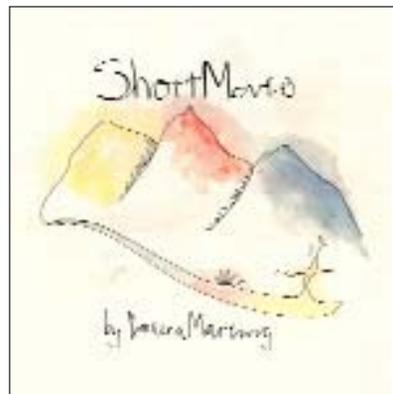




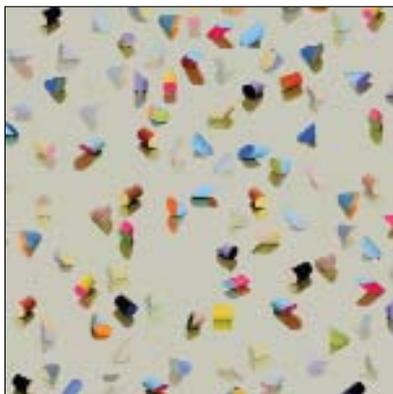
SUFJAN STEVENS
CARRIE & LOWELL
 ASTHMATIC KITTY

Carrie & Lowell sounds like memory: it spans decades yet does not trade on pastiche or nostalgia. **Sufjan Stevens'** gauzy double-tracked vocals wash across the dashboard of long-finned, drop-top Americana, yet as we race towards the coast we are reminded that sunshine leads to shadow, for this is a landscape of terminal roads, unsteady bridges, traumatic video stores, and unhappy beds that provide the scenery for tales of jackknifed cars, funerals, and forgiveness for the dead. Each track in this collection of eleven songs begins with a fragile melody that gathers steam until it becomes nothing less than a modern hymn. **Sufjan** recounts the indignities of our world, of technological distraction and sad sex, of an age without neither myths nor miracle and this time around, his voice carries the burden of wisdom. **Carrie & Lowell** accomplishes the rare thing that any art should achieve, particularly in these noisy and fragmented days: By seeking to understand, **Sufjan** makes us feel less alone. Also available on glorious VINYL!



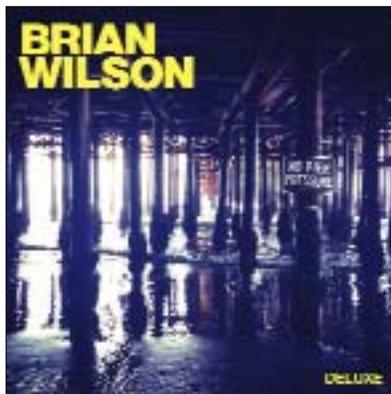
LAURA MARLING
SHORT MOVIE
 RIBBON

Laura Marling returns with her fifth studio album in seven years, **Short Movie**. The album, a follow up to 2013's Mercury Prize nominated **Once I Was An Eagle**, marks a new chapter in her sound and development as an artist. **Marling** produced the album, which was recorded at Urchin Studios in London and aided by her long time drummer Matt Ingram and studio engineer Dan Cox. The shift in sound can be attributed to **Marling's** extended period of reflection and a conscious attempt to change her routine. The songs portray a striking new confidence in their mood, sound, and temperament. "I realized that I hadn't been in place for longer than two or three weeks since I was 16" she explains, "I thought I wonder what would happen if I try and root myself somewhere?" **Short Movie** marks a new chapter in **Marling's** sound and development moving towards a much bigger electric feel. The album is freer and looser sounding than anything she has done before. Also available on VINYL!



