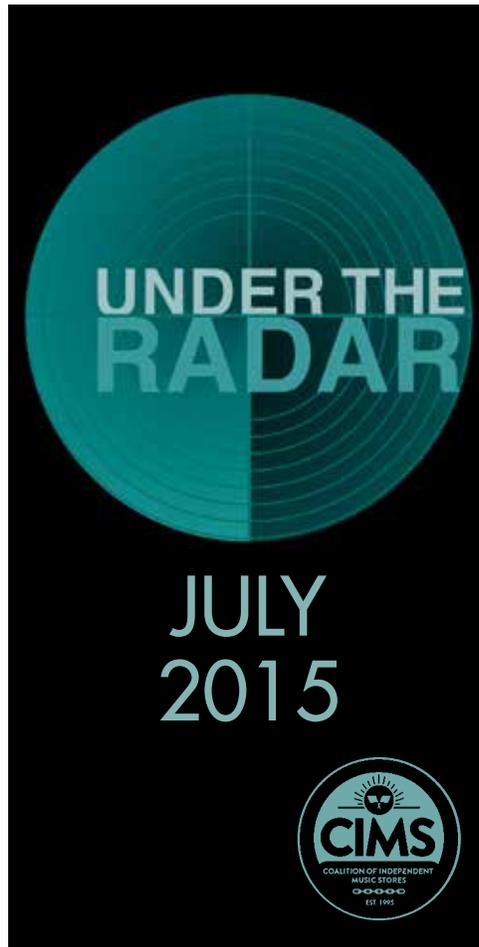


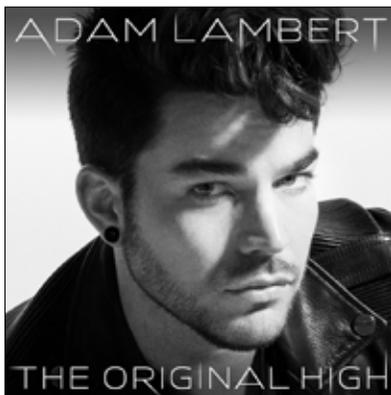
CAYUCAS
DANCING AT THE BLUE LAGOON
 SECRETLY CANADIAN

As Zach Yudin and his twin brother and bandmate, Ben, went in to create the new **Cayucas** album, they found themselves transported back to another time. While they now call Los Angeles home, they drew from the nostalgia of their childhood growing up in Davis, CA; the nostalgia in their music that is as much about a place they've never been as any actual experience. And it was that wandering imagination and a punchy California dream that eventually grew to become *Dancing at the Blue Lagoon*. While their sun-drenched, jangly, sometimes melancholic sound is quintessentially "Californian," is **Cayucas'** California: It's the sound of kids from the suburbs who fantasize in Technicolor, whose view of the Golden State is its own form of idealism. *Dancing at the Blue Lagoon* is all about a band testing its comfort zone and asking us to do the same. Zach and Ben would create bands that were more like a musical idea, record a few songs, and then move on. **Cayucas** grew out of this period of experimentation – taking sound we thought we knew and turned in into something personal and complex yet still imbued with all the catchy hallmarks of a couple of dudes having fun in the sun.



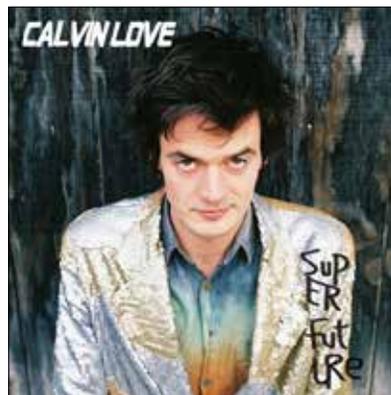
THIRD EYE BLIND
DOPAMINE
 MEGA COLLIDER RECORDS

Third Eye Blind gained wide success at the end of the recording industry golden age. Their ability to adapt through the digital revolution speaks to the ingenuity and creativity found in the music. After four smash albums and millions of records sold worldwide, they continue to write, record and tour, entertaining their core audience while growing a larger, younger and more dedicated fanbase than ever. Their first album in six years, *Dopamine* is a road-tested collection of songs chronicling the band's time on tour since their last studio effort, *Ursa Major*. In many ways, *Dopamine* is vintage **Third Eye Blind** – but a lot can change in six years, and while the sound has progressed, the recordings retain the endearing sentiment **Third Eye Blind** fans new and old have come to love. The production is both punchy but punctuated with subtle electronic touches. Still, it's Stephen Jenkins words, melodies, and spirit that keeps *Dopamine* twisting and turning – and, likewise, listeners will be kept on their toes. Seriously; check out "Everything Is Easy," "Back To Zero," and especially "Rites of Passage" and you'll find that *Dopamine* makes good on the promise of its title. **Third Eye Blind** is one of America's Pure Pop Treasures.



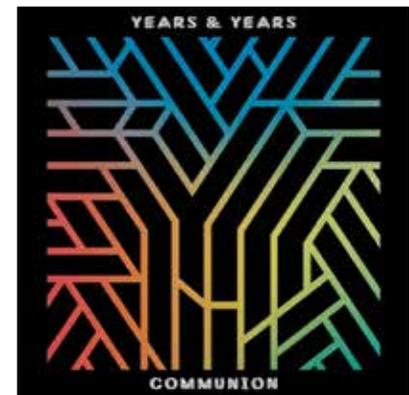
ADAM LAMBERT
THE ORIGINAL HIGH
 WARNER BROS

Anyone who has ever seen **Adam Lambert** perform knows that he carries within him an unquenchable thirst to sing better, to live better, to love better, and to be better. On *The Original High*, the international superstar keenly captures the piercing longing of trying to recapture the exquisite rush that comes with any first—from first kiss to first hit—followed by the inevitable dashed expectations. The hypnotic, pulsating title track dares to question what's behind the sense of melancholy that dusts over people as they struggle with the discontent that comes with their dreams not coming true — or coming true and then seeming hollow. The set adventurously balances dark and light themes and sonically pushes pop boundaries with its experimental beats and quirky rhythms. For *The Original High*, **Lambert** turns up the vulnerability and tones down the vocal acrobatics. His soaring range and powerful vocal strength remain, but he purposefully dials back some of the pageantry, and, in doing so, creates an enthralling intimacy with the listener. In the past, **Lambert** was content to hide behind his often over-the-top glam persona, but on *The Original High*, he has no use for artifice as he steps confidently and boldly back into the spotlight.



