

## Bittles' Magazine

This month we have some absolutely above average music for your listening pleasure. If you are heading back to school, or just mourning the death of summer then we've got lots of goodies here guaranteed to cheer up your moody little face. We've got some epic rock from **Glasvegas**, a **stunning collection of house music from Kompakt**, **skewed rock grooves from Franz Ferdinand**, and **loads more fantastically funky stuff.**  
By JOHN BITTLES



We'll begin with those Scottish heart-pullers, who are famous for making grown men cry at their gigs, **Glasvegas**. Many people may have given up on the band after the unmitigated travesty of their previous album *Euphoric Heartbreak*, yet *Later... When The TV Turns To Static* is an excellent return to form. Containing ten epic tracks that are so huge they should come with their own solar systems the album is an emotional rollercoaster that can't help but make the heart soar. *Young Blood*, *Secret Truth*, *If* and the rather splendidly named *I'd Rather Be Dead (Than Be With You)* all teem with emotional turmoil and a wall of sound like noise. This is a poignant return to form for the band and while there is nothing as strong as *Daddy's Gone*, or *It's My Own Cheating Heart* the songs on the album are perfect for those of you who like a bit of heartbreak with their rock n' roll.



In contrast, opening track *People In Love Make Me Feel Yuck* illustrates how brothers **Drenge** feel about overly emotional rock. Sounding like Seattle grunge ain't dead after all, their self-titled debut is a noisy racket that is rash, abrasive and just a little bit great. Managing to capture that cool as fuck vibe from raw, primal rock isn't as easy as it sounds yet somehow Rory and Eoin Loveless make it appear so. *I Wanna Break You In Half*, *Bloodsports* and *I Don't Wanna Make Love To You* may sound as if they were created by your annoying snotty nosed little brother yet listening to these tracks you are overcome with that tingly sense of excitement that makes playing music worthwhile. It's an angry scuzzed-up affair with most tracks running at under two minutes and resembling an aural short, sharp punch to the gut. It won't change your life but it will create fantastic mosh-pits and put

a huge smile on your face.

✘ Sounding like a lost Model 500 release comes the rather excellent debut long player by Murphy Jax. *Teleport: Echo City* imagines a futuristic landscape filled with danger, love and super-intelligent machines while echoing back to the glory days of electro. Imagine if a super-computer discovered emotion and funk and decided to replicate these things in sound and that's pretty close to how the record sounds. Tracks such as *Remember the Future*, *Body Moving* and *We Are Machines* contain a nostalgic sense of innocence and a beautiful emotional funk based groove. With allusions to Vangelis, John Carpenter and Zombie Zombie this is machine music for your head, your feet, and your soul.

✘ Hailing from the sunny climes of Cape Town John Wizards are a band who actually seem to have fun with their experimentation with noise and sound. This is one of the first things the listener notices when sticking the record on. Take *Lusaka By Night* with its subtle reggae rhythms and heavily treated vocals which seems as if it was just as pleasurable to create as it is to hear. There are no studied footwork influences or overly forced house beats at play here. Their only manifesto appears to be 'if it sounds good then lets go with that'. This is such a relief after listening to an avalanche of British records where it almost feels as if the creators are ticking different boxes off a 'now that's what I call what's cool right now' list. *Muizenberg* is a soft torch song, *Iyongwe* resembles synth pop from 1982 and *I'm Still A Serious Guy* is like reggae recorded by stoned yet talented kids. A good thing indeed!

✘ If most record labels were to release a double CD of label highlights it's fair to say there would be some filler. The fact that Cologne stalwarts *Kompakt* can release their second double CD of highlights this year with each and every track sounding fresh, funky and unique shows how strong this label is. The rather snappily titled *20 Jahre Kompakt Kollektion 2* contains 24 pop house masterpieces that have shreds of techno, ambient and trance elements that create a rich sonic experience that never once feels boring or stale. In a collection full of highlights, standouts come from Aril Brikha, Walls, Michael Mayer and an absolutely storming *Yes Sir, I Can Hardcore* by Ferenc. Like all great pop there is a melancholic streak running throughout the records' best songs. That there is also a great dancefloor thump perfect for dancing ably displays why *Kompakt* are one of the most revered record labels around.

✘ Hailing from San Diego Crocodiles have released some of the most vibrantly fucked-up rock music around. Their first two albums *Sleep Forever* and *Summer of Hate* are filthy shoegaze epics that bristle with attitude and noise. And while previous album *Endless Flowers* was a disappointment, *Crimes of Passion* sees the band striding back confidently into form. Sounding cleaner and better produced than their earlier stuff it also has an almost pop sensibility that makes their sleazy garage rock tunes stick firmly in the head. The album could have been an overly commercial mess. It isn't though! *I Like It In The Dark* opens proceedings with an almost Brit-Pop air while *Marquis De Sade* has an eerie sense of longing and features a chorus where previously there would only have been noise. Not that the band have completely mellowed though, and *Crimes Of Passion* is a gloriously drugged up rock n' roll ride.

