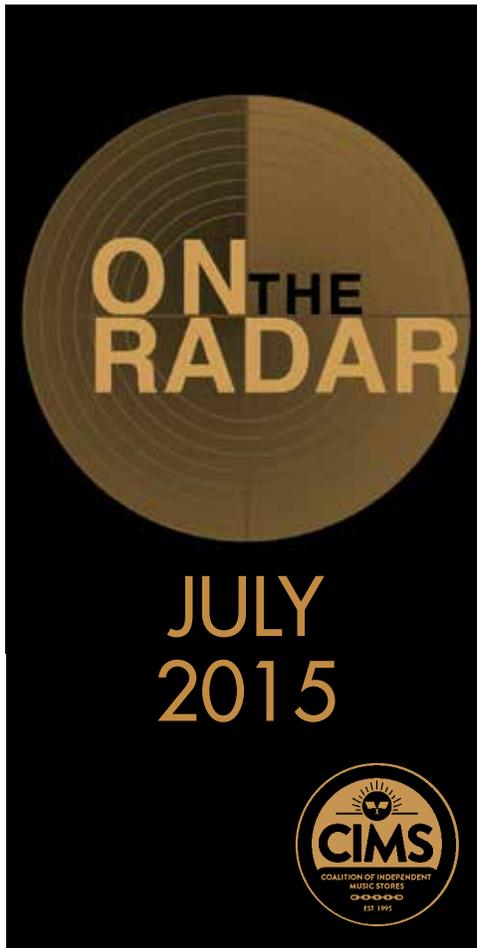




BREAKING BENJAMIN
DARK BEFORE DAWN
HOLLYWOOD

It's been six long years since **Breaking Benjamin** – the hard rock outfit founded by Benjamin Burnley – treated fans to new music. In that time Burnley battled a mystery illness, reconfigured the band, and tapped back into the joys of songwriting. The result is **Dark Before Dawn** – an album born of personal tumult that, conversely, was a joy to make: “**Dark Before Dawn** was by far the most fun album I’ve had writing and recording,” says Burnley. “I did it myself with no interference from anyone, and I did it with my friends who are in the band now.” **Dark Before Dawn** doesn’t disappoint. The new band picks up right where **Dear Agony** left off with soaring melodies, liquid metal riffs, and a slight psychedelic sheen – a powerful amalgam of Metallica’s **Load** and Nirvana’s **Nevermind**. Lead single, “Failure,” is makes for a perfect ambassador to **Dark Before Dawn**. “Before **Breaking Benjamin** I had been in and out of so many failed bands, and with each one of those failures I have become a better musician, a better songwriter and have made so many amazing friends along the way,” continues Burnley. “Life is full of failures but it teaches us exactly what not to do, and learning what not to do is no different than learning precisely what to do to succeed.” Indeed.



TYRESE
BLACK ROSE
VOLTRON RECORDS

After starring in the massively successful **Furious 7**, **Tyrese** – the model, poet, actor, musician – has dropped a new LP, **Black Rose**. Not only that, but this new project is accompanied by a book, documentary, and short film called “Shame” (with Jennifer Hudson). The 14-track album (his 10th) will feature collaborations with **Snoop Dogg**, **Wiz Khalifa**, **Chrisette Michele**, **Tank**, and **Brandy**, so you can tell this is gonna be some uncompromising R&B. **Tyrese** also claims that **Black Rose** will be his final solo album, which may explain his multimedia onslaught and the raw lyrical content. **Black Rose** finds **Tyrese** pouring his heart out – e.g. the aptly-named single, “Dumb Sh*t.” “I was in a relationship for 5 years and I got caught cheating and doing some dumb sh*t so the song is real.” And reality is the name of the game on **Black Rose**. “I feel like this is my confessions album,” says **Tyrese**. “When you think about all the music that is out now, there is a lot of singing a lot of rapping but I think the music that is cutting through is the music that’s honest.”



