Permanence
Collect

When No Devotion's first single literally dropped out of nowhere on the last day of June 2014 — with the help of BBC Radio 1’s much-loved Rock Show — it’s safe to say that most of the world was caught off guard. Featuring former Thursday frontman Geoff Rickly and Lostprophets – one of the UK’s most successful rock bands of decade – “Stay” delivered a widescreen debut for No Devotion, making its way onto the UK Charts. The band rounded out the year with a second single, two UK tours, and the promise of a full-length album. That album is Permanence. Mixed by Dave Fridmann (The Flaming Lips, MGMT, Cut Copy, Thursday) and produced by Stuart Richardson and Alex Newport (Bloc Party, Frank Turner, The Man Vida), No Devotion have refined its early flirtations with widescreen debut for

Wild Child doesn't want a place to hide. Song after song, town after town, they'll wear their hearts on their sleeves, addicted to the rush that only comes when thousands of strangers know all your secrets and sing them back to you, because they're their secrets, too. "It’s not necessarily the performing that’s addictive, but being able to connect with that many people at once,” says Kelsey Wilson, who shares lead vocal and songwriting responsibilities for the Austin-based seven-piece band with Alexander Beggins. "You feel like you’re together in something—like you experience the whole thing together. It’s family therapy with a lot of dancing.”

Wild Child's third album, Fools, is an ambitious collection of lush pop that takes sad stories and transforms them into an electrifying love letter to the power of music and the art of living with yourself. Writing for the album, Kelsey split from her fiancé of five years, then watched as her parents divorced. "It was the first time that I’d ever had writer’s block,” she remembers. "Within a week, all of the lyrics just came out.” Wild Child doesn’t pull punches in its musical repertoire, either. Their songs sting as they groove – so we’re dancing and laughing before we realize we’ve got tears in our eyes. Fools is delightfully painful. Sorta like being in love.

Silversun Pickups
Better Nature

“Silversun Pickups singer/guitarist Brian Aubert. “It’s kind of unstable.”

New Order
Music Complete

Music Complete is New Order’s first full studio release since 2005’s Waiting For The Sirens’ Call. Music Complete finds the legendary and groundbreaking group revitalized — where the group has previously pushed toward electronics or guitars, here the two are in balance. Tracks like “Plastic” and “Restless” are two great examples of this dichotomy – the former is New Order at their driving, pulsating, and aggressively electronic best, while the latter is a gorgeous yet spartan affair led by a driving acoustic guitar and New Order’s unique rhythm section. Music Complete also marks a return to the studio for Gillian Gilbert, this is her first album with New Order since 2001’s Get Ready. Music Complete was produced by New Order, except 'Singularity' and 'Unlearn This Hate' which were produced by Tom Rowlands of The Chemical Brothers, while 'Superheated' features additional production by Stuart Price. Long-term collaborator Peter Saville provides art direction. Music Complete is an exciting return to form New Order, but we hope the title doesn’t portend retirement – we’re hoping that the music won’t stop.

The Dead Weather
Dodge and Burn

The Dead Weather is comprised of Dean Fertita, Jack Lawrence, Alison Mosshart and Jack White. The impetus for the band came when Mosshart’s band The Kills opened on a few US tour dates for The Raconteurs. Recognizing immediately the musical synergy between Mosshart, White and Lawrence, the trio devised a plan to record together during some down time in White’s own Third Man Recording Studio in Nashville where White enlisted the addition of erstwhile Raconteurs’ touring accomplice and Queens Of The Stone Age collaborator Dean Fertita. What was initially imagined as a one-off collaboration for a 7” single release turned into a full-length album project once the quartet switched on the recording tape. The Dead Weather’s menacing sounds were so electrifying that they couldn’t help but keep the tape rolling. In three weeks they had recorded a full-length album, Morehoun – a dark, spacious, and hip-hop inflected rock n’ roll masterpiece. The band’s follow-up effort, Sea of Cowards, came soon after. After some extensive touring, the band remained quiet for a few years, eventually teasing new music in the form of a handful of 7” records. Now, Dodge and Burn finds the band fully-reactivated with a collection of new songs as ferocious and sexy as you hoped.

