



JULIA HOLTER
AVIARY
DOMINO

Aviary is Los Angeles composer **Julia Holter's** most breathtakingly expansive album yet. The follow-up to 2015's critically-acclaimed, *Have You in My Wilderness*, *Aviary* takes as its starting point a line from a 2009 short story by writer Etel Adnan ("I found myself in an aviary full of shrieking birds"). It's a scenario that sounds straight out of a horror movie, but it's also a pretty good metaphor for life in 2018. *Aviary* finds **Holter** juxtaposing ancient and contemporary reference points: Jetting between medieval chamber music and proggy jazz-rock transports, plaintive balladry and android robotics. It's a journey full of wild twists and turns – but one that clings to a sense of radical hope, even in its most somber moments.



THE BLUE STONES
BLACK HOLES
MUSCA/EONE

Listening to the larger-than-life, dense, but precise, garage blues-rock of **The Blues Stones** on their debut, ***Black Holes***, it is astonishing to discover all that sound and fury is created by just two people. Longtime friends, guitarist/vocalist/lyricist Tarek Jafar and percussionist/vocalist Justin Tessier play blues rock: "It's not loose and dirty, like the traditional kind," explains Justin. "It's lean, raw, tight, without a wasted note." So though you'll be tempted to peg them The Black Keys, The White Stripes, or Royal Blood wannabes, their propensity for gigantic, swampy rock – Zep, My Morning Jacket, The Stooges – but even bigger choruses and hooks will speak for themselves. ***Black Holes*** is the sound of a band blasting into outer space – leaving "Solid Ground" behind.



CLOUD NOTHINGS
LAST BUILDING BURNING
CARPARK RECORDS

Clocking in at just over half an hour, ***Last Building Burning*** – the new album from **Cloud Nothings** – captures the band's live fury. The product of eight days working with producer Randall Dunn [(Sunn O))), Wolves in the Throne Room, Boris] – who frontman Dylan Baldi describes as "technically minded without relying on technology to perfect the live sound" – ***Last Building Burning*** is a return to **Cloud Nothing's** sharpest form: The unhinged, feverish, guitar-heavy sound that they explode with onstage – but with a fraction of the angst. "It's not an angry record," says Baldi. "It's a very joyous thing for me. And it feels so nice to scream again, especially when you know people in the crowd will be screaming along back at you."



JOHN GRANT
LOVE IS MAGIC
PARTISAN RECORDS

"Each record I make is more of an amalgamation of who I truly am," declares **John Grant**. "The more I do this, the more I trust in myself, and the further along I go." Even when the Michigan-born musician released his debut solo album *Queen Of Denmark* in 2010, **Grant** laced sumptuous soft-rock ballads with an array of spacey, wistful synthesizer sounds. With ***Love Is Magic***, **Grant**, in collaboration with Benge (analogue synth expert and a member of electronica trio, Wrangler) has created his most electronic record yet. Produced by **Grant**, and engineered by Benge at his Cornish studio, the diamond-hard and gleaming ***Love Is Magic***, "is how I've always wanted my records to sound, but I didn't know how until now," **Grant** says.



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