CALVIN LOVE
SUPER FUTURE
 ARTS & CRAFTS

Only once with every blue moon comes an artist that seems so familiar yet out of space as **Calvin Love**. On *Super Future*, the young charmer from Edmonton, Alberta, steeps songs of psychedelic wisdom in celestial sensuality. **Calvin Love** arrives an enigma, a strutting, crooning contradiction. With coolness that defies contrivance, **Love** links sounds and images of science-fiction vintage with an auspicious version of the future. "Automaton" plays late summer Knight Rider funk like a factory machine, while soul-drenched bass and electric guitars chase each other in flirtatious dialogue. "Daydream" makes landfall with near-tropical humidity: cavernous, scuttling drum lines echo **Calvin's** lilting vocals and stalactite guitar phrasing, exposing how nimbly he moves from sunny to gritty climes. The urgent "Creepin'" races at a siren's pace, with bursts of fractured guitar framing its more primal, animistic, punk rock personality. The music is at all times seductive – **Love's** reedy tenor phases in the same atmospheric register as age-old synthesizers – blending obsession with the beauty of artifice and the inner systems of real and natural things. It's this infallible match of the authentic to the inventive that makes *Super Future* so strange and inviting.



YEARS & YEARS
COMMUNION
 INTERSCOPE RECORDS

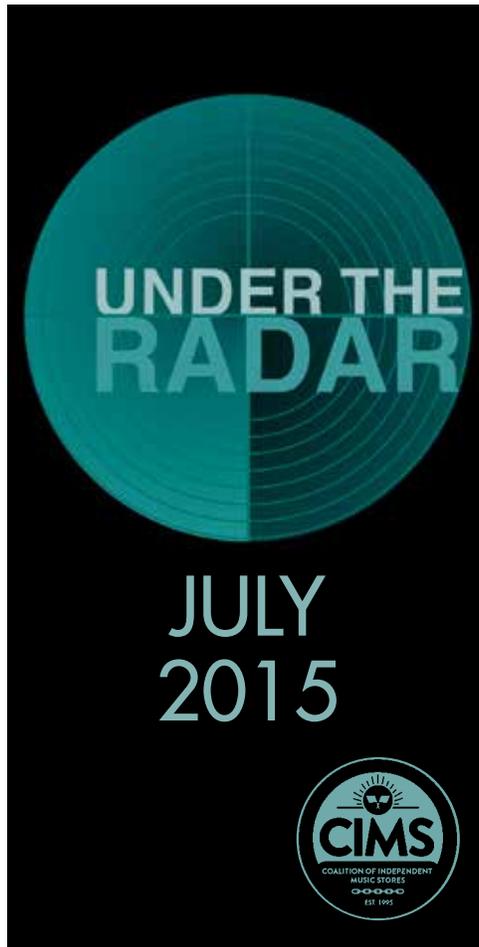
With their luminous brand of electro-pop, London-based trio **Years & Years** layer sweetly smooth vocals over bright and heady beats to create what they call music you can dance and cry to. As winners of the BBC Sound of 2015 Poll (an honor previously granted to such critically praised hitmakers as Sam Smith, Adele, and Ellie Goulding), bassist Mike Goldsworthy, keyboard player Emre Turkmen, and vocalist Olly Alexander have spent the last few years charming audiences worldwide by merging R&B, deep house, and classic-pop with both elegance and abandon. Appearing on 2015 Artists to Watch lists from the likes of USA Today, BuzzFeed, and Huffington Post, **Years & Years** are now poised for their stateside breakthrough with the release of their highly anticipated full-length debut album *Communion*. Just direct yourself to "Shine" – an undeniable single that gives of serious Michael Jackson vibes while reveling in a sumptuous, contemporary production. "Worship" ups the ante with a seductive groove, warm keyboards, and an irresistible come-on of a chorus that makes church sound way sexier than it (usually) is. *Communion* is a sexy sacrament perfect for the club or the boudoir.



KEN MODE SUCCESS

SEASON OF MIST

Winnipeg's **KEN Mode** has long worn its influences on its sleeve. The brainchild of Canadian Royal Conservatory of Music trained musicians Jesse Matthewson and brother Shane Matthewson, **KEN Mode** took inspiration for its name from punk pioneer Henry Rollins – it's an acronym for "Kill Everyone Now." Rather than resort to violence **KEN Mode** works its aggression out through its music – which in the case of their latest album, *Success*, comes in the form metallic sheets of aggravated guitar clearing a path for darkly poetic ranting underneath of bed of seasick bass and unrelenting, almost tribal rhythms. With *Success*, which is **KEN Mode's** 6th album, the band wanted to pay tribute to the bands that helped shape their musical style, particularly Nirvana, Cop Shoot Cop, The VSS, Drive Like Jehu, and Circus Lupus, though one can also hear the influence of The Jesus Lizard, Big Black, and the metallic K.O. of Touch and Go Records. That said, it's fitting that **KEN Mode** enlisted the one-and-only Steve Albini to capture the feral sound of *Success* – and, as such, it's an absolutely monster record. They just don't make 'em like this anymore. PLAY LOUD!!!