✘ A lot more sedate is the gloriously electronic new album by Braids. *Flourish//Perish* may be a pretty rubbish title but at least the album itself is a beautifully mellow delight. With Bjork like vocals by Raphaëlle Standell-Preston that seduce and beguile the album sounds sunny and delightful yet contains a darkness and depth that is the equivalent of a cold breath on the back of your neck. *Fruend* is eerily spooky while opening track *Victoria* is quite simply Balearic gold. *Together* contains Aphex Twin style beats that shift and soar throughout the songs duration while

*Amends* wouldn't sound out of place in a darkened basement. If people weren't so terrified of the term we could easily label this music as Trip-Hop and love it for the great record it is.

✘ If you are a fan of techno, or great electronic music and you haven't been listening to the stuff being released by *Ostgut Ton* over the previous couple of years then I have nothing but a condescending shrug for you. Their releases contain elements of techno, house, dub and ambient and have such a sense of space you almost feel like you're listening to the records in a huge subterranean cavern. *Dettmann II* the rather imaginatively titled second album by Marcel Dettman is coming out on the 16th of September and is every bit as good as you would expect. *Throb* opens the record proper with a deep, dark (well) throb before *Ductil* booms and echoes like a lost *Harthouse* 12inch from back in the day. *Lightworks* takes a dub-techno blueprint and creates something thrilling and unique while *Aim* finishes the album with a resounding techno crunch. This is techno music that you really don't mind listening to at home; the production is lush, the sonics are sublime and there is real depth and heart to be found.

✘ Also on a techno tip comes the double CD compilation to celebrate the 100th release on Sven Väth's techno institution *Cocoon*. Containing seventeen tracks by such luminaries as Ricardo Villalobos, Minilogue, Dominik Eulberg and Loco Dice what we have here is a complex and varied collection of music. Some *Cocoon* releases can leave this listener feeling cold with their simple mindless techno that hurts the head rather than making me want to dance. There are some such tracks on this particular comp. Yet thankfully the positives more than make up for the brain-dead thumps: Lawrence gives us some lush deepness, Ricardo Villalobos gives us groovy, and Extrawelt gives us heartfelt trance. For me CD 1 is the better of the two, being a more varied listening experience with the second CD containing a bit too much boom, boom, bash for my delicate little ears. Yet overall this is an eye-opening collection of all new material from a label that is to techno music what butter is to bread.

✘ Coming out on the 16th of September on the extremely excellent *No.19 Music* is *Atomic Age* the new album by synth-pop electronic fetishists My Favorite Robot. Recalling Depeche Mode, Heaven 17 and a more beat-based Cure, *Atomic Age* is a dark disorientating affair where bleeps and beeps collide with heartfelt vocals to stunning effect. Sounding more like an eighties album than something released today the synths and vocals contain a warmth found all too rarely in today's electronic music scene. Opening tracks *The Circus* and *Here Tonight* tell you all you need to know about these guys; sincere lyrics, gorgeous electronics and a truly sad and mournful air. It is fair to say that this could easily be one of the albums of the year.

✘ Also out on *No.19 Music* is the new edition of their regular *Summer Sampler*. The 2013 version is a wonderfully groovesome listen that ably shows off the house-based grooves that the label has to offer. *Memories* by BLUD opens the record with some mournful strings and a soft house beat that urges you to close your eyes and shuffle in your chair. *How's That* by Nitin and Anthony Middleton keeps the house vibes oceans deep. In fact the only disappointment on the album is the epic (on paper at least) team-up of Kenny Glasgow and Deniz Kurtel. Maybe it's the weight of expectation but *Sickness* just doesn't sound all that sick. In fact it screams out 'Will this do?' when really it should be the highlight of the set.

✘ And finally, we have the fourth album by those Scottish art-rockers Franz Ferdinand. Title track *Right Thoughts, Right Words, Right Action* opens the record like a breath of fresh air. *Evil Eye* is furiously funky, *Fresh Strawberries* has an almost Beatles like air, while *The Universe Expanded* sounds as if it is constantly on the brink of an epic explosion. This is rock music with a meltingly subtle pop heart, choruses to die for and a fresh art disco sound that is perfect for angular haircuts

**everywhere.**

And to think I never had the time for *Body Music* by **AlunaGeorge (future soul music with a vapid centre)**, ***An Object by No Age (frantic art rock that's not as good as their last one)***, ***6 Feet Beneath The Moon* by King Krule (experimental singer-songwriter stuff that has had rave reviews but left me a little cold)**, and ***The Grace* by Troumaca (wonderfully baggy and groovy with a sunshine heart)**.

| JOHN BITTLES