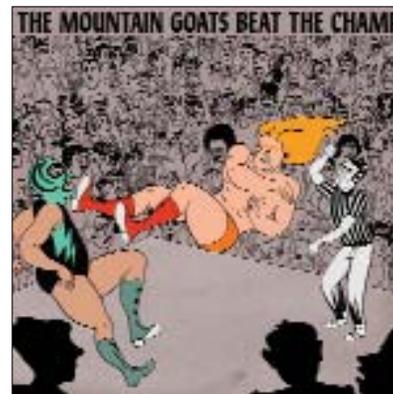
LOWER DENS
ESCAPE FROM EVIL
 RIBBON

Baltimore's Lower Dens return triumphantly with their third album, **Escape from Evil**. On **Escape From Evil**, **Lower Dens'** Jana Hunter emerges: cerebral and hot-blooded, rash and incorruptible, and, crucially, possessing of a loud, clear voice. The album sees Hunter stepping up and taking center stage, and emboldening every aspect of the band. **Escape From Evil** is a cinematic, tonally rich work. The sounds are clean and warm. The pulse of the album is strong. Melodies are potent and songs are physical. Lyrics are direct, frank confrontations with life's common crises. The album title is brazen, and along with the grimly funny title of lead single, "To Die in L.A.", almost theatrical. **Lower Dens'** 2010 debut, **Twin-Hand Movement**, was a stunning evolution of guitar brilliance and murky emotiveness, while its 2012 follow-up, **Nootropics**, was a stark, textured paean to experimental bands of the Krautrock era. **Escape From Evil** marks a bold, monumental step forward for the band and the welcome manifestation of a singer we've never quite seen until now. You need this. (Also available on VINYL!)



BRIAN WILSON
NO PIER PRESSURE
 CAPITOL

It is no exaggeration to call **Brian Wilson** one of the most gifted and influential composers of the past 50 years. For the release of his 11th solo studio album, **No Pier Pressure**, **Wilson** reunited with longtime collaborator Joe Thomas, with whom he co-produced The Beach Boys' **That's Why God Made The Radio** for the iconic band's 50th anniversary reunion in 2012. Always most inspired when creativity is given time and space to freely flow, **Wilson** initially envisioned the sessions for his new album with The Beach Boys in mind, but that was not to be. Wanting to find the right voices to complete his vision, **Wilson** saw an opportunity to finally become hip with his kids and recruited some amazing young musicians who have been inspired by his music to do the job, including his former Beach Boys bandmate **Al Jardine** as well as **Kacey Musgraves**, fun.'s **Nate Ruess**, **She & Him's Zooey Deschanel** and **M. Ward**, and **Capital Cities' Sebu Simonian**. **Wilson** took a fluid, woodshedding approach to the recording process, deftly tailoring the vocal and instrumental parts and arrangements to each participant – even writing songs in the studio. **No Pier Pressure** is a vibrant, 21st century pop outlier in **Wilson's** legendary catalog.



THE MOUNTAIN GOATS
BEAT THE CHAMP
 MERGE RECORDS

The Mountain Goats' new album, **Beat the Champ**, is, as any fan of the band will expect, a heartbreaking and heart-reviving album about imperfect people described perfectly, with melodies that will stay with you for days. There are also things about it that even longtime fans will not expect. The songs in **Beat the Champ** are about the simple and beautiful stories of professional wrestling as seen by fans who need something simple in their messy lives. The songs are also about the complicated and beautiful lives of the people who work in professional wrestling, who do their best to entertain, to leave a mark, and, when all else fails, to survive. It is an album about, as the chorus of one of its tracks puts it, "nameless bodies in unremembered rooms." **Beat the Champ** is a gorgeous album that sees the **Mountain Goats** expand themselves musically, in startling and exciting ways. Here is a jazz chord progression over brushed cymbals. Here is a track that spirals out from verse and chorus into a slow, hazy piano solo. Here are pounding drums straight from a metal record. And here, as always, are songs like no one else can write them. Like no one else does write them.



COURTNEY BARNETT
SOMETIMES I SIT AND THINK, AND SOMETIMES I JUST SIT
 MOM & POP

Fueled by the nimble crunch of her guitar and the loose groove of the rhythm section, **Courtney Barnett's** songs are wild and shaggy and wordy, her lyrics plainspoken and delivered like she's making them up on the spot. Beginning with 2014's best song about and allergy-induced existential crisis, "Avant Gardener" from *The Double EP: A Sea of Split Peas*, **Barnett's** sound — which is rooted in that grand tradition of loose, Velvet Underground-inspired, art-damaged chooglers fronted by a singer/songwriters too smart for their own good (e.g. Parquet Courts, Pavement) coupled with that distinct South Pacific twist (**Barnett's** from Melbourne, Australia where she shredded for local garage bands) — has prompted the loathsome "slacker" tag from journalists and critics around the world. Bullshit. Tropical lassitude, perhaps, but as a description of **Barnett's** work ethic and musical influence "slacker" is all wrong: Queen is clearly on her grind. Mixing witty, often hilarious, occasionally even heartbreaking observations with devastating self-assessment, **Barnett's** debut album, *Sometimes I Sit and Think, and Sometimes I Just Sit*, cements her standing as one of the most distinctive and compelling voices in indie rock. Be prepared to fall in love. You need this.



