

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

To say that there are some great albums out this month is a bit like saying that **David Cameron** is a little bit dodge. Amongst these new aural gems are the sublime electronica of **Sasha**, **Yoshimi**, **Moderat** and **Dino Sabatini**, the funk-ed-up house of **Potions**, the alien beats and rhythms of **Babyfather** and **Ash Koosha**, the fuzzed-up guitar noise of **Bleached**, and more. By **JOHN BITTLES**

And, in a crazy world of Brexits, right wing nutters, **Donald Trump** as (possible) US President and my beloved **Aston Villa** getting relegated, I can't think of a better way to spend the next thirty or so days than locking myself in a darkened room with the following great new LPs.



This week it seems only fitting to begin with the return of house legend **Sasha**. The artist has consistently been considered one of the world's finest DJs, but has somewhat struggled when it comes to producing his own tunes. Previous LP *Airdrawdagger* released way back in 2002 was, at best, a mixed bag; losing its way after a strong beginning. Yet, on his new project for *Late Night Tales*, **Sasha** successfully forgoes the appeal of the dance floor entirely and succumbs to the glacial soundscapes, intricate melodies and ambient textures which seem his natural home. The result is *Scene Delete*, a heart-rendingly good twenty-one track, three disc LP, which is passionate, emotional and great. Being freed from the tyranny of the 4/4 beat seems to have inspired the producer, leading him to create what is arguably the highlight of his career so far. Unbelievably rich and texturally deep, *Scene Delete* grabs the listener by the scruff right from the off, welcoming them wholeheartedly into a world of melodic sighs. Those seeking drops, crescendos and choruses should make a beeline for the new **Robin Schulz** album, cause there's nothing for you here. For the rest of us though, this is a rarefied listening experience which seems, almost, to speak directly to your soul. **10/10.**



Without a doubt Italian musician **Dino Sabatini** is one of the most exciting producers working in the field of techno today. *Shaman's Paths*, his previous LP combined house grooves, techno rhythms and tribal aesthetics to create a vivid and astounding body of work. For his new album *Omonimo*, Dino explores a world of slow tempos and subdued bpm's to create a record which is downright divine. After the lush ambiance of *Foreword*, *Choosing The Right Way's* hushed strings and gorgeous piano refrain hint at the aural delights to come. *It's My Forest* is an early highlight, its heady trip hop groove and exotic samples working their way straight into your brain. Mesmerising and hypnotic, it wouldn't have sounded out of place on a *Feed Your Head* compilation from *Planet Dog* back in the day. Other picks include *The Unexpected*, which pairs a horror score melody with a dense electronic throb to create a track which both delights and unnerves. *Sometimes Back*, is another goody, and is one of the most beautifully affecting tracks you will hear all year, while the slo mo clanks and jazz keys on *If Feat. Antonello Salis* is the sound of a loved one laughing gently in your ear. Simply stunning from beginning to end, *Omonimo* is already shaping up to be one of the highlights of 2016. **10/10**.

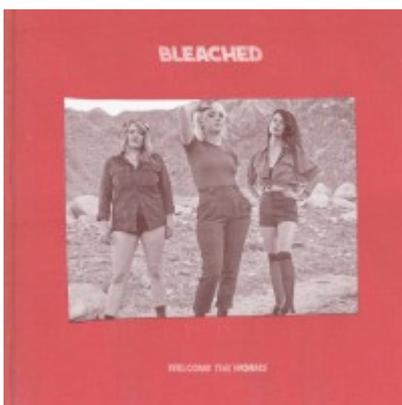


If I ever meet anyone stupid enough to claim that house music is generic and boring I smugly correct their mistake by playing them something released on *100% Silk*. Over the last few years the LA-based label have brought out some of the most gloriously out-there and downright funky house music to ever grace these ears. Case in point is the dub-infused rhythms to be found on the amazing new album *Pushing The Cuboid* by **Potions**. Taken from a selection of live staples *Pushing The Cuboid* sees producer **Tom Owens** taking influences from the past, and twisting and mutating them to create something vital and new. Recalling house music legends such as **Gene Farris**, **Mr. Fingers** or **Vincent Floyd** the album's eight tracks are deep, groovy, and unbelievably good. From the lush proto house of *Cool Ride*, to the shimmering synth pulse on *Space Mountain*, one listen is enough to convince anyone that this is house music the