JULY 2015



RICKIE LEE JONES THE OTHER SIDE OF DESIRE

TOSOD MUSIC

Two-time Grammy winner **Rickie Lee Jones** exploded onto the pop scene with her groundbreaking self-titled debut and has fearlessly experimented with her sound and persona over 15 critically acclaimed albums. Her latest, *The Other Side of Desire*, was written, recorded and rooted in the city of New Orleans, where **Jones** lives on the opposite side of the street made famous by Tennessee Williams. Produced by John Porter (of Roxy Music) and Mark Howard, this is the first new music **Jones** has written in over a decade. "This work is inspired by many years of sitting with all the events of my life until I had something to paint with," says **Rickie**. "I came to New Orleans to write and to live a different way than what I have known on the west coast... Here is another record then, made of my imagination, and whatever else that has no words, using the clay of this place and the shapes of my eyes to form some kind of picture of my life, or my heart, that I alone can understand, and hopefully that others can enjoy."



LYFE JENNINGS TREE OF LYFE

RAL

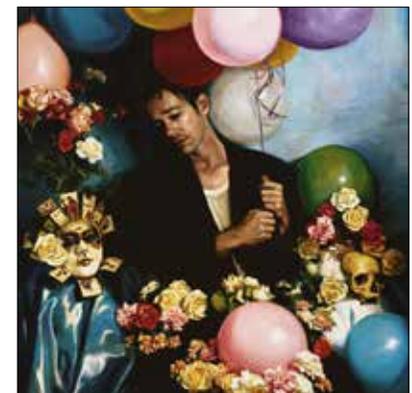
Lyfe Jennings describes *Tree Of Lyfe* as his most personal work to date. He wrote and produced the majority of the album at his home studio. "Everybody feels like they have to reinvent themselves," says **Lyfe** of his the new album. "I don't think you can reinvent the truth. It is what it is. I'm not focused on reinvention. I want to go deeper. This album reaffirms the reasons why people started loving this music in the first place." **Jennings** populates *Tree Of Lyfe* with songs about personal empowerment and self-respect, particularly "Pretty Is." Other highlights include "Always" (a throwback jam worthy of Raphael Saadiq) and the wobbly O'Jays-infected future funk of "I Love You." *Tree of Lyfe* feels fresh and positive through and through – from the songs to the incredible artwork, which comes from a series titled "Shadows," taken by a photographer named Baki in Korea. "I chose this album cover image because I feel it represents everything I wanted to convey on my *Tree Of Lyfe* album. I've always felt people are the tree of life and not success or materialistic things."



HUDSON MOHAWKE LANTERN

WARP

Hudson Mohawke has been on a meteoric rise the last few years, working with some of the biggest names in hip hop, pop and dance music but everything started in a bedroom in Glasgow when he was barely a teenager. From age 15 he was an award winning scratch DJ producing happy hardcore on cracked software. He came to define a generation of electronic fusion producers but unlike many of his peers, **Hudson** has matured into a fully-fledged contemporary hit-maker continually working to break the mold. Born of the underground club scene in the UK, **Hud Mo** has been releasing music for the last 10 years, cultivating a formidable presence in the community. His US break-out came in 2012 with *TNGHT*, the collaborative project with fellow producer Lunice, which saw their production influence the A-list in rap and help reintroduce the US dance / EDM scene to Hip Hop as club music. In the two years following, **Hudson** has worked on releases from Drake, Kanye West, John Legend, Young Thug, Pusha-T, and Antony Hegarty. *Lantern* is the sound of **HudMo** circa NOW – casually pushing Hip Hop ever forward into the 21st century ... But you'll be too busy partying to notice.



NATE RUESS GRAND ROMANTIC

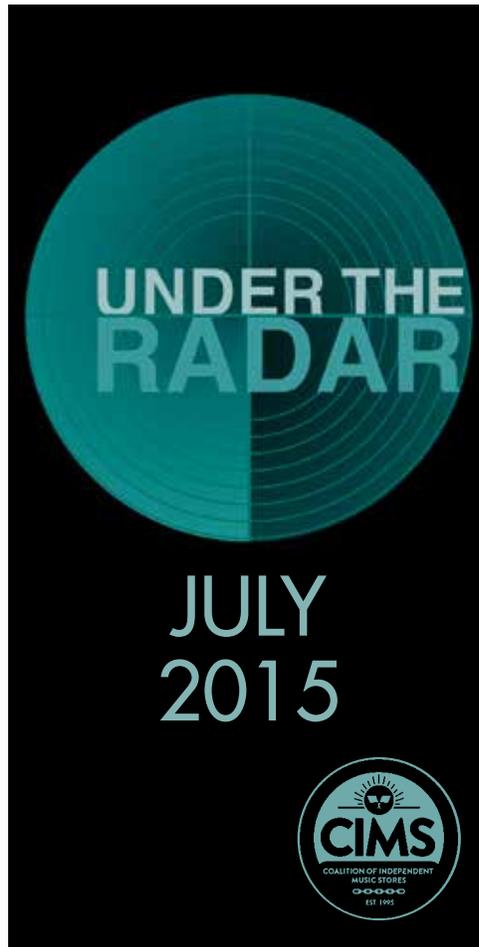
ATLANTIC / FUELED BY RAMEN

Known around the globe as the singer/songwriter of indie pop super-group **fun.** (you know: "We Are Young"), GRAMMY® Award-winning recording artist **Nate Ruess** has struck out on his own with *The Grand Romantic*. **Ruess** has long been on a roll, finding success with his band as well as working as a co-writer with pop heavyweights such as Pink, Eminem, and Brian Wilson. The songwriting process for *The Grand Romantic* began with **fun.** in mind, but with his bandmates' schedules proving as busy as his own, **Ruess** decided that it was time for him to see the thing through on his own. Along with **fun.** producers Jeff Bhasker and Emile Haynie, **Ruess** recorded *The Grand Romantic* in New York and Los Angeles. Together they found inspiration in Van Morrison, George Michael, e.e. cummings, and magical vibe that comes after having dinner and drinks with good friends. The result is an emotionally explosive celebration of life and love with big ass production and arrangements and are perfectly tailored to **Ruess'** big ass voice, which sounds like it was made to come blasting forth of a big ass pop song... Which, of course, it does. Need a dose? "Nothing Without Love" is monster lead single while "What This World Is Coming To" features Beck.



