

Bittles' Magazine

Here at ›Titel kulturmagazin‹ we have been receiving a load of complaints about last week's reviews. Apparently there just wasn't enough new music in there. So, bowing to public pressure, together with the threat of the sack, I managed to compile a further 17 albums which have been pleasuring my ears over these past few weeks. By **JOHN BITTLES**

We have the shady hip hop of **Tricky**, the doom-rock thrash of **Interpol**, the spectral dream-pop of **Ballet School**, the body horror score of **Gazelle Twin** and one or two more. So. Put your feet up, grab yourself a beer, smoke a fag, get yourself comfortable, and let us begin.

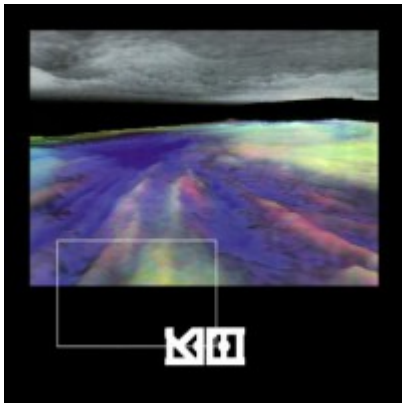


This week we'll begin with some gloomy, chorus-driven rock with the eagerly anticipated new album by the mighty **Interpol**. An absence of four years, together with the loss of influential bassist Carlos Dengler means fans would celebrate any new output from the band. That ›El Pintor‹ (the painter) is a rough, jagged rock beast which is easily their strongest release since ›Antics‹ will have many in fits of delirium even before the first song. ›All The Rage Back Home‹ is a magnificent opening number, which sticks itself firmly in the brain, sets up home and refuses to ever leave. Meanwhile, ›My Desire‹ explodes in glorious rock noise, ›Same Town, New Story‹ makes the heart yearn and ›Everything Is Wrong‹ is so good it could even make a believer of your Nan. So, dig out those black suits from the back of the wardrobe, because ›El Pintor‹ is a stunning return to form from one of the very few vital indie bands still around today.



Last year's ›False Idols‹ saw Bristol maverick **Tricky** hit top form after over a decade of releasing increasingly forgettable fare. Follow-up ›Adrian Thaws‹ is reported to be **Tricky's** club-based album. But those expecting a collection of EDM bangers will be in for a bit of a surprise since what we get is thirteen tracks of trip-hop goodness that, at its best, is like an evil seductress whispering in your ear.

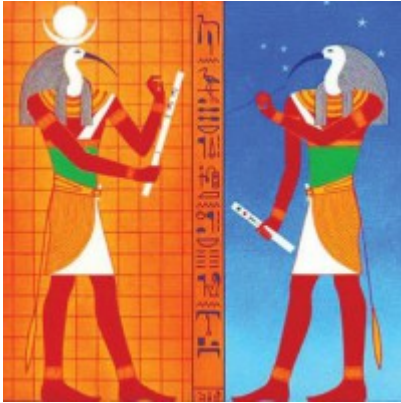
Tracks like ›Sun Down, Something In The Way‹ and ›Silly Games‹ brim with a righteous sense of melancholia, and are stunningly good. As if to mix things up, ›Lonnie Listen, Gangster Chronicle‹ and ›Why Don't You‹ hit the listener with an angry sounding rap/rock apocalypse. With the latter being one of the worse songs **Tricky** has ever done, not everything on here works. Yet, even though the record is not as essential as ›False Idols‹, ›Adrian Thaws‹ is still a thrilling collection full of urban menace and sinister love.



