



ASH
ISLANDS
INFECTIOUS MUSIC

Islands marks **Ash's** return to the sound that yielded the grungy Britpop classics *1977* (which gave us “Kung Fu,” “Girl From Mars,” and the still unstoppable “Goldfinger”) and *Free All Angels*. Produced by singer/guitarist Tim Wheeler, *Islands* is **Ash's** seventh studio album – and twenty-five years on from their emergence as teenagers on Belfast's DIY scene. Lead single “Buzzkill” is another irrepressible track that holds its own in what is a seemingly already over-stocked catalog of hits. It's a dizzying slice of upbeat pop nous, creating another wave of typical **Ash** ebullience that is sure to strike a chord with fans both young and old. The Undertones' Damien O'Neill and Mickey Bradley provide guest backing vocals on the song.



AMERICAN AQUARIUM
THINGS CHANGE
NEW WEST

In the lush tobacco fields of North Carolina where BJ Barham was raised, people work hard. Families stay nearby, toiling and growing together. BJ loves those farms and his tiny Reidsville hometown, but he had to spread his wings. He couldn't stay, but he couldn't really leave, either: He's still singing about the lessons, stories, and lives that define rural America. **American Aquarium's** seventh album, *Things Change* was produced by Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter John Fullbright and features cameos from **John Moreland** and **Jamie Lin Wilson**. Stacked with BJ's signature storytelling – always deeply personal but also instantly relatable, it questions and curses current events, shares one man's intimate evolution, and leaves listeners with a priceless gift: Hope.



NEKO CASE
HELL-ON
ANTI

An indelible collection of colorful, enigmatic storytelling that features some of her most daring, through-composed arrangements to date, *Hell-On* is simultaneously **Neko Case's** most accessible and most challenging album in a rich and varied career that's offered plenty of both. **Case's** first solo album in five years is rife with withering self-critique, muted reflection, anthemic affirmation and the beloved singer/songwriter's unique poetic sensibility. **Neko** enlisted **Bjorn Yttling** of (**Peter Bjorn & John**) to co-produce six tracks with her in Stockholm, Sweden where she mixed the twelve-track album with Lasse Mårtén. *Hell-On* features performances by **Beth Ditto**, **Mark Lanegan**, **k.d. Lang**, **AC Newman**, **Eric Bachmann**, **Kelly Hogan**, **Doug Gillard**, **Laura Veirs**, **Joey Burns** and many more.



BEACH HOUSE
7
SUB POP

Beach House released B-sides and Rarities in 2017, which served as a proverbial “cleaning of the closet” to pave way for a new creative process. Their approach in the creation of **7** was rebirth and rejuvenation. Instead of one long studio session, **Beach House** recorded, when inspired, batches of songs – resulting in 5 mini-sessions over the course of 11 months. Unlike the last four albums, **7** didn't have a producer in the traditional sense. **Spacemen 3's Sonic Boom (Peter Dinklage)** became a significant force on this record by shedding conventions and helping to keep the songs alive, fresh, and protected from the destructive elements of recording studio overproduction and over-perfection. Quite simply, it's their best yet.



BOMBINO
DERAN
PARTISIAN

With ***Deran***, **Bombino** and crew have once again conjured up a roving mystery tour of contemporary Saharan sounds, from the raw diesel rock of the opener “Imajhane” (“The Tuareg”), to the camel gait lope of “Tenesse” (“Idleness”), the tender lilt of “Midiwan” (“My Friends”) and the ‘Tuareggae’ style that is **Bombino's** unique contribution to desert music on the song “Tehigren.” But more than anything ***Deran*** had to be honest and true. “You have to begin with the question of who you are,” says **Bombino**. “You're a Tuareg. With all the travels, all the experience of world, it's as if I'm making myself remember where I come from. Where I come from will always be my home, my memory.”



