital download generation. musically, the group sticks to their established slick, pop-funk sound, with the lead single 'boom boom pow' standing out as a typically boisterous & dramatic hip-hop fusion. [interscope](#)

## jazz

**hypnotic brass ensemble : hypnotic brass ensemble** not unlike the hot 8 brass band, hbe started as a street ensemble, busking on the sidewalks. after a number of self-released records & on the back of years of relentless touring & recording with the likes of erykah badu, mos def, tony allen & as part of the african express they release their debut album proper on damon albarn's honest jons label. the chicago-based jazz group features 8 sons of phil cohran (sun ra's arkestra) & their father's fight for morally upright, challenging jazz are clear inspirations here, retooled for the hip-hop era. the songs are largely stripped of solos & the arrangements are tight with nods to the songs of curtis mayfield, art ensemble of chicago & afrobeat – indeed tony allen guests on a number of tracks. their early school morning horn workouts from their father, though i'm sure resented at the time, have clearly paid dividends. recommended. [honest jons](#)

**roberto fonseca : akokan** fonseca is one of the most charismatic composers & band leaders to explode from cuba in recent times, wowed audiences as a member of buena vista social club & co-produced ibrahim ferrer's last album. an explosive pianist, fonseca's music combines cuban traditions with the lyricism of herbie hancock & the drive of mccooy tyner. recorded in just 4 days, with the help of mayra andrade & r  ul mid  n, the musicians' creative freedom & chemistry is distilled from the magical strength of the exhilarating live performances. "a fabulously gifted pianist, composer & band leader... a gift for melody that outshines more celebrated peers." - [the guardian](#). [enja](#)

**evan parker electro-acoustic ensemble : the moment's energy** evan parker, widely recognised as one of the most important saxophonists of the post coltrane period, returns with the 5th ecm disc from his trail-blazing electro-acoustic ensemble. the group's pioneering work has effectively established a model for a new kind of improvising chamber orchestra, creating fresh colours from the blending & contrasting of acoustic instruments & live electronics. the latest edition is the largest yet – the current 14-strong line-up includes improvisers, composers, & sonic scientists. with more acoustic instruments in the mix, the group now embraces both the ancient & the modern. similarly, the borders between improvisation & composition are dissolved in this music. [ecm](#)

**cyminology : as ney** 3<sup>rd</sup> release & ecm debut for a young band already making waves internationally. cyminology proposes a unique intercultural chamber jazz, by turns poetic, sensual, melancholic, dynamic & pulsating. based in berlin the band features a singer of iranian descent, an indian drummer, a french-born pianist & a german bassist. cymin samawatie is not only a charismatic frontwoman but also the author of most of the music & lyrics; she writes texts in farsi (persian) & sets them to her own music, often developed through improvising. she also sings classic sufi texts from masters of persian poetry, & 20th verse of iranian proto-feminist farough farrokhz  d. the sound & melody of the language itself establishes a direction & atmosphere, creatively explored by the musicians. "cyminology is one of ecm's best finds in recent years. 'as ney' is an album that speaks across borders with quiet but nevertheless passionate beauty." – [allaboutjazz](#). [ecm](#)

## country

**gretchen peters & tom russell : one to the heart, one to the head** you may never have heard of gretchen peters but you have probably heard her songs many of which have been recorded by etta james, bonnie raitt, the neville brothers, & neil diamond. tom russell is no song-writing slouch either, & his songs have been recorded by johnny cash, nancy griffith, joe ely, kd lang, ramblin' jack elliot & many other great artists. they got together earlier in the year to record an album largely of covers & turn their gaze back to the american west with songs celebrating its land, its mythology & its inhabitants. they cover numbers by the likes of bob dylan, townes van zandt & bonnie raitt. "the frontier may be long dead, but peters & russell sure do an excellent job of making it come alive again, however briefly, in song." – [popmatters](#). [western songs](#)