CURRENT SWELL
ULYSSES
 NETTWERK

Cultivating the unique moments when a first take becomes the final cut, or when a fleeting idea turns into a fully realized creation, has become something of an unofficial philosophy for **Current Swell**. Considering the pace they have set in recent years — a first place win at Vancouver's Peak Performance Project and sold-out headlining tours of Brazil and Europe — **Current Swell** had no reason to re-write their approach heading into the sessions for *Ulysses*, the band's anticipated second release. But Stagnation is death: Motion is everything to an artist, so **Current Swell** followed its muse with a collaborative spirit — writing together and finding brotherhood in the deep grooves, big harmonies, and joyful blasts of slide guitar. That spirit comes through loud and clear on *Ulysses* — an apt title given the band's adventurous, itinerant spirit, rooted in the band's early days when, left Canada to spend five months touring Bali, New Zealand and Australia as an independent act. A bold move, but one that has come to define the band's music-first mindset and catch-all musical approach — an easy-going grandeur that recalls Dr. Dog or Band of Horses. *Ulysses* was already a No. 1 album in Canada — so crank it up, get a taste, and learn all the songs before their upcoming U.S. tour.



RICHIE FURAY
HAND IN HAND
 EONE MUSIC

Best known for forming the bands Buffalo Springfield with Stephen Stills, Neil Young, Bruce Palmer, and Dewey Martin, and Poco with Jim Messina, Rusty Young, George Grantham, and Randy Meisner, *Hand In Hand* is the first solo release from Rock and roll Hall of Famer **Richie Furay** in 8 years. "Just when you think 'it was a nice run,' you realize it's not over...especially when one day you wake up and songs are flooding your heart and mind that you know you just have to document and preserve," says **Furay**. "*Hand In Hand* was that confirmation for me — I've learned to say 'never say never.' Who knows where this collection will land, but I'm sure glad I get to share these songs with a world that knows music really is the universal language." The cover of *Hand in Hand* features the wedding photo of **Richie** and his wife of 48 years, Nancy. The two met at the Whisky-A-Go-Go in West Hollywood, where Nancy caught his eye and became the inspiration behind Buffalo Springfield's, "Kind Woman." The title track of the new record, "Hand In Hand," serves as a follow-up song to the Buffalo Springfield hit, which is also featured as a bonus track.



WAXAHATCHEE
IVY TRIPP
 MERGE RECORDS

Waxahatchee, the solo musical project of Katie Crutchfield, is named after a creek not far from her childhood home in Alabama and seems to represent both where she came from and where she's going. **Ivy Tripp** drifts confidently from its predecessors and brings forth a more informed and powerful recognition of where Crutchfield has currently found herself. The lament and grieving for her youth seem to have been replaced with control and sheer self-honesty. "My life has changed a lot in the last two years, and it's been hard for me to process my feelings other than by writing songs," says Crutchfield. "I think a running theme [of **Ivy Tripp**] is steady yourself on shaky ground and reminding yourself that you have control in situations that seem overwhelming, or just being cognizant in moments of deep confusion or sadness, and learning to really feel emotions and to grow from that." Recorded and engineered by Kyle Gilbride of Wherever Audio at Crutchfield's home on New York's Long Island — with drums recorded in the gym of a local elementary school — **Ivy Tripp** presents a more developed and aged version of **Waxahatchee**. "I have thought of it like this: [**Waxahatchee's** last album] *Cerulean Salt* is a solid and **Ivy Tripp** is a gas."