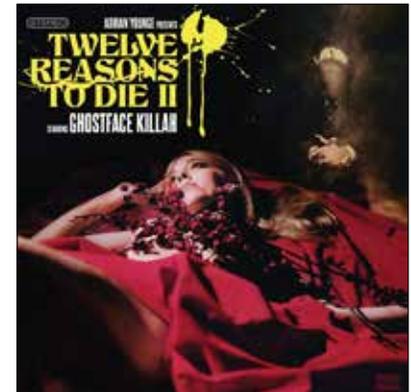
BILAL
IN ANOTHER LIFE
EONE MUSIC

The most interesting albums of 2015 (sonically speaking) belong to RnB and Hip Hop. This should hardly be a surprise, as these genres always innovate, but Kendrick Lamar, D’Angelo, and **Bilal** have all released stunning records that somehow sound both classic and otherworldly. After contributing his talents to the aforementioned K-Dot, among others, **Bilal’s** new joint, **In Another Life**, takes a turn from surrealism to a more soulful and socially conscious sound. The first single, “Satellites,” has a late 60’s / early 70s vibe that takes listeners on a journey of reflection in regards to today’s political climate. In this track, **Bilal** views the world as an outsider crooning, as evidenced by the lyrics: “Just another day in another life. I’m a satellite, watching the world watch people as they do what they do to people. So what did we do and what can we do and how did this happen.” That powerful refrain is reinforced by **Bilal’s** vocals, which range from soft and inquisitive to harsh and angry as he tries to get people to remember their love for humanity. But despite the weight of the subject matter, **Bilal’s** songs, inventive arrangements, and *that* voice always inspire. Kendrick Lamar, Big K.R.I.T., and Kimbra guests. Produced by Adrian Young (Jay-Z, Ghostface Killah).



RICHARD THOMPSON
STILL
FANTASY/CONCORD

Named by *Rolling Stone* as one of the Top 20 Guitarists of All Time, **Richard Thompson** is also one of the world’s most critically acclaimed and prolific songwriters. He has received Lifetime Achievement Awards for Songwriting on both sides of the Atlantic - from the Americana Music Association in Nashville to an OBE (Order of the British Empire) personally bestowed upon him by Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace. Most recently, the Americana Music Honors & Awards nominated him for “Artist of the Year.” Having co-founded the groundbreaking group Fairport Convention as a teenager in the 60’s, **Thompson** and his mates virtually invented British Folk Rock. By the age of 21 he left the band to pursue his own career, followed by a decade long musical partnership with his then-wife Linda, to over 30 years as a highly successful solo artist. Recorded with his trio, **Thompson’s** new album, **Still**, stands out among his massive body of work which includes over 40 albums and numerous Grammy nominations. Produced by Wilco’s **Jeff Tweedy**, **Still** features 12 brand new songs that underscore his position as one of popular music’s most important figures. Deluxe Edition features bonus CD.



GHOSTFACE KILLAH
ADRIAN YOUNGE PRESENTS: TWELVE REASONS TO DIE II
LINEAR LABS

Fans who have been waiting for the past two years can finally rejoice: **Adrian Young**’s and **Ghostface Killah’s** **Twelve Reasons To Die II** is here. To up the ante, **Ghostface** has added a very important lyrical companion to the mix: **Raelkwon**. The chemistry that was cemented two decades ago on Rae’s classic **Only Built 4 Cuban Linx** is a strong as ever. And on the topic of chemistry, executive producer and Wu-Tang patriarch **The RZA** returns to **Part II** as the story’s narrator. Where the first installment of **Twelve Reasons To Die** was based in 1960s Italy – detailing the machinations of the feared DeLuca crime family – **Part II** inhabits the grimy streets of mid-1970s New York City. The storyline for **Part II** is vividly brought to life with the help of Young’s never-endingly evocative and unique brand of cinematic, psychedelic soul, which was recorded strictly on analog tape, to bring out the true grit of the ‘70s era that provides the **Twelve Reasons** backdrop. **Twelve Reasons To Die II** is another heavy feather in the caps of all involved, especially Young and **Ghost**, who again poured their skills and intellect into this dramatic and engaging tale. It all fits perfectly into the Wu-Tang family tree as well as Young’s always-expanding musical universe.