way God always intended it to be. **9/10.**

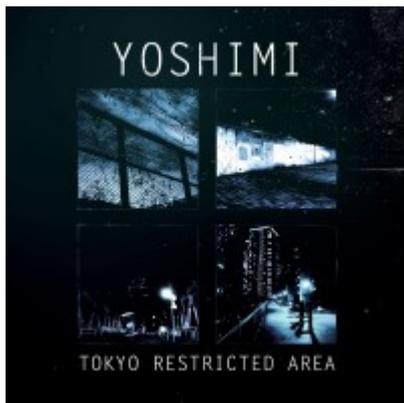


Please ignore the annoying five minute *Stealth Intro* which opens **Dean Blunt's** new **Babyfather** album and you will find yourself absorbed by a raw, visceral record which couldn't sound more London if it was snatching at your wallet while calling you 'Bruv'. *BBF Hosted By DJ Escrow* is a fun, hyperactive listen and perfectly replicates the pirate radio shows which used to dominate the capital's urban airwaves throughout the 80s and 90s. Including shout-outs, requests, surreal digressions and some serious-assed beats, *BBF* sees the musical maverick that is **Dean Blunt** stepping out of the art school and into the streets. In a record which constantly shifts pace and genres *Greezebloc*, a furious rap number will suddenly morph into the **Massive Attack** style reflection of *Meditation Feat. Arca*, which, in turn, merges seamlessly into the ragged dancehall of *Shook*. Across twenty-one short tracks which seem to contain more ideas than most artists' careers, *BBF* is a voyeuristic, edgy and enjoyable romp into the heart of inner-city funk. **8/10.**

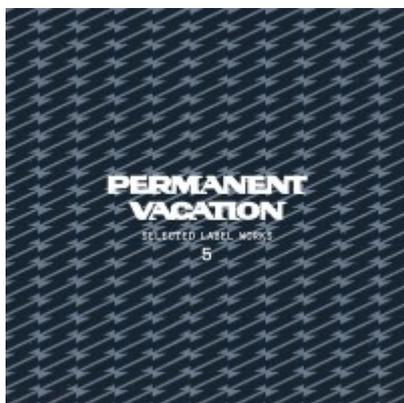


Los Angeles-based trio **Bleached** make scuzzy rock music which is catchy as hell and guaranteed to get hearts pounding and fists pumping. *Welcome The Worms* (named after a religious pamphlet the band discovered), their sophomore album is a guitar cranking, dirt riddled case in point. Yet, what makes the record stand out from the assorted brat pack of talented youths making unholy rackets is the musicianship on display. Pair this with a **Nirvana** like understanding of the power of a good chorus and what you have is a band so good they could change the world. The album opens with *Keep On Keepin' On* where fuzzy synths and percussive hand-claps rub shoulders with crunching guitars and impassioned vocals to

devastating effect. Yet the fun doesn't stop here, as *Trying To Lose Myself Again* is a masterpiece of moshpit nihilism, *Wednesday Night Melody* revels in a fantastic bass strut, while *Desolate Town* recalls the art-rock cool of vintage **Sonic Youth**. Just when you think it's safe to return to an indie club, **Bleached** are here to spit in your face with a punk rock sneer. **8/10**.



Tokyo Restricted Area, the debut album by Tokyo-based musician and composer **Yoshimi** is a gorgeously intense and evocative listen. Out now on *Dream Catalogue*, the press release claims the record is "About the city of Tokyo and the ghosts and ancient lore that exists between the cracks of the concrete metropolis". The album lives up to this promise and more. After the dramatic opener *Plated City*, which positively drips with images of deserted streets, strained faces and urban decay, the album successfully merges heavy electronics with hints of the past to create something both original and new. *Forbidden Place's* strange clanks and disorientating murmurs, *Refoulement's* deep booming bass and Asian strings, the spooky atmospherics of *We Need Ghost*, and the slo-mo throb of *I Had So Many Names* all stand out in a set which slowly, but surely sucks you right in. Creating a vividly realised aural world in which it is possible to lose yourself for days, *Tokyo Restricted Area* successfully exposes the alienation, the longing, the anonymity and the beauty which lie at the heart of the modern city. **8/10**.



Throughout a long and distinguished career Munich institution *Permanent Vacation* have put out some of the most memorable dance music known to man. Whether it be house, disco, techno, or some uncategorizable sound, every single *Permanent Vacation* release is more than worthy of your time. The fifth in their regular *Selected Label Works* series highlights many of the hits, should have been hits

and dance floor bombs they have brought us over the last two years. Over two crammed CDs, acts such as **Lake People, Locked Groove, Mano Le Tough, Lauer, North Lake, Tuff City Kids**, and more serve up a glorious cocktail of spine-tingling house. From the fantastically deep **Barnt** remix of *Pay The Rent* by **Alex Burkat** which opens disc one, to the gorgeously euphoric downtempo jam *Having A Coke With You* by **New Jackson** that closes disc two this is a compilation which is a must for any music fan. House music this good deserves to be heard! **9/10**.



