

piano laden with ghost chains of echoes and dank cyberpunk smog. "The Stand" could be the second Stephen King epic referenced in today's column. It's a heavy, suffocating space dirge, expanding like clouds of a noxious gas rolling tendrils to fill a room. The first track on *Ultimatum* sees Arora in a gentler mode, with its looping, Laraaji-like melody; the second is an increasingly claustrophobic scorch of white noise and bitrate burn.

Plaid

Polymer

Warp CD/DL/2xLP

Maybe there's something in the water, or maybe that's just the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. Plaid's tenth album is a tribute to slippery synthetics and their environmental implications. Unlike Matmos's *Plastic Anniversary*, they don't use polymers as direct sound sources. Instead, the minimal tracks here stretch (and sometimes tangle) like long chains of extruded material, pulsing along into the future. "Meds Fade" rustles with what sounds like sheets of laminate whipped through the air like glowsticks in military formation; "Ops" is sighs rebounding from intricate webs of industrial spider silk. Fingerpicked strings and squatty winds lead the melancholy "The Pale Moth" into a twisty, squelchy churn: a rare nod to decay. Standout "Dancers" is minor key mourning as ice sculpture perfection.

Sisilisko

HoxA-5: In Turiya

Amniote Editions DL/USB

Following *Serpent Power* – the most recent release under the Celestial Trax moniker – Finnish producer Joni Judén returns with another alter ego. Judén's efforts here are somewhere between a half-asleep Cameron Stallones contemplating infinite sand dunes, and Robert Fripp and Brian Eno's (*No Pussyfooting*) tape loops spun through the rich lather of a gong bath car wash. Lots of echoes and murmurs tantalisé just out of range; piano lines radiate like patches of sun; drones sweep and drift, calming and becalmed.

Tiger Village

Modern Drummer

Hausu Mountain DL/MC

More Midwestern mindfuckery from Hausu Mountain. The title track of Tim Thornton's latest outing as Tiger Village sounds like drum machine demo patches sped up beyond the limits of playability then nuked in a microwave like popcorn. Meanwhile a serene 8-bit melody prances along. Think of hacked videogame cartridges and space age, interdimensional warp-speed slapstick, then play this tape on headphones so it can rattle every edge of your cranium. Everything fizzles, pings, slurps and squelches like molten silly putty. Supremely tactile and odd; mastering by labelmate Angel 'Fire-Toolz' Marcloid undoubtedly helps. □

Global by Francis Gooding

Altın Gün

Gece

Glitterbeat CD/DL/LP

Altın Gün's take on the Anadolu psych sound is nothing if not attentive to detail. The Amsterdam based outfit have instrumentation, arrangement and production all finely honed to pay homage to the Turkish rock and pop sound of the 1970s and 80s; vocalists Erdiñ Ecevit and Merve Daşdemir add immaculately studied vocals. As with most bands who carefully revive a past sound, elements of the earlier music that don't jive so well with contemporary ears are judiciously omitted. No bad thing really, and it means that *Gece* is tailor-made for a modern audience, dutifully replicating the funk, psych and breakbeat features that have brought classic Anadolu rock its recent wide acclaim. Faithful to its model it may be, but merely copyist it is not – the freshness and commitment of tracks like fuzzy opener "Yolcu" makes *Gece* a new iteration of the style rather than pastiche.

Ifriqiyya Electrique

Laylet El Booree

Glitterbeat CD/DL/LP

Ifriqiyya Electrique are comprised of Tunisian Banga musicians Tarek Sultan, Yahia Chouchen and Fatma Chebbi (replacing Youssef Ghazala) who have joined with veteran European punk rockers Gianna Greco and François Cambuzat. The band fuse the trance-inducing sacred music of the Banga with what their rock collaborators style "post-industrial ceremony" music, which in practical terms means growling guitars and some muddy electronics. With Banga tchekchekas and chants overlaid by gravelly post-punk riffage and pummelling drums, it's certainly noisy and uncompromising, though it tends to sound less like fusion and more like two different things playing at once, very loudly, both slightly out of focus.

