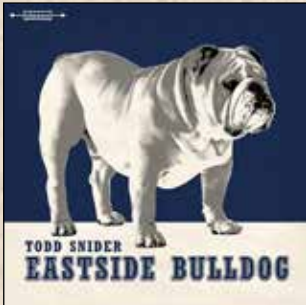




HOMEGROWN



TODD SNIDER EASTSIDE BULLDOG

AIMLESS RECORDS

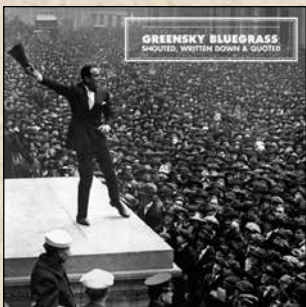
Nashville gonzo outlaw **Todd Snider's** new album, *Eastside Bulldog*, brings life to his Elmo Buzz pseudonym – a name he has used to play in Nashville while dodging radius clauses. On *Eastside Bulldog*, **Snider** develops Elmo Buzz into a full-blown three-dimensional character, with interests (Hank Williams Jr., chicks, cars), hobbies (partying hard, fighting) and even sworn enemies (folk music, **Todd Snider**). Buzz blames his minimal success as a musician directly on **Snider**, who he accuses of stealing his look (**Snider's** reasoning for why the two are identical) and keeping folk music popular in East Nashville (the reason their sounds are so different). The album creates a world around this wannabe rock star's blind East Nashville (read: "hipster") pride. **Snider** wrote and recorded much of *Eastside Bulldog* in the spur of the moment after he was offered free studio time but had no new material to record. Fortunately, his wit is sharp as ever.



WILCO SCHMILCO

ANTI/DBPM

Last year **Wilco** dropped *Star Wars* – a short and sweet burst of gonzo guitar skronk buttressed by Jeff Tweedy's unassailable melodic sensibility and the big softie heart at the core of his lyrics. The release was unexpected – and unexpectedly great. A year later, **Wilco** are back with *Schmilco* and it's even better. Using *Star Wars'* country-ish anomalies as a launching point (both albums were made at the same time), *Schmilco* isn't the opposite of its predecessor as much as it's an inversion of it. Despite a larger employment of acoustic instruments, *Schmilco* retains much of *Star Wars'* skittery energy, distant vocals, and Tweedy's best lyric sheet since *A Ghost Is Born* – especially in the back half, where he is trying to break your heart... And succeeding. There's plenty of humor, beauty, and weirdness, too, and "Cry All Day," "Common Sense," "Locator," and "Someone To Use" utilize all the above. A low-key masterpiece.



GREENSKY BLUEGRASS SHOUTED, WRITTEN DOWN & QUOTED

BIG BLUE ZOO RECORDS

For more than a decade and a half, the members of **Greensky Bluegrass** have created their own version of bluegrass music, mixing the acoustic stomp of a stringband with the rule-breaking spirit of rock & roll. Like the band's own name, *Shouted, Written Down & Quoted* is a collection of opposites, full of dark psychedelic swirls, bright bursts of acoustic guitar, soundscapes, solos, freethinking improvisation, and plenty of sharp, focused songwriting. It's wild and wide-ranging, showing off the diversity **Greensky Bluegrass** brings to every live show. At the same time, *Shouted, Written Down & Quoted* is unmistakably a studio album, recorded during two different sessions that, together, comprise the band's longest block of recording time ever. The result is an 11-track album that mixes the full-throttle energy of a **Greensky Bluegrass** concert with the nuanced approach of a band that's still eager to explore.



AARON LEWIS SINNER

DOT RECORDS

Known for genuinely gritty lyrics, hard rock anthems, and his powerful live shows, **Aaron Lewis** is getting back to his Country roots with *Sinner*. **Lewis** comes out of the gate with both fists flying on the lead single, "That Ain't Country," where he laments the current state of art – h pining for the sound of his honky-tonk heroes. "I'd like to think that *Sinner* is a newer take on classic, traditional Outlaw Country, Waylon and Merle and Willie, and Hank Jr. and Johnny Cash and all that stuff," says **Lewis**. "That was the music I heard a kid, and that's the Country music that permeated my soul." Produced by Country legend Buddy Cannon (George Strait, Merle Haggard, George Jones), and recorded over 16 intense hours at Nashville's Blackbird Studios, *Sinner* captures **Lewis'** mindset while serving as a laid back soundtrack that is reminiscent of the genre's most honest and musically adventurous artists.