Next up we have some bass heavy beat-scapes from the latest musical *Ninja Tune* prodigy, **Ash Koosha**, an Iranian-born, London-based producer whose music recalls the experimental head fuck created by the likes of **Run The Jewels, Aphex Twin** or **Amon Tobin**. Yet, this is more than pure pastiche, as there is a sense of both drama and groove within his music which makes it undeniably his own. His debut *Ninja Tune LP, I Aka I* is the perfect illustration of this! At times dense and tortured, others bitter-sweet and elegant, it takes the listener by the hand and leads them to the type of places your mother always warned you about. In an album which constantly shifts and changes highlights are aplenty. Yet, a special mention must be given to the rumbling bass pulse of *Ote*, the fractured hip hop of *In Line*, the dense electronica of *Biutiful* and the **Autechre**-style electronic intricacy of closer *Needs*. Imaginative, hyperactive and inspired, this will have even your grandma shaking her booty in no time. **8/10**.



Moderat, the collaboration of **Sascha Ring** of **Apparat** and **Gernot Bronsert & Sebastian Szary** of **Modeselektor** reach album number three with the emotionally wrought and functionally titled *III*. Their previous LP, *II*, saw the trio ditch the wonky techno of their debut for a more pop

focused sound, a trajectory they continue here to winning effect. After the **Radiohead**-style soul searching of opener *Eating Hooks*, the album finds its feet and confidently hit its stride. For instance, *Running* ups the pace slightly, utilizing an elastic sounding synth hook which contrasts nicely with vocalist **Sascha Ring's** desolate lyrics. *Finder* revels in ghostly samples and a kick-ass clanking rhythm, *Reminder's* lush bass wobble is genuinely sublime, while *The Fool* fuses techno, grime and dancehall to create a strange mongrel of a song. While it can be a little too polite and overwrought to reach the giddy heights of some of **Moderat's** previous output *III* is still a rich, downtempo affair which will ably appease hardcore fans, or anyone who has been feeling a bit down. **7/10**.



A special mention must also go to: *The Ridges* by **Diamondstein** - An achingly beautiful record of dark-infused cinematic soundscapes with just a hint of techno groove. Superb! **9/10**, *Kendo Dynamics* by **Pleasure Model** - Vintage electro, synth trickery, house grooves and more combine in a fab new LP from disco don **Antoni Maiovi**, **8/10**, *Distance, Further & Chorus* - **Flying Saucer Attack** - Welcome reissue of three classic albums from the celebrated British band, with the feedback drenched *Distance* being the pick for me, **7/10**, *Girl At The End Of The World* by **James** - The band my girlfriend once wrongly referred to as »The poor man's **U2**« make a storming return to form with an excellent new LP. Whether you were around in the 90s or not, this could well make your day, **8/10**, *Meanderlust* by **Randweg** - A strange, unclassifiable album of alien soundscapes, heroin funk and skewed jazz flourishes, **6/10**, *Particles & Waves* by **Arad** - **Lakker** member **Dara Smith** dons his **Arad** alias for a strange and sinister sounding album where tough, functional techno and experimental beatscapes collide, **6/10** and *III Part II* by **K-X-P** - Sounding as if **Can** never went away, **K-X-P's** wilful experimentation and dark, krautrock indebted grooves take great pleasure in messing with your head, **7/10**.



And let's not forget: *Reversed* by **Ocoeur** - Hauntingly melancholic and beautifully atmospheric, the fourth LP from French composer **Franck Zaragoza** is stunningly evocative, and will make the perfect soundtrack for gazing into your loved one's eyes, **9/10**, *Recent Arts* by **Tobias Freund & Valentina Berthelon** - An expansive and varied album of glacial ambiance which will find favour with fans of *Bine* or **FSOL**, **8/10**, *Decimus 7* by **Decimus** - Composed of two twenty minute plus tracks this is dense, trippy electronica for those who have adventure in their hearts, **7/10**, *Panorama Pacifico* by **Satin Jackets** - An album of vocal-heavy Balearica and sun-drenched house from the *Eskimo Recordings* mainstays, **6/10**, *Suara Music Presents Beauty Imperfection* by **V/A** - From the lush deep house of *Silent Violence* by **Kris Davis** to the choral techno thump of *Varpulis* by **Charlotte De Witte**, **Sacha Robotti's** *Suara* imprint's new comp is deliciously good, **7/10**, *Patch The Sky* by **Bob Mould** - The one time **Sugar** and **Husker Du** artist returns to the solo album format with twelve loud rock songs which won't change the world, but will be enjoyed by old fans, **5/10** and *Overflow Pool* by **Mogador** - Three long, lingering tracks of tranquil ambiance which sound perfect with your eyes closed and your mind open wide, **7/10**.

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