POKEY LAFARGE
SOMETHING IN THE WATER
 ROUNDER/CONCORD

Pokey LaFarge makes original Midwestern music. With one foot deep in the heart of the American musical tradition and the other firmly planted in the present, **LaFarge** continually challenges the notion that tradition-bearers fail to push musical boundaries. An eclectic writer and performer, he incorporates elements of early jazz, ragtime, country blues, Western swing, and beyond, transcending the confines of genre to present a sound very much his own. *Something in the Water* follows on the heels of his last album, released on Jack White's Third Man Records, but comes with an evolution in sound. Treated with a heavier dose of catchy rhythms and traditional drum kit percussion throughout, the 12 tracks on *Something in the Water* see **LaFarge's** sound imbued with new life. Produced by kindred spirit Jimmy Sutton, *Something in Water* showcases **Pokey LaFarge's** peerless gifts as a songwriter, performer, and entertainer, and further solidifies his place at the forefront of American music.



THE WOMBATS
GLITTERBUG
BRIGHT ANTENNA

Liverpudlian indie rockers **The Wombats** have gone Hollywood with **Glitterbug**... Or is it that Hollywood has gotten to **The Wombats**? **Glitterbug** was inspired by the idea "of writing about a tumultuous relationship with a fictional woman from Los Angeles," according to frontman Matthew 'Murph' Murphy. "As time progressed, I'd go to L.A. more and more, and the idea kept on building. The album's about the envy and the struggle and the pretense and the worry and the fear that L.A. - and every major city in the world - encompasses." Songs like 'Give Me A Try,' 'Greek Tragedy,' and 'Your Body Is A Weapon' have all of the hallmarks of Modern Pop grandiosity - big choruses, club ready beats, soaring background chants, etc., as without giving up on expected textures and big, crunchy guitars and blown-out drums - 'Give Me A Try' even boasts guitars worthy of My Bloody Valentine. In order to create an authentic air of El-Lay's plasticity the band drafted **Bastille's Mark Crew** as both a collaborator and producer. The lyrics are snarkily smart but irony-free - **The Wombats** have created a sincere soundtrack to a fictional reality show that you'd love to hate. Check it out.



BETH HART
BETTER THAN HOME
PROVOGUE

Some say there can be no artistry without agony. **Beth Hart** has been dealing with demons that have pursued her for her whole life: her older sister who died from complications from AIDS when **Beth** was only 20 and her own battle with drugs, booze, bad relationships, bad decisions and ultimately the diagnosis that tied the knot on the whole damn thing, bi-polar disorder. It's enough to send anyone into a downward spiral that's inescapable. And on face value, her new album, **Better Than Home**, is saying, "anything is better than those demons, so I'm gonna go out of my way to create something better than that." And she has: **Hart's** career spans over 20 years, and is filled with hit songs, world tours, and collaborations with Slash, Jeff Beck, and Joe Bonamassa. **Better Than Home** isn't about what's been wrong with **Beth's** life. Instead, she's choosing to find the good things that have been there all along: accepting and loving her parents for who they really are, appreciating her good husband, facing her fears head on and ultimately finding ways to heal and convert that positive energy into music that moves people. **Better Than Home** is a blues album who's light at the end of the tunnel isn't a train.



TORO Y MOI
WHAT FOR?
CARPARK

Opening to the scream of F1's speeding around a racetrack, and maintaining that intensity with booming guitar riffs and psychedelic effects throughout, the forthcoming album from **Toro Y Moi** is definitely making a statement. Or maybe a few statements. But Chaz Bundick, the frontman and songwriter, is leaving it up to you to figure out what they are. Chaz presents you with a few themes: love, beauty, nature; and gently lets go of your hand so you can wander off on your own. A feeling of searching for something threads its way through every song on the album, which is aptly named **What For? What For?** is a glimpse into the life of a guy trying to figure out what it all means. The music is influenced by bands like Big Star, Talking Heads, Weezer, Tim Maia, Todd Rundgren, but it doesn't quite sound like any of them in particular. And it isn't trying to. It has that special something that Chaz imbues in every **Toro Y Moi** album, his personal filter on the world he experiences. So whatever message you take from the album, don't forget that it's good. As Chaz himself so candidly believes, "Good is good. Good finds its own audience." At least this's for sure: You can dance to it. Like crazy.



