



JUDITH OWEN
EBB & FLOW
TWANKY RECORDS

On **Judith Owen's** new album *Ebb and Flow*, the Welsh singer-songwriter fearlessly explores the duality of the human condition. She also enlisted the legendary musicians who created the seventies troubadour sound – drummer Russ Kunkel, bassist Leland Sklar and guitarist Waddy Wachtel played on many of the landmark albums from the era by the likes of Carole King, James Taylor, Joni Mitchell and Jackson Browne... And *Ebb and Flow* unites them for the first time in 15 years. The songs on *Ebb and Flow* touch on the deepest emotions of **Owen's** own storied life with an unswerving honesty. But although her songs are highly personal, the emotions are universal. "Singing about the human condition, living under the shadow of loss and frustration and sadness and loneliness and not being gratuitously sentimental about it, instead making something beautiful out of it - that's the songwriter's job," Indeed... And **Judith Owen** does it well.



HALSEY
BADLANDS
ASTRALWERKS

"I am **Halsey**. I will never be anything but honest. I write songs about sex and being sad." A pop deathwish disguised as social commentary, **Halsey** is Francis Bean Cobain as imagined by Charlie XCX. "Raised on Biggie and Nirvana," she claims on "New Americana" – there's no doubt. **Halsey** is bouncing in the club, popping bottles, and Googling Nietzsche. She could probably take Lana Del Rey in a fight, not that anyone thinks it would be a challenge. She'd be better off just hanging out with Lorde, with whom she has much more in common – namely good turns of phrase and some catchy hooks. *Badlands* is the soundtrack for a night at the club, but for the girl who spends the night furiously texting that stupid boy. She's knows she's got drama, but she'll figure out. That's what music's for. Oh: And she smokes cigarettes... That's still cool, right?



YOUNG EMPIRES
THE GATES
VOTIV MUSIC

The tale of Canadian indie poppers **Young Empires** is quite unconventional. Their story began in the fall of 2009 with the help of Craiglist, and the creative core now consists of lead vocalist Matthew Vlahovich, bassist Jake Palahnuk, and drummer Taylor Hill, who joined later. Within two weeks of forming, the band began rehearsing and booked their first gig shortly after, putting pressure on the musicians to write viable songs, practice relentlessly, and become savvy in sampling and analog drum machine programming. It's pretty impressive considering **Young Empires'** fulllength debut, *The Gates*, sounds so slick. "Uncover Your Eyes" has it all: big chords, handclaps, some chimey bits, and a clumsy stab at self-deprecation that's catchy enough to count as a hook ("I used to be afraid of myself / so I covered my eyes"). There's a bunch of hoots and hollering, too, so it'll feel like a sing-along even though, ultimately, we're all alone... together.



RAYLAND BAXTER
IMAGINARY MAN
ATO RECORDS

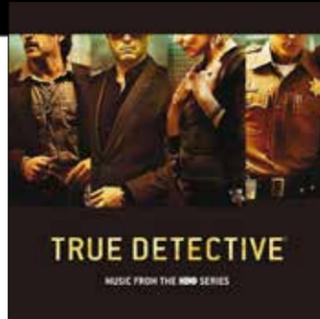
Rayland Baxter was born in Nashville, but he sounds like he was born in a Wes Anderson film. Growing up, Rayland Baxter's father Bucky (a multi-instrumentalist for Bob Dylan, Steve Earle and Ryan Adams, among others) made sure music was just a natural part of life, a soundtrack to childhood. "I grew up around pedal steel melodies," **Baxter** says, "not knowing how later in life it would shape me and how I sing or place lyrics in a song." He'd met Dylan and become friends with a young Justin Townes Earle—back then, they were just two kids who knew their dads were gone frequently. Eventually that dad came back with a guitar, and **Rayland** went off on journeys of his own, in American and abroad. Eventually, he lived enough to write songs that held a touch of twang and a lot of The Kinks. *Imaginary Man* is a fine howdy-do.

caroline

Mixtape



"RAISED ON BIGGIE AND NIRVANA, WE ARE THE NEW AMERICANA" - HALSEY



VARIOUS ARTISTS
TRUE DETECTIVE SOUNDTRACK
HARVEST

True Detective just wrapped up its second season. If there's one thing that everyone can agree about the show is that, even as the plot (unnecessarily) thickened, the music was always on point. Things kick off appropriately enough with the them song, which came courtesy of the great Leonard Cohen, a singer who sounds like his deal with the Devil is not up for renegotiation. The Handsome Family, who provided the theme to Season 1, return with "Far From Any Road," a fine chunk of mystic folk that plays well alongside cuts from fellow travellers Bonnie "Prince" Billy and troubadour of troubadours, Bob Dylan. Lera Lynn, who made a few cameos this season as the saddest lounge season ever, is represented by 5 different cuts – and there was no music more perfect for the show than her harrowing yet beautifully haunted blues. If anyone should walk away a hero from season two, it's her.



THE LIBERTINES
ANTHEMS FOR DOOMED YOUTH
HARVEST

Anthems For Doomed Youth is the cheekily-titled album from **The Libertines** – the band's first in over a decade. You may recall **The Libertines** from their turn-of-the-century heyday, which gave listeners the one-two punch of *Up The Bracket* and their self-titled album—both assured, catchy, and seedy punkers that reached for the heights of The Clash and The Jam as often as they settled for the gutters of Rancid (who, let's face it, could crank out a tune). But that binary made for good press, and perpetual trainwreck Pete Doherty earned a lot of ink for his self-destructive shenanigans... So thank god there were so many good tunes. A decade later, the band appears fitter, happier, and content to bring only the good habits with 'em, which means that *Anthems For Doomed Youth* is a treat for the hooligan in us all. Romantic and righteous in the face of debauchery, it's good to have 'em back.



BEN RECTOR
BRAND NEW
APTLY NAMED RECORDINGS

Brand New, the latest from singer-songwriter **Ben Rector**, marks a return to the spirit of his youth, when he was a music-crazed teenager playing guitar in his Tulsa bedroom. At that time, every new song was a discovery, and turning those songs into a career was just a dream. His four studio albums and 2014's *Live In Denver*, have repeatedly put him on top of the iTunes charts, and lead to sold-out shows. **Rector** has written hundreds of songs and played thousands of bills in his young career, but in the writing and recording of *Brand New*, he re-discovered the energy of his early days, with songs that have all the punch, power and promise of a debut record. Filled with rich string arrangements, percussion, pounding piano chords and anthemic melodies, *Brand New* is still safe enough for your Mom and Dad, but cheeky enough to get to 2nd base.



ALPINE
YUCK
VOTIV MUSIC

Alpine is six friends from Melbourne who make bold, twinkling, sophisticated pop music. Their latest album, *Yuck*, is a collection of vibrant songs that shimmer and shine with colorful harmonies and inventive melodies. Featuring the dual vocals of front women Phoebe Baker and Lou James, Christian O'Brien on guitar, Ryan Lamb on bass, Tim Royall on keys and Phil Tucker on drums, **Alpine** traverse diverse themes, ideas and sounds on the album, always assured, but never quite taking themselves too seriously. They are also gloriously surreal – the songs, though they seem perfectly fussed over, travel into trippy terrain despite their big hooks. "Foolish" could still be yr summer jam with its cool come on and hilariously punctuated "Yuck." "Damn Baby" is almost as good yet twice as catchy. This is a sexy beast of a record. You need it.