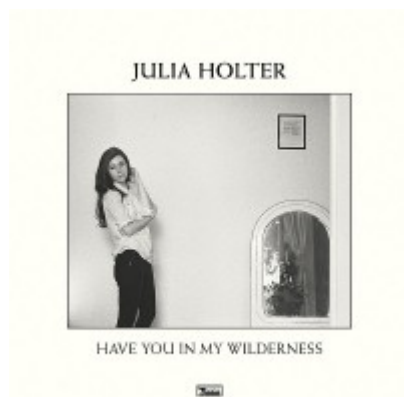


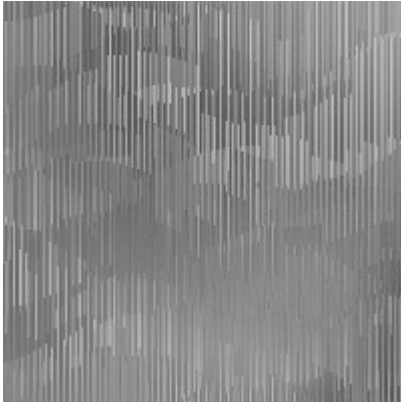
Music | Bittles' Magazine: The music column from the end of the world

After a short break to have my highlights done, the world's best music column written by me makes a welcome return this week with a look at some of October's top album releases. We have great new LPs by the likes of **Julia Holter**, **King Midas Sound**, **Helena Hauff**, **Wolfgang Flür**, *Ghost Box*, **Visionist**, **Bruce Brubaker**, **Grant** and more. By **JOHN BITTLES**

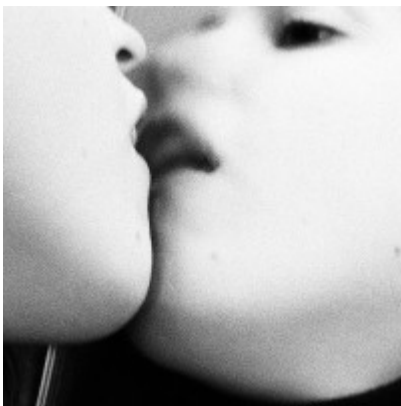
In fact there is so much excellent new music out right now that there is no room for great new albums by **Deehunter**, **New Order** and **Lana Del Rey**. With huge advertising campaigns behind them, and an already strong fan-base I have contentedly assumed that you are intelligent enough to make up your own mind whether these three albums are going to be worthy of your money and your time.



Gaining just as much critical acclaim as the above three pop experimentalist, **Julia Holter** makes a very welcome return this month with the expansive and wonderfully intimate *Have You In My Wilderness*. A lot has been made in the press about this being the singer's crossover album. Long-time fans needn't worry though, as the LP's ten tracks are unlikely to be troubling the Top 40 charts anytime soon. Were *Have You In My Wilderness* does differ from previous releases is that it exposes a much more confident artist, with Julia herself stepping right to the fore, no longer content to hide behind literary icons, obscure allusions or strange noises. Honest and revealing, the album really is a joy from beginning to end. *Silhouette* is light and playful, *How Long* poignant and stirring, while *Night Song* will have you sobbing into your tea. Pick of the bunch though is the singer-songwriter jazz of *Vasquez*; a joyously free-form track which shifts and shakes to constantly take the listener by surprise. In short, this is devastatingly good! **9/10**.



This October **Kevin Martin** once again dons his **King Midas Sound** alias with the subdued ambiance of *Editions 1*. Moving beyond the grubby dancehall of his work as **The Bug**, or the oppressive dubstep of *Waiting For You*, the album is a richly atmospheric and coherent body of work. The first in a series of collaborations, the LP sees Martin join forces with Austrian guitarist/experimentalist **Fennesz** for a collection of spooky soundscapes and bleak torch-songs. Stark and mournful the record's nine tracks stirringly explore urban decay, modern apathy and the loneliness of the soul. *Mysteries* opens proceedings with a quiet air of desolation before *On My Mind's* sleek trip hop conjures images of **Massive Attack** or **Zero 7**. And while it misses the grittiness of **Kevin Martin's** best work, *Edition 1* is an album of immense subtlety and depth. Like the sight of a pretty girl crying forlornly in the rain, there is something deeply affecting and troubling about these songs. **8/10**.



Helena Hauff has managed to gain herself an enviable reputation through her *Golden Prudel* club residency and a string of tough techno and electro releases on labels like *Pan*. This Autumn sees the sonic explorer release *Discreet Desires*, her debut artist LP. And I am glad to report that it is everything that fans would expect, and more. With a playful 80s edge tracks such as *Spur* and *L'Homme Mort* move beyond the realm of mere 'techno banger' by being as satisfying as a good book. Deep, mesmeric and funky as fuck, the album's 10 tracks merge cerebral contemplation with dance floor appeal to hypnotic effect. The vintage synthesizers on *Sworn To Secrecy Pt. 1* will give any analogue freak the horn, *Piece Of Pleasure* is an early 80s throwback, *Tryst* is full of ominous bleeps, while *Sworn To Secrecy Pt. 2* introduces some Germanic vocals into the mix. Fully justifying the hype, this is futuristic electro which is never frightened of re-entering the past. **8/10**.