**hank williams : the unreleased recordings - gospel keepsakes** these are the songs that williams wanted to play & sing when he was with his people. when he made these recordings for the mother's best flour radio shows in 1951, hank made sure that religious music was well represented. he performed old time jubilees, formal hymns, gospel songs & southern quartet music, & they're gathered for the 1<sup>st</sup> time here. includes a never-before-released version of one of the most popular hymns of the 20th century, 'i saw the light', as well as a previously unreleased version of the southern gospel standard 'thirty pieces of silver'. a very rich assortment of spiritual songs that captures the father of country music at his most impassioned. [time life](#)

**amanda shires : west cross timbers** 'west cross timbers' showcases the traditional fiddle prowess & songwriting ability of one of the most sought after players on the americana circuit. best known in the uk for her touring with singer-songwriter rod picott, this is the much anticipated follow-up to her album 'being brave' & is produced by david henry & rod picott. this girl produces first rate songs in the alt-country style are first rate & her delivery is understated in a way that causes the songs stick with you long after the disc ends. [amanda shires](#)

## folk

**brett dennen : hope for the hopeless** the north californian singer-songwriter delivers a new album containing 11 narrative rich songs. a deliberately careful songwriter with an at times dylanesque flair for unlikely rhymes, a certain nick drake-like fragility (due in large part to his voice, which is pitched high & sounds at times eerily like billie holiday) & a subtle african pop feel (he has femi kuti singing backing vocals on one of the songs here), brett dennen is certainly singular & at his best, he catches a breezy, mellow groove that allows his thoughtful songs to truly shine. *"dennen shows himself to be a unique voice & talent" – amg, "he's timeless. he's probably twenty-five but he seems like he's twenty-five in 1972" – john mayer.* [downtown](#)

## world

**tony allen : secret agent** allen's 2<sup>nd</sup> solo release since becoming a founder member of the good the bad & the queen. he has long been acknowledged as africa's finest kit drummer & one of the continent's most influential musicians. with fela kuti, allen co-created afrobeat - the hard driving, horns rich, funk-infused, politically insurrectionary style which became such a dominant force in african music. this album represents a return to those roots. the music is foursquare in the afrobeat tradition - nagging tenor guitar, funky keyboards, soulful call & response vocals & fat, full throated, hard riffing horns - with a few twists. at its heart, of course, is the beat itself. allen drives the music on, straight as an arrow, in a loose-limbed ragged shuffle, fusing the cross rhythms into one irresistible forward motion. *"a magisterial display, as you'd expect" –independent.* [world circuit](#)

**oi va voi : travelling the face of the globe** the band's 4<sup>th</sup> album seems to have come out of nowhere – we'd kind of assumed they'd disappeared forever but instead they have returned, sounding invigorated & stronger than ever. exploring the same kind of territories as calexico, devotchka & a hawk & a hacksaw but with a slightly lighter approach & the odd smokey vocals & jazzy interludes, this record sounds like it could be the one that finally makes their name. pizzicato violin, rattling percussion, clarinet, trumpet & soaring violin all provide the basis for their sound. *"the uk finally has a band to match the best of the current american groups who are exploring alternatives to the guitar, bass, keyboard & drum line-up" 4/5 – omm.* [oi va voi](#)

**victor olaiya : victor olaiya's all stars soul international** (cd & lp) *"it was believed that my highlife was a little bit out of this world, beyond explanation. this was why alhaji alade odunewu of the daily times styled me the evil genius of highlife" - victor olaiya.* olaiya is one of the legendary foundation stones of modern nigerian music, yet he has never received much acknowledgement or had his albums released in any quantity outside of nigeria. his band acted as a training ground for future stars – the likes of sir victor uwaifo, fela kuti, tony allen, king sunny ade & joni haastrup all served apprenticeships in his various bands. on this album from 1970 he had clearly been taking notes from soul brother number one - mr james brown & the cocktail of funk & highlife is quite a heady one. each track bleeds into the next & he loosely alternates between funkier & jazzier highlife tunes which are all blessed with bright joyful arrangements. recommended. [vampisoul](#)

