

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

With the dreaded *Record Store Day* just around the corner, I would suggest visiting your local vinyl emporium before it gets swamped by a terrifying mixture of **Rolling Stones** re-issues and *Discogs* abusing culture vultures. To help you on your way, this week I'll be reviewing some of the fantastic new albums which have been gleefully stimulating the pleasure receptors of my mind. We have swoon-inducing electronica from **Chris Carter** and **Steven Rutter**, the warm house tones of **Will Saul** and **Booka Shade**, the lush Balearica of **E Ruscha V**, and lots more. By **JOHN BITTLES**

So, before we are forced to endure an exclusive limited 7" from **Abba** (too late), we had best begin...

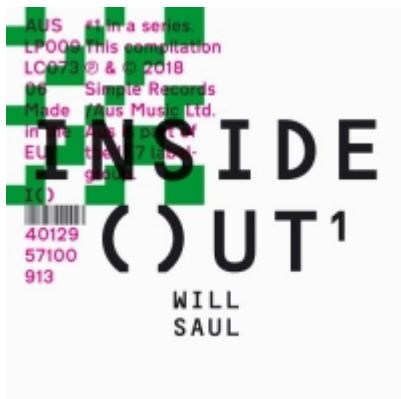


His first solo release in almost two decades, *Chris Carter's Chemistry Lessons Volume 1* finds the former **Throbbing Gristle** member in stunning form. Composed of 25 short electronic vignettes, most of which don't pass the three minute mark, the album is deeply engrossing from beginning to end. Recalling the best of 90s IDM one minute, the mutated techno of **Sandwell District** the next, *Chris Carter's Chemistry Lessons Volume One* is, quite simply, one of the best albums you will hear all year. For those quick off the mark, the coloured vinyl is a gorgeous piece of art, and contains four sides of lush, all enveloping electronica which excels at enriching the soul. Picks include the deep synth crunch and misfiring bleeps of *Blissters*, the melodic house flourish of *Tangerines*, the **Cocteau Twins** style eeriness of *Cernubicua*, *Modularity's* tough techno throb, and the spooky acid of *Ghosting*. Everything to be found here is excellent though, making the purchase of *Chris Carter's Chemistry Lessons Volume 1* a must for anyone with eager ears and an open mind. **10/10**.



The band **B12** are considered legends within techno circles, their *Electro Soma* and *Time Tourist* albums, which both came out on *Warp* in the early/mid 90s, are still rightly regarded as

masterpieces of the genre. Last year founding member **Steven Rutter** took a step back from the **B12** project to bring out the excellent *From Me To You* EP. This month he follows this with the beautifully deep *BrainFog* LP. Resembling a lost IDM classic, the record blurs downtempo acid, languid rhythms and melodic flourishes on an album which should be considered as essential as air. *Sleep Gives Freedom* opens proceedings with a dense, foggy atmosphere, daring the listener to step further into this uncanny world. Next, *Statuesque* utilizes toughened beats and a killer melody on a track which positively begs to be stuck on repeat. Further in, the classic techno sounds of *Degenerator* recall classic **Derrick May**, *First Degree Anguish* is an emotionally charged piece of rich ambiance, *Infinity Engine* is a perfect slice of machine soul, and the slow bass squelch of *Takedown* is so good it is impossible to listen to without it raising a smile. Electro nerds and sonic explorers take note! **9/10**.



This April also finds *Aus Music* head **Will Saul** kicking off his label's new *Inside Out* compilation series with a stellar mix of techno and house. Full of new and exclusive tracks from artists such as **Lone**, **Komon**, **Appleblim**, and **Move D**, the album moves from downtempo grooves to upfront bangers with ease. Merging the best of ambiance, bass music, house, techno, acid and more, this impeccably mixed album is a genuine delight. Genres and BPMs blur into one glorious whole, with the steely dub pulse of *Mission* by **Komon**, sitting easily next to **Sei A' s** deep bass throbber *Via*, and the mid-paced rave of *Gleeko Drive* by the impeccable **Move D**. Other picks include **Tee Mango's** faultless disco cut-up *Too Future*, the New York style swing of *Need You* by **Marquis Hawkes**, and the emotive melodies and subtle trance riffs of **Nathan Micay's** *Vor Showers*. While the vinyl version features nine of the album's tracks unmixed, the real joy of *Inside Out* is in allowing **Will Saul** to take you on a 75 minute journey into the very heart of electronic groove. **8.5/10**.

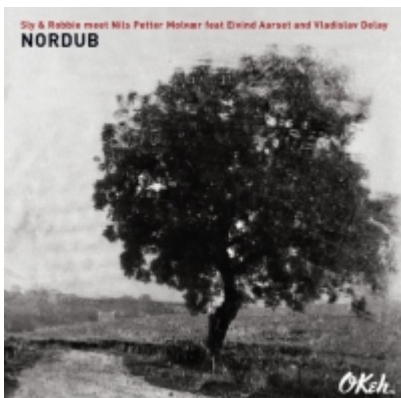


Next up we have the eclectic Balearica of *Who Are You* by **E Ruscha V**. Out now on the always excellent *Beats In Space* label, the record is the aural equivalent of sipping Mojitos in the

sun. Best known for his work as **Secret Circuit**, *Who Are You* sees **Eddie Ruscha** donning his given name for a record full of warmth and soul. *The Hostess* kicks things off with twinkling melodies and lightly plucked guitar to create a track which washes over the listener like a long, hot bath. Further in, *Gravity Waves* is gorgeously trippy, *Carried Away* could even make an enraged gerbil find its sense of inner calm, *Endless Sunday* merges 70s electronics with a sunny disposition, while *All Of A Sudden* is nothing short of a heart-stirring masterpiece. In the press notes **Ruscha** himself describes the music on *Who Are You* as spanning “from calm to ecstatic but mostly in-between these”. An apt description of a record which is tranquil, melodic, and pretty close to divine. **8.5/10**.