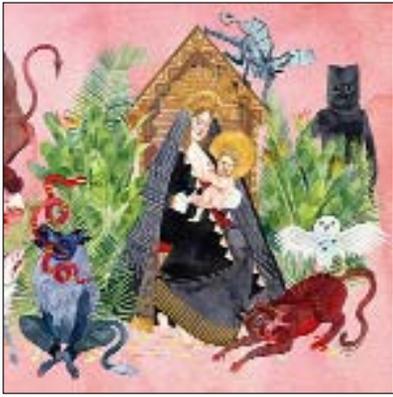
DOLDRUMS
THE AIR CONDITIONED NIGHTMARE
SUB POP

The Air Conditioned Nightmare is the new album by **Doldrums**. The title was spawned by Henry Miller upon his return to the US after ten years as an expatriate. Keen to rediscover the country he left behind, Miller found it a stifling place of big business, pollution, credit, misinformation and prejudice. "Nowhere else in the world," he wrote, "is the divorce between man and nature so complete". Hence: **The Air Conditioned Nightmare**. The follow-up to his 2013 debut *Lesser Evil*, Airick Woodhead - the DJ, producer and performer at the heart of **Doldrums** - makes a sizeable leap from being darling of the Montreal warehouse creative explosion that gave the world the likes of Grimes, Majical Cloudz, Blue Hawaii to being a stand-alone artist and composer on the cusp of something quite special. **Doldrums** apply a punk rock ethos to electronic music, creating songs using samplers and DJ gear in place of guitars. Bold, anxious, dream-like, uplifting, glacial, hypnotic, constricting, expansive, alien - this is an album that is ever-changing. **The Air Conditioned Nightmare** is an album of texture and taste - an extra-sensory overload. Weaving through the mix are Woodhead's androgynous, tweaked vocals singing lyrics like voices down broken phone-lines. You need to hear it.



JOYWAVE
HOW DO YOU FEEL NOW
CULTCO MUSIC (HOLLYWOOD)

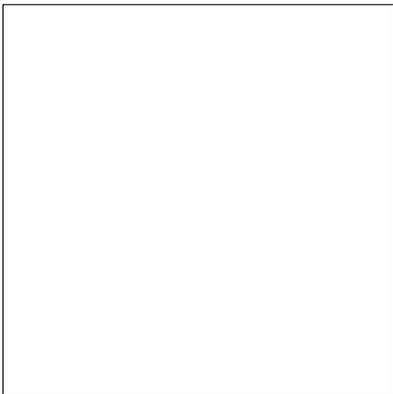
Creating a sound that deftly jumps between genres, **Joywave's** music is grounded in classic songwriting, often injected with house music's energy, the playfulness of disco and an overarching hip-hop spirit. Being from Rochester, NY, **Joywave** acknowledges that they are somewhat isolated from the mainstream music scene and that's how they like it. **Joywave's** distinguished sound is already paying off, they've received high praise from Rolling Stone, The Fader and Nylon, to name a few, and have been generating a substantial fanbase on the road nabbing slots with The Killers and RAC while festivals including Lollapalooza, Osheaga and Bunbury. To top it off, **Joywave** made their TV debut on "Late Night with Seth Meyers," performing not only their hit song "Tongues," but also performing with Big Data on their collaborative alternative radio hit "Dangerous." **How Do You Feel?** showcases the band's pointed talent for originality while blending influences. **Joywave's** all-embracing approach puts their distinct personality front and center while reinforcing the band's stance that they are not aiming for the middle. "Music should engage the audience. If we have not elicited a response of some sort, we have not done our job." And won't ya dig that mustache?



