

**Music | Bittles' Magazine: The music column from the end of the world: January/February New Albums Reviewed.**

Music doesn't change over time! The only variable that exists between music and the listener is you. The number of people I know who exclaim »Music isn't as good as it was in the 70s, 80s, 90s«, etc is depressing. Somewhere down the line people will be saying the same about the noughties and now. But the thing is, we don't listen to music in the same way as we get older. By **JOHN BITTLES**

When we are teens, the bands and tunes that we listen to take on almost mythical significance to our hormone addled minds. This is why so many dissatisfied adults spend so long disparaging the cultural signifiers of today. Books, films and albums released over the last few years are just as good, if not better, than what was available when many of us were young. Standards haven't slipped. Merely our capacity to relate to an ever developing culture has declined.

To prove my point, this week I will be reviewing some amazing albums by **Suede, Moodymann, Telepath, Tuff Love, Savages, Moomin, Hunter/Game** and more. This is music which should sound fantastic no matter your circumstances, or age. So, whether you are a child of the 60s, an 80s entrepreneur, or a drug addicted wreck with no concept of time, there will be something in here for you.



After years in the wilderness **Brett Anderson's Suede** made a triumphant return in 2013 with the indie pop romanticism of *Bloodsports*. This year they consolidate this rebirth with the release of their brand new LP *Night Thoughts*. The record is a dark, emotionally troubled concept album which keeps the listener in a heightened emotional state from beginning to end. With **Brett** in fine voice throughout, the record is sequenced without gaps, which means listening to this on shuffle won't make an awful lot of sense. The desolate, string-drenched opener *When You Are Young* makes for an evocative, mournful beginning, setting the scene for the rest of the LP. Indeed, one of the most striking things about *Night Thoughts* is the complete absence of the band's trademark glam and sleaze. As if to reinforce this, the record opens with a suicide, and then spends the rest of its duration taking a sorrowful look back upon the person's life, showing what led to this awful fate. For bedroom philosophers, and misunderstood romantics these really are special times. **8/10.**



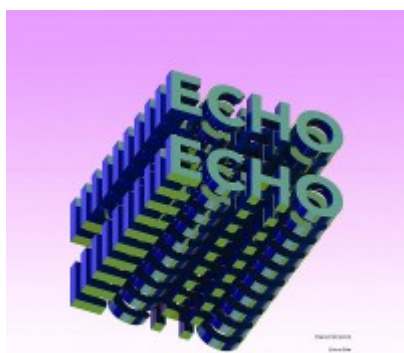
Following last year's fantastic **DJ Koze** edition of the *DJ Kicks* series could be no easy feat. Yet, if anyone is capable of matching, if not besting, the lush musical journey created by the German producer and DJ it is the house legend **Moodymann**. His introspective, soulful and lush sounding *DJ Kicks* mix hits the shops on the 19th of February. Over the course of 75 gorgeously laid-back minutes the set takes in smooth soul, tear-drenched blues, jazzy hip hop and, of course, bitter-sweet house. With the album also including eleven exclusive **Moodymann** edits amongst its thirty tracks this is quality from beginning to end. Unless you have the vinyl, which contains 19 full tracks spread across three discs, this is best listened to in one long, luxurious whole. The mix moves through a myriad of tempos and styles, but never once feels jarring, stilted, or anything less than sublime. With the set made up mostly of oldies and classics, **Moodymann** illustrates perfectly how you don't need a load of white labels or pre-released tunes to make a killer set. Great music is great music, no matter when it was released! Don't believe me? Give this a try. **10/10**.



*Dream Catalogue* artist **Telepath** creates the type of profoundly moving ambient music which manages to say more with one moment of quiet instrumentation than most artists could with a thousand words. 2015's *Dream\_111* album with fellow vaporwave producer **Nmesh** was one of the best [Year](#), its rich, *Blade Runner*-inspired soundscapes evoking feelings of intense nostalgia and longing within its futuristic romanticism. This sense of yearning and loss is further investigated in *Another Night Together*, **Telepath's** new album released in January of this year. Composed of two long, emotionally devastating tracks, the album is an 89 minute journey which you never want to finish. *Endless Love* arouses images of empty streets, endless rain and heart-broken souls, while dislocated voices cry out over gentle chimes and fractured echoes to create a gorgeously narcotic haze. *Seaside Lover* meanwhile, contains the mere hint of a beat, its low bass pads accompanying a tragic sounding elegy to an unwanted future and a half-remembered past. Please believe me when I tell you that this is one of the most beautiful things you will hear all year. **10/10**.