GOOD OLD WAR
BROKEN INTO BETTER SHAPE
 NETTWERK

Broken Into Better Shape finds **Good Old War** pushing their musical boundaries to the limit. Road-weary from two years at sea, the trio set out to write an album full of songs that were not limited to sounding perfect in a live experience. They bunkered down in singer Keith Goodwin's toddler-toy-filled house and struggled for half a year to find what they were looking for. Around this time, drummer Tim Arnold left the band for Atlanta, where his fiancé was pregnant with their first child. Arnold's DNA remains in the band and his fingerprints are still present as a writer on some of the tracks on the record. With half of the album's songs now written, Goodwin and guitarist Dan Schwartz began experimenting with other writers and producers, including Emile Haynie (fun., Bruno Mars) for "Fly Away" and Zimbabwe-born urban producer T.Collar for "Tell Me What You Want From Me." *Broken Into Better Shape* became the record that it is in Nashville, where the band wrote and rounded out songs with producer Jason Lehning (Alison Krause & Union Station, Mat Kearney, Dolly Parton) and with the aid of a terrific group of musicians and writers. The result is the band's proudest moment, an album of lush, well-crafted songs with no filler.



NEIL YOUNG
THE MONSANTO YEARS
 REPRISÉ

Neil Young has never had a problem speaking his mind. Whether he's grieving, wailing against the man, shilling for unlikely Presidents, or trying to change the way we look at technology, **Young** puts it all on the line. He can break it down solo acoustic, keep things elemental, but it's best when he plugs in Ol' Black, cranks everything up to 11, and lets it rip. And he's been doing this shit long enough that when he speaks – whether it seems to make sense or not – that we should take the time to listen. Lately it's the scourge of corporate greed, environmental destruction, Starbucks, big box retail and the evils of Monsanto that have woken **Young's** ire, on the presciently titled *The Monsanto Years*. Such subjects seem perfectly suited for the rantings of a crazy old coot –which, I suppose, they are – but they're also subjects near and dear to the hearts of indie record store people... So who are we to judge? Fortunately, it sounds pretty damn good, not to mention a nice edition to the "weird" section of **Young's** storied canon. For this guitar-centric and highly-charged rock album, **Young** is joined by **Promise of the Real**, an LA-based rock band fronted by Lukas Nelson (vocals/guitar) and Micah Nelson (guitar, vocals), who happen to be the sons of **Willie**. It's rock for a slightly less free world. Dig.



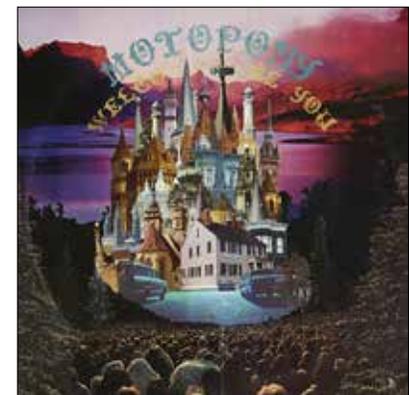
HIGH ON FIRE
LUMINIFEROUS
 EONE MUSIC

Universally recognized as one of the most potent acts in music today, **High On Fire** creates molten heavy metal that merges primal fury and aggression, blackened bombast and hall of fame heaviness. The group's seventh studio album, *Luminiferous*, is a supersonic exercise in conquest by volume, delivering calculated catharsis as a volcano of revolving riffs and hailstorm of thundering drums combine to beam a blazing spotlight towards the future of modern metal music. "We're doing our part to expose The Elite and the fingers they have in religion, media, governments and financial world downfall and their relationship to all of our extraterrestrial connections in the race to control this world," comments vocalist / guitarist Matt Pike. "Wake up, it's happening. All while we stare at a socially engineered lie we think of as normalcy. Unless we wake from the dream, there will come true doom." After nearly two decades of trailblazing new passageways to heaviness, **HIGH ON FIRE'S** strong, stunning archetype continues to both sharpen and evolve; the Trio's vision has never been clearer. The Rif, as always, is King. Produced by the one-and-only Kurt Ballou (Converge).



THE REVIVALISTS
MEN AMONGST MOUNTAINS
 WIND-UP RECORDS

After seven years of making music together, New Orleans rock hybrid **The Revivalists** cloistered themselves within the intimate confines of Bogalusa, LA's Studio in the Country for nearly two weeks while recording *Men Amongst Mountains*, taking advantage of the studio's generous acoustics by setting up in a single room and recording to tape in an effort to induce a more performance-based sensibility. New Orleans' Esplanade and Living Room Studios hosted the finishing touches to an album that leans first and foremost on capturing authentic moments in warm, rich tones and with a distinctly raw, old-world feel. Mirroring the broader themes that connect the individual songs on the album, the recording and instrumentation on *Men Amongst Mountains* represents the next step in **The Revivalists'** ever-evolving depth and maturity. Like the band's vaunted live shows, *Men Amongst Mountains* can and will turn on a dime. The gentle gives way to the heavy, the acoustic to the orchestral. Despair becomes hope. Fire becomes light. At times, the obstacles and troubles in our lives can make the world seem impossibly, hopelessly big. *Men Amongst Mountains*, ultimately, is about the journey that makes us greater than the mountains standing in our way.



MOTOPONY
WELCOME YOU
 EONE MUSIC

Motopony was formed in 2009 with the meeting of songwriter Daniel Blue and co-producer Buddy Ross, drummer Forrest Mauvais, and guitarist Brantley Cady. The band was named for Daniel's appreciation for the spiritual duality of the physical and digital, with moto – the representing side – and the pony – the animal. Originally based in Tacoma, WA, it wasn't long before they relocated to Seattle. They began playing shows locally in 2009 and soon were scooped up by the label Tiny Ogre and released their first self-titled record in 2010. After finishing a string of tours around the album, they took time to write dozens of songs and reformed with Ross and Cady leaving and new members Nate Daley, Andrew Butler and Terry Mattson joining the band. In 2014 the EP *Idle Beauty* was released and the band did a three month international tour last fall which took them to the UK, India and included a stop in London to record an acoustic EP in Abbey Road Studios with producer Rob Cass. **Motopony's** new full length, *Welcome You*, was recorded at Bear Creek in Seattle by producer Mike McCarthy (Spoon, Heartless Bastards, Trail of Dead) and mixed in London by Guy Massey (Radiohead, Spiritualized, The Libertines).