**fred fisher atalobhor : african carnival** (2cd) the 70s was a vibrant musical period universally & the scene in nigeria was no exception. bands sprang up all over, free to fuse their traditional music with soul, funk & pop. in the midst of this creative turmoil, an effervescent style innovator called fred fisher – famed trombonist, vocalist, composer, songwriter - hit the world with his talent. since 1972 fisher has recorded albums for emi & afrodisia creating & defining his so called "asolo rock" - a blend of afro funk-rock with soulful melodies. his band opened at one time for fela kuti, who swiftly poached his guitarist bob ohiri & who eventually left for king sunny ade's band. this comp takes the best from fisher's albums : 'say the truth', 'no way', 'wahala dey for town' & 'ogiza'. fred fisher is finally starting to get the recognition he deserves. [vampisoul](#)

**soznak : dear dad tango** an exciting product of the increasing ethnic diversity in the north-east of england, this newcastle based band's sound is a life-affirming synthesis of the collective musical heritage of its constituents. the rich blend of styles in the music reflects the breadth of cultural interplay among the band members who have made their homes in newcastle. during regular al fresco street gigs soznak has had the city dancing to many world beats. there are strong elements of soukous & afro-cuban strands but other musical ingredients surface through the mix, derived from spain, latin america, angola, congo, cameroon, iran, iraq & ireland, creating a unique & joyful sound. [home made records](#)

**sara tavares : xinti** the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation afro-portuguese songwriter's new album is full of "sunshine soul" with a strong tavares trademark. with cape verdian guitar licks & warm portuguese vocals, 'xinti' is another step forward of this young talented singer/song writer from portugal with cape verdian roots. the single 'bue' is a strong contender for the feel good hit of the year. she never sounded so sparkling. [world connection](#)

## reggae

**laurel aitken : the high priest of reggae** by the dawn of the 70s, aitken was established as the uk's top jamaican singing star. following his move from jamaica in 1960 he had acquired a faithful following in britain & beyond. by 1970, he had provided pama with a series of best-selling singles & the hugely popular, 'scandal in brixton market' but with demand for his works showing no signs of diminishing, the company decided to collect a dozen of his most popular sides to date for what became this compilation. all told, 'high priest' is a superb album, doubling as an aitken's greatest-hits collection from the reggae era. now includes 13 bonus tracks from those '69 sessions. [pressure drop](#)

**laurel aitken : scandal in a brixton market** early in '69, pama records acquired the much sought after signature of the ex-skatalite, aitken & the achievement was rightly regarded as a major coup by the london-based operation. over the weeks that immediately followed, laurel duly provided pama with a number of best-selling singles but such was the demand for the singer's music, pama wasted little time in issuing a long-playing collection : 'scandal in brixton market'. featuring a handful of previously released sides along with 7 recordings exclusive to the collection, the lp also featured guest appearances from girlie & celebrated trombonist, rico rodriguez. now available again in its entirety, the original dozen tracks are augmented by an additional 13 from laurel's sojourn at pama & local rivals, bamboo. [pressure drop](#)

## vinyl

**kreng : l'aurpsie phenomenale de dieu** (limited to 400, on green vinyl) pieced together from a plethora of unidentified samples, field recordings & found sounds, kreng taps into a unique, almost indescribable corner of the musical universe that originates from (& proceeds to completely re-imagine), the world of music for film & theatre. the 11 pieces here were, indeed, originally made for a variety of theatre productions & retain that illusory quality that's so often associated with arts-based music but without any of the pretension or impenetrability that generally goes hand in hand with this kind of material. there's an intensely overbearing darkness to this work, covered by a dense thicket of layered drones & fuzzy sound recordings but as each piece progresses, narrow cracks begin to emerge, letting in shards of colour & light. [miasmah](#)

