

Music | Bittles' Magazine: The music column from the end of the world

I was watching *Wimbledon* the other day when I came to the startling realisation that tennis is boring. Hoping that all it might need was a good soundtrack, I reduced the volume on the telly, replacing it with the morose musings of *Darklands* by **The Jesus And Mary Chain**. Much Better! Experiencing yet another epiphany I turned the TV off altogether, allowing the Reid brothers the attention they fully deserve. By **JOHN BITTLES**

The following albums may not reach the hallowed heights of **The JAMC**, but they will entertain you a lot more than a couple of posh boys hitting a ball really hard ever could. So, get yourself some *Pimms*, a bowl of strawberries and cream, and let us begin.



To prove my point we'll start with the rich, woozy pop experiments of Helsinki-based singer/producer **Jaakko Eino Kalevi** and his rather wonderful self-titled debut LP. Taking the fuggy haze of modern psychedelia and injecting it with a generous helping of pop hooks and a sensuous sense of groove helps create one of the outstanding albums of the summer. Laid-back, dreamy and always charming, the record's ten tracks touch on funk, electronica, chill-wave, indie, rock and more. *Deeper Shadows* contains a loose bassline to die for, *Jek* is a slow, languid jam, while *Don't Ask Me Why* should be in the dictionary under the definition of cool. With Jaakko's treated falsetto quite low in the mix, the record hits the listener like an aural wave, seducing them quietly but surely until all resistance is swept away. **8/10**.



Opening with the twelve minute opus *Sunspots (Events 1-3)* illustrates straight away that *Imagine The Future* by **ASC** isn't going to be your standard drum and bass LP. In fact, even though it is out on the 180bpm specialist label *Samurai Red Seal*, the album exists within a mesmerising world

of spectral ambiance and industrial noise. Recalling the urban splendour of **Burial**, or *Lifeforms*-era **Future Sound Of London**, *Imagine The Future* explores a paranoid landscape that is all its own. The low level clanks of *Bell Curve*, the echoing trip hop of the title-track and the alien funk of *Cosm* are just some of the highlights in a record which completely envelops the listener until the far off bass rumbles and irresistible synth washes are all that exists in your head. Not that this is a bad thing of course, since, with his twelfth album, **ASC** has given us an album perfect for getting lost in for a very long time. **9/10**.



White Poppy's debut album was one of 2013's most rewarding listens. Gorgeously hazy and psychedelic, the record prospered through an explosion of pop hooks and complex rhythm patterns to create an album which confidently stood out from the crowd. This June sees the Vancouver-based artist release her sophomore LP *Natural Phenomena*, which exists in a sonically dense, yet surprisingly pastoral and playful world. At their best, tracks such as *Sublimity* and *Aurora* envelop the listener within a richly evocative soundscape to ably recall the aural experiments of the likes of **Grouper** or **Sonic Boom**. Out now on LA's ever excellent *Not Not Fun* label, *Natural Phenomena* can be a little over-whelming at times, but repeated listens reveal numerous stand-out moments that should have you rushing back for more. **8/10**.



After winning *DJ Mag's Breakthrough DJ award* in 2013 things have been really kicking off for former film director **Citizenn**. This summer sees the release of his debut album, *Human Interface*, which is out now on the respected *Crosstown Rebels* imprint. Inspired by the „idea of humanity infusing with technology“ and how „we have become completely dependent upon it to survive“, the record is a house album brimming full of passion and ideas. Reaching to the past glories of Detroit techno and Chicago

house, this is the type of record you would play to someone to illustrate what exactly house music is. The deep dance floor groove of *Control* sounds like **Scuba** sharing a studio with **James Blake**, *Lacefront* is a glorious piece of techno beamed straight from **Carl Craig's** vault, while *Gone* is a futuristic slice of R&B which recalls **Blake Baxter** or **Juan Atkins** at their best. More please! **8/10**.



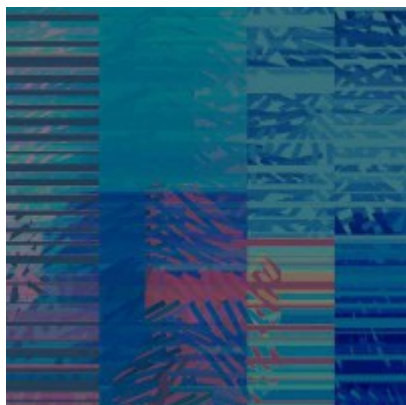
Former hip hop producer **Lee Bannon** surprises us all after the brutal jungle assault of his previous album *Alternate/Endings* by following it with a glacial LP of beatless ambiance. *Pattern Of Excel* is a rich, full-bodied work full of moments of eerie beauty, lush atmospherics and probing instrumentation. Out now from the veteran *Ninja Tune* stable, tracks such as *Artificial Stasis*, *Shallowness Is The Root Of All Evil* and *Towels* glide by in a gorgeous haze. It's not all misty-eyed wonder though, as the clanking dub of *Dx2*, the paranoia inducing soundscapes of *Aga* and the crushing density of *Inflatable* add a depth of flavour to proceedings that prevents the record from ever sounding tired or bland. After releasing this strange record of sonic beauty the only question to ask of **Lee Bannon** now is, What the hell is he going to do next? **7/10**.