While the music of **Wolfgang Flür** hasn't changed much since his **Kraftwerk** days, it is always undeniably great. *Eloquence - The Complete Works* collects the pick of the producer's releases from 2002 until now. Through recalling the music of his former band **Wolfgang's** songs always manage to sound simultaneously retro and futuristic. Such is the case here! Opening track *I Was A Robot* (also the title of his entertaining autobiography) sounds both thrillingly new and like a lost **Cosmic Baby** track from 1992. *Cover Girl (The Ninjaneer Mix)* is exactly how electroclash always wanted to sound, *Staying In The Shadow* is deliciously strange, while *Silk Paper* brings to mind the soft trance of **William Orbit's** *Water From A Vine Leaf*. Not everything works, with tracks like *On The Beam*, *Blue Spark* and *Pleasure Lane* straying too close to cheese for their own good. All in all though this is a welcome compendium from one of our finest purveyors of electronic pop. **8/10**.



Glass Piano from earlier this year saw New York pianist **Bruce Brubaker** re-interpret a selection of **Philip Glass** pieces to mesmerising effect. Beautifully realised, the music seemed to reach out from the speakers to embrace your very soul. This month French label *Infine* release the sublime *Glass Piano (Versions)*, a selection of remixes of said tracks; or remixes of a remix if you will. **Julian Earle's** refit of *Mad Rush* starts the album in fine style, its emotive piano refrain sounding heart-rendingly bitter-sweet. Further in, **Akufen** delights with his down-tempo remix of *Metamorphosis 1*, turning it into a late-night trip hop groove, while **John Beltram** ekes every last bit of emotion out of *Metamorphosis 3*. Pick of the bunch though comes from early *Warp* heroes **Plaid** who create something unique and wonderful in their version of *Metamorphosis 5*. With a nine minute house version of *Knee For Thought* by **Francesco Tristano** and a **Biblo** remix of *Metamorphosis 4* completing a great package, **Glass Piano (Versions)** is practically guaranteed to elicit a wistful sigh from heart-broken dreamers everywhere. **9/10**.



To celebrate their 10 year anniversary this month, UK institution *Ghost Box* release *In A Moment*, a bumper 2CD package full of highlights from their enviable back catalogue. Quintessentially English, the label have long enraptured their devoted fan-base through a string of quality left-field releases which take in kooky electronica, library music, pagan folk, synth pop and more. On the first disc the skewed funk of *Attaining The Third State* by **ROJ**, the warm pop pulse of *Almost There* by **John Foxx and The Belbury Circle**, and the heart breaking synths of *Deep End* by **Pye Corner Audio** all manage to worm their way into both heart and head. On the second disc the 80s style instrumental funk of *The Mirror Ball Cracked* by **Pye Corner Audio**, the 60s sci-fi epic *Wheel Of The Year* by **The Advisory Circle** and the **John Carpenter**-sounding *The Willows* by **The Belbury Poly** perfectly illustrate why the label is so respected and loved. Bittersweet and melancholy, these tracks skilfully reinterpret the past to suggest the beauty of what might have been. **8/10**.



Fans of house music to inspire both mind and soul will find themselves in heaven with the deep basslines, spine-tingling melodies and gorgeous beats to be found on *The Acrobat* by **Grant**. Little is known of the enigmatic producer, with the theory that the alias was the work of a legendary Chicago producer long discredited. Whoever **Grant** may be, one thing we can be sure of is that the music they produce is house which touches on the sublime. For instance, the moment where the bass kicks in midway through opening track *Charade* may well be one of the most glorious things I have ever heard. The rest of the record is also excellent, with the Detroit funk of *Awful Truth*, the alien groove of *Doris Day*, the epic sounding *Hughenden Road* and the gorgeous strings of *Rio Rita* just a few of the aural nuggets on offer. With not a duff track in sight, this is house music as we always knew it could be. **9/10**.



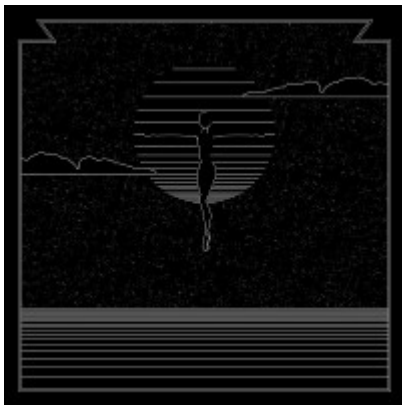
After an eight year silence the Berlin duo of **Denzel + Huhn** make a welcome return this October with the lush electronica of *Brom*. Fans of the group's *City Centre Office* output from the noughties, or those who like their electronic music subdued yet poppy will find much that will appeal here. Filled with sparkling melodies, focused ambiance and shuffling beats the record is one of the most accomplished listening experiences you will hear this year. Rather than drifting aimlessly as most chill-out music now tends to do, songs such as *Deriwat*, *Asid Trei*, *Raoul Von Korn* and *Lithium Lite* recall a type of ambiance which seeks, nay, demands your full attention from beginning to end. This is something which has been all too neglected in downtempo music of late. Echoes of **Tortoise**, **To Rococo Rot** and more combine on an album which will keep you happy and snug through these long autumn nights. **9/10**.



