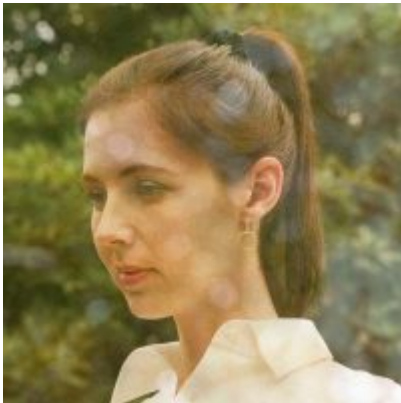


## Music | Bittles' Magazine: The music column from the end of the world

With the autumn season firmly upon us most of us want nothing more than to lock our doors and peacefully hibernate for a month or two. What we need now are records made for listening to in the cosiness of your own home (or at least a club with a decent heating system). This week I will be raving about some new releases which make the perfect soundtrack for escaping the perils of the outside world. By **JOHN BITTLES**

We have the leftfield pop of **Carla Dal Forno** and **Bat For Lashes**, the hypnotic urgings of **DIIV**, **Octo Octa's** euphoric rave rush, **Insta:mental's** deconstructed drum 'n' bass and lots more.

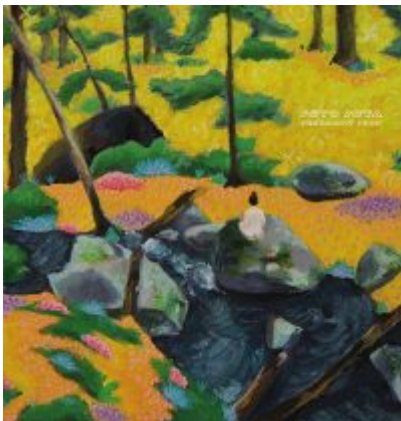
So, close the windows, tug the duvet tight, and let us begin...



**Carla Dal Forno's** *You Know What It's Like* was one of 2016's best LPs. Merging pop melodies with post-punk rhythms, fractured electronics and just a tinge of dub, it sounded like nothing else around. This month she returns to the album format with the dreamy DIY aesthetic of *Look Up Sharp*. Clearer and punchier than its predecessor, the album is, quite simply, an unmitigated success. *No Trace* gets things off to a great start, wistful vocals combining with a fabulously loose bassline to create a song which instantly sets up home in your head. Recalling the spectral ambiance of the **Cocteau Twins**, or a more sedate **Grimes**, *No Trace* is bordering on the sublime. Next up, *Hype Sleep* is deliciously dreamy, guitars merging with spatial ambiance and the mere hint of a beat to craft a song which would sit perfectly in a **Jim Jarmusch** score. Other picks include the gorgeously woozy *So Much Better*, the dirge-like groove of *I'm Conscious, Took A Long Time's* **New Order** style bass and the glitchy electronica of closer *Push On*. Everything on here is spectacular though, making *Look Up Sharp* an album I will be playing for many months to come. **9/10**.



American indie dreamers **DIIV** follow up their excellent *Is The Is Are* this October with third album *Deceiver*. Out now on *Captured Tracks* the album sounds like **Jesus And Mary Chain** jamming with **Mazzy Star** and finds the band creating an ear-tingling racket. If you like your music edgy, guitar driven and wistful then you are in for a treat. With **Zachary Colin Caulfield's** vocals recorded low-down in the mix, *Deceiver* sounds like a lost shoegaze classic recorded in 1986 (in a good way of course). The aptly named *Horsehead* opens proceedings with panache, **Slowdive**-style bittersweet vocals sitting within dirt-encrusted guitar riffs and wonderful melodic highs. Further in, we have the exquisitely pensive *Like Before You Were Born*, the laidback grunge of *Taker*, and the quiet/loud explosion of closer *Acheron*. An album to accompany the lost and the lonely on grey, rainy days where no one else seems to care, *Deceiver* is a record to love, cherish and hold. **9/10**.



**Octo Octa's** third album is chock full of bouncy breakbeats, old school house jams and huge rave riffs and finds the Brooklyn producer sounding happier and freer than ever before. *Resonant Body* is out now on *T4T LUV NRG*, a label Maya runs together with partner **Eris Drew**. It forgoes the ambient interludes, (although *My Body Is Powerful* is both beatless and fab) and pretentious displays of maturity to concentrate on giving us a collection of banging house tunes. Uplifting and full of unrestrained joy, each track hits the body like a glorious rush of E. *Imminent Spirit Arrival* begins with a deep technoid groove before the spirit of early 90s raves kicks in. The result is six minutes of aural delight. Next, *Move Your Body* comes on like a lost New York house jam from back in the day, its rallying call all but impossible to ignore. Further nuggets can be found in the form of the primal rush of *Deep Connections*, the deep trance jam *Can You See Me?*, and the slow build elation of *Power To The People*. While not one for the chin-strokers, *Resonant Body* is an exuberant musical excursion sure to bring a smile to anybody's face. **8.5/10**.