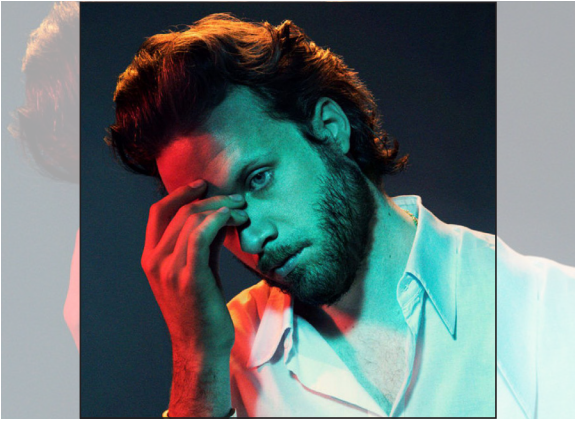
STEPHEN MALKMUS & THE JICKS
SPARKLE HARD
MATADOR RECORDS

Stephen Malkmus & The Jicks' seventh record, *Sparkle Hard*, is light 'n' breezy, head-down heavy, audacious, melancholic and reflective, a goodtime and bodacious, and it pulls off the smartest trick: it's both unmistakably **The Jicks** and – due to the streamlining of their trademark tics and turns, plus the introduction of some unexpected flourishes (Auto-Tune! A fiddle! Guest vocalist **Kim Gordon**! One seven-minute song with an acoustic folk intro!) – **The Jicks** refashioned. If 2014's *Wig Out At Jag Bags* balanced the lengthy prog workouts of *Pig Lib* with *Mirror Traffic's* sparky pop moments, then *Sparkle Hard* bears less obvious direct relation to what's come before... And hints of the Krautrock record **Malky** was born to make! One of his best!



SKATING POLLY
THE MAKE IT ALL SHOW
EL CAMINO MEDIA

Sibling punk-rock trio **Skating Polly** return with their fifth studio album *The Make It All Show*, recorded with producer Brad Wood (Smashing Pumpkins, Liz Phair) who also helmed the band's *New Trick* EP. With ages ranging between 17 and 21, **Skating Polly** continue to construct music well beyond their quantifiable years and *The Make It All Show* is clearly reflective of a band at its tightest and most confident – expanding on the dynamic song structures, harmonies and melodies explored on *New Trick* – but never at the behest of their gonzo energy. “Queen For A Day” features guest vocals from co-writer, **Exene Cervenka**, producer of the band's 2013 album *Lost Wonderfuls* and singer of seminal punk band X.



FATHER JOHN MISTY
GOD'S FAVORITE CUSTOMER
SUB POP

Josh Tillman's fourth **Father John Misty** LP, *God's Favorite Customer* follows-up his Grammy-nominated 2017 effort *Pure Comedy* and reflects on the experience of being caught between the vertigo of heartbreak and the manic throes of freedom. *God's Favorite Customer* reveals a bittersweet directness in Tillman's songwriting, without sacrificing any of his wit or taste for the absurd. From “Mr. Tillman,” where he trains his lens on his own misadventure, to the cavernous pain of estrangement in “Please Don't Die,” Tillman plays with perspective to alternately hilarious and devastating effect. Furthermore, the songs here have a ligheness sorely missing from *Pure Comedy* – which makes his Harry Nilsson meets Kurt Vonnegut vibe even more pleasurable. That he's America's best-dressed satirist is a bonus.



JO PASSED
THEIR PRIME
SUB POP

The nicest thing anyone has ever said to Jo Hirabayashi, frontman of **Jo Passed**, is that his band's debut album sounds like “fucked-up Beatles.” Titled *Their Prime*, the LP does sound like fucked-up Beatles – but across an '80s universe where Lennon and McCartney discovered Can and Neu!, and maybe a little Sonic Youth and XTC along the way. Opening with “Left,” it demonstrates that timeless knack for dreamy melodies – chord progressions that sound like they were created in a land far, far away. Lyrically, however, it's imbued with a philosophical longing for answers to questions that have resurfaced for the first time since the explosion of counterculture in the late 1960s and early 1970s. DIG!!!



