

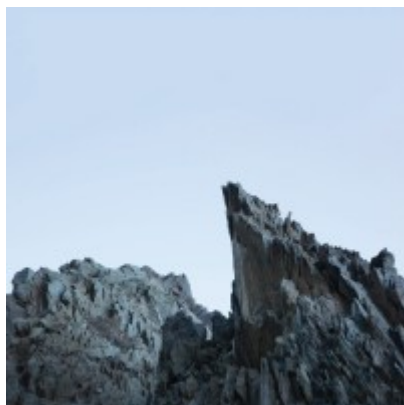
Bittle Magazine | Record Reviews

This June has been something of a short, hard kick in the face for all those who say there is no good new music out there, with so many great new albums that it's hard to know where to begin. By **JOHN BITTLES**.

Seriously, it's almost as if those within the music business knew about my spiralling **DJ Sprinkles** addiction and decided to release lots of great music to help wean me off. We have the gorgeous romantic house vibes of **Glitterbug**, the melancholy soul-searching of **The Antlers**, synth-pop gold from **Lust For Youth**, killer slacker rock from **Happyness** and so much more. And if you still aren't excited about new music after reading this article then just play ›Midtown 120 Blues‹ on repeat. It works for me!



This month we're gonna start with one of the most surprisingly touching and exciting new albums of the last few weeks, ›Weird Little Birthday‹, the debut album by London-based newcomers **Happyness**. Taking US slacker rock as a starting point the band give us 13 tracks that are, at turns, tear inducing, bittersweet, and full of that 'We don't give a fuck' attitude that you've just got to love. ›Naked Patients‹, the album's second track has already been proven by a top team of scientists (me and my mate Steve) to increase a listener's 'hip' quota by 15 whole points! Meanwhile ›Orange Luz‹ is so laidback it almost forgets it's there. Another highlight is ›Pumpkin Noir‹ which contains one of the lines of the year in 'I've gotten orange tongue, from my orange bubblegum'. There are influences aplenty on here with ›Regan's Lost Weekend (Porno Queen)‹ bringing to mind slacker king **Kurt Vile**, and ›It's On You‹ recalling early **Smashing Pumpkins** before they went all weird. Easily one of the indie-rock albums of the year so far, discover **Happyness** now before they get all huge and cool.



In contrast to the guitar-based grooves of **Happyness**, the slo-mo techno of **Glitterbug** is the aural equivalent of a long, hot electronic bath after a very hard day. Every track he produces

simply oozes emotion and soul and his new album ›Dust‹ continues his exploration of the very special brand of subdued, melancholy house that he has made his own. The title track opens the album and is a gorgeously atmospheric introduction that combines elegantly with following track ›Silent Glory‹ whose broken down hi-hats soar over an evocative synth. It's not until fourth track ›Apparition‹ that we get our first sign of a beat. That it's a shy, timid thing, more frightened of us than we of it, matters not when it's this damn good. From here we journey through the deep ambience of ›When The City Was Bare‹, the **Lawrence**-style house of ›The Stars Behind The Light‹ and into territories guaranteed to stimulate both mind and feet. Seemingly capable of squeezing every ounce of humanity and emotion from even the coldest of machines ›Dust‹ sees **Glitterbug** establish himself as one of the top electronic producers around right now.



A somewhat downbeat affair, ›Familiars‹ is a sparkling return from the rather fantastic **The Antlers**. Following up ›Burst Apart‹, an almost perfect album of emotional rock, can't have been easy. Yet, somehow the band manage to get it just right. ›Palace‹ opens the record with a lost, wistful air and beautifully sets the tone from the start. That the album had me crying salty tears on my morning commute illustrates the power of the music on here. Either that, or it shows just how crap my job is! ›Doppelganger‹ is almost sultry in its mournful air with the vocals by Peter Silberman recalling the broken-hearted majesty of **Nina Simone**. Each and every song is a beautifully realised thing, with ›Director‹ and ›Parade‹ deserving some kind of melancholic genius award. Feeling sad, alone, and like there is no-one out there who gives a darn? Then allow **The Antlers** into your life, as they know and feel your pain.

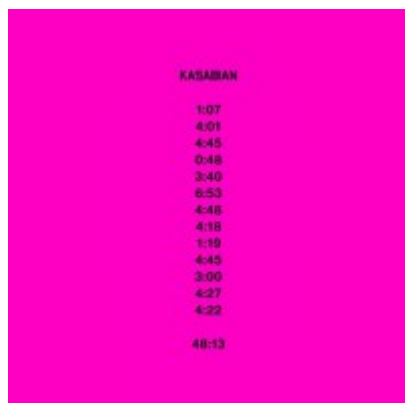


This June the ever excellent ›Ki Records‹ released an unbelievably poignant and emotive gem in the form of ›Saved Once Twice‹, the debut long-player by relative newcomer **Sean Pineiro**. And what a debut it is! Utilizing a downbeat, sample-heavy sound, the record's 14 tracks manage to perfectly capture the essence of melancholy, anomie, first love, and unbridled joy. Picture **Air** jamming with **Boards of Canada** and **DJ Krush** and you are close to the elegant sounds that Sean gives us here. Showing

that sending your demos off to record labels can work ›Saved Once Twice‹ is, quite simply, one of the most sublime collections of music you will hear all year.