**white hills : heads on fire** (1000 limited ed lp + download code) 'heads on fire' was originally released only on cd in 2007 by british label rocket recordings. this is its first appearance on lp format. "*their wall of guitar, hawkwind meets the stooges meets monster magnet meets the heads is tough to beat, every song drenched in wild outer space pounding beneath an avalanche of psychedelic guitar, the vocals, shadows flitting across the molten surface of these tracks, barely audible just dense fuzz*" – aquarius, "*it throws down grungy distorted layers of sludge that relentlessly churn along. it's neither subtle nor pretty, but goddamn it rocks. they take the space rock template & inject it with a battered fucked-up new york punk spirit*" -drowned in sound. [thrill jockey](#)

**bardo pond : gazing at shilla** (limited edition pressing of 1000 copies) this is the 1<sup>st</sup> of four vinyl only bardo related releases coming out on important & comes on vinyl heavy enough to hold some of bardo pond's headiest jams. the two pieces, both very different in sound & feel, have sat patiently in the bardo archive waiting for the most opportune moment for release. 'eight-thousanders' & 'kali' are both entirely improvised pieces with no overdubs. slide blissfully into a smokey heaven & then forget your mind in a lower world of strange tones on side a. if you're still able to flip the record when the needle hits the runoff groove, you'll find yourself exposed to the goddess kali's naked blackness. [important](#)

**alasehir : torment of the metals** (limited edition of 500 copies pressed on virgin vinyl). the 2<sup>nd</sup> in the four part bardo pond related vinyl set on important. alasehir is grounded stoner heavy-zen & guitar out-crunch hailing from the bardo axis. alasehir's 4th release, following a cd apiece for the important, archive & siltbreeze labels, "*continues their sonic exploration of dense, languorous, free expansion. billowing & exploding like a cluster of hashish stars, they produce a cosmic energy akin to a quasar in the heavens far left of coltrane's om & just right of the galaxy known as dead c's harsh '70s reality.*" - [siltblog](#). [important](#)

**alumbrados : monochord** (limited edition of 500 copies pressed on virgin vinyl). the 3<sup>rd</sup> in the four part bardo pond related vinyl set on important. "*deep in the forest ethno-drones, drenched in buzz & shimmer. sitar, guitar, cumbas & all sorts of percussion create exquisite layers psych drone nirvana that will transport you to another dimension. strangely peaceful, the music we hear in our heads when we lay in grass at night staring at the stars.*" - [aquarius records](#). [important](#)

**moon phantoms : moon phantoms** (v. limited, on virgin vinyl). the 4<sup>th</sup> release in the simultaneously released 4 part bardo pond related vinyl set on important. moon phantoms is a collaboration of bardo pond, alasehir & suishou no fune. "we suishou no fune & alasehir played an east coast tour of one week together again in the autumn, 2007. during the autumn concert tour, we had felt like that moon always chased us. i believed that we, suishou no fune & alasehir could be one band under this special moonlight. the next day, i spoke my wish to perform music in one band to the members & pirako kurenai of suishou no fune". [important](#)

**lydia lunch : big sexy noise** it was only a matter of time...lydia lunch has collaborated with terry edwards, james johnston & ian white in a variety of musical guises for the last 10 years. the 3 rabble rousers from gallon drunk have, in a series of ever morphing configurations, collaborated with lydia in creating psycho-ambient soundscapes in the service of propelling forth spoken word exorcisms in her decade-long prophecies of societal collapse, moral bankruptcy & global corruption. 'big sexy noise' is the primeval bump, grind & holler of white's thuggish drums, johnston's moronic low-tuned riffing & edwards' brutal organ & sax interventions led by lunch's take-no-prisoners vocals. [sartorial](#)