Drawing inspiration from 14th century architect **Peter Parler's** work on *St. Vitus Cathedral* in Prague **Jonas Reinhardt's** sixth LP, *Palace Savant*, is a record of amazing sound design and depth. Out now on the always reliable *Further Records*, the album's eight tracks ably convey a sense of grandness and wonder. They also sound fantastic played in a darkened room. What makes the record work so well as a whole is how the dense ambiance will suddenly dissipate into a lush melody or a welcome fractured series of beats. For instance, after the drone-scapes of the opening three songs the album suddenly springs into life with the eerie disco synths of *Androma*, closely followed by the **Orb**-style bass pulses of *Go Sceptre Go*. Seriously, if you only listen to one record inspired by architecture this week make *Palace Savant* the one. **8/10**.



South London maverick **Visionist** has long made music impossible to either pigeon-hole or dance to. This month sees him release his long-awaited debut LP on the like-minded *Pan*. The result is *Safe*, a fractured and ominous listen which is never content to sit happily in the background of your mind. Skewed beats, skitterish production, bruised pop and more merge seamlessly to create a body of work that is abrasive, rude and very, very good. *1 Guarda's* menacing bass roll and chopped-up vocal samples recall an alienated and lost **FKA twigs**, *Sin-cere* utilises oriental melodies and strange echoes to create something haunting yet undeniably pop, while the title-track brings to mind the stilted melancholy at the heart of **Burial's** work. Unafraid to push the sonic spectrum as far as it will go, *Safe* is unsettling, thrilling and like nothing else released this month. **7/10**.



A special mention must also go to: *Changes* by **Synkro** - One half of **Akkord**, **Joe McBride**, explores lush ambiance, future soul and post dubstep textures in an enriching debut LP, **7/10**, *Beach Music* by **Alex G** - Still sounding as if it cost only 50p to make, the Philadelphia singer's seventh album finds him sounding as wistful as ever, **6/10**, *Berlin Atonal Vol. 3* by **Various** - A collection of live performances by **Cabaret Voltaire**, **Fis**, **Miles Whittaker** and **Abdulla Rashim** from said festival provides an excellent variety of dark techno and electronica which will find favour with those with open minds, **8/10**, *Photograph* by **Dirty Vegas** - With the ghost of debut hit single *Days Go By* sitting snugly on their backs the UK duo's fourth LP is a winning mix of pop, rock and EBM, **6/10**, *The Lonely Roller* by **Steven A. Clarke** - Soft and romantic debut from the talented singer which may not impress your hipster mates but will make a nice soundtrack to cuddling with someone you love, **6/10**, *From The Land Of Rape And Honey (The Suppressed Tapes) 1995-2005* by **IBM aka Jamal Moss** - Out now on *Interdimensional Transmissions*, this LP collects nine hard and heavy techno tracks from the artist best known as **Hieroglyphic Being**. **5/10** and *Neighbourhood Wonderful* by **White Boiz** - Sonically diverse hip hop which sounds like it could have been

released anytime in the last 20 years. In a good way of course! **7/10**.

And let us not forget: *No. 3* by **Christina Vantzou** - Recorded in Belgium with a full 15 piece orchestra, Christina's new album for *Kranky* is full of atmosphere, drones and spectral ambiance, **7/10**, *Circe: Music Composed For The Show Of Shows* - Two thirds of **Sigur Ros** team-up with Icelandic composer **Hilmar Örn** for the soundtrack to a documentary about the history of vaudeville, circuses and carnivals. The results are gorgeous! **9/10**, *Darker Than Blue* by **Blue Daisy** - Adventurous and dense sophomore album from the talented Londoner which ticks all the right boxes, but never truly soars, **6/10**, *Detroit's Son* by **Guilty Simpson** - The Detroit rapper joins forces with talented beat-smith **Katalyst** for an album which is just about as thrilling as modern hip hop gets, **8/10**, *Ad Infinitum* by **Telekinesis** - For his fourth album **Michael Lerner** ditches the guitars for synthesizers with pleasing results, **6/10**, *Loom* by **Ms. John Soda** - **Micha Acher** of the **Notwist** fame joins forces with vocalist **Stefanie Boehm** for an album's worth of experimental pop, **7/10**, and *Night On The Town* by **Mr. G** - House legend **Colin McBean** pushes the envelope with his latest album of skewed rhythms and funky-assed beats. My only criticism being, it's far too short! **9/10**.

| [JOHN BITTLES](#)