Keeping within the realms of dense, paranoid soundscapes, the next album comes from **Lee Gamble**, a name that will be instantly familiar to those who like quality electronic music which has a deep, experimental edge. His brand new double album ›Koch‹ is a fascinating listen, that constantly surprises the listener through its wildly diverse roster, and the sheer quality of the songs. ›Koch‹ opens with the spooky ambiance of ›Untitled Reversion‹, before the album erupts into the beat-based technoisms of ›Motor System‹. From here we are taken on a heady tour de force where echoes of rave, techno and IDM clash in a mesh of beautiful noise. ›You Concrete, Oneiric Contur, HMix‹ and ›Voxel City Spirals‹ stand out in a set which is aurally thrilling, adventurous and otherworldly.



Usually, by the time a band have got round to releasing their ninth album, you expect them to be creatively void; merely going through the motions to pay the mortgage and put their kids through school. Not so, New York residents **Blonde Redhead** though, as, if anything, ›Barragán‹ (Spanish for Warrior) is the best thing the band have released in years. The record explores a tranquil form of indie rock that isn't scared of entering the hazy world of electronics. ›Cat On Tin Roof‹ swaggers with nonchalant cool, ›Dripping‹ throbs with electronic soul, while ›No More Honey‹ is a strangely dissonant, yet ear-enticingly beautiful song. Brim full of passion, ideas and left-turns, ›Barragán‹ is the perfect place to begin for all those who think that all indie music is as dull as dishwater?



Seattle label ›Further Records‹ are on a bit of a roll right now! This year alone we've had the spellbinding techno soundscapes of ›K‹ by **Donato Dozzy**, ›Listen‹ by **The Smoke Clears** and ›Live 72‹ by sonic pioneer **Conrad Schnitzler**. This September that great run continues with ›Trance Mutation‹ by Italian producer **Nuel**. There is a lush acoustic, ambient vibe throughout the album's seven tracks making it the perfect accompaniment to 2014's final blast of sun-shiny days. With the entire LP recorded in only one week it is surprising just how calm and fully formed these tracks sound. ›Mentalism‹ is a deep, seductive opener, while ›Vibration‹ revels in its kosmische theme. ›Cause And Effect‹ has clanking percussion and a sense of drama that sucks you right in, leaving it to ›Gender‹ to finish things off with a soft, gentle air.



NeonSchwarz are one of those rare discoveries, a supremely funky rap collective that make music to make you feel good. Hailing from Hamburg, their music is steeped in the age-old hip hop tradition of finding the perfect combination of kick-ass samples, phat beats, and conscious lyrics. New album ›Fliegende Fische‹ is great fun, and even had my cat attempting to break-dance unsuccessfully in the living room by the end of the very first song. ›Unser Haus‹ is as catchy as chicken pox, ›Hinter Palmen‹ will plant a huge grin on your face, while ›Die Schwizzys‹ recalls the glory days of early electro. One to play to your annoying friend who has always claimed that Germans can't rap.



As anybody who is unlucky enough to know me personally will testify, my latest record label crush is on the ever excellent German label ›Ki Records‹. As if to reinforce my love comes ›Floating Underwater‹, the rather special new album from Japanese producer **Daisuke Tanabe**. The music has a stately, warm character that fully rewards repeated plays, as elements of trip-hop, ambient, broken beat and more combine majestically on an album which is the aural equivalent of a nice warm bath. ›Paper Planes‹ is a lovely, trippy affair containing merely the ghost of a beat, ›Origami‹ sounds like a record played at 33 instead of 45RPM, while ›Fun Robbery‹ is a cool marriage of hip hop and acid jazz. While upon first listen it is easy to dismiss this record as nothing more than a collection of 'pretty sounds', there is a sense of naivety and wonder here which will have you coming back for more time and time again.