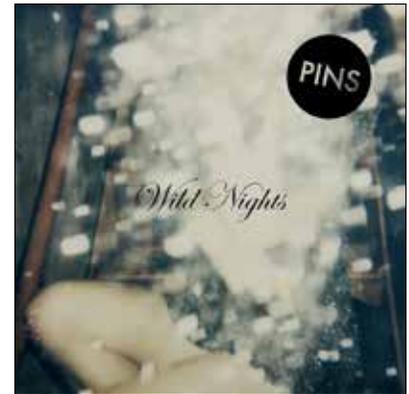
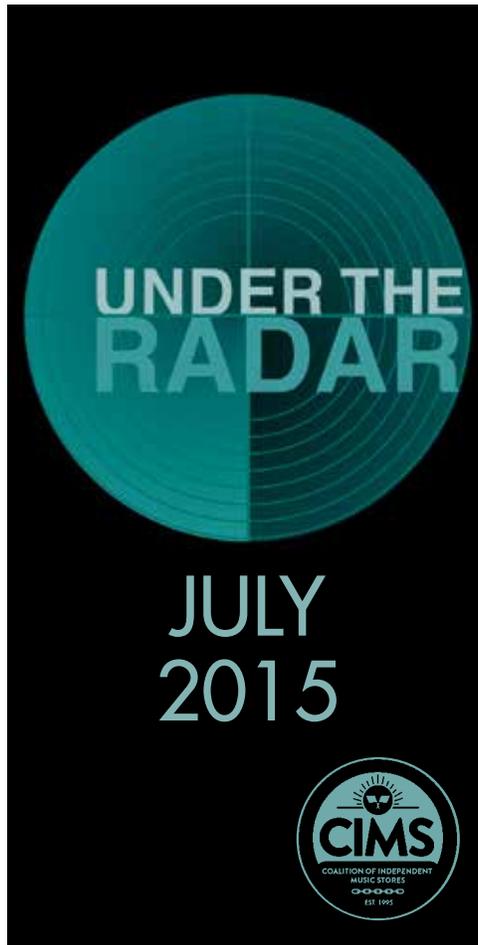


SON LUX BONES

GLASSNOTE

Son Lux, founded by New York's Ryan Lott, began as a solo exploration of the jagged, icy line between the strange and the familiar, in which sonic structures supplant the conventions of pop form. Over the last eight years, though, the name has taken on myriad meanings, just as the work has subsumed sounds and collaborators. Now, **Son Lux** is a band. A trio, to be exact; one that has meticulously woven together dizzying percussion, fraying guitar, symphonic bluster, and haunting vocals into a quaking and vivid post-pop (post-everything) burst called **Bones**. The fourth **Son Lux** LP combines all of the architectural precision and aural inventiveness we've come to expect, with more immediacy and melody than ever. That's all to do with the crew.

"It basically sounds like Queen plus huge drum machines and vocal effects. If you like your pop bombastic, orchestral, and full of still-bleeding wounds, this song is for you. Listen." - Stereogum



PINS WILD NIGHTS

BELLA UNION

Speaking about their second album, **Wild Nights**, Mancunian quartet **PINS** say "We didn't want to be bound to the sound of our first album. The albums were recorded years apart, and in **Wild Nights** you can hear the new experiences, ambitions, and influences we've taken on. We have introduced new instruments, and stronger vocal harmonies - and have brought this through to our live performances." They've just toured with Sleater-Kinney, Babes In Toyland, Wire and Drengé and have huge fans at KEXP, WFUV, Stereogum, NYLON and Rookie Mag. Recorded in Joshua Tree at Rancho De La Luna with Dave Catching (GOTSA, Eagles of Death Metal) and Hayden Scott, and mixed in New York with Ben Baphtie at Atomic Sound NYC, **PINS** have had quite a two years. Now it's your turn to fall in love with this sumptuous psychedelic fuzz fest that recalls Dum Dum Girls and The Black Angles. **Wild Nights** asks the musical question: "What do we do when our dreams come true?"



CREEPOID CEMETERY HIGHRISE SLUM

COLLECT

After releasing two albums with No Idea, an EP for Graveface, and countless miles logged on the road with everyone from Against Me! and Balance and Composure to Kurt Vile and A Place to Bury Strangers, Philadelphia's **Creepoid** lands at Collect Records for **Cemetery Highrise Slum**—a document of stunning growth that finally crystallizes the promise of an already feverishly loved band. Produced and mixed by Peter Mavrogeorgis (The National, Sharon Van Etten) at Dollhouse Studios in Savannah, GA, **Creepoid** have stripped away at the reticence of previous albums for a bold and focused effort that places equal measure on high definition and playful ambiguity alike. That critics have never quite been able to contain **Creepoid's** style—they've been called everything from punk and psych to dream-pop and grunge—is not as much a conflict as it is a statement, and on **Cemetery Highrise Slum**, the band finds itself at this idiosyncratic intersection of their own design: This is how it feels when a feisty, aggressive impulse agrees to be led by a firm, but graceful hand.