FATHER JOHN MISTY I LOVE YOU HONEY BEAR

SUB POP

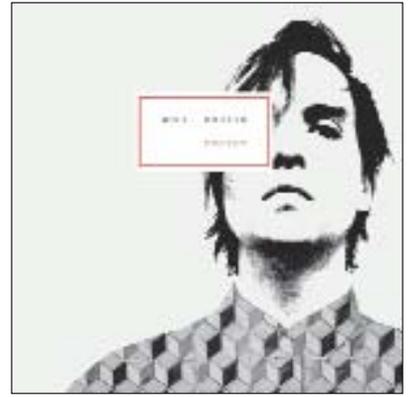
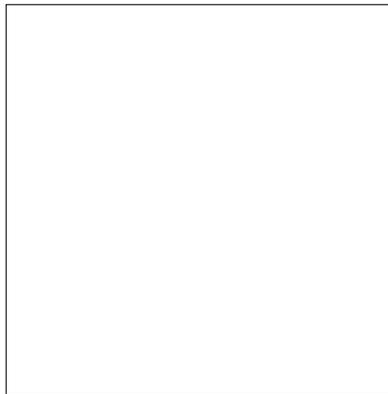
"*I Love You, Honeybear* was recorded all through 2013 to 2014 in Los Angeles with producer Jonathan Wilson, who I also recorded and produced 2012's *Fear Fun* with. There's a case to be made that it sounds and acts a bit like solo-era John Lennon, Scott Walker, Randy Newman, Harry Nilsson, and Dory Previn, while taking more than a few cues from Woody Allen, Kurt Vonnegut, Alejandro Jodorowsky and Muhammad Ali. **Blammo.** It has a decidedly more soulful presence than *Fear Fun*, due in no small part to the fact that I am truly singing my ass off all over this motherfucker. The album is really characterized by the scope and ambition of the arrangements. Nearly every tune is augmented by something special, be it orchestral strings, a mariachi band, questionable electronic drum solos, ragtime jazz combos, soul singers, or what have you. I'm pretty sure there's a sitar in there somewhere. **Blammo.** My ambition, aside from making an indulgent, soulful, and epic sound worthy of the subject matter, was to address the sensuality of fear, the terrifying force of love, the unutterable pleasures of true intimacy, and the destruction of emotional and intellectual prisons in my own voice. **Blammo.**" – *Father John Misty*



SLEATER-KINNEY NO CITIES TO LOVE

SUB POP

"We sound possessed on these songs," says guitarist/vocalist Carrie Brownstein about *Sleater-Kinney's* eighth studio album, *No Cities to Love*. "Willing it all—the entire weight of the band and what it means to us—back into existence." The new record is the first in 10 years from the acclaimed trio—Brownstein, vocalist/guitarist Corin Tucker, and drummer Janet Weiss—who came crashing out of the '90s Pacific Northwest riot grrrrl scene, setting a new bar for punk's political insight and emotional impact. Formed in Olympia, WA in 1994, *Sleater-Kinney* were hailed as "America's best rock band" by Greil Marcus in *Time Magazine*, and put out seven searing albums in 10 years (all of which have been lovingly remastered and released on LP) before going on indefinite hiatus in 2006. But *No Cities to Love* isn't about reminiscing, it's about reinvention—the ignition of an unparalleled chemistry to create new sounds and tell new stories. "*Sleater-Kinney* isn't something you can do half-assed or half-heartedly," says Brownstein. "We have to really want it. This band requires a certain desperation, a direness. We have to be willing to push because the entity that is this band will push right back." And push they do. Welcome to the first great album of 2105. You need this.



WILL BUTLER POLICY

MERGE

Will Butler has been a member of the band *Arcade Fire* for over 10 years. This is his first release under his own name. *Policy* is American music—in the tradition of the Violent Femmes, The Breeders, The Modern Lovers, Bob Dylan, Smokey Robinson, The Magnetic Fields, Ghostface Killah, and John Lennon (I know, but it counts). Music where the holy fool runs afoul of the casual world. *Policy* was recorded in one week in Jimi Hendrix's old living room (upstairs at Electric Lady Studios). *Will* played most everything. The song structures are traditional; the arrangements are clean. The music is experimental only in that it attacks consistency as a requirement for sincerity. The songs are angry, loving, joking, tired, honest, and idiotic. They clash against each other but also fit and work together—as if a blind watchmaker made a Frankenstein watch that came alive and told extremely accurate time while having conflicting feelings about its creator. But then the watch makes friends with a talking rat, and they go on hilarious adventures until it turns out that the rat was dead the whole time... Which is to say: *Policy* manages to be smart, hooky, and none-too-serious. You might even call it a lighthearted indie rock romp.

