



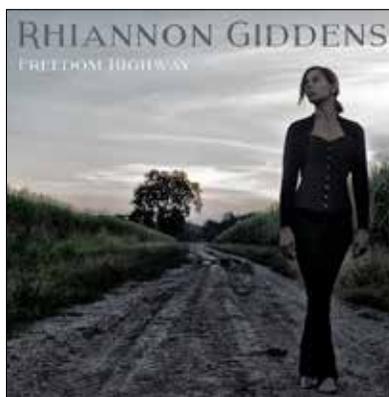
**BONOBO**  
**MIGRATION**  
NINJA TUNE

*Migration* will be the record which cements **Bonobo's** place in the very highest echelons of electronic music. By turns lush, manic, beautiful, melancholy, joyful, packed with both emotion and technical skill, *Migration* is **Bonobo's** most ambitious attempt to capture the very textures of human existence in his work. *Migration* was written and recorded in Los Angeles – a city which proved to be the perfect respite from three years of non-stop touring. This new environment – combined with the “euphoric, spiritual moments” he experienced playing his all-night DJ sets in New York – had a profound effect on *Migration*. **Bonobo** has placed the unstable, the heart-breaking, the often beautiful migratory life at the core of how he understands humanity, and hence how he understands music. *Migration* is to him, “the study of people and spaces,” he expands, “It’s interesting how one person will take an influence from one part of the world and move with that influence and affect another part of the world. Over time, the identities of places evolve.” As such, **Bonobo's** newest work is itself a statement of this change and growth. And, of course, you can dance to it.



**VALERIE JUNE**  
**THE ORDER OF TIME**  
CONCORD

On this enthralling and illuminating leap forward, *The Order of Time* finds, Tennessee-bred Brooklyn-based songwriter **Valerie June** weaving electric blues, African rhythms, cosmic atmospherics and delicate soul into an inventive and wholly original rumination on love, family, struggle and the passing of time. Musically, **June** has refined and expanded her sound on the new album finding space from her previous work in its artful, self-assured restraint and overall cohesion. The collection’s finely sketched character studies brim with richness and detail while **June's** ethereal, wide-open soundscapes provide a sterling backdrop for her remarkable voice. “Long Lonely Road” is a reflective and somber lament as **June's** voice reverberates over ringing guitar and unhurried drums, whereas the entrancing blues of “If And” internalizes regret in the face of time’s relentless churn. On the spiritual “Astral Plane,” **June's** mystical vocal takes an otherworldly turn, whereas the sumptuous string arrangement on “With You,” is reminiscent of Nico’s most affecting work. Norah Jones adds her distinctive vocals to three tracks and “Shake Down” sparkles with background vocal contributions from her father and brothers and ripping guitar. *The Order of Time* is hypnotic, raw, and utterly captivating.



**RHIANNON GIDDENS**  
**FREEDOM HIGHWAY**  
NONESUCH

*Freedom Highway*, **Rhiannon Giddens'** follow-up to her highly praised solo debut album, *Tomorrow Is My Turn*, includes nine original songs she wrote or co-wrote; a traditional tune; and two civil rights-era songs, “Birmingham Sunday” and Staple Singers’ “Freedom Highway.” **Giddens** co-produced the album with multi-instrumentalist Dirk Powell in his Louisiana studio, with the bulk of recording done in wooden rooms built prior to the Civil War, over an intense eight-day period. The result is an album that is rawer and more personal than its predecessor. It’s a “rich collection, the latest chapter in the 40-year-old master folklorist, banjo virtuoso and vocal powerhouse’s epic retelling of our history with its sins and sorrows—and joy born of resilience—fully reinstated,” says NPR’s Ann Powers. “On *Freedom Highway*, **Rhiannon Giddens** shows us that while America was never as innocent as some nostalgists want to believe, its young spirit still lives within, resistant to corruption, leading those who can hear its voice toward a better place down the road.”



**DIRTY PROJECTORS**  
**DIRTY PROJECTORS**  
DOMINO

The break-up record. Where would modern music be without it? Love, sex – having it, needing it, being without it – has not only fueled the greatest music ever made but, art, in general. “What I want from art is truth / What you want is fame” sings in an incredibly down-pitched vocal in “Keep Your Name” – the first track on **The Dirty Projectors'** self-titled new album. There’s a bunch going on here – genres speed through your ears as quickly as the noises themselves. It’s unclear who this is directed at – maybe **DP** mastermind himself, Dave Longstreth – but it hits right. It might remind you of that new Bon Iver record – but one doesn’t get the impression that Longstreth is being a willing obscurant. He wants to sing the blues in a way his high, warbly voice typically can’t. And it works. It’s been four years since the last **Dirty Projectors** album. In that time, Longstreth had not only left a relationship – he was busy being in relationships with others (musically speaking): David Byrne, Bjork, Solange, Joanna Newsom, Bombino and, most notably, the bridge of “FourFiveSeconds” – a massive hit for Rihanna, Kanye, and Paul McCartney. All that experience – the music and the heartbreak – has found its way to **Dirty Projectors**, but it’s processed in a far messier and beautiful way. Like love. Like truth. Like art. You need this.