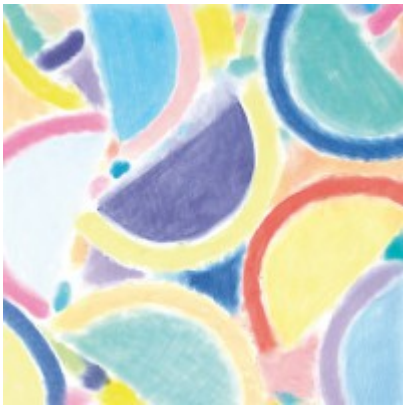


To the casual observer **Savages** seem a band on a mission! Their debut album *Silence Yourself* was an angry cry into the night. Full of post-punk rhythms and righteous indignation, it was a record which grabbed rock music by the scruff of the neck, screamed in its face, and left it feeling dazed and confused. While not quite capturing the visceral excitement of their live shows, it was an intelligent blast of a record which still thrills even after repeated plays. The band's second album, *Adore Life*, has just been released and finds the four-piece both refining and expanding their sound. *The Answer* opens proceedings with a glorious stop/start punk swagger, leading to the goth-tinged squeal of *Evil*, a furious yet funky racket. From here the title track sounds like a gloriously dark, opium-filled dream of regret and sorrow, *I Need Something New* is both spiteful and frenetic, while *When In Love's* bassline will send shivers up and down your spine. A gentler and more mature album than its predecessor, *Adore Life* is a vital release from one of the few bands in 2016 who actually have something to say. **8/10**.



Arriving on **Prins Thomas' Full Pupp** label, this month comes the sensuous musical voyage that is *Echo To Echo*, Oslo DJ **Magnus International's** debut LP. The album successfully merges the 90s IDM melodies of **B12** with the disco-soaked grooves of **The Idjut Boys** and the classic house stylings of **Mr. Fingers** to create one funk-filled whole. In other words, this is a record seemingly created with two intentions, to make you dance and smile. *Big Red* opens proceedings with a wave of synth washes, warming us up before the slo-mo rhythms of *Energi* worm their way straight into your head. *Rise Above* meanwhile, brings to mind a dubby remix of **Mason's I'm Perfect** (in a good way, of course), *No Release* revels in a series of atmospheric bass pads, *Synths Of Jupiter* induces goosebumps with its vintage sounding house, while *Fun And Games* is a lush, italo-inspired gem. Absolutely stunning from beginning to end, this is a

thoughtful sounding and unique house album (and how rarely do I get to say that?). Carrying a copy in your record bag will make you cool and may even get you laid. **9/10**.

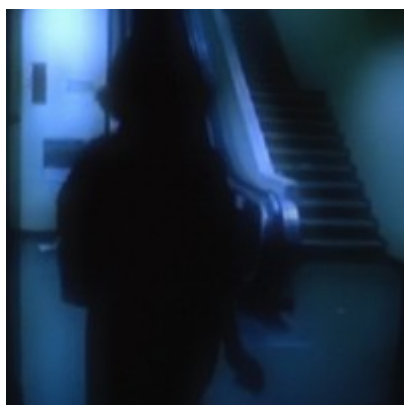


Good house music shouldn't just move your feet, it should also touch your soul! This is something deep house purveyor **Moomin** understands all too well. His *The Story About You* album from 2011 was one of the year's best. Full of relaxed house, jazz flourishes and laidback grooves, it made the perfect companion no matter the setting or mood. Those who, like me, have been eagerly awaiting the follow-up can relax a little now as *A Minor Thought* should be hitting the shops and download stores on February the 5th. Gorgeously deep, the record is full of the type of house music which is so timeless sounding it is impossible to think about it in terms of the future, present or the past. The title track is a beautiful organic groove which creates swells of emotion within the listener until their heart feels it might burst. *Loop No. 1* meanwhile, recalls the jazzy delights of **St. Germain**, *Woman To Woman* contains winsomely evocative strings, while *You Neva Know* is nothing short of sublime. If you foolishly believe that all house music is emotionless crap, give this a listen. It may just change your mind! **9/10**.



Glaswegian trio **Tuff Love** are one of those bands who, from the very first guitar riff, you simply have to adore. They create guitar music which isn't afraid of static, melody, discordance, or a damn good chorus or two. After a support slot for shoegaze survivors **Ride**, and radio support from the likes of **Lauren Laverne** and **Steve Lamacq** the band are ready to step into the limelight this month with the release of new album *Resort*. The twin vocal assault of **Julie Eisenstein** and **Suse Bear** forms the cornerstone of their sound, and contains a warmth and depth which helps their music stand both proud and tall. In a

fantastic album tracks like *Slammer*, *That's Right* and *Flamingo* are gorgeous examples of C86 inspired rock. These sit nicely alongside the more downbeat numbers such as opener *Sweet Discontent*, *Penguin* and *Doberman*, highlighting a band of surprising maturity and depth. Full of a sense of nostalgia so rich you can almost reach out and touch it, the jangle-filled indie on *Resort* will waste no time in becoming your new best friend. **9/10**.