HAUNTOLOGISTS



Resembling a dusty old techno record from the likes of **Dr. Walker**, **The Bionaut** or **Air Liquide** from back in the day, **Hauntologist's** self-titled debut LP is full of funky beeps, beats and bleeps, and sounds so deep you experience vertigo every time you dare to look down. The duo of **Jay Ahern** and **Stefan Schneider** (of **To Rococo Rot** fame) met a few years ago when they began a fruitful relationship which has heralded six killer EPs. This Summer sees them step into the album market with aplomb, releasing a record that melds the rich melodies and hazy pace of mid 90s IDM with the filth-ridden

electro flourishes of classic labels like *Cheap* or *Force Inc.* Made to be listened to in one continuous loop, tracks such as *Point*, *Brooklyn* and *Shakes* work together perfectly to create an intensely hypnotic jam. Strangely disorientating and surreal, this works as well at home as on the dance floor and will keep the adventurous listener entranced for months to come. **8/10**,



Following up his gloriously dub-infused *Seeds Of Paradise* album on the Bristol-based label *Idle Hands*, Portland producer **Strategy** now unleashes *Noise Tape Self* onto an unsuspecting world. Out now on *Further Records* the six tracks explore a world of strange ambiance and complex electronics with barely a beat in sight. *Cassette Loop* is an eerie yet beautiful sounding lament that recalls the drone rock of **Tortoise**, or the melancholy of *Selected Ambient Works vol. 2*. *Ominous Lovely Piano* and *Lovely Loop* meanwhile resemble the dub techno explorations of the likes of **Echospace** or **Bvdub**. The album is book-ended by the experimental drone-like *Awesome Piano* and *Rhen's Loop*, which begins and ends the record in disorientating form. **7/10**. Also keep an eye out for the fucked-up horror soundtrack strangeness of *ABABABABABAS (Blue Lion Child)* by **Innercity**, also out on *Further Records* now. **5/10**.



Sometimes, when the stars align, you will hear a song and realise immediately that the two of you are gonna be the best of friends. On very rare occasions this phenomenon also occurs when you stick on an LP. Yet, this is something I had the pleasure of experiencing within the opening minute of *Liste Noir #2: Darker It Gets, Clearer We See*, the excellent new compilation of dark disco, slo mo house, and post punk shuffles from French label *La Dame Noir*. In fact, the opening salvo of *You Can Play* by **Amevicious Feat. Alta**, *Snake In Your Eyes* by **Did Virgo Feat. Johanna** and *Dancing Delight* by **deWad Feat. Dr. No** is

as good as anything you will hear all year. With the album containing a total of eleven spacious house tracks, each one sounding like a highlight in an **Andrew Weatherall** *A Love From Outer Space* set, this is a spellbinding disco journey from beginning to end. **9/10**.



Last but not least, we finish with a sublime piece of blistering analogue funk. Out at the end of July, *Universes* is the long awaited debut LP from the much heralded and extremely talented **Seven Davis Jr.** Long championed by a stream of DJs and bloggers, the album sees **Seven** make the leap into the big time with a set which is sure to pacify his wave of admirers and blow unsuspecting minds. Keeping the focus firmly on the dance floor, opensers *Imagination*, *Freedom* and *Sunday Morning* erupt in a wash of frantic samples, bursts of bass, crashing beats and infectious grooves. From here we also experience the **Prince** alike *Everybody Too Cool*, the classic house tones of *Good Vibes Feat. Julio Bashmore*, the woozy psychedelica of *Afterlife Feat. Kutmah* and lots more. *Universes* traverses sounds and tempos with relish in a set which will fill fans of classic house and/or future soul with glee. **8/10**.



A special mention must also go to: *Portraits* by **Maribou State** - A collection of pastoral electronica which recalls the emotional soul-searching of **Banks**, or a lost trip hop classic from the mid 90s, **7/10**, *Il Collo E La Collana* by **Rayon** - **Markus Acher** of **The Notwist** dons his **Rayon** guise to create a magical soundtrack to the film *N-Capace*. Full of lush instrumental flourishes this is well worth tracking down, **9/10**, *Shopsca* by **Tosca** - Containing 11 remixes of tracks from last year's *Outta Here* LP, this is a pleasant enough way to pass an hour of your time, **6/10**, *Flamingo* by **The 23s** - A strange, yet entertaining album of lounge-based exotica which stays just the right side of cheese, **6/10**, *Love Somebody* by

Popof - A top album of slow, sexy house music out now on **Jamie Jones** and **Lee Foss'** *Hot Creations* imprint, **7/10**, and *Inner8* by **Inner 8 - DaDub's Danielle Antezza** adopts the **Inner8** guise to present an album's worth of dub-infused techno and electronica, **7/10**.



Also worth checking are: *Sunset Silk* by **Various** - A killer compilation of classic-sounding house from the *100% Silk* imprint. Featuring the likes of **Jupiter Jax**, **Strategy**, **James Booth** and more, if you are a fan of dance music then this is a must, **9/10**, *Grain* by **Ashworth** - For his debut LP on *Needwant* the London-based producer gives us twelve tracks of lush house music which may not be big or clever, but gently tugs at heart, feet and soul, **9/10**, *Calling Out* by **EZTV** - The band met when auditioning for **Spiritualized's** US tour. Forming a band after rejection, **Jason Pierce's** loss is jangly pop's gain as the three-piece reveal an album of pleasant pop diversions, **6/10**, *S/T* by **Le Millipede** - With the sonic playfulness of a **Mr. Scruff** or **Kid Koala**, **Mathias Götz** utilises a wide variety of instruments to create a rich and strange aural world, **7/10**, *LP* by **Container** - *LP* sees **Ren Schofield** merge electronic noise with a sense of funkiness which sounds punishing and beautiful at the same time, **6/10**, *Inji* by **LA Priest** - **Sam Dust** of **Late Of The Pier** fame gives us ten tracks of oddball pop which may be exceptionally clever but lack the heart to truly engage, **5/10**, and *Progadub* by **JPatterson** - Out now on *Acker Records*, the album sees the German native playfully reinterpret elements of reggae and dub to wondrous effect. Perfect for the summer, believe me when I tell you that this is fucking ace, **9/10**.