BYRON LEE & THE DRAGONAIRES UPTOWN TOP RANKING

VP

The hippest **Byron Lee** release in years is here! **Uptown Top Ranking** is a collection of ska, rock steady and vintage pop sounds from one of the biggest bands to emerge from the Caribbean Islands. **Byron Lee's Dragonaires** have been a major force in the region for decades and this album pays tribute to a forgotten yet potent sound from the man who revolutionized the Soca genre. **Lee** and his band got their start in 1950 playing *mento* - an acoustic-based ancestor of Ska. Soon the band was backing up visiting musicians like Harry Belafonte, The Drifters, Chuck Berry, Sam Cook, and more. After visiting the U.S., **Lee** returned to Jamaica with a Fender bass and an electric organ - two instruments that had never graced the island nation. From that moment on Ska became a force to be reckoned with, and the band found themselves with hit singles and a big time cameo in the James Bond film, *Dr. No* (they do a killer cover of "Goldfinger," BTW). **Uptown Top Ranking** presents 20 classic hits were culled from the extensive Dynamic Sounds catalogue and hand picked to appeal to the new wave of vinyl collectors and a wide range of tastes. Also available as a specially re-mastered double LP. **Uptown Top Ranking** deserves to be an essential part of your summer. You need this.



CITIZEN EVERYBODY IS GOING TO HEAVEN

RUN FOR COVER

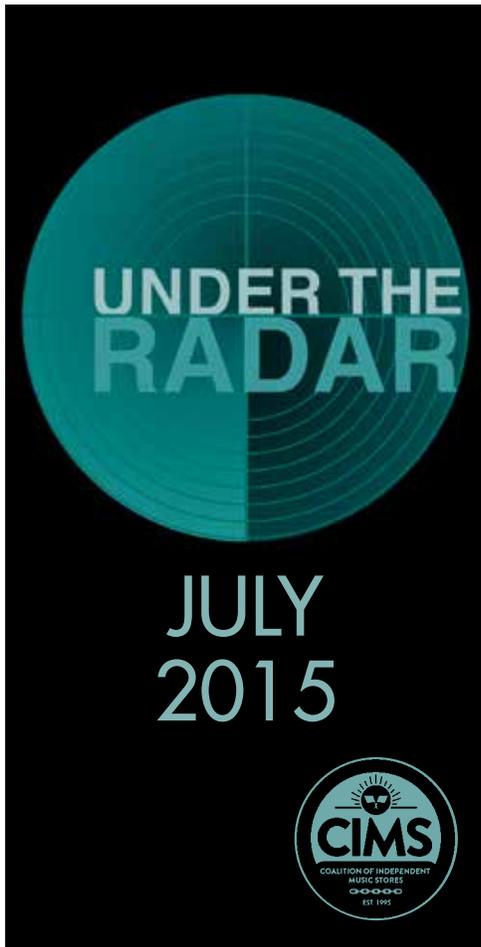
Almost two years to the date of the release of their breakthrough album, **Citizen** return with their highly anticipated follow-up full-length, **Everybody is Going to Heaven**. Haunting these ten songs is a foreboding, dark atmosphere masterfully crafted by producer Will Yip, and an immediate, intense energy is palpable from even the first grimy seconds of the opener, "Cement." As with every one of **Citizen's** releases, Mat Kerekes' signature vocal delivery here is a trademark feature, demonstrating the emotional tension that boils over on this release. As cathartic as ever, he duels between a soft croon and a haunting scream, confronting his demons on tracks like "My Favorite Color" echoing the tormented refrain, "My heart still beats for nothing." And while most of the record is an intense and noisy onslaught, songs like "Heavyside" and "Yellow Love" act as armistices, each aching in reverb-drenched consonance. **Everybody is Going to Heaven** is a defining record for **Citizen**: Once regarded as newcomers with undeniable potential, the band shows here that they have matured both abruptly and uniquely, with no end to their upward trajectory in sight.



**DONALD CUMMING
OUT CALLS ONLY**

RAZOR & TIE

"For me, the title refers to a distress call," explains former Virgins frontman **Donald Cumming** in regards to his excellent solo debut *Out Calls Only*. "I like the idea of emoting as being a strictly outbound thing, like having that red telephone that goes directly to its intended line. It can't take calls in, because it has to be clear in case of an emergency." The seamless shifts in style that transpire across these ten songs, in fact, are more indicative of what he represents as an artist than anything he's done since he first began absorbing music growing up above the family liquor store in Tribeca. A learned ear can easily hear elements of alt-country, post-modern folk and even sprawling psychedelic instrumentalism in the crescendo of the album's eight-minute centerpiece "Scarecrow" within the singer's trademark vibe that permeates all he does. According to **Cumming**, it is the result of a sound that has no attachment to any kind of cultural agenda. "It seems to me there is a trend that favors aesthetics over content," he surmises. "I don't have an aesthetic or a sound that I'm looking for as much as I want to be as sincere as possible." And that sincerity is palpable in tunes like "Shadow Tears", "Lonesome for You", "Total Darkness" and the album's illuminating closer "Spanish Horses."



**MAIN ATTRAKTIONZ
808S & DARK GRAPES III**

VAPOR

Over the ensuing 7+ years, (and with an added assist from the world wide web and social media) **Main Attractionz** have cultivated a unique and passionate sound, combining opaque atmospheric and lived-in reality rhymes, that stands as one of the most interesting and refreshing in the crowded and fractured world of today's rap underground. Squadda B, who doubles as both producer and rapper, has an instantly identifiable production style that draws from regional rap styles like hyphy and mobb music in the Bay Area, as well as Memphis mixtape obfuscation and the NYC street rap of C-NN, but also maintains pop accessibility through his use of booming 808s and melodic, floating vocal clips. Simply put: this music sounds like nothing else out right now. Their collaborations with like-minded artists such as Lil B, Clams Casino, and Shady Blaze have only added to post-digital sonics **Main Attractionz** have cultivated over the last 5 years. Produced entirely by Friendzone, who have risen to become one of the premiere young production teams in music, producing the hit, "Fashion Killa" from A\$AP Rocky's, *Long Live. A\$AP.* and responsible for such classics as "Perfect Skies" and "Chuch," *808s & Dark Grapes III* is a cohesive and brilliant album.