Wild Child
Fools

Dualtone

Silversun Pickups
Better Nature

New Machines

"This album is like its own quantum universe,” says Silversun Pickups singer/guitarist Brian Aubert. “It’s kind of unstable.” Silversun Pickups’ first new album in more than three years, Better Nature sees the Silverlake, CA-based band partnering once again with producer Jacknife Lee (U2, R.E.M., Crystal Castles), with whom they so successfully collaborated on 2012’s visionary Neck Of The Woods. Songs like “Friendly Fires” and “Craddle (Better Nature)” were created and crafted in Lee’s Topanga studio, the band building out organically from Aubert’s spare songwriting demos. The result is fluid and freewheeling, “oozy,” in Aubert’s words, with heavily cranked guitars, propulsive rhythms, and seemingly infinite textures. Legendary mix engineer Alan Moulder (My Bloody Valentine, Nine Inch Nails, Royal Blood) brings maximum sonic power to the proceedings – after all, this is the dude who mixed My Bloody Valentine’s Loveless – but at the album’s beating heart is Silversun Pickups’ remarkably intuitive interplay, as ever providing panoramic musical counterpoint to Aubert’s incisive, increasingly self-exploratory lyrism. Richer, warmer, and more evocative than anything in their prior canon, Better Nature is Silversun Pickups’ most human music thus far.
JOE BONAMASSA
LIVE AT RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL
J & R ADVENTURES

In January 2015, Joe Bonamassa took the iconic Great Stage at Radio City Music Hall for the first time for a sold-out, two-night run that allowed him to fulfill his lifelong dream of performing in one of the world's most legendary venues. Bonamassa is sharing this experience with fans and music lovers around the world via Joe Bonamassa Live At Radio City Music Hall – a CD/ DVD set and CD/Bluray set. The set features over 75 minutes of music, two newly recorded songs, nine unreleased live tracks, over 2.5 hours of live footage, a special 45-minute behind-the-scenes featurette, a 40-page collector's book with exclusive photos, and a sneak peek into Bonamassa's childhood home and musical heritage. The first set has Bonamassa playing alongside his acoustic band, The Huckleberries, from his #1 Billboard CD/DVD An Acoustic Evening At The Vienna Opera House. He then shifts into electric mode for the second set with his regular touring band (bassist Carmine Rojas, keyboardist Reese Wynans, drummer Tal Bergman, trumpeter Lee Thornburg, trombonist Nick Lane, and saxophonist Paulie Cerra). Joe Bonamassa Live At Radio City Music Hall presents an iconic performance on an iconic stage.

ROBERT DE LONG
IN THE CARDS
GLASSNOTE

Robert DeLong has a thing for tarot, but that shouldn't be too surprising. The rise of the Los Angeles dance-pop provocateur and one-man band seems fated thus far. In 2013, his self-fulfilling "Global Concepts" single became an international hit and he's been following it around the world since. Now the man returns from the neon wilderness with his most diverse and best-driven work yet: In The Cards. DeLong's second album boldly swivels electronic strains—techno, house, drum & bass, electro, trip-hop—with rock composition and emotive soul. Each song is an aural world unto itself where DeLong probes a different angle of the record's theme: Is the story of our lives written "in the cards" or are we free to make our destinies? In the Cards is another step forward—a leap into the digital abyss. The tranquil chimes that open the titular track are a red herring. The song goes full rave fast, with DeLong's crisp vocals soaring over a wild soundscape of surging bass, acid-washed synth, and percussion that runs the gamut from jungle to trap. That the entire album feels huge and alive like this shouldn't be a surprise: DeLong's sound is tempered by the road—his high energy live shows find him lording over a battle-station of keys, drums, pedals, joysticks and other video game controllers.