JESSE DAYTON THE REVEALER

BLUE ÉLAN RECORDS

Jesse Dayton's pedigree is as impressive as it is varied. Besides having made 8 solo albums, he's also recorded with Willie Nelson, Johnny Cash, and Waylon Jennings, and played live with Kris Kristofferson, and X (filling in for Billy Zoom while he was in cancer treatment). **Dayton** has also collaborated with Rob Zombie, creating the soundtracks to three of his films. *The Revealer* is a barnburner gumbo of country, blues and punk, all mixed together into what would now be called Americana. *The Revealer* was recorded at the legendary Sugar Hill Studios in Houston where he did his first recording session there at 18 years old. "You could feel the ghost of George Jones, Freddy Fender, Doug Sahm and Jerry Lee Lewis in the room," **Dayton** says, "I wanted to get great live rootsy sounds, like the records I loved growing up, but with a real Texas songwriter, story-telling, approach to the lyrics."

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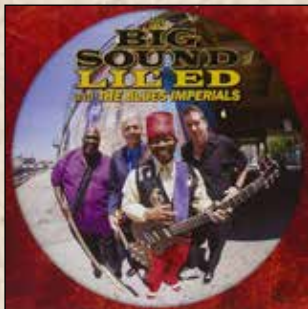
HOMEGROWN



THE HANDSOME FAMILY UNSEEN

MILK & SCISSORS MUSIC

Unseen, the new album from husband and wife duo Brett and Rennie Sparks – aka **The Handsome Family** – is their first release since finding unexpected worldwide fame after their song “Far From Any Road” was picked as the **True Detective Season 1** theme song. Recorded in the Sparks’ home studio at night “with only hawk moths listening” *Unseen* is an epic western gothic masterpiece drawing from real life events: “Gold” first began when a bunch of twenty-dollar bills blew in Brett’s face in a parking lot dust storm and “Gentlemen” is a tribute to William Crookes who built the first vacuum tube in 1875, hoping to detect spirits from alternate dimensions. Many tracks fix around the idea that light emanates from things we can’t see, including behind “The Red Door,” in the empty hands of blackjack losers (“The Silver Light”), and amidst desert bones bleaching in the sun (“King of Dust”). You need this.



LIL' ED & THE BLUES IMPERIALS THE BIG SOUND OF LIL' ED & THE BLUES IMPERIALS

ALLIGATOR RECORDS

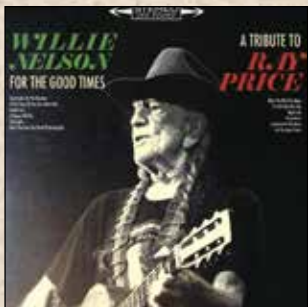
Lil' Ed Williams comes to the blues naturally. His uncle, Chicago slide guitar king and master songwriter J.B. Hutto, taught him how to feel, not just play the blues. Nine albums and thousands of performances later, **Lil' Ed** is rightly hailed as a giant. *The Big Sound Of Lil' Ed & The Blues Imperials* features **Lil' Ed's** incendiary playing and playful, passionate singing, with the ragged-but-right **Blues Imperials** cooking like mad alongside him. Produced by **Lil' Ed** and Alligator president Bruce Iglauer, it is a tour-de-force of authentic, deeply rooted Chicago blues. **Lil' Ed** wrote or co-wrote all but two of album's 14 songs, the other gems written by Uncle J.B. The *Chicago Reader* says the band's music “is a soundtrack for dancing and celebration infused with a sense of hard-won survival. **Williams** attacks his lyrics like he attacks his guitar: with bare-bones intensity that makes each word sound like a matter of life or death.”



MANDOLIN ORANGE BLINDFALLER

YEP ROC RECORDS

Lean in to North Carolina duo **Mandolin Orange's** new album, *Blindfaller*, and it's bound to happen: You'll suddenly pick up on the power and devastation lurking in its quietude, the doom hiding beneath its unvarnished beauty. In fact, there's heartache by the numbers on *Blindfaller*. Take “Gospel Shoes,” a gimlet-eyed critique of how politicians have used faith as a weapon. If you didn't know better, you'd swear “Picking Up Pieces” is a tearjerker George Jones or Willie Nelson sang back in the early 1970s. A country dirge with soulful washes of pedal steel and mandolin, “Wildfire” details the lingering, present-day devastation of slavery and the Civil War. But there's also room for detours: Straight out of a honky tonk, “Hard Travelin'” lets the band shift into overdrive with a freewheeling ode to life on the road. You'd be forgiven for thinking *Blindfaller* was a country music classic. One day it will be.