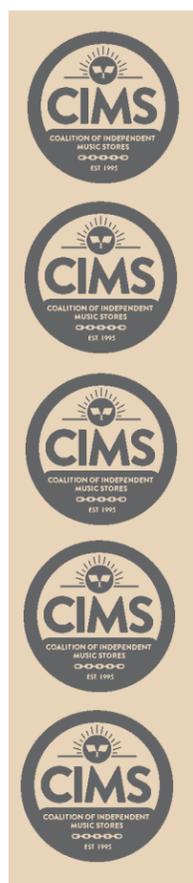
**THE SHINS  
HEARTWORMS**  
COLUMBIA

The Shins' fifth studio album, *Heartworms*, ushers in a return to the handmade. *Heartworms* is, as always, entirely written by James Mercer, with exception of "So Now What" (produced by band member Richard Swift), but he's backed up by a cracker jack band featuring Joe Plummer (drums, percussion, backing vocals), Yuuki Matthews (bass guitar, keyboards, backing vocals), Mark Watrous (guitar), and Richard Swift (keyboards, piano, organ, synthesizers, percussion, backing vocals). *Heartworms* is the first Shins album to be self-produced by Mercer since *Oh, Inverted World* in 2001. *Heartworms* features Mercer's most diverse lyrical palette to date. The result is a cohesive, yet genre defying album marked by Mercer's distinct voice and melodic composition. Unified by his singular vision, Mercer creates a sound that is both familiar a nostalgic nod to the album's predecessors - and distinctly new. Despite Mercer's artisanal approach to *Heartworms*, it's clear that the big pop experiments he forged with Danger Mouse for their two Broken Bells albums, have rubbed off on The Shins, especially on the gigantic "Name For You." "Elsewhere, tracks like "Dead Alive" feel like home. A welcome and exciting return to form. It might even change your life.



**SPOON  
HOT THOUGHTS**  
MATADOR

*Hot Thoughts*, Spoon's 9th album, is the bravest, most sonically inventive work of their career, though keep in mind, Britt Daniel has already overseen a number of other reincarnations. With all due respect to earlier efforts that have made the band both critically acclaimed and a commercial contender, preconceptions about Spoon are about to be obliterated. That's not to say *Hot Thoughts* doesn't have a requisite supply of infectious earworms, but there's a lyrical bent that's as carnal as it's crafty, and a newfound sense of sonic exploration that results in the genre-smasher Spoon have flirted with in the past but not fully consummated. The ten songs on *Hot Thoughts* run the gamut from the kaleidoscopic opening title track (as tone-setting as say, "Dirty Mind") through the gargantuan stomp of "Do I Have To Talk You Into It" and ubiquitous wiry hooks of "Can I Sit Next To You" to the bittersweetness of "I Ain't The One" and the deadpan swing of "Tear It Down." Ample recognition should be tossed in the direction of producer / mixer Dave Fridmann, whose wizard-level ingenuity has brought a diabolical sheen to the band's swagger. Crossing the lines between accessible and experimental, *Hot Thoughts* is pop as high art. You need this.



**LAURA MARLING  
SEMPER FEMINA**  
MORE ALARMING

*Semper Femina* is Laura Marling's sixth studio album in a little over nine years. It is a record that similarly addresses questions of how society views sexuality and gender but without seeking to provide definitive answers. It retains an openness to express and portray her own 'voyage' of self-discovery, but also to develop and learn as artist, performer, and as an individual. "I started out writing *Semper Femina* as if a man was writing about a woman," says Marling. "And then I thought it's not a man, it's me—I don't need to pretend it's a man to justify the intimacy of the way I'm looking and feeling about women. It's me looking specifically at women and feeling great empathy towards them and by proxy towards myself." Co-produced with Blake Mills (who crafted the amazing sonic landscapes of the Alabama Shakes' *Sound & Color*) in her adopted home of Los Angeles, *Semper Femina* is takes off immediately via the album's aptly-named single "Soothing," which rides a dual-bass groove that takes Marling's spectral folk leanings into post-rock territory. Elsewhere, "Wild Fire" has channels the spirit of a fellow sonic adventurer, Joni Mitchell (with cynical lyrics to match) and "Next Time" smolders in unexpected places. Beautiful and sharp, you need this.



