



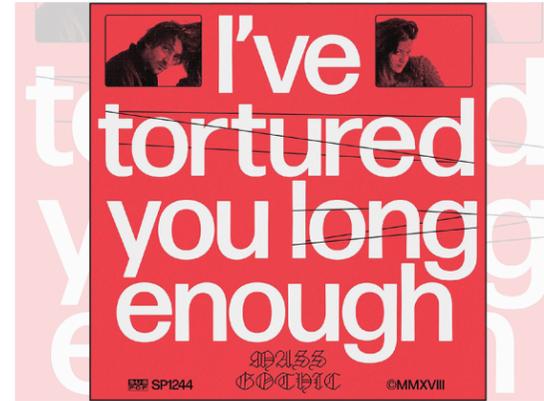
IRON & WINE
THE WEED GARDEN
SUB POP

Iron & Wine follow up the Grammy-nominated *Beast Epic* with **Weed Garden**. The six-song EP features songs that were part of the writing phase for *Beast Epic*, but went unfinished. They were part of a larger narrative for principal songwriter Sam Beam, who ran out of time to get them where they needed to be for inclusion on *Beast Epic*. While on tour last fall, the final pieces of material took shape and a sense of urgency prevailed in bringing these characters to resolution. In January, Beam and company hunkered down in Chicago at The Loft (Wilco's recording studio) and captured these six songs... And in 2018's focus-challenged world, that's not a bad thing. Includes fan favorite, "Waves of Galveston."



CULLEN OMORI
THE DIET
SUB POP

Cullen Omori's path to his second album, **The Diet**, wasn't an easy one. After the release of the former **Smith Westerns** member's first album, *New Misery*, he had to deal with busted vans, crashed cars, mangled relationships, and other trials that can leave one feeling like the world is playing a cosmic joke. From the guitar that drops out of the sky on the opening track "Four Years" all the way through the fade-out of kaleidoscopic closer "A Real You," **The Diet** is a powerful modern indie-rock album that is buoyed by warped, analog pedals/transistors and tailor-made guitar tones. **Omori's** winsome vocals crisscross 70's art rock and classic songwriting all within the span of 40 minutes.



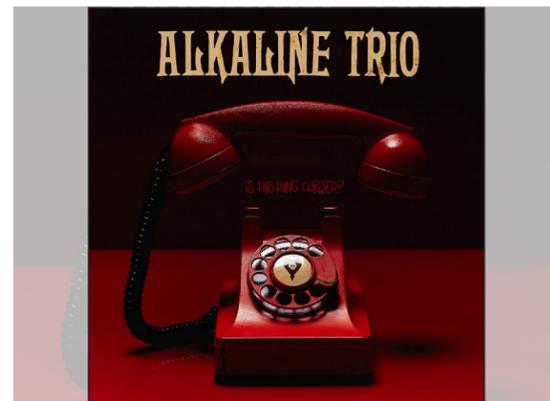
MASS GOTHIC
I'VE TORTURED YOU LONG ENOUGH
SUB POP

I've Tortured You Long Enough is the tongue-in-cheek title of **Mass Gothic's** second album. Husband & wife duo Noel Heroux and Jessica Zambri have always dipped in and out of each other's creative spaces, advising on their respective outputs and supporting one another. But, until this record, they had never completely committed to doing an entire album as a duo, sharing an equal load. The final product recalls the frantic energy of Animal Collective and the celestial torch-bearing of Bat for Lashes, revealing a remarkable arc. It begins from a place of uncertainty, disquiet, and self-doubt, and concludes with the comfort in knowing that you can be both independent and successful in a relationship.



IDLES
JOY AS AN ACT OF RESISTANCE.
PARTISAN RECORDS

Joy as an Act of Resistance is the follow up to Bristol, UK 5-piece **Idles'** debut album, *Brutalism*, self-released in 2017. **Joy as an Act of Resistance** takes aim at everything from toxic masculinity, nationalism, immigration, and class inequality - all while maintaining a visceral, infectious positivity. Singer Joe Talbot summarizes: "This album is an attempt to be vulnerable to our audience and to encourage vulnerability; a brave naked smile in this shitty new world. We have stripped back the songs and lyrics to our bare flesh to allow each other to breathe, to celebrate our differences, and act as an ode to communities and the individuals that forge them. Because without our community, we'd be nothing."



ALKALINE TRIO
IS THIS THING CURSED?
EPITAPH

Across 2 decades, 8 albums, and a multitude of singles, splits, and EPs, **Alkaline Trio** has built a reputation as a defining act in punk rock's modern era. **Is This Thing Cursed?** was produced and mixed by Cameron Webb and serves as the group's first album written almost entirely in the studio. According to **Alkaline Trio**, **Is This Thing Cursed?** is a cousin or sibling to *Maybe I'll Catch Fire*. Dan Andriano explains, "the songwriting process is almost like what it was back in the day. We would just kind of write a song, we excited about it, then move on. I really feel like we made a record that the old school fans are going to dig."



ERIC BACHMANN
NO RECOVER
MERGE RECORDS

While **No Recover** is decidedly mellow and reflective, do not mistake it for the work of a relaxed, satisfied songwriter. No, the **Eric Bachmann** of 2018 seems to view life with a sort of disgruntled maturity and righteous resignation. The album is mostly just him, a classical guitar, some treated rhythm tracks, and otherworldly drop-ins from singer Avery Leigh Draut and guitarist Eric Johnson, **Bachmann's** pal from their **Archers of Loaf** days. He's got a lot on his mind, only some of it pretty - and you can find those tracks at the albums' end: The '70s AM Gold of "Wild Azalea" (a song for his wife, singer-songwriter Liz Durrett) and "Dead and Gone" (one for his child).



WAXAHATCHEE
GREAT THUNDER
MERGE RECORDS

Katie Crutchfield's ever-shifting musical project **Waxahatchee** returns with the **Great Thunder EP**. Featuring a collection of songs written with now-dormant experimental recording group **Great Thunder** while Crutchfield was also writing the **Waxahatchee** albums *Cerulean Salt* and *Ivy Tripp*, the original recordings have mostly faded into obscurity. Unearthing and re-imagining them with producer Brad Cook at Justin Vernon's April Base studio in Wisconsin was a cathartic experience. On the heels of 2017's critically-acclaimed *Out in the Storm*, Crutchfield found herself looking to take a sharp turn away from the more rock-oriented influences and towards her more folk and country roots. As Crutchfield entered April Base to record, she became ill but opted to forge on, beautifully stretching her voice to its emotional limits. Stunning.