BØRNS
DOPAMINE
INTERSCOPE RECORDS

Growing up in coastal Michigan, Garrett Borns moved from one inspiration to another. His first artistic love was visual arts and then came music thanks to an eccentric piano teacher. At the age of fifteen BØRNS attended the prestigious summer program at Interlochen Center for the Arts to study filmmaking while writing songs on the side with the music majors. Playing local gigs through high school and college, BØRNS ended up in a secluded treehouse home in the Los Angeles canyons where he wrote his debut Candy EP, a set that filters the singer's naturally moody, sensual sound through "an explosion of sunlight," as he puts it. BØRNS' single "Electric Love" is taking over radio airwaves and garnering praise from the media with NPR stating the song is "catchy and clever," and Spin noting BØRNS "writes brilliant pop songs that warm their way into your heart in an instant." BØRNS spent most of 2015 on the road sharing the bill with Misterwives, Charli XCX and Bleachers and playing festivals like Firefly, Lollapalooza and the upcoming Bumbershoot. Life is Beautiful and Austin City Limits. Now, with his debut album, the aptly-named Dopamine, his vision comes further into focus (imagine MGMT gone ELO). Dopamine is future disco for now people.

OCTOBER 2015

CHVRCHES
EVERY OPEN EYE
GLASSNOTE

A lot has changed for CHVRCHES in the past few years. When the Glaswegian trio wrote and recorded their debut, The Bones Of What You Believe, CHVRCHES came together with the idea of working on a writing project together, unsure of what path that would take other than one which belied their previous musical projects and foregrounded melody and classic songwriting styles before everything else. The Bones of What You Believe went on to sell over 500,000 albums worldwide. The band also became both a critical success and a major festival draw. Made in CHVRCHES’ Alucard Studios – the same converted three-bedroom flat on the southside of Glasgow where the band made its debut. Musically, Every Open Eye seeks to do more with less: To make something intense and urgent and visceral, using the basic tools of melody, rhythm and arrangement rather than the mentality that “more is more.” Sonically, Every Open Eye develops CHVRCHES’ signature style, juxtaposing the light and the dark, creating their own brand of twisted pop music that uniquely merges the organic with the electronic, molding sounds and ideas forged over two years on the road into an electronic-pop record with a heart.
Whereas Ryan DeRobertis’s previous gig, Saint Pepsi, had often used decades-old boogie, disco, and new wave as grist for the sampling mill, Skylar Spence is intent on trafficking more overtly in those genre aesthetics through his own production techniques and vocal contributions. With Prom King, DeRobertis resists his music for his new full-band live act and winds up with an album full of tight and enveloping dance tunes. While DeRobertis’s previous long-players have been more amorphous collections, Prom King is compact and cohesive, with the album’s varied stylistic references (new wave, UK garage, boogie) united through strong guitar melodies and Todd Edwards–ian cobbled-together of tiny vocal samples. “Kidnapping” and “Bounce is Back” are big groovers that capitalize on jacking rhythms and hand drumming, respectively, and both have an air of Balearic warmth and smoothness. On the title track, DeRobertis entwines a chorus of unintelligible but expressive samples with his own vocals—what feels like a synthesis of two approaches—and the result is an affecting pattern of build and release. More contemplative sophisti-pop numbers like “Fall Harder” and “Affairs” add a realist’s breadth of scope. Big pop for you can only get as far as “oh this bit sounds like—” before a guitar winds up with an album full of tight and enveloping dance tunes. While DeRobertis’s previous long-players have been more amorphous collections, Prom King is compact and cohesive, with the album’s varied stylistic references (new wave, UK garage, boogie) united through strong guitar melodies and Todd Edwards–ian cobbled-together of tiny vocal samples. “Kidnapping” and “Bounce is Back” are big groovers that capitalize on jacking rhythms and hand drumming, respectively, and both have an air of Balearic warmth and smoothness. On the title track, DeRobertis entwines a chorus of unintelligible but expressive samples with his own vocals—what feels like a synthesis of two approaches—and the result is an affecting pattern of build and release. More contemplative sophisti-pop numbers like “Fall Harder” and “Affairs” add a realist’s breadth of scope. Big pop for