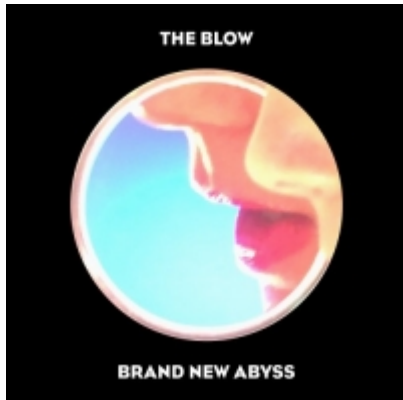


While last year's *Galvany Street* saw German house duo **Booka Shade** largely eschew the huge emotional riffs and trance touches with which they made their name, new LP *Cut The Strings* finds them rediscovering their previous form. *Cut The Strings* is out now on the band's own *Blaufield* imprint, and contains eleven mostly instrumental songs full of nuance, depth and main room appeal. The opening trio of *Easy Drifter*, *Night Surfing* and *EMS Love* is about as good as it gets; emotional crescendos, impeccable production and a warm, welcoming air makes for a great introduction to the **Booka Shade** sound. From here, the title track features soft synth tones and the vocal talents of **Troels Abrahamsen** to form a deep piece of dance floor joy, *Kolibri* is a short, but sweet piece of bubblegum electro, while *Black Crystal* contains a bassline to die for. While *Cut The Strings* is unlikely to appeal to techno purists, it contains more than enough goodies to please any dance music fan. **8/10**.



This week we'll finish with what is perhaps one of the strangest yet most mesmerising records to see the light of day so far in 2018. *Nordub* by **Sly & Robbie Meet Nils Petter Molvaer Feat. Eivind Aarset and Vladislav Delay** (whew) is a strange, yet rewarding merging of Jamaican rhythms with Nordic jazz and more. Reggae legends **Sly & Robbie** have been touring with trumpeter **Molvaer** for a while now. For the album they have also added guitars from **Aarset** and percussion and electronics by

Vladislav Delay. The result of this unusual melting pot is a meeting of minds which not even Mystic Meg could have foreseen. After the dub, jazz fusion of *If I Gave You My Love*, things really get going with the fabulously stoned fug of *How Long*. Also worth checking are the nostalgia filled melancholy of *White Scarf In The Mist*, the deep dub groove of *European Express*, and the soft bass strut and playful trumpets of *Politically KKKorrekkkttt*. While not everything works, there are still enough gems to reward repeated plays. **7.5/10.**



A special mention must also go to: *Brand New Abyss* by **The Blow** - Sounding like nothing else around, the new record by **Melissa Dyne** and **Khaela Maricich** merges post-punk attitude with spacious sound design and an invigorating dollop of bass, **9/10**, *Always Yours* by **Chevel** - A collection of next level techno and bass drenched ambiance which help make the debut LP for **Mumdance** and **Logo's Different Circles** imprint a mighty fine thing, **8/10**, *Earth Loop* by **Moon Gangs** - **BEAK** keyboard player **William Young** takes a break from the day job with an album of retro sounding synth workouts, **8/10**, *Once Upon A Time In Napoli* by **Daive Squillace** - *Crosstown Rebels* keep it funky with this collection of ten groove heavy tracks by Italian DJ/Producer **Daive Squillace**, **7/10**, *Where's The Magic* by **Band Of Gold** - The Norwegians inject an air of youthful yearning to their winning brand of eighties indebted indie pop, **7/10**, *Waves* by **Pale Grey** - Sounding like a more electronic **Elbow**, **Pale Grey's** new LP is full of emotional crescendos and a bittersweet air, **7/10**, and *20 Jahre SOS - Jubiläums Compilation* by **V/A** - Celebrating 20 years of the *Save Our Souls* party, artists such as **Acid Paul**, **The Glitz**, **The Micronaut** and more supply top quality tunes for both hearts and feet, **8.5/10.**



And let's not forget: *The Sound Path* by **Aera** - German label *Permanent Vacation* come up trumps yet again with Berlin resident **Ralf Schmidt's** fab new LP. Full of gentle house rhythms, soft-focus beats, and lush melodies, *The Sound Path* is a truly wondrous thing, **9/10**, *Beautiful Thing* by **Alexis Taylor** - The **Hot Chip** front man goes it alone for a solo album of soft house pulses, downbeat excursions, disco flourishes and melancholy vocals, **8/10**, *Abandon In Place* by **Umwelt** - *New Flesh Records'*

20th release finds label head **Umwelt** reducing the pace somewhat with a dystopian inspired record full of atmosphere and tension, **8/10**, *Freedom* by **Amen Dunes** - New York artist **Damon McMahon** returns to the *Sacred Bones* label with an album of widescreen indie soul, **8/10**, *No.4* by **Christina Vantzou** - Atmospheric soundscapes and rich orchestration make the new LP from Belgium based composer **Christina Vantzou** something you'll gladly lose yourself in for days, **7.5/10**, *Nihx* by **Groeni** - Hints of **Radiohead** abound in an emotionally rich and musically diverse collection of downbeat gems from the always reliable *Project Mooncircle* stable, **7.5/10**, *Fine But Dying* by **Liza Anne** - Head straight for the heartfelt acoustic strum of *Control*, a song you'll find yourself playing again and again, **7/10** and *Soulquencies* by **Aquarius** - Melody rich dubstep and ambiance combine on an record which sounds so Now it might already be passé, **7.5/10**

| [JOHN BITTLES](#)