**gnod : gnod** (limited) since early 2007, the manchester based cosmic collective gnod have been building a hell of a reputation as a 'must see' live band providing supports to the likes of the sun ra arkestra under direction of marshall allen, acid mothers temple & sonic boom. this record comprises 2 sides of free-sprawling jams & psyched-out space rock, captured live & raw, then fucked with, just a little, before being cut to wax for good measure. previously available only at gigs, there are limited copies available of this release, so act fast!. - fans of sunburned hand of the man, no neck blues band & amon duul won't be disappointed. [gnod](#)

**tape : luminarium** thrill jockey

**the warlocks : the mirror explodes** tee pee

**booker t : potato hole** anti/epitaph

**malcolm middleton : waxing gibbous** full time hobby

## soundtracks

**v/a : girl in a suitcase (upgraded)** (2cd) the original 'girl in a suitcase' collection of tunes from tv, film & radio from the 1960s to the 1980s has long been deleted. finally it is has been re-released in expanded form with a giddy 60 tracks that feature even more 'cult classics' of easy listening, from the era when catchy themes for programmes & interludes were the order of the day. sit back & remember the good ol' days with music from such famed television series as the avengers, the sweeney, spy trap, mary mungo & midge, new scotland yard, angels, animal magic & vision on, classic radio signature tunes for pick of the pops (ba-ba-ba bababa baa-baa-baabaa!!!) & the jimmy young show, the music used for the testcard transmission & the bbc close-down music & much much more besides. they don't make them like this any more... whr

## dvd

**acid mothers temple : acid mothers temple festival volume 5** (region 0, limited to 1000 copies) this is the live footage of the full concert of amt fest. vol.5 (dec.2006) in nagoya japan featuring mani neumeier (drums, percussion, voice: guru guru), kuriyama jun (voice: ex.ox) as well as tsuyama atsushi (monster bass, voice, recorder, guitar), higashi hiroshi (synth, guitar, voice), kawabata makoto (guitar, voice), kitagawa hao (voice), & tabata mitsuru (freak out). recommended to all acid mothers fans! acid mothers temple

**paul weller : just a dream** (ltd. hardback dvd/dvd) 'just a dream' is the bookend of an incredible year that saw weller deliver a critically acclaimed number 1 album '22 dreams', receive a brit award for best male solo artist & sell out 3 uk tours. the main dvd features the full 90min live session recorded by paul for the bbc, first televised in december 2008, 21 tracks in all & includes 6 previously unseen performances. other features include a 5-track session recorded for channel 4, videos & an exclusive end-of-2008 interview. island

## singles

### single of the week

**michachu : golden phone** limited 7" on gold vinyl. rough trade (yes, it's single of the week again - there's simply no contest!)

**rose elinor dougall : start/stop/synchro** limited white 7"(1000 only). elefant

**cave : made in malasia** 7" v. limited important

**yo majesty : don't let go (radio slave remix)** limited 12". domino

**blank dogs : waiting / spitting** limited 7". in the red

**elvis costello : complicated shadows** limited 7". hear music

**joy joseph : our love is taking us through/out of all the boys & the girls** 7". frizz

**hatcham social : crocodile** ltd 7". fierce panda

**silent film project : two days** ltd 7". kids

**cheap time : woodland drive / penny & jenny** limited 7". in the red

**real estate : fake blues / pool swimmers** limited 7". woodsist

**vivian girls : wild eyes / my baby wants me dead** v.limited 7". wild world

**the lemonheads : i just can't take it anymore** 7". cooking vinyl

**thee oh sees : tidal wave / heart sweats** limited 7". woodsist

**vibes : psychic** limited 7". not not fun

**wave machines : i go i go i go** 7" neapolitan

**duchess says : begging the three ts** 10" back yard recordings

**sound of guns : architects** limited 7" with cd. distiller

**dave house / gavin osborn : lungs / hello, my name's charlie** 7". banquet

**julie doiron / calm down, it's monday : heavy snow / sweetest may** 7" k records

**pseudo nippon : edamame freakout** 7" o.i.b. records

**decoration : square mile** 7". 13sides

**tigers that talked : black heart blue eyes** 7" bad sneakers