

# what we've been listening to...

with such an insane & somewhat overwhelming amount of music available, we thought you might like to know what's really been working for us lately. so, here's a run down of what's been keeping our ears & souls happy this month.....

## derry

**thee silver mt. zion : 13 blues for thirteen moons** if you've been lucky enough to see silver mt zion live over the last year or so, these are the songs that made up most of their set, including what for me is their best moment ever, the epic '1,000,000 died to make this sound'. where most bands seem to peak early & fade away, the greater understanding between the musicians seems to inspire silver mt zion to higher & higher levels  
[constellation](#)

**nick cave & the bad seeds : dig, lazarus, dig!!!** deceptively simple & straight forward sounding album from the most consistently brilliant musician of the last 30 years. this album reveals more depth, subtlety & wit with every listen. a particular highlight is the mammoth autobiographical album closer 'more news from nowhere'. if you've ever bought a nick cave album, you definitely need this one too. [mute](#)

**v/a : african scream contest - raw & psychedelic afro sounds from benin & togo 70s** with the release of the 'ethiopiquest' compilation, 'nigeria special' & 'nigeria disco funk special' it seems like there's never been a better time for african 70s music than now. this album shows that there was a lot more to the african/funk/psychedelic crossover than just fela kuti & the nigerian scene. totally essential. [analog africa](#)

## natasha

**rod modell : incense & black light** if like me, you couldn't get enough of last year's 'deepchord presents : echospace – the coldest season', then you'll be wanting to get your hands on this beauty from deepchord's rod modell. seriously hypnotic, spaced out, dense, dubby compositions. this album leaves me feeling all woozy & contemplative & awestruck at the same time. breathtaking! [plop](#)

**fuck buttons : street horrsing** when i 1st heard the bright tomorrow 7" i said "it doesn't really go anywhere does it?" but i found myself buying it anyway as i found myself quite enjoying not really going anywhere with the fuck buttons. then matt brought the album in & suddenly it all made a lot more sense. these tracks all work together in a kind of anarchic harmony. fucked up, apocalyptic euphoria built from epic noise rock, psychedelic drone, widescreen electronica & fisher price microphones. [atp](#)

**school of language : sea from shore** from the creative brain of field music's david brewis comes one of this year's pop treats (even i need a bit of pop every now & then to balance out the darkness!). something of a concept album (yep, i'd normally run a mile now too!) but only in that it circles round & ends up where it started with a quartet of "rockist" tracks. a hugely varied album in terms of styles but consistently engaging. it calls to mind everything from grizzly bear to the futureheads (barry hyde guests on guitar) to early shins, 10cc, xtc or robert wyatt. a guaranteed mood lifter. [domino](#)

## matt

**v/a : nigeria special – modern highlife, afro-sounds & nigerian blues** a definite contender for compilation of the year, nigeria special presents us with a mixture of irresistibly infectious, uplifting highlife & massive afrobeat style funk workouts – showcasing the best of the forgotten sounds of nigeria. you'll be having a chant and throwing down you're best dance moves in no time! [soundway](#)

**angels of light : how i loved you** i've recently become a little obsessed with ex-swans man michael gira. this album (under the name 'angels of light') finds gira taking a more subdued approach to song writing – with a much less harsh swans-esque vibe - leaning more towards long drawn out folk balladry. gira has said every track on this album is about love, but don't think this is a soppy affair, some of these songs are the darkest tracks i've ever heard...the final track 'two women' never ceases to send massive shivers down my spine. definite winner for fans of nick cave, leonard cohen & smog . [young god](#)

**v/a : don't stop recording tap** awesome collection of obscure disco-soul from the ultra obscure new york tap label. every track on this is pretty much the business, but the four massive standout tracks all come from 'arnie love and the lovettes' - with lyrics like "invisible wind/blow my baby back to me/i know that you can set me free/so why don't you blow her back to me/no one can tell me that you're not real/no one can tell me bout the way i feel" how can you not love this...oh & it's also available in a triple vinyl boxed version with a book and extra vinyl of cuts not on the cd!. [numero group](#)

## james h

**sightings : through the panama** their output has been pretty much flawless since their self titled load lp back in 2002. each time they come back from wherever they hibernate between recordings, they've ripped up & re-arranged the rock rule-book all over again. however, this sees them go above & beyond all expectations. the production (andrew w.k) is perfect, bringing out all the subtleties of their sound without weakening it. the vocal delivery is more restrained & controlled, & you can even make out some of the words if you fancy a sing-a-long. it still amazes me how a conventional guitar, bass & drum 3 piece can produce this stuff. astounding. a milestone for not only the band but for rock music. [load](#)