SAM EVIAN
YOU, FOREVER
SADDLE CREEK

You, Forever is the second studio album from **Sam Evian**. Fueled by a desire to escape the glow of screens and embrace a sense of limitation, **Evian** developed a new set of instrumental songs written and recorded on a four-track cassette recorder. **Evian** borrowed an eight-track reel-to-reel tape recorder, rented a house in Upstate New York, and took his band there to record. That less-is-more sensibility is utilized in both practice and theory on *You, Forever*. Dreamy album opener “IDGAF” provides suitable exposition with its notion of embracing one's passions. “Health Machine” is a crunchy, slow-burning, but deliberate stomper glowing with warm electric guitar noodling, saxophone wailing, and **Evian's** reverb-laden vocals. A delightful groover, this.



TRACYANNE & DANNY
TRACYANNE & DANNY
MERGE RECORDS

Fans of Scottish indie rock know **Tracyanne Campbell** from her time spent writing and singing songs for **Camera Obscura**, the charming group whose five LPs to date carry on the tradition of chiming Scottish pop. And anyone who loves beautifully melancholy acts like The Smiths and Lloyd Cole should already be aware of **Crybaby**, the masterfully crafted, eponymous 2012 album recorded by Bristol singer-songwriter **Danny Coughlan**. Inspired by a variety of artists including Serge Gainsbourg, The Style Council, Lou Reed, The Roches, and Dion, **Tracyanne & Danny** is vibrant, melodic, and at times, even murderous. They’re pretty fun, too – especially Campbell’s steel-guitar-accented “Alabama” and Coughlan’s peppy “Cellophane Girl,” a song about his adolescent infatuation with a co-worker at a plastics factory.



TRACYANNE & DANNY
TRACYANNE & DANNY
MERGE RECORDS

Fans of Scottish indie rock know **Tracyanne Campbell** from her time spent writing and singing songs for **Camera Obscura**, the charming group whose five LPs to date carry on the tradition of chiming Scottish pop. And anyone who loves beautifully melancholy acts like The Smiths and Lloyd Cole should already be aware of **Crybaby**, the masterfully crafted, eponymous 2012 album recorded by Bristol singer-songwriter **Danny Coughlan**. Inspired by a variety of artists including Serge Gainsbourg, The Style Council, Lou Reed, The Roches, and Dion, **Tracyanne & Danny** is vibrant, melodic, and at times, even murderous. They’re pretty fun, too – especially Campbell’s steel-guitar-accented “Alabama” and Coughlan’s peppy “Cellophane Girl,” a song about his adolescent infatuation with a co-worker at a plastics factory.



TRACYANNE & DANNY
TRACYANNE & DANNY
MERGE RECORDS

Fans of Scottish indie rock know **Tracyanne Campbell** from her time spent writing and singing songs for **Camera Obscura**, the charming group whose five LPs to date carry on the tradition of chiming Scottish pop. And anyone who loves beautifully melancholy acts like The Smiths and Lloyd Cole should already be aware of **Crybaby**, the masterfully crafted, eponymous 2012 album recorded by Bristol singer-songwriter **Danny Coughlan**. Inspired by a variety of artists including Serge Gainsbourg, The Style Council, Lou Reed, The Roches, and Dion, **Tracyanne & Danny** is vibrant, melodic, and at times, even murderous. They’re pretty fun, too – especially Campbell’s steel-guitar-accented “Alabama” and Coughlan’s peppy “Cellophane Girl,” a song about his adolescent infatuation with a co-worker at a plastics factory.



TRACYANNE & DANNY
TRACYANNE & DANNY
MERGE RECORDS

Fans of Scottish indie rock know **Tracyanne Campbell** from her time spent writing and singing songs for **Camera Obscura**, the charming group whose five LPs to date carry on the tradition of chiming Scottish pop. And anyone who loves beautifully melancholy acts like The Smiths and Lloyd Cole should already be aware of **Crybaby**, the masterfully crafted, eponymous 2012 album recorded by Bristol singer-songwriter **Danny Coughlan**. Inspired by a variety of artists including Serge Gainsbourg, The Style Council, Lou Reed, The Roches, and Dion, **Tracyanne & Danny** is vibrant, melodic, and at times, even murderous. They’re pretty fun, too – especially Campbell’s steel-guitar-accented “Alabama” and Coughlan’s peppy “Cellophane Girl,” a song about his adolescent infatuation with a co-worker at a plastics factory.