

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

Now that we have moved to a monthly format I have had lots of time on my hands. Rather than trying to listen to numerous albums a day I have been able to take my time and get to know the nuances of some hand-picked gems. This month I will be dissecting some of the the best LPs to hit the shops so far this year. We have the haunted electronica of **Pye Corner Audio**, the emotion rich indie rock of **Twilight Sad**, the fuzz-filled psychedelica of **Toy**, **Deerhunter's** immaculate return, and lots more. By **JOHN BITTLES**

**So, make sure you are emotionally and psychologically prepared, and let us begin...**

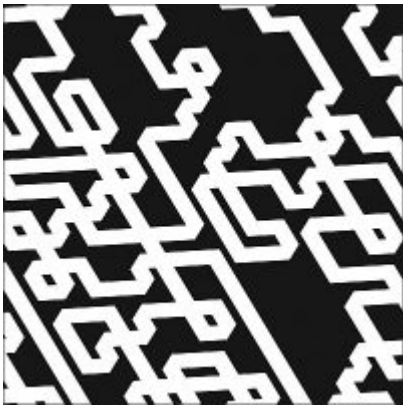


Fans of timeless sounding electronica are in for a treat this month with the eagerly anticipated return of **Pye Corner Audio**. *Hollow Earth* is out now on UK label *Ghost Box* and finds **Martin Jenkins** conjuring fifteen deep electronic masterpieces where traces of house, techno, dub and ambient merge. Conceived as a sequel of sorts to the spectral pulse of *Stasis*, *Hollow Earth*, according to the press notes “takes subterranean exploration and submerged psychologies as its theme”. The title track gets things off to a divine start, mournful synths merging with spacious atmospherics and evocative melodies to create a song which should be soundtracking a moment of wonder too beautiful to put into words. Next, *Descent* adds a slightly ominous air to proceedings, its tension offset by a gentle melody line. Other highlights include the spine-tingling Italo house groove of *Mindshaft*, the hauntingly beautiful ambience of *Imprisoned Splendour*, the slow-paced squelch of *The Seventh Labyrinth*, and the elastic synth pulse of *Buried Memories*. Spellbinding from beginning to end, *Hollow Earth* is nothing short of sublime. **10/10**.



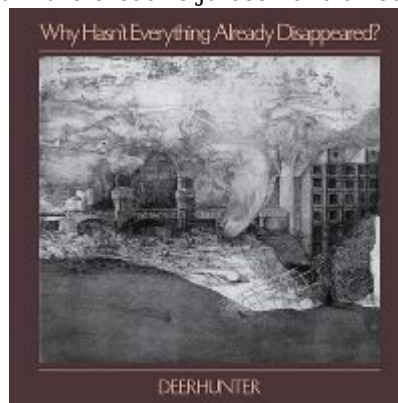
Scottish rockers **The Twilight Sad** step back into the limelight this month with *It Won't Be Like this All The Time*. With **James Graham's** evocative vocals thrust to the fore, the album is a glorious cocktail of melancholy post-punk anthems which contain enough emotional force to have you crying

into your pint one minute, howling at the moon the next. The fabulous (*10 Good Reasons For Modern Drugs*) opens the album in stunning style, huge synths, a killer bass groove and passionate vocals combining to create a track which hits you like a punch to the gut. The **Sonic Youth** style *Shooting Dennis Hooper Shooting* follows, its quiet-loud dynamic impressive to behold. In an album full of highlights make sure to check the lullaby-like poppiness of *The Arbor*, the driving krautrock groove of *I/m Not Here (Missing Face)*, the stadium sized *Auge/Maschine*, and *Girl Chewing Gum's* breathless build up of passion and noise. Warning, **The Twilight Sad** are for life, not just for Christmas. **9/10**.



*Echospace* regular and dub techno legend **CV313** returned to the album format in January with the spacious soundscapes of *Glass City Sessions*. Formed of five long tracks this is the type of music made for listening to with your mind open and your eyes closed. Based on live recordings created in “an old dingy warehouse about 10 miles out of downtown Detroit”, the album finds **Stephen Hitchell** merging beats, atmospherics and bass to fashion a record which sounds as timeless as the sea. Opener *Belle Isle Symphonics* is a fathoms deep groover. Whether heard as part of a warm up set in *Berghain* or on headphones on the way home from the club it is all but guaranteed to send shivers creeping up the spine. Next, *Masonic Mystic* is even deeper, creating an unsettling yet mesmeric atmosphere over its fourteen minute running time. On the second disc, *Stars Above Elmwood* is the album’s highlight, a dub techno masterclass of low end bass and melancholic chords. Of the other tracks, *Two Way Inn* is a heady slice of ambiance, while *Eloise’s Theme* ends things on a spectacular high. Available only on vinyl, make it your mission to track this down. **9/10**.