Empress Of

“Can I make it clear?” Lorely Rodríguez asks within the opening moments of her debut album, Me. If clarity is what she seeks, Lorely has found it; her voice upfront, every word audible and strong. Her singular voice is the centerpiece of Me, her first full-formed vision of an album, following her previously shorter and more abstract releases as Empress Of. “Don’t tell me who I am,” she sings seconds later. Where her previous recordings worked in moody abstractions, layered soundscapes hinting at a voice deep under the surface, Me plays out like diary entries from one female voice musing on the personal, the political, and all the middle ground between. Bringing to life her unique blend of deeply personal yet incredibly celebratory dance music. However, “this record...it’s about me,” Lorely adds. “It’s very much about my experiences. I learned how to let my voice out through this record. I learned how to record, how to produce. I learned how to write way better songs. I didn’t realize this until I was almost done with it, but it was all about growth, and all about kind of being selfish and taking time for myself to really understand what events in my life have shaped me as a person.”

SKYLAR SPENCE

HALF FREE

Work’—a nagging, arpeggio-laced ode to Giorgio Moroder that picks at themes of beauty, anxiety and paralysis in the face of ageing. Half Free’s 7” back in 2012) recast here as a Misfits flavored rocker; and the lush production that sounds like lo-fi Kate Bush. Whereas Ryan DeRobertis’s previous gig, Saint Pepsi, had often used decades-old boogie, disco, and new wave as grist for the sampling mill, Skylar Spence is intent on trafficking more overtly in those genre aesthetics through his own production techniques and vocal contributions. With Prom King, DeRobertis resists his music for his new full-band live act and winds up with an album full of tight and enveloping dance tunes. While DeRobertis’s previous long-players have been more amorphous collections, Prom King is compact and cohesive, with the album’s varied stylistic references (new wave, UK garage, boogie) united through strong guitar melodies and Todd Edwards–ian cobbled-together of tiny vocal samples. “Kidnapping” and “Bounce is Back” are big groovers that capitalize on jacking rhythms and hand drumming, respectively, and both have an air of Balearic warmth and smoothness. On the title track, DeRobertis entwines a chorus of unintelligible but expressive samples with his own vocals—what feels like a synthesis of two approaches—and the result is an affecting pattern of build and release. More contemplative sophisti-pop numbers like “Fall Harder” and “Affairs” add a realist’s breadth of scope. Big pop for

U.S. GIRLS

HALF FREE

ROUGH TRADE

Holding Hands with Jamie, Girl Band’s debut album, comes a few years into their tenure: A few years after their first tour (nine days crammed into a Fiat Panda); a few years of stacking 7” sleeves to sell at merch tables and mail-order; a few years of writing songs and touring and developing a live ferocity unmatched by nearly anyone. Recorded in April 2015, two days after returning home from their first-ever US tour, the nine tracks making up Holding Hands with Jamie capture, more than any previous recordings, the tension and abrasive energy of a Girl Band performance. Recalling any number of things but for only milliseconds at a time, Girl Band make a mockery of comparisons, because you can only get as far as “oh this bit sounds like—” before a guitar winds up with an album full of tight and enveloping dance tunes. While DeRobertis’s previous long-players have been more amorphous collections, Prom King is compact and cohesive, with the album’s varied stylistic references (new wave, UK garage, boogie) united through strong guitar melodies and Todd Edwards–ian cobbled-together of tiny vocal samples. “Kidnapping” and “Bounce is Back” are big groovers that capitalize on jacking rhythms and hand drumming, respectively, and both have an air of Balearic warmth and smoothness. On the title track, DeRobertis entwines a chorus of unintelligible but expressive samples with his own vocals—what feels like a synthesis of two approaches—and the result is an affecting pattern of build and release. More contemplative sophisti-pop numbers like “Fall Harder” and “Affairs” add a realist’s breadth of scope. Big pop for