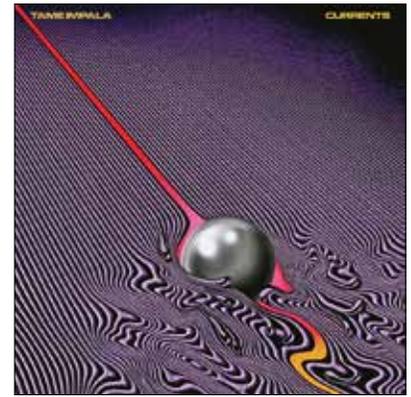
JASON ISBELL
SOMETHING MORE THAN FREE
 THIRTY TIGERS

The personal story surrounding **Jason Isbell's** last, breakthrough album, *Southeastern*, is widely known and easily revisited. A troubled young troubadour, newly married, stepped away from the darkness of addiction into a new, uncertain life of clarity and commitment, reflecting ruefully on his hard won victories and the price he paid attaining them. It was an album of aching elegance, marked by the sort of lyrical precision that brought to mind certain literary masters of the melancholy American scene, from Flannery O'Connor to Raymond Carver – an album of memorably infectious empathy. With *Something More Than Free*, he stretches himself further, greatly expanding the boundaries of **Isbell** country, that territory of the heart and mind where people strive against their imperfections, and simultaneously against their circumstances, in a landscape that's often unfriendly to their hopes. The album deepens as it goes along, offering some of the pleasures of a fine novel, including a collection of sharp vignettes that stick in the mind, impossible to shake. This isn't an album of easy certainty, but what makes his songwriting so rich and gripping, besides its observational precision, is the honesty of his inquiries. He doesn't flinch.



FLO MORRISSEY
TOMORROW WILL BE BEAUTIFUL
 GLASSNOTE

"I'd like it to be ageless. I like to think that there's another element to my music where it's not a 19 year old girl singing it." **Flo Morrissey** stands just on the brink of her 20th birthday, yet her voice and her songwriting possess an otherworldly naivety coupled with the weight of an old soul. It's a rare quality, one that calls to mind the work of Karen Dalton, Jackson C. Frank or Joanna Newsom, and that marks her out as a distinct and remarkable talent. When she was 15, **Morrissey** had written a song called "Show Me" — a stunning and arresting song that sounded world-worn and emboldened, showcasing the height and depth, the twist and turn of her exceptional voice. It is "Show Me" that forms the cornerstone of her debut album, *Tomorrow Will Be Beautiful*, a collection of songs written over the past 5 years of her life. That song caught the attention of her label but it's her most recent single, the glorious dream-song "Pages of Gold," a personal study of teenage confusion, that's poised to break her big. **Morrissey** recorded the album with producer Noah Georgeson (Devendra Banhart, Joanna Newsom, Cate Le Bon), who allowed her to "hear the songs in a new way" by devising different arrangements, introducing guitar and harp and harmonium and piano. Lovely.