Usually by the time bands get to their eight album the creative juices have dried up and the struggle to remain



relevant in an uncaring world has taken its toll.

Not so indie rockers **Deerhunter** whose new LP *Why Hasn't Everything Already Disappeared?* is dynamic and assured. With vocalist **Bradford Cox** in fine voice throughout, the album merges wide-eyed romanticism, heavy hearted

nostalgia and science fiction lullabies with aplomb. *Death In Midsummer* opens the album with some **Bob Dylan** style strumming and a soft wistful air. The song's crisp, clean sound means it is as close to pop as the band have ever come. Next, *No One's Sleeping* utilizes electronic atmospheric and some retro guitar to craft a tune which eagerly tugs at the soul. Further in, the synth-pop strut of *Greenpoint Gothic*, the bitter-sweet oddness of *What Happens To People?*, the **Grouper** style loveliness of *Tarnung* and the deranged majesty of *Nocturne* all stand out. For those who say that indie music is devoid of ideas *Why Hasn't Everything Already Disappeared?* is a much needed slap in the face. **8.5/10**.



Brighton based band **Toy** have been creating a buzz for a few years now. Their self-titled debut from 2012 is still a firm favourite of mine, while their live sets are a furious build up of groove and noise. Early 2019 finds the group delivering what may well be their best album in years. *Happy In The Hollow* is out now via *Tough Love Records* and is full of blurry psychedelic jams. Reminiscent of **Psychic Ills**, **Spacemen 3**, or a stoned **Brian Jonestown Massacre**, **Toy** can be fierce and heavy one minute, spacey and tranquil the next. The album opens with the twin assault of *Sequence One* and *Mistake A Stranger*, where hazy keyboards and restrained guitars accompany **Tom Dougall's** vocals to create a mesmerising musical stew. From here, *Energy* brims with rock n' roll swagger, *Last Warmth Of The Day* is so laid-back it almost sounds like it needs a nice lie down, *The Willo* is seven plus minutes of rich psychedelica, while *You'd Make Me Forget Myself* sounds like a lost shoegaze anthem. An album that sucks you in over repeated plays, *Happy In The Hollow* is all the better for sounding like a record lost in time. **8/10**.



A special mention must also go to: *Twenty Five* by **Dole & Kom** - After twenty five years in the game, German duo **Dole & Kom** present their debut LP. Lush and melodic, it is an album you will find yourself returning to again and again, **9/10**, *Hypnagogia* by **BNJMN** - An album of lush ambiance and beguiling techno from **Ben Thomas**, which is hypnotic and deep, **8.5/10**, *Back To Mine* by **Nightmares On Wax** - *Warp* stalwart **George Evelyn** presents a selection of funk, soul, house and hip hop which will lift the

spirit of even the most jaded of souls, **8/10**, *Sasami* by **Sasami** - Out early March on *Domino*, the **Cherry Glazerr** synth player's debut solo album is a bewitching mix of heartfelt confessional and slacker rock cool, **8/10**, *A Different Forest* by **Hauschka - Volker Bertelmann** arrives on *Sony Classical* with an album of mournful piano pieces. Beautifully evocative, this is the the perfect soundtrack to watching the rain fall from the sky, **8/10**, *Who Else* by **Modeselektor** - Back with their first album since 2011, the duo merge electronica, techno, grime and more on a fresh, invigorating record which refuses to sit still, **7.5/10**, *Encores 2* by **Nils Frahm** - At times overwhelmingly beautiful, the second volume of Nils' *Encores* series could make your heart sing, **8.5/10** and *Being Water* by **Lali Puna** - Out early March on the always wonderful *Morr Music* imprint, this dreamy five track EP is all but guaranteed to put a smile on your face. Also, be sure to check **Dave DK's** epic remix of *Wear My Heart* which closes the record in stunning style, **8/10**.

| [JOHN BITTLES](#)