Girl Band

Holding Hands with Jamie

DAVID GILMOUR

Rattle That Lock

COLUMBIA

Rattle That Lock is the new solo album by David Gilmour, the voice and guitar of Pink Floyd. This is David’s fourth solo album, and the first since 2006’s #1 album “On An Island.” The primary lyricist for Rattle That Lock is Gilmour’s long-term writing partner, Polly Samson, and the album is co-produced by David Gilmour and Roxy Music’s Phil Manzanera. The album’s striking cover has been art directed by Dave Stansbie. Rattle That Lock may be a solo album, but it is still very much a group effort. The lead single of this album is the title track, “Rattle That Lock”. The song begins with the four notes, created by Michael Boumendil, which precede the chorus of Hand that Leaks. The centerpiece of Me, her first full-formed vision of an album, following her previously shorter and more abstract releases as Empress Of. “Don’t tell me who I am,” she sings seconds later. Where her previous recordings worked in moody abstractions, layered soundscapes hinting at a voice deep under the surface, Me plays out like diary entries from one female voice musing on the personal, the political, and all the middle ground between. Bringing to life her unique blend of deeply personal yet incredibly celebratory dance music. However, “this record...it’s about me,” Lorely adds. “It’s very much about my experiences. I learned how to let my voice out through this record. I learned how to record, how to produce. I learned how to write way better songs. I didn’t realize this until I was almost done with it, but it was all about growth, and all about kind of being selfish and taking time for myself to really understand what events in my life have shaped me as a person.”
ALO
TANGLE OF TIME
REPUBLIC

Tangle Of Time is a jubilant collection of songs that evoke the California cool of 70s Pop/Rock while embracing the in-the-moment improv that has propelled the band for almost two decades. Although there’s a distinct songwriting voice that can be heard on each track, the band’s collective efforts string the album into an unstoppably ALO offering. The first single, a Zach Gill (bass/vocals) led track entitled “The Ticket”, offers up the one-two-punch of a synth-filled spacejam while his “There Was A Time” is an accordion driven tale of painting human history by firelight. Dan “Lebo” Lebowitz (guitar/vocals) also provides songs that counterpoint the album. “Undertow” features swirling guitar solos that extend an open-invitation to live improvisation, while “Push” is a jaunty yet thoughtful number with a playful guitar riff that’s basically the musical equivalent of joy. Steve Adams’ (bass/vocals) “Not Old Yet” is a lighthearted romp about keeping a positive perspective on life’s long road of hurdles and surprises, and finally, Dave Brogan’s (drums/vocals) “Coast To Coast” (co-written with Ben Malan) offers a funky layer-upon-layer soundscape of esoteric textures telling the surreal tale of a band on the run. In all, Tangle Of Time is a bundle of joy.

Matt Nathanson's new album Show Me Your Fangs his tenth studio recording delves deeper and further into the complexities and observations of everyday life than any of his previous albums. Songs such as “Giants,” “Bill Murray,” “Adrenaline,” “Washington State Fight Song,” and the title track tell vivid stories touching on the overall theme of self-identity and how we choose to reveal ourselves. These vignettes are all offered wrapped in richer, musical textures with Nathanson's signature seductive hooks. In as much as these songs have a solemn message, leave it to Nathanson to offer the perfect counter balance with the sultry 70s soul groove of single “Gold In The Summertime” – which Nathanson's offered wrapped in richer, musical textures with his unique visionary spin that has expanded the vocabulary of modern music. Together these two music legends have found an exciting musical synergy as the aptly-named AndersonPonty Band.

Wolfmother’s self-titled debut – which features classic songs like the Grammy-winning “Woman,” “Joker & The Thief,” and “White Unicorn,” along with international hits, “Mind’s Eye,” “Dimension” and “Love Train” – was well loved on its release 10 years ago, with critics comparing the band’s raw power to the likes of Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath and classic psychedelic groups like Blue Cheer. Now, in honor of its 10th anniversary, Wolfmother is available as both as a deluxe two-CD physical set, digitally and – for the first time in the U.S. – a two-TP vinyl set. The double album set, issued on audiophile 180g heavyweight vinyl, features four bonus B-sides, including “The Earth’s Rotation Around The Sun,” an acoustic version of “Vagabond,” a Loving Hands remix of “Joker & the Thief” and a Mstrkrft remix of “Woman.” The double-CD will also be available in digital audio, while the two-LP set will come with a download card. The 13 tracks on the original album release will be supplemented by another CD of demos, besides, remixes and live recordings, many of them from the band’s famed Velvet Sound Demo, recorded at the Sydney studio of the same name in a single day. By the way: The band’s new Brendan O’Brien produced album is coming in 2016!