Not much is known about the mysterious producer **Immune**. One thing we can be sure of though is that their new album *Breathless* is deliciously good. Dub techno textures merge seamlessly with digital ambiance, dancehall, house and just a hint of shoegaze to create a body of work which any right-minded individual would want to get lost in for days. *Murmur Of A Heart (Feat. HKE)* is a ten minute long techno odyssey awash with stately dub atmospherics while containing a steadfast groove. From here, *Digital Rivers* ups the pace for a *Selected Ambient Works* era **Aphex Twin**-style piece of angular funk, *False Concourse* is a smooth, deep house jam, while the title track's shuffling beats and dreamy synths recall the mighty **Boards Of Canada** at the top of their game. Ambient with a pulse, the aural worlds created by *Immune* will remain in both heart and mind for months. **9/10**.



Before they found a home on *Kompakt*, Italian duo **Hunter/Game** released a string of celebrated singles and EPs on labels such as *Innervisions* and *Sasha's Last Night On Earth*. Known for their stunning use of texture and melody, their output has long been cherished by those who want more from their dance music than mindless bosh, bosh, bosh. Early February sees **Emmanuele Nicosia** and **Martino Bertola** release *Adaptation*, their much anticipated debut LP. And what an album it is! Recalling the

melodic splendour of fellow *Kompakt* artists **The Field** and **Gui Boratto**, the album sits snugly in that glorious middle-ground between techno, trance and house. After the gorgeously deep *Intro*, *Declino* gets the album going in fine style, its rising synths and driving beats making for a majestic piece of pop euphoria. Other highlights include *The Path*, a killer techno groove, the rave inspired bombast of *Hexagon*, and the emotionally charged ambiance of *Hide*. At times a little too cold and clinical, *Adaptation* is still a solid album which will work wonders on any floor. **7/10**.



The US duo known as **Beacon** create sophisticated house music for those jaded individuals out there who are seeking some emotional resonance with their beats. The pair of **Thomas Mullarney III** and **Jacob Gossett** combine **Burial's** sense of melancholy, sumptuous deep house and impassioned vocals to glorious effect. Be aware though, this is music which is alternative, deeply electronic and undeniably pop. The band's second album, *Escapements* is an immaculately produced collection of late night torch songs haunted by the echoes of the ghost of clubbing's past. The album's eleven tracks work together to create a rich aural tapestry, with songs such as *Backbone*, the title track, *Better Or Worse* and *Preserve* combining the best of club culture with the vocal dynamics of **James Blake** to winning effect. The results are surprisingly stirring in a set which could easily have been overly polite and staid. Like the always excellent **Bob Moses**, **Beacon** mix pop introspection with dance floor dynamics with aplomb. **8/10**.



A special mention must also go to: *The Official Bootleg Series: Volume 2* by **Tangerine Dream** - A four CD box-set of live recordings from Paris and Berlin. Needless to say, if you have an open mind then this is a must, **8/10**, *Future Disco 9: A Disco Love Affair* by **V/A** - Tracks and remixes by

**Fatima Yamaha**, **Joe Goddard**, **I-Robots**, **PBR Streetgang** and **Vessels** stand out in the latest groove-rich instalment of *Needwant's* long running mix series, **8/10**, *An Arabesque* by **Cloudland Canyon** - A nicely varied LP which jumps from the wall-of-sound rock of *Where's The Edge* to the acid-soaked synth pop of *Try Faking It* with ease, **7/10**, *Catch Me If You Can* by **Max Chapman** - Out now on **Kerri Chandler's Madtech Records**, this is a fab bass driven house album chock-full of dirty low-end jams and crisp technoid grooves, **8/10**, and *Hymns* by **Bloc Party** - Bland, inoffensive indie with an electronic sheen from a band that could do better if only they tried, **4/10**.



And let's not forget: *Hacking For Freedom* by **Flash Kostivich** - Gaining a very welcome re-release on *Dream Catalogue*, Flash follows up his excellent *End Of The World Rave* cassette with seven tracks that take in bass, hip hop, glitch, ambiance and more, **8/10**, *Gumpton* by **Your Friend** - Brooding pop music with a grandiose air is the order of the day in an album which contains a rich gothic chill, **8/10**, *Polyester Skin* by **Jacob Bellens** - A record of electronic pop from the Danish singer which features additional production from **Kasper Bjork** and some damn fine leftfield flourishes, **6/10**, *Pipes* by **Hantasi** - Challenging and disorientating electronica which will titillate and arouse fans of *Pan*, **Flying Lotus**, or the more 'out there' output of *Warp*, **5/10**, and *M:Fans/Music For A New Society* by **John Cale** - Originally released way back in 1982 the much lauded *Music For A New Society* album has been reworked and remastered for 2016, **6/10**.

| [JOHN BITTLES](#)