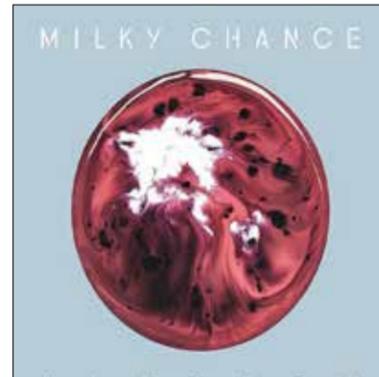
**DEPECHE MODE  
SPIRIT**  
COLUMBIA

For many of the big arena bands of the 1980s, it would be difficult to return with a serious album well into the 21st century. The fact that Depeche Mode has not only done it repeatedly, but has accomplished their return with grace and style is quite a victory. In fact, the band has continued to release albums every few years, which has likely helped them to maintain such an edge. As a result, *Spirit* sounds perfectly current, easily standing up to any electronics-based rock album today. Even returning to Depeche Mode's 1990 hit album *Violator* proves the band was quite ahead of their time all along. *Spirit* stands out as a landmark among the band's last several releases, made better by its fresh, modern textures and masterful production that clearly pronounce the band's growth. Having James Ford of Simian Mobile Disco on board certainly helps matters but, at the end of the day, it's Dave Gahan's chocolate-goth baritone that still delivers - he's truly become the post-apocalyptic gospel lothario that he began to develop back in the 90s. And *Spirit* finds him using those powers for good, as the timely "Where's the Revolution" makes clear [Never let him down again, okay?].



**REAL ESTATE  
IN MIND**  
DOMINO

On *In Mind*, the fourth full-length record from Real Estate, the band fine-tunes the winsome songwriting and profound earnestness that made previous albums—2009's *Real Estate*, 2011's *Days*, and 2014's *Atlas*—so beloved. Recorded in Los Angeles with producer Cole M. Greif-Neill (Julia Holter, Beck), *In Mind* delivers the same kind of warmth and soft-focus narratives that one has come to expect from the band—pastoral guitars, elegantly deployed arrangements, a sort of mindful melancholy—but there is also a newly adventurous sonic edge to the proceedings. It offers a mild shifting of the gears, positing a band engaged in the push/pull of burgeoning adulthood. Reflecting a change in lineup, changes in geography, and a general desire to move forward without looking back, the record casts the band in a new light—one that replaces the wistful ennui of teenage suburbia with an equally complicated adult version. That white-knuckle grip on nostalgia gives tracks like "Darling" sound like 80s Johnny Marr creating the soundtrack to a surrealist documentary. It's a textured and surprisingly groovy affair that marks a subtle and welcome evolution of the Real Estate sound.



**MILKY CHANCE  
BLOSSOM**  
REPUBLIC

German indie-tronica duo Milky Chance are back with their highly-anticipated second album, *Blossom*. The follow-up to their 2014 international hit debut *Sadnecessary*, *Blossom* features 14 brand new tracks, including lead single "Cocoon," "Doing Good" and "Bad Things," which has a guest vocal from award-winning British singer Izzy Bizu. Milky Chance sit somewhere between the folksy rock of Vampire Weekend and the haunting electropop of Beach House, but with the dizzying pitched up guitar stabs of Dirty Projectors. Blending indie inflections with a distinct reggae influence, Milky Chance sound right at home next to the dayglow pop of Alt-J or the Flaming Lips. But their advantage over their contemporaries lies in their lyrical smarts - songs like "Ego" and "Cocoon" are catchy, smart, and slyly self-deprecating, revealing nuance with each spin. It's easy to hear why Milky Chance have already found huge success in Europe. *Blossom* should be their ticket into the hearts and mind of music lovers across the pond. Dig it.



**ELLIOTT SMITH  
EITHER/OR: EXPANDED EDITION**  
KILL ROCK STARS

*Either/Or* was the record that took the late, great Elliot Smith from underground phenomenon to an Oscar-nominated Indie Hero. *Either/Or: Expanded Edition* features the original tracks carefully remastered from original tapes under the supervision of recording engineer / Smith archivist, Larry Crane. The second disc features five live multi-track recordings from the Yo Yo A Go Go Festival in Olympia WA in 1997, as well as three previously unreleased studio recordings and one b-side gem. The new collection also includes a previously unheard studio rendition of the song "I Figured You Out"; a new version of "I Don't Think I'm Ever Gonna Figure It Out," the B-side to the 1996 "Either/Or" single "Speed Trials"; a short and playful keyboard take on "New Monkey," from "New Moon"; and an alternate recording of "Bottle Up and Explode!," from the 1998 album *XO*, with completely different lyrics. The double LP is packaged in a gatefold jacket that includes an insert of the original liner notes, a postcard of the original master tapes, and several never-before seen photos. This gorgeous collection is an essential listen for longtime fans and newcomers alike.