**LEON BRIDGES
COMING HOME**

COLUMBIA

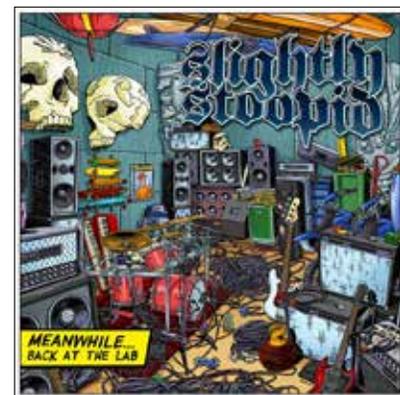
Leon Bridges is the 'out of almost nowhere' story that only comes along once in a while. Awareness of **Leon Bridges** and his unique craft continues to grow authentically and consistently. It was only last summer that **Leon Bridges** was singing open mics in his hometown Fort Worth, TX. One of those open mics was attended by Austin Jenkins and Josh Block of the notable indie band White Denim who were absolutely floored by **Leon's** voice, songs, and creative vision. They soon after set-up shop in a makeshift studio and recorded the album's opener "Coming Home" completely live to tape. This first take is exactly what you hear opening the album. The remaining 9 songs followed in a burst of creativity and inspiration. He's looking the part, too – dude has some real Sam Cook cool going on. But don't get too hung up on the vintage costumes – what sets **Leon** apart from the pack is his songwriting that deconstructs familiar tropes and imbues them with 21st century freshness that is subtle yet palpable. And despite his great band, hearing **Leon** perform solo will melt even the hardest hearts. *Coming Home* never sounded so good.



**JOY WILLIAMS
VENUS**

COLUMBIA

Many know **Joy Williams** as one half of the four-time Grammy-winning folk-rock duo **The Civil Wars**. Until their 2012 hiatus (and eventual break up in August 2014) the singer-songstress with her long sea witch hair and Mona Lisa half-smile rarely revealed herself, except through the duo's bruising and stark lyrics of romantic conflations and doomed intimacies. On *Venus* she changes all that. No longer content to just conjure the antique grace of some mythic, bygone world, **Williams** was intent to actually pierce the veil of metaphor and an imagined history and tell a more honest, human story of one woman's journey out of darkness. Over 11 unstintingly honest songs, she unabashedly re-counts what occurred in her life over the past two and a half years. She doesn't try to defend or explain, but instead tells a simple straightforward story of events, sparing no one, especially herself. In the end she can see her life from a great altitude – able to view her choices as an overarching geography that finally makes sense to her. Oh: And don't come expecting "Americana" – *Venus* finds **Williams** reveling in dank beats, brooding piano ballads, and dark atmospheric. Americana Gothic, perhaps? Regardless, it's a sensual, compelling, and worth your attention.



**SLIGHTLY STOOPID
MEANWHILE...BACK AT THE LAB**

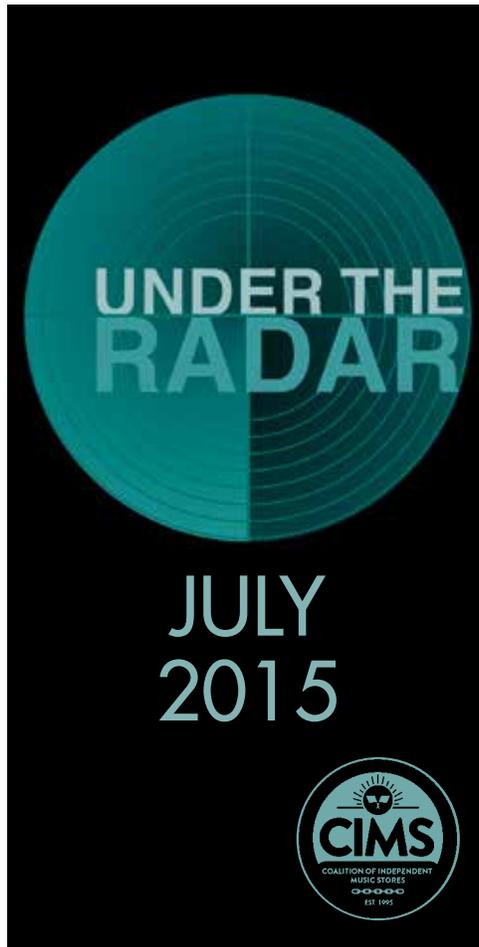
STOOPID RECORDS

While it's a rare commodity for a band to tour as consistently as **Slightly Stoopid**, the group's diligent commitment to live music provides some insight into their loyal fan base and the unique creative metamorphosis throughout its existence. This is made apparent by their latest studio album: On *Meanwhile... Back at the Lab* the Ocean Beach, California-based group – led by co-founders and multi-instrumentalists Kyle McDonald and Miles Doughty – has also found the same passionate dedication to their studio craft as they've found on the stage. Holing up between tours in their own San Diego recording studio and record label complex, **Slightly Stoopid's** balance of a prolific touring regimen between albums has helped to refine the tasty fusion and massive groove that permeates its trademark sound, as well as the live shows. As a result, *Meanwhile... Back at the Lab* is **Slightly Stoopid** at their dankest.



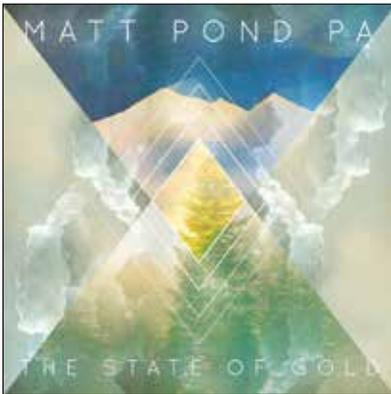
**PETE ROCK
PETESTRUMENTALS 2**
MELLO MUSIC GROUP

Grammy Award winning Producer **Pete Rock**, also known as Soul Brother #1 and the Chocolate Boy Wunda, has arguably pioneered the fusing of jazz, funk and soul into hip-hop. He revolutionized rap production through groundbreaking studio wizardry. He made remixes matter. Just in case you didn't know, **Pete Rock** rose to prominence in the early 90's as one half of the critically acclaimed group **Pete Rock & CL Smooth**. He's behind some of the greatest Hip Hop albums of all time, including Nas' undisputed classic, *Illmatic*. J-Dilla wanted to be him. Kanye West is still trying. And to this day he rocks crowds around the globe with his legendary DJ Sets. Dude still has it... Which is why *Petestrumentals 2* is such an heavily anticipated release. Here we have **Pete Rock** doing what he does best – creating the freshest hip hop landscapes – the beats that Heads from now until the future will covet. This is **Pete Rock** in his element. Crank it up and learn from the best. This is Boom Bap eternal. You need this.