Early September found **Natasha Khan** returning to her **Bat For Lashes** alias with *Lost Girl*, a sleek sounding synth-pop record full of warmth and romance. A concept album of sorts, the LP imagines a parallel universe where female biker gangs roam menacing, mist-filled streets. The result is an imaginative, bewitching set of songs which seduce from the off. *Kids In The Dark* opens proceedings with some **Johnny Jewel**-style synthscapes and a vocal full of quiet longing. Merging the nostalgic beauty of **Chromatics** with the open-hearted romanticism of 80s acts such as **Berlin** the song gently swells over its three and half minute running time, slowly but surely working its way into our hearts. From here, *The Hunger* combines chugging beats, soft church organs and Natasha's rich vocals to stunning effect, *Desert Man* could melt the heart of anyone, *Vampires* sounds like **The Cure** gone instrumental, while *Safe Tonight* is one of the most striking love songs you will ever hear. Evocative and mesmeric, *Lost Girl* may just be **Bat For Lashes'** best album yet. **8.5/10**.



A full eight years since the impressive *Resolution 653* **Instra:mental** forage once again into the album format this month with the widescreen drum 'n' bass soundscapes of *Timelines*. Formed of eleven immaculately produced tracks, which for the most part sound beautifully deep and dreamy, the record is best listened to alone with the lights off. Picks include the tense atmospherics of opener *Sakura*, the soulful ambience of *Deep Night* and the sedate synths and beats that make up *End Credits*. Star of the show though is the ghostly refrain and sci-fi dystopia of *Auto Love*, a track so good I immediately listened to it five times in a row. It's not all lush ambience though as elsewhere the beats and breaks come more to the fore. *Watching You's* fractured garage will work wonders in any club, *Shine* could be the high point of an **LTJ Bukem** set, while *Pacific Heights* is the classic sound of jungle done to complete perfection. A highly personal sounding piece, *Timelines* is a dance album made to be listened to as a whole and sounds all the better for it. **8/10**.



A special mention must also go to: *Commissions 1977-2000* by **Inoyama Land** - An album of beautifully realised ambient which quickly moves beyond the realm of background music to tug on your soul, **9.5/10**, *Volume Massimo* by **Alessandro Cortini** - Out now on UK imprint *Mute*, this collection of deep, atmospheric electronica is pretty damn divine, **9/10**, *Remixes EP* by **Babe Roots** - Deep spacious dub techno with **DB1's Basic Channel**-style version of *Work Hard* and **Forest Drive West's** technoid refit of *Jah Nuh Dead* the pick of the bunch, **9/10**, *Bucket Of Eggs* by **Lerosa** - *Acid Test* come up trumps yet again with the heady 303 laced downbeat excursions which make up **Leopoldo Rosa's** first LP in eight years, **8.5/10**, *Nothing Makes Me Feel (Good Anymore)* by **Black Light Smoke** - Six tracks of dusty, raw, sample-heavy house music make up this stellar EP, **8.5/10**, *Palais* by **Kris Baha** - Vintage electro and cyberpunk combine on a record full of body-popping grooves, **8/10**, *We Have An Impact (Even Hippies Do)* by **Boreal Massif - Pessimist** teams up with **Loop Faction** for an album of deep bass excursions, **8/10**, *Close It Quietly* by **Frankie Cosmos - Greta Kline** and gang's fourth LP is a bittersweet blast of joy, **8/10**, *If I Think Of Love* by **Hochzeitskapelle** - Sounding like it should be sound-tracking an old black and white movie where the hero is on an epic quest to find love, listening to this album of muted jazz exercises is like opening yourself up for a hug, **8/10**, *Wallop* by **!!!** - The New York dance-punkers sound re-energised with a collection of party starting jams sure to rock any indie disco, **7.5/10** and *Cocoon Compilation S* by **V/A** - German imprint *Cocoon's* long-running compilation series reaches the letter S with twelve tracks of club-based goodness, **8/10**.

| [JOHN BITTLES](#)