**charalambides : likeness** they seem to fall into the list of great bands that people have heard of but not investigated properly. this was highlighted when listening to this album & realising just how damn bloody amazingly beautiful it is. it came out last year but only recently made its way to my ears. had i heard it earlier i no doubt would've put it onto my top releases of 2007. cristina & tom carter are always busy with all kinds of collaborations & side projects & sadly that could be why they get overlooked so often. on 'likeness' they seem to have focussed all their creative & emotional energy into it. everything is more...cristina's spectral vocals are dazzling & tom's riffs on this record are arguably his best yet. don't let your heart miss out on this one. [kranky](#)

**the intelligence : deuteronomy** i love the intelligence (& lars finberg's other band the a-frames) so i was always going to be a little biased about this release but surely everyone will love this right? that might be a little off the mark but this is definitely their most accessible/clean record to date. finberg is basically the american counterpart to the country teasers' ben wallers (the rebel) & is therefore also an underrated genius (wow i really like this band don't i). anyway what you get here is some seriously jump out your seat garage-noise party bangers aswell as some gloopy, drunken jaunts through finbergs mind, but mostly its feel good party hits all the way. makes me want to drink moonshine & start a bar brawl somewhere. cathartic. [in the red](#)

## s a m

**v/a : nigeria special – modern highlife, afro-sounds & nigerian blues** it's fair to say that I am a bit of a fela kuti nut but this comp just goes to show there is far more to nigerian music than one mr kuti. simply put, this is one of the finest collections of nigerian music you will have the pleasure of listening to. it is loosely focused on highlife and afro rock but there was clearly a lot of healthy cross pollination going and so what you get has hints of afrobeat, juju & the western influences of contemporary black america. it is a testament to the depth of the scene that there isn't a dud across 2 cds. essential listening. [soundway](#)

**black mountain : in the future** this album has been out since the very start of year but had taken until the last month to have a strangle hold on my stereo. it is the sound of two worlds colliding. specifically the worlds of 70's blues rock and 70's prog excess. somehow these canadians make it work and it really, really shouldn't. almost despite myself this is one of my favourite records of the year. [jagjaguwar](#)

**v/a : the garden of forking paths** you only have to stumble as far as the 1<sup>st</sup> track to know this album is something special. james blackshaw has curated a loose group of avant garde musicians to produce pieces for solo acoustic instruments. they are all brought together by a similar spirit and this meditative, soothing and resonant music packs quite a punch. the highlight is undoubtedly koto player chieko mori's 2 contributions but really there isn't a weak tune on this outstanding album. [important](#)

## a m i

**atlas sound : let the blind lead those who can see but cannot feel** my favourite album of the year so far, from start to finish a real corker that leaves you with a great feeling, from the front man of deerhunter – bradford cox. he really embraces the ambient aspects of sound in a gripping way & creates layers of noise that are accessible, dreamlike & highly melodic. [kranky](#)

**valet : naked acid** another kranky release but when they are consistently releasing wonderful stuff then it makes this list writing business very easy. this is a dronier, psychedelic affair with ribbons of guitar noodling weaving their way around the sonic intensity. the result washes over you with elements of darkness overtaking the slivers of light. [kranky](#)

**v/a : garden of forking paths** compiled & featuring james blackshaw (check out his album from last year – the cloud of unknowing) this album showcases some fine playing of stringed instruments. from blackshaw's 12-string raga influenced piece to espers helen espvall's cello composition. a real highlight is found in mori chieko's koto that adds beauty & a hint of magic to this excellent record. [important](#)

## j a m e s d

**serge gainsbourg : les annees psychedeliques -1966 – 1971** a superb compilation of psychedelic nuggets from everyone's favourite potty-mouthed frenchman. drawing on everything from soundtrack work (including excerpts from cannabis, la pacha and manon 70) to the seminal histoire de melody nelson, this collection features collaborations with writers/producers michael colombier and jean-claude vannier. what really shines through on these productions is the great, at times epic, instrumentation (harpisichords, choirs, strings and sitars all present and correct) along with gainsbourg's effortless swaggering vocals. magnifique! [lsd](#)

**kelpe : ex-aquarium** dc recordings can do no wrong with me at the moment. as well as recently releasing sterling lysergic disco from emperor machine & krautrock inspired brilliance from the oscillation, they've now just unleashed this little gem. the order of the day here is highly melodic electronica interwoven with some nifty & at times invasive beats the likes of vibert, four tef or shadow aspire to, resulting in a wonderfully produced, consistent record that, although draws obvious comparisons, still effortlessly holds its own. [dc recordings](#)

**the accidental : there were wolves** bit of a supergroup of sorts is the accidental, featuring members of tunng, the memory band and the fence collective. musically, it's what you'd expect for a meeting of such minds, but there's a certain charm and at times mystique to these songs that make them feel very personal. undeniably it sounds very tunng, but more like a tunng who decided to turn the glitch machines off for a night and sit down with their guitars, a few friends and some good stories and record the outcome. so a happy accident then. [full time hobby](#)