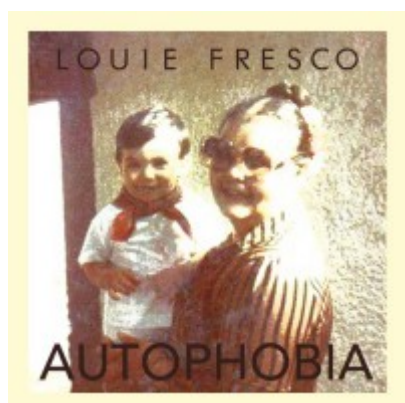
Lust For Youth has come a hell of a long way since the shouty post-punk of his first few albums. Now, with the addition of fellow band members they are something of a fully-fledged synth-pop group. Which means the time is now right to hate them, right? Well, no actually, due to the simple fact that their new album ›International‹ is a great sonic achievement, and a whole lot of fun. **New Order**, **Depeche Mode**, and **Joy Division** are all obvious references, as is the ghastly spectre of **Hurts**. In an album of introspective pop-nuggets that brim with vitality even while raging against the futility of life, the pace never once slows or becomes dull. Hugely deserving of some cross-over success those with fond memories of the 80s should welcome this into their lives.



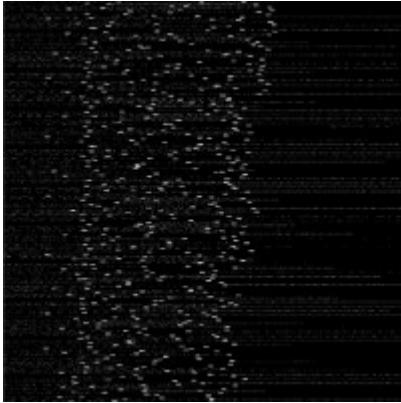
Next we have those stadium titans of laddish rock **Kasabian** who return with the evocatively named ›48:13‹. The problem with many of **Kasabian's** songs is that they seem to have been created for the live setting rather than for listening to at home. Such is the case here. Opening tracks ›Bumblebeee, Stevie‹ and ›Doomsday‹ may sound raw and exciting live, but on record, they simply come across as pitifully empty sloganeering. In fact it's not until the sixth track, ›Treat‹ that we come across the first tune that is worthy of our time. Just as good as ›Treat's‹ outstandingly dirty-funk groove is ›Glass‹ which hints at something deeper and more substantial than the empty posturing that has come before. Another track to check is ›Explodes‹ which moves beyond its shallow lyrics to become an aurally satisfying gem. While far from essential the album will still satisfy those who like their rock loud and undemanding.



I've never been that big a fan of **GusGus**. Sure, I enjoyed the progressive house delight of ›Purple‹ way back in the day, but the rest of their output can come across as too calculatedly kooky for my taste. So, when their new album ›Mexic‹ arrived in my inbox I wasn't exactly filled with anticipation at the prospect of pressing Play. Yet, as soon as the deranged rave blasts began on the chorus of opening track ›Obnoxiously Sexual‹ I felt my ears instantly prick up. What follows are nine tracks of snappy pop-flavoured house that may not have you pondering the deeper meaning of existence, but will put a huge smile on your face with its snazzy delights. Tracks like ›Another Life, Airwaves‹ and ›This Is Not The First Time‹ bristle with trance-filled joy. It may be cheesy as fuck, but, more importantly, this is one record that is a hell of a lot of fun.



Jonny White's ›No 19‹ label have had a pretty great five years since coming into existence and this July sees them bring out ›Autophobia‹, the new LP from the hotly tipped **Louie Fresco**. The album's eleven tracks are all over the place in terms of style and pace, with hip hop, world music, house, techno, pop and lots more vying for attention. More at home when utilizing the standard 4/4 beat it is safe to say that not all of Louie's experiments work. Opening track ›Missunderstood's‹ strange hip hop was seemingly created to demonstrate how the Skip button works, ›So Good‹ sounds like a bad 80s remix, while the title track's limp trip hop is just plain dull. Don't give up just yet though, as much more worthy of your time are the straight up house textures of ›White Sugar (Dub), Owl Night‹ and the **John Carpenter** synthwork of ›Alternate Dimensions‹. These tunes burst with groove and invention to illustrate just what a great producer **Louie Fresco** can be. Some great tunes on here, but in an over-saturated market it doesn't do enough to stand out from the crowd.



Formed as a side-project by **Martin & Richard Dust** who make up two thirds of legendary techno outfit **The Black Dog**, ›System Fork‹ created under the alias **Application** sees the duo create a dense electronic journey apparently inspired by the principle of Itamae. ›Ambient A, Flange 7‹ and ›**Steve Reich's**‹ ›Ice Cream Van‹ open the album in delicate style sounding so lost and fragile that you want to hold them close to your heart in order to keep them safe. ›Front End‹ and ›Siren‹ see the pair strive more towards darkened dancefloors with repetitive techno beats leading to hypnotic results. Perhaps not an essential home-listening experience, there are still enough great tracks on here to keep most techno anoraks happy for a few months to come.

Other great new releases to check out: ›Unwise‹ by **Synthek & Audiolouis** - will give fans of quality techno a hard-on for weeks, ›Until Silence‹ by **Roll The Dice** - electronic genius mixed together with a full orchestra to create the soundtrack to the film of your dreams, ›And The Infinite Sadness‹ by **Kyle Bobby Dunn** - a drone-ambient master-class and ›Sleepygirls‹ by **Yagya** - spacious and hypnotic dub techno with just enough oomph for the floor.

| [JOHN BITTLES](#)