TAME IMPALA
CURRENTS
 INTERSCOPE RECORDS

Musically, *Currents* sounds like **Tame Impala** mastermind Kevin Parker is on top of his game and having a blast – indulging his whims and unafraid to dive down the rabbit hole after an idea. Again operating as a one man studio band, Parker's resultant record calls to mind contemporary hip hop production, *Thriller*, fried 70s funk, the irreverent playground Daft Punk presented on *Discovery*, swathes of future pop and emotional 80s balladry, all filtered through a thoroughly modern psychedelic third eye. A genre-bending soundscape fuelled equally by curiosity as well as consciousness, it's an exhilarating new territory for **Tame Impala**. *Currents* was written, recorded, produced and mixed by Parker in Fremantle, West Australia. Lyrically the record finds Parker in a very different place in 2015 to where he was seven years ago. Transitions in life, relationships, perspectives, and mindsets – *Currents* maps Parker's evolution through these obstacles and finds him a brand new person. Whereas **Tame Impala** recordings would normally feature Parker's vocal hidden beneath a layer of psychedelic fuzz, drenched in reverb, *Currents* features his voice front and center, so no bones are made about his intent. In the meantime, you'll wanna crank this up and follow your bliss. Your summer begins now.



GALACTIC
INTO THE DEEP
 PROVogue

Hailing from New Orleans, Louisiana – **Galactic** has been exploring their seemingly limitless musical possibilities for more than 20 years. Since then, the band has consistently pushed artistic boundaries on the road and in the studio, approaching their music with open ears and drawing inspiration as much from the sounds bubbling up from their city's streets as they do from each other. No strangers to collaboration – just check out 2007's Hip Hop mash up *From The Corner To The Block*, 2010's *Ya-Ka-May*, or their inspired tribute to Carnival Season, *Carnivale Electricos* – **Galactic's** new release *Into The Deep* finds the funk legends teaming up with artists they've made connections with over the last two decades — including Macy Gray, Mavis Staples, JJ Grey, Ryan Montbleau, David Shaw of The Revivalists, Maggie Koerner, Brushy One String, and Charm Taylor. And while the funk is still strong with **Galactic**, it's the smoky, slow-burners (like the Macy Gray helmed title track) that give *Into The Deep* its distinct flavor. Of course, **Galactic** will be playing concerts and festivals all summer long, so don't you dare miss 'em.



FFS
FFS
 DOMINO

Collaborations don't work, or that's what **FFS** would have us believe on their debut album. When the seminal Los Angeles duo **Sparks** and Glasgow-based quartet **Franz Ferdinand** decided to record together, it was a flawed and potentially disastrous idea, right? Wrong, as **FFS** is one of the strongest albums of either bands' career. Produced by Grammy-award winning John Congleton (St Vincent, David Byrne) at London's RAK Studios, **FSS** took 15 days to complete. *Kimono My House-era Sparks* fans will recognize how **FSS** highlights their classic 'pop rock' DNA, and **Franz Ferdinand** fans won't be disappointed to hear the band at their peak of their powers as they bring their exhilaratingly unique and witty modern rock sound to the collaboration. Very much a new project, **FFS** doesn't truly sound like either band, but a striking and fascinating mutation. So in the right hands, collaborations DO work, and beautifully. The strength of the two bands is bigger than the sum of the parts.



RATATAT
MAGNIFIQUE
 XL

Combining the bedrock beats and primordial riffs from their first two albums with the sonic experimentation and production prowess of *LP3* and *LP4*, **Ratatat's** Mike Stroud and Evan Mast arrived at a new plateau with *Magnifique*. "We used to nearly always start tracks with a beat, but with this album we were often starting with melodies," Mike says. **Ratatat** created their most fully-realized album with proper "Intro" and "Outro" tracks and palette-cleansing interludes made to sound like someone tuning in music from an alternate world, often creating stark juxtapositions between lo and hi-fi sounds – and lots of guitars. "Some of the guitars were recorded an octave lower and then sped up to give them an unnatural gloss," says Evan. "It almost sounds like guitars on steroids. I like having that intensity and then getting down to tape hiss, where you can hear the amp that's dying as you're playing the guitar." The secret weapon on *Magnifique's* slower tracks is the pedal steel guitar, an instrument most commonly heard in country music, "But it's a really futuristic sounding instrument," Evan explains. The result is a dance album that feels indebted to ELO and Queen rather than new software – a human touch that makes *Magnifique* seem aptly named.