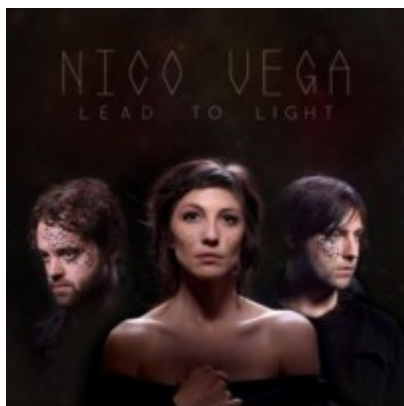
Next up we have some groove-some, house business from ›Era Two‹, a great collection of tunes from ›Thoughtless‹ music, mixed together with aplomb by label head **Noah Pred**. Released on the 22nd of September to celebrate 100 releases, the mix features a total of 50 tracks blended together with passion and flair. Some of the songs by the likes of **Arthur Oskan**, **Stone Owl** and **Noah** himself are so good that you immediately want to get online to track down the songs in full. This is a tense, dramatic, tech-tinged comp that will have fans of quality house and techno reverently revisiting their best nights out in a club.



Next up we have some spectral sounding indie music in the form of Berlin-based band **Ballet School** and their debut LP ›The Dew Lasts An Hour‹. At their best the group make a form of gloriously ethereal dream-pop that recalls **The Cocteau Twins** in their moments of heartfelt beauty. Vocalist Rosie Blair has a voice that could entrance a nation, while songs such as ›Pale Saint, Ghost, Lux‹ and ›Crush‹ drift by in a gentle, ambient like haze. Fans of **Slowdive**, **Beach House**, or laid back pop music will find plenty to entice here. And while it is not the most exciting album out this month, it is still an enchanting collection of songs that reveals new layers after each and every play.



If the thought of laid back indie music is enough to send you into a bored stupor, you might be more comfortable with the latest in the esteemed ›Balance‹ mix series (No 25) curated by the living legend that is **Danny Tenaglia**. Utilizing ›Traktor‹ to meticulously blend and re-edit two CDs' worth of sturdy house and slinky techno our DJ takes the listener on a wondrous journey into his personal world of club inflected grooves. Tough, tribal-informed beats are the main order of the day in a set guaranteed to make you move. Highlights come from **Reboot**, **Ø**, and **Regis**. But really, the whole thing is a blast!



Those who like a bit of pop nous with their rock n' roll might find lots to enjoy

with ›Lead To Light‹, the catchy new album from American trio **Nico Vega**. The fist pumping choruses and Aja Volkman's impassioned vocals are enough to bring out the inner 14 year old in any of us. Songs like ›Fury Oh Fury, No Home‹ and ›Dance‹ are huge sing-a-longs tailor-made for stadiums all around the world. While these are bona fide anthems in the making, it is tracks such as ›Simple, Back Of My Hand‹ and ›Lucky One‹ that demonstrate a band of heart and depth. It is this will to move away from the expected norm which helps make ›Lead to Light‹ a very pleasant surprise indeed.



To finish we have a spot of uneasy listening in the form of ›Unflesh‹, the rather strange and unpleasant sounding new album from Brighton-based music torturer **Gazelle Twin**. Sounding like a pissed-off **Aphex Twin** jamming with an even angrier death metal band, the record is a dense, and extremely dark affair. The cover together with track titles like ›Unflesh, Guts, Good Death‹ and ›Belly Of The Beast‹ warn the listener of the horrors to come, should you be adventurous enough to press play. Yet, through all this the record somehow manages to work its way into your head and affection until you come to welcome an hour spent within its blood-soaked world.

A special mention must also go to: ›Whorl‹ by **Simian Mobile Disco** - A shit-hot collection of electronic soul music with an experimental edge, ›Collection Of Retrospective‹ by **Various** - A bumper two CD comp of dance floor techno from Italian label ›Loose Records‹ which is perfect for all those who like their beats tough, ›Anjou‹ by **Anjou** - Eight tracks of spooky soundscapes, perfect for chin-strokers everywhere, ›Tayi Bebbā‹ by **Clap Clap** - A sonically adventurous bass infused album that will keep hipsters aroused for months, and ›Wilderness Of Mirrors‹ by **Lawrence English** - A very special drone-ambient masterpiece that sucks you deep within its troubled world.

| [JOHN BITTLES](#)