WILLIE NELSON FOR THE GOOD TIMES: A TRIBUTE TO RAY PRICE

LEGACY

For the Good Times: A Tribute to Ray Price finds the one-and-only **Willie Nelson** paying tribute to one of his most legendary influences, longtime friend (and former boss – **Nelson** was a member of the Cherokee Cowboys in 1961), **Ray Price**, who passed away in 2013. The album debuts **Willie's** new interpretations of 12 songs **Price** made famous, including “Heartaches by the Number,” “Crazy Arms,” “Night Life,” “Faded Love” and “For the Good Times.” It was produced and arranged by longtime **Nelson** and **Price** friends / collaborators Fred Foster and Bergen White. *For the Good Times* showcases the breadth of **Price's** output by featuring **Nelson's** unique approach in his tribute. For the more traditional country songs, **Nelson** and Foster recruited the Grammy Award-winning Western swing outfit The Time Jumpers, featuring such luminaries as guitarist Vince Gill and pedal steel player Paul Franklin.

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HOMEGROWN



ERIC JOHNSON EJ

PROVOGUE

Showcasing nine original compositions and four covers, **EJ** is easily Texas guitar legend **Eric Johnson's** most intimate album to date. "Ever since I was young, I've played piano and acoustic guitar in my private life," **Johnson** says. "This type of music has always been a part of me, but I never showcased it on any kind of bigger level." **EJ** brings listeners as close as possible to hearing **Johnson** in his own living room, performing songs on piano and steel-string and nylon-string acoustic guitars. "Almost all of that material was cut live," **Johnson** explains. "Some of the songs I actually sang and played at the same time – just live in the studio." **Johnson's** prized 1980 Martin D-45 – a gift from his late father – and a Ramirez nylon-string guitar are the musician's go-to instruments, but the jazz inflected piano solo on his inventive cover of Jimi Hendrix's "One Rainy Wish" might be **EJ's** most sublime moment.



BOB WEIR BLUE MOUNTAIN

LEGACY

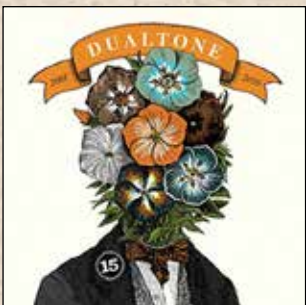
Before he co-founded the **Grateful Dead**, **Bob Weir** spent a summer working and living on a ranch in Wyoming, sparking a lifelong fascination with the stories and songs of the American West. **Blue Mountain**, **Weir's** first solo album in over 10 years, brings his musical journey full circle. Working with producer Josh Kaufman, acclaimed songwriter **Josh Ritter**, and **Aaron Dessner**, **Bryce Dessner**, and **Scott Devendorf** of **The National** (who helped put together this year's sprawling Grateful Dead tribute, *Day of the Dead*), **Blue Mountain** is a moody, highly textured modern interpretation of **Weir's** unforgettable experience – a modern album of cowboy songs from an artist who's been known to ramble. Other collaborators include The Walkmen's Walter Martin, Furthur bandmate Joe Russo, RatDog bassist Robin Sylvester, and Steve Kimock, along with backing vocals from The Bandana Splits. Also available as a double LP set in a gatefold package.



AMANDA SHIRES MY PIECE OF LAND

BMG

Amanda Shires began her career as a teenager playing fiddle with the Texas Playboys. Since then, she's toured and recorded with John Prine, Billy Joe Shaver, Todd Snider, Justin Townes Earle, Shovels & Rope, and, most recently, Jason Isbell. She's made three solo albums, each serving to document a particular period in her life. The songs on **My Piece Of Land** deal with family, with anxiety, with the phases of one young woman's life; but the primary focus of **My Piece Of Land** is the concept of home – comparing and contrasting the home she was born into, the two homes she was eventually split between, and the home (and family) she has finally made for herself. **My Piece Of Land** was recorded by zeitgeist producer Dave Cobb, who encouraged **Shires** preserve the spirit of early takes rather than endlessly reworking her already strong material. The vibrant results speak for themselves.



VARIOUS ARTISTS IN CASE YOU MISSED IT: 15 YEARS OF DUALTONE

DUALTONE

In Case You Missed It: 15 Years of Dualtone represents the eclectic mix of the label's roster over the years, spanning from blues to country to indie rock to folk. "Some of the best songs in this business are the ones that never get heard by a larger audience. This was our chance to shine a light on some of the deeper cuts from the catalog," says **Dualtone** president Paul Roper. "The core of the label has stayed the same, in a lot of ways... Giving albums our full dedication, giving them their own appropriate time and space to find an audience, is something that has always been important to us." **In Case You Missed It** also features new recordings from **The Lumineers**, **Shakey Graves**, **Ivan & Alyosha**, **Drew Holcomb & The Neighbors**, and **Langhorne Slim & The Law**. Playing catch up has never sounded so good.

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