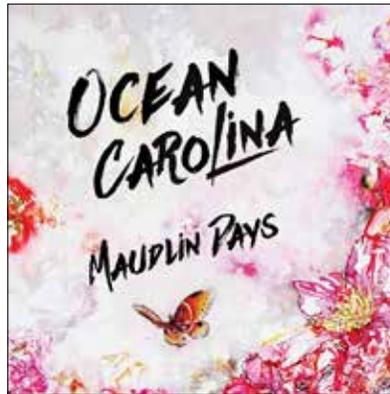
**CIVIL TWILIGHT
STORY OF AN IMMIGRANT**
WIND-UP RECORDS

"What am I to build, if my hands are broken, if I'm not the chosen one?" sings Steven McKellar of **Civil Twilight** on "Story of An Immigrant," over a lush, dynamic beat that evokes the sounds of his native South Africa while steeped in the band's ever-evolving present. The foursome (Steven, his brother and guitarist Andrew, drummer Richard Wouters and Kevin Dailey on keys and guitar) are living proof of what happens when you stop worrying about being the chosen one and make music built on both the roots that grew you and the love that keeps you thriving every day. **Civil Twilight's** songs embrace every corner of human emotion, balancing delicate, poetic lyrics with sweeping arrangements that touch all the senses. Produced by Ben H. Allen (Gnarls Barkley, Bombay Bicycle Club, Cut Copy), *Story of An Immigrant* is built on this vibrancy, on the permanent dust of a Cape Town youth; on the connection that unites them all as brothers beyond blood and on their new home in America where they pull from the innate, thriving musicianship of Nashville, where they live. We're all immigrants, in some way, and **Civil Twilight's** singing our national anthem.



**MATT POND PA
STATE OF GOLD**
DOGHOUSE RECORDS

It's a complicated quest, trying to pin down all the different sides that make up **Matt Pond PA**. Perhaps the only way to make sense of it all is to bring the band's past and future together as one, to let them meet and shake hands. That's precisely what they've spent the last year chasing. The 10 Year Anniversary Tour of *Emblems* allowed fans old and new to experience the entire critically-acclaimed album from start to end. But it wasn't just about homage. The tour coincided with a successful Pledge campaign to support the making of their new album, *The State of Gold*. The new album has the same **Matt Pond PA** feel that fans know and love, but there's also an exciting level of experimentation—new sounds and compositions that take things to a different, wilder place. The upcoming year will follow the same path as the last. The band is planning a 10 Year Anniversary Tour in support of another one of their most beloved albums, *Several Arrows Later*, as well as releasing *The State of Gold* to the masses. Both in the lyrics and arrangements he creates there is a desire to connect the cognitive harmonies that exist between everyone, and *The State of Gold* is no exception. By bridging the past and the present, **Matt Pond PA** hurdles towards an exciting future.



**OCEAN CAROLINA
MAUDLIN DAYS**
OLD HAND RECORD COMPANY

Ocean Carolina and their latest release *Maudlin Days*, a follow-up to their well-received first LP *All the Way Home*, is what happens when a life-long musician stops questioning himself and lets the music unfold on its own. Michael Simone, the songwriter, guitarist, and vocalist behind the band, has immersed himself in music since he was a teenager, and his varied passions—from Prince to Led Zeppelin, The Cure to Waylon Jennings, and Jeff Buckley to The Smiths, everything has culminated to produce a record that sounds like '70s alt-rock while maintaining a timeless story of heartbreak and trying to find one's place in the world. The songs are sincere and honest, but they also capture the energy and spark of **Ocean Carolina's** live performances. "For the first time, I just wanted to be the guy who showed up in the studio with my guitar and played and sang my songs with a band and capture that," he said. Each of *Maudlin Days'* song seems to tell part of a story about looking at heartbreak and people's human failings. However, they all dare the narrator—and the listener—to triumph in spite of the pain, and to grow stronger, if not back together. It's practically the story of making the record but, really, it's a tale of endurance to which all dreamers can relate.



**MUTOID MAN
BLEEDER**
SARGENT HOUSE

Mutoid Man is a hardcore trio featuring Converge drum master Ben Koller, Cave In frontman Stephen Brodsky and live sound engineer Nick Cageao on bass. Their new album *Bleeder* – the follow-up to 2013's *Helium Head EP* – is poised to leave your face looking like you've opened the Ark of the Covenant. Need a taste? Look no further than "1000 Mile Stare." Though it's just over two minutes long, it explores a huge range of sonic territory. It begins by mixing technical hardcore with bluesy guitar parts reminiscent of heavy metal's pioneers. The song also gets into straight-up punk before the Converge influence really takes over. Even then, blistering solos take front-and-center in a very different way than Converge approach their music. "It's a song about being pissed that you can't get through to someone," says Brodsky. "Imagine trying to talk to one of those underwater corpses in the dead marshes from *Return of the King*." Cageao adds, "1000 Mile Stare" is a heartboner-inducing nose breaker, with hooks that would make Kanye jealous." These men speak the truth! The rest of *Bleeder* is just as pummeling – **Mutoid Man** live up to their name by twisting hardcore into new sonic shapes – some electronic; other straight up skronky. *Bleeder* is pure exhilaration.