EAGLES OF DEATH METAL
ZIPPER DOWN
T-BOY / UME

Eagles Of Death Metal (known henceforth as EODM) – aka Jesse Hughes (“Boots Electric”) and Joshua Homme (“Baby Duck” A.K.A. “The Dude from The Queens of the Stone Age”) – are back with their first new album in seven years, Zipper Down. Zipper Down, really represents to Zipper Down album in seven years, “Rooftop in Soho / Prince on the radio” – sounds good to us. “Rooftop in Soho” is a sultry 70s soul groove of single “Gold In The Summertime” – which Nathanson’s offered wrapped in richer, musical textures with his unique visionary spin that has expanded the vocabulary of modern music. Together these two music legends have found an exciting musical synergy as the aptly-named AndersonPonty Band.

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ANDERSONPONTY BAND
BETTER LATE THAN NEVER
LIAISON MUSIC

Jon Anderson has had a successful solo career, which includes working with such notable music artists as Vangelis, Kitaro, and Milton Nascimento. International violin superstar Jean Luc Ponty is a pioneer and undisputed master of his instrument in the arena of jazz and rock – an innovator who has applied his unique visionary spin that has expanded the vocabulary of modern music. Together these two music legends have found an exciting musical synergy as the aptly-named AndersonPonty Band. Better Late Than Never was culled from a live performance and enhanced with innovative production. Not only has The AndersonPonty Band created some breathtaking new musical compositions, but Better Late Than Never also showcases rearrangements of classic YES hits like “Owner Of A Lonely Heart”, “Roundabout” and “Wondrous Stories”, as well as some of Jean Luc Ponty’s beloved compositions, with Jon’s lyrical vocals and melodies enhancing the music and creating a very special and unique sound such as “Infinite Mirage” a new song incorporating Jean Luc’s classic tune “Mirage.” Also included are a performance DVD (including artist interviews) and a 20 Page Booklet.

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OCTOBER
2015

KEITH RICHARDS
CROSSED’HEART

Time is of no consequence to Keith Richards. He’s lived a long, crazy life despite folks predicting he’d bite it 40 years ago — so he’s gonna do whatever he pleases, when he pleases — and that includes releasing solo albums. Still flying high on the success of his book, Life, Richards has now given us CROSSED’HEART — a fifteen track master class encompassing everything that makes Richards one of the 20th century’s most celebrated talents — is a live star musical journey that takes in reggae, rock, country and the blues — all the music that’s moved Richards throughout his amazing career. His third solo album and his first in over 20 years, Richards is richly supported by old friends, drummer Steve Jordan, guitarist Waddy Wachtel, and Bernard Fowler on backup vocals. To make the album, Richards basically showed up at a studio with Jordan (who produced the record with Richards) and simply started making up songs (“There’s nothing like walking into a studio and having absolutely no idea what you’re going to come out with on the other end,” he says). CROSSED’HEART finds Richards in fine voice, and these songs are beautiful, rocking, and absolutely charming. Here’s hoping the next Rolling Stones record is so inspired. Dig it!

JOSH RITTER
SERMON ON THE ROCKS

Indie record store supporters (such as yourself) are likely familiar with the work of Josh Ritter — the hardcore troubadour from Moscow, ID who’s spent over decade building up a dedicated following thanks to his inventive and highly-literate “Americana.” And, sure, most singer-songwriters are literate, very few can claim to have a bestselling novel. Ritter’s got a great eye for the odd details of human existence — the sort that suck you in immediately — and those gifts are in full magnetic effect with Sermon on the Rocks. Of his inspiration behind Sermon on the Rocks, Ritter says, “I wanted to play messianic oracular honky-tok.” “We’re not exactly sure what that means but it works: Just check out “Where The Night Goes” or “Getting Ready To Get Down” — a rapid fire, folk-boogie nugget that will appeal to Preacher’s Kids (and those who’ve experienced them) everywhere. Sermon on the Rocks was produced by Ritter and Trina Shoemaker [Queens of the Stone Age, Emmylou Harris], and was recorded over two weeks at New Orleans’ The Parlor Recording Studio and features Matt Barrick from The Walkmen on drums, Zachariah Hickman on bass, Josh Kaufman on guitar and Sam Kassirer on piano. Being bad always sounds good — and You need this.