Jardin

Maqui De Hierro

Buh DL/CD/LP

Sometimes it's hard to credit just how incredibly hardcore the Peruvian underground is and was. Rough, raw and dubwise, *Maqui De Hierro* is another bewilderingly heavy missive from the recent past of Lima's underground scene, dug up by the ever consistent Buh label. Jardin, a duo of Orlando Ramirez and Raúl Gómez, emerged on the electronic, experimental

and art scene in Lima at the end of the 1990s, combining indigenous Amazonian trance rhythms with harsh industrial noise. First released on cassette in 2005, *Maqui De Hierro* collects tunes produced in the first years after the turn of the century. Combining abrasive white noise, analogue squeals and glitch spasms with slow and low 808 kick patterns, "Lulu" and "Perfume De Ceniza" are brain-frying music for off-world trap houses; elsewhere, things get really hectic, with the 15 minute "Serpientes De Humo" ("Smoke Snakes") steadily building toward brutal, psychically invasive neo-ritualism.

Kolida Babo

Kolida Babo

MIC CD/DL/LP

I wonder if Greek duo Kolida Babo have been listening to Shabaka Hutchings? Parts of this self-titled debut sound uncannily like miniaturised, quietened versions of both Sons Of Kemet's motif-based stomp ("Kolida Babo") and the synthesizer prog-jazz of The Comet Is Coming ("Join The Moog"). Not that they're biting – it's more that those bands offer models for the recasting of tradition. And the central tradition that Kolida Babo have set to work on is the music of Epirus, though they reach toward the wider Balkans too. Rewiring the whirling sound of skaros and the keening, melancholy laments known as mirologi, the duo assemble a pulsing Epirotic jazz, fringed with electronics, flickering with phasing analogue shadows out of the deep past.

Wolf Müller meets The Nile Project

Wolf Müller Meets The Nile Project

Nouvelle Ambiance DL/12"

The Nile Project is a cultural organisation dedicated to increasing cooperation among people who live along the 6750 kilometre length of the Nile. It has communication through music at its heart. In 2016, German producer and Salon Des Amateurs resident Jan Schulte (working here under his alias Wolf Müller) was invited to Aswan in Egypt to take part in a Nile Project workshop with musicians from across the Nile Basin, and this four track EP was the result. Featuring vocalist Adel Mekha, prominent Kenyan percussionist Kasiva Mutua and nyatiti master Rapasa Nyatrapasa Otieno, *Wolf Müller Meets...* is a warm and house-y meeting of minds. Its stepping 14 minute centrepiece "Mabomba Dance" journeys resolutely towards dancefloor headwaters on currents of synths, Schulte's supple programming generously flecked with live percussion.

Praed

Doomsday Survival Kit

Akufone CD/DL/LP

Kicking off with a bouncing Islam Chipsey-like drum and keyboard motif, the long title track of Praed's *Doomsday Survival Kit* starts out at a fairly high level of intensity before it even gets going. Unlike Chipsey's EEK, keyboards

aren't the only instruments in play; Praed introduce clarinets and a variety of MIDI instruments, layering the track with increasingly frantic and siren-like synths before vocals enter the mix. It's crowded, urgent and suitably apocalyptic in tone. "El Khawaga" and "Embassy Of Embarrassment" are similar exercises in delirious maximalism; "The Spy Who Spoke Too Much" nods ironically to Bond theme aesthetics while dissolving in an ecstatic chaos of drums, keys and horns.

Ravana & Jumme Khan

Dubfounded

Amarrass DL/LP

Delhi based Amarrass Records seem to have suspended their essential *At Home* recordings of Indian folk masters in favour of tentative forays into more contemporary sound. *Dubfounded* finds them pairing Jumme Khan, a visionary and politically fiery folk poet from Alwar in Rajasthan, with Ravana, a Delhi based producer and DJ, for an album of what might be termed indo-dub poetry. While Khan chants and declaims, Ravana's production ranges from reverberant, tabla-laced digi roots to strobing dubstep.

Star Band De Dakar

Psicodelia Afro-Cubana De Senegal

Ostinato CD/DL/LP

Distinguished Afro-Latin from the great Star Band De Dakar. Calling this stuff psychedelia is pushing it a bit, but never mind: culled from the classic 1970s albums that band founder and club owner Ibrahim Kassé recorded live at his famous nightspot Le Miami, the music collected here is simply impeccable. Founded in 1960 to celebrate Senegalese independence, The Star Band variously included Dexter Johnson, Youssou N'Dour, Laba Sosseh and Mar Seck, among others; as the key architects of Afro-Cuban music in Senegal, they laid the groundwork for mbalax, and their splits and defections would spawn N'Dour's Etoile De Dakar, Orchestra Baobab, and others. The six tracks gathered here are an inch-perfect sampling of a magnificent band.

Michael Veal & Aqua Ife

Volume 2

No label CD/DL

Writer, academic and *Wire* contributor Michael Veal's *Fela: The Life And Times Of An African Musical Icon* (2000) remains perhaps the best book on its multifarious, innovative and militant subject. As a musician, Veal's musical homage to Fela through his Aqua Ife band is just as erudite and committed. He composes, leads and plays bass and percussion, and at times *Volume 2* seems an inch-perfect replication of the classic Afrobeat sound. But on a closer listen, Veal's outward adoption of Afrika 70-style rhythms and horn voicings is a vehicle for thoughtful, jazz-tinged compositions, which adopt the sound from a position of real understanding. □

**Hiphop & R&B by
Jeff Weiss**

Azjah

Princess Diaries

Empire DL

Despite its deep talent pool, Los Angeles has failed to produce a breakout national female rap star until now. Introducing Azjah, the Princess of Compton, who hails from a venerable lineage and blends rap and singing with an ease the city has rarely seen since the passing of Nate Dogg. Her more logical nodes of comparison are contemporary: Lil Durk, Dej Loaf and Compton legatee Roddy Ricch. Yet when you listen to a song like "Loved Ones" the singularity becomes obvious. "Pour Out A Little Liquor" style requiems are rarely this refulgent; her litany of the dead freezes your blood, reminding you that such hauntingly beautiful melodies rarely come without a price.

Fredo Bang

Big Ape

Bang Biz Ent DL

In September 2017, the Baton Rouge rapper Gee Money was murdered outside his studio, mere days before he was due to sign to a major but months after he'd already become the hottest unsigned rapper in Louisiana. At the time, his longtime collaborator and best friend Fredo Bang was still incarcerated on attempted murder charges of his own – and according to Bang, prison authorities kept him locked up lest he enact vengeance on his partner's killer. Since his release last spring, the de facto head of TBG has made #InTheNameofGee his mantra, delivering poignant and harrowing bangers that venerate the dead and boast about bloodshed in near sociopathic terms. On the bonus track remix to his massive below the Mason Dixon hit "Oouuh" where he teams up with Kevin Gates to remind you that nowhere else on Earth can produce rappers who conjure such a bewitching bayou blues.

Choosey & Exile

Black Beans

Dirty Science CD/DL/LP

Chicano life is inextricably intertwined with lowrider culture and classic soul music, the yearning sun meets steel slow dance ballads full of Brenton Wood and Bobby Purify that in pre-internet days you'd find in carwash cassette compilations. Credit San Diego's Choosey and Los Angeles underground legend Exile for creating a modern day rap classic in

that vein, replete with scuffed soul lifted from 45s, sweet nostalgia keenly balanced by anti-corporate salvos and deeply thoughtful odes to Choosey's Afro-Latinx heritage. As he spits on "Black Beans", "I'm a mix of enchiladas and fried chicken/ Dashikis and Pendletons, penitentiary penmanship".

03 Greedo

Still Summer In The Projects

Alamo DL

Recorded weeks before 03 Greedo began serving a 20 year sentence for possession of methamphetamines with intent to sell, *Still Summer In The Projects* can't help but be bittersweet and mournful in its hedonism. These are saturnine bangers for the strip club, even if YG pops up to get "Wasted" on a revamped version of "Set it Off". The production from DJ Mustard hits like a cannonball dive into chlorinated waters, as Greedