

WE GIVE THE LATEST RELEASES A SPIN

Album of the Fortnight

Dustin O'Halloran – *Lumiere* (130701)

★★★★★



Lumiere is Dustin O'Halloran's debut release on the FatCat label's 130701 imprint. Moving

away from his previous two solo piano records, Dustin invites string players from New York's acclaimed ACME ensemble to bring new texture and colour to his compositions.

It's difficult to describe this album without gushing. Dustin's piano playing is serene, soft, intricate and so captivating it would prompt even the loudest of mouths to pause for thought. This collection of 'miniature symphonies' ebbs and flows liberally, using a wealth of dynamics, texture and range.

As a seasoned film composer,

producing works for films such as *Marie Antoinette* (2006) and *An American Affair* (2010), *Lumiere* duly tugs at heartstrings, as it becomes the soundtrack to a film you find in your mind while listening.

Self-produced by Dustin over three years, subtle electronic sounds appear in the most appropriate places. Far from feeling forced into the mix, they blend beautifully with the acoustic instruments, reinforcing the film score emotion.

This is an album you will listen to for a long time yet.

JM

Six Organs of Admittance – *Asleep on the Flood Plain* (Drag City)

★★★★★



Asleep on the Flood Plain is a strange record, it's one that can almost pass you by, drifting softly, gently and slowly from the stereo, never showing off or shouting for your attention, just gradually, almost accidentally drawing you in with the meandering ebb and flow of Ben Chasny's acoustic guitar.

Recorded largely at home in an unrushed environment, this is a jam-based album which revels in the sound of the plucked guitar strings and all the natural nuances of the instrument. It's almost completely unpolished, but despite the simplicity of the record, it never sounds rough or raw.

It's an album from which it's hard to draw highlights or key tracks, with all 10 working together, the pleasant folksy melodies of one leading into the psychedelic twinkling droning of the next.

In that way it drags the listener in, the oft-repeated melodies getting lodged in your mind, the gentle wave-like rhythms lulling you and suddenly 45 minutes have passed, you've kind of not noticed you were listening, but can't help but need to listen again.

TG

Mazes – *A Thousand Heys* (FatCat)

★★★★★



Records can arrive at good times and they can arrive at bad times.

I remember becoming utterly addicted to a Dressy Bessy album because its release coincided with a May heatwave. Not to do down Dressy Bessy: it was a good album – just not that good.

I feel a little like that with this record from the frenetic and unashamedly retro Mazes. Perhaps the infectious energy and delightfully rough around the edges production fit with the slightly misplaced optimism I always feel around this time of year as the weather improves – a bit. Or maybe it's just a genuinely good record.

Recorded on an old lightship on the Thames but sounding about as British as apple pie and immaculate teeth, waves of surfy, drive-in movie, Fonzie and Happy Days riffing crash against jagged chords and foamy production.

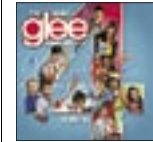
Lovable melodies, charmingly nostalgic lyrics and chirpy musicianship offset the total absence of musical originality.

This record arrived at a good time and this record is a good time.

Danny Owen

The Cast of Glee – *Glee: The Music, Volume 4* (Epic)

★★★★★



If you're not a self-proclaimed 'Glee' you either haven't seen it or you're in denial. The US musical phenomenon is in its second series and the very clever marketers at 'Glee' towers are on their fourth album release since the programme first aired last year.

'Proper' music fans will tell you it's rubbish, but between you and us, it's *amazing*. Listening to commercial radio sometimes makes you feel like you want to drown things as they play their five-strong A-list on repeat for weeks on end. These songs that normally make us zone out are transformed by the Glee treatment to great effect.

Songs like 'Billionaire' and 'Me Against The Music' passed us by during their original release because we were far too 'cool' to realise what made a great pop song.

Opening track 'Empire State of Mind' is probably the coolest track covered, and almost *deep breath* sounds better than the original.

Swallow your pride and join the bandwagon. And lose your voice singing along to 'River Deep, Mountain High'. Probably.

Annie Moss

Lanu – *Her 12 Faces* (Tru Thought)

★★★★★



Lance Ferguson moves away from his funk roots on this latest release. Megan Washington adds vocals to Ferguson's lush production and between them they create gorgeous beat-driven folksy pop. Jon Horner

Yuck – *Yuck* (Fat Possum)

★★★★★



Yuck make an onomatopoeic buzz that's more boom than bust, slightly cantankerous round the gills, and rounded off with an accomplished fuzz, the sizzle of expectation and an all-encompassing inertia. Sterling stuff. Ewan Jamieson

The Shoes – *The Shoes* (Southern Fried)

★★★★★



The first uber-cool album from Parisian duo Guillaume and Benjamin, *The Shoes* takes inspiration from Hot Chip, LCD Soundsystem and The Cure, with a welcome dollop of feel-good electro pop. AS

Preview

British Wildlife Festival

A look ahead to the festival of indie, noise and oddness in March

Adam Nodwell first decided to organise the British Wildlife Festival five years ago.

During the five years of the festival's existence, Adam is keenly aware that the Leeds music scene has undergone a wholesale transformation. "There was no Nation of Shopkeepers back then, and the Brudenell Social Club was just a downtrodden beatnik poetry-hole," he says. "I have seen larger crowds at some gigs where others have dwindled. It's definitely much harder to put on an unknown band nowadays unless there's a real local crowd puller."

Fortunately there is no shortage of crowd pullers at British Wildlife 2011. But Adam is keen to point out some of the more leftfield acts: "I would personally recommend Three Trapped Tigers, That Fucking Tank and Blacklisters, as well as some of the lesser-known travelling bands on the line-up. For instance there are Bad Guys, Gum Takes Tooth, Hired Muscle and Ultimate Thrush, if only because I would love to see other people's eyes light up as much as mine did when I first witnessed their awesome power."

A new feature of this year's festival is Sunday's 'The People vs British Wildlife' at The George pub. "I took submissions from bands and I put them up for a public vote with the fans getting to pick their top eight," Adam says. "The result was a pretty eclectic mix of new and old which should result in a great day."

Now running from Thursday through to Sunday, all-access tickets for British Wildlife cost a paltry £12.

3-6 March, Brudenell Social Club, The George, Nation of Shopkeepers, Royal Park Cellars, £12, see www.britishwildlifefestival.blogspot.com for stage times

NR

D.R.U.G.S. – *Destroy Rebuild Until God Shows* (Sire)

★★★★★



D.R.U.G.S. flawlessly recreate nu-metal, as if someone actually excavated a tape spool from 2001. Most people can remember that far back, and hence know why it was buried in the first place. NR