A SILENT FILM
A SILENT FILM

Formed in Oxford, UK, by Robert Stevenson (vocals/piano) and Spencer Walker (drums), A Silent Film’s expansive and poetic poprock sound has garnered comparisons to everyone from Coldplay, The Killers, to U2. Collectively they create an unyielding optimism in their lyrics and sound — a spirited and romantic musicality that embodies an unashamedly upbeat pop attitude. Over the years, the band has toured with OneRepublic, Civil Twilight, Smashing Pumpkins, and Temper Trap, while also making appearances at festivals like Glastonbury and Firefly. The duo’s anticipated eponymous album will be released on A Silent Film’s own label, Silent Songs. Produced by the band’s Robert Stevenson and Spencer Walker, with assistance from Matthew Wilcox [Foster the People, Bethel Music], the 11-track album was recorded in A Silent Film’s hometown of Oxford, UK, over a five-week period following the sold out Secret Rooms tour — a series of unique and intimate in-the-round performances across the US. Tracks like “Lightning Strike” perfectly capture A Silent Film’s gigantic aesthetic — a pure endorphin rush that sounds like Bruce Springsteen on molly.

PROTOMARTYR
THE AGENT INTELECT

The Agent Intelect is Protomartyr’s third and finest work to date. Named after an ancient philosophical questioning of how the mind operates in relation to the self, it’s an elegant and often devastating display of all that makes Protomartyr so vital and singularly visceral on an outfit. Over the course of several months, guitarist Greg Ahee washed through more than a hundred song fragments until he reached the bottomless melodies of “I Forgive You” and “Clandestine Time”, the inky depths of “Pontiac 87” and titanic churn of “Why Does It Shake?” Lyrically, singer Joe Casey is at his most confident and haunting. He humanizes evil on “The Devil In His Youth,” and, amidst the charred pop of “Dope Cloud,” he reassures us that nothing—not God, not money—can or will prevent our minds from unraveling until we finally fade away. We are no one and nothing, he claims, without our thoughts. It’s a theme that echoes throughout the entirety of the record, but never as beautifully as it does on “Ellen.” Named after his mother (who suffers from Alzheimer’s) and written from the perspective of his late father (who he unexpectedly lost), it’s as romantic a song as you’re likely to hear this or any year, Casey promising to reassures us that nothing—not God, not money—can or will prevent our minds from unraveling until we finally fade away. We are no one and nothing, he claims, without our thoughts. It’s a theme that echoes throughout the entirety of the record, but never as beautifully as it does on “Ellen.” Named after his mother (who suffers from Alzheimer’s) and written from the perspective of his late father (who he unexpectedly lost), it’s as romantic a song as you’re likely to hear this or any year, Casey promising to
You could say that a lot has happened since the release of Wax Idols’ critically well-received 2013 album, Discipline + Desire, and if you’re steeped in the shorthand of music criticism goto narratives, it would be dangerously easy to get reductive about what happened next. The band’s singer-songwriter, Hether Fortune, supported the album as best she could, spent some time in 2014 as a touring player in White Lung, went through a heartbreaking divorce, and then sat down to make American Tragic – the band’s long-awaited third album. But that’s not exactly how it went. “Divorce is a part of this record, yes, but this is not an entirely sad album,” Fortune explains. “The whole spectrum of grief is represented here — shock, pain, anger, loneliness, and then finding a way to work through all of that and not only survive, but thrive. That’s what I was going through. I was trying to save myself.” Indeed, this is not only a deeply personal record, but a chiefly independent one: As a songwriter and true multi-instrumentalist, Fortune wrote and recorded everything but the drums on American Tragic — a feat only bolstered by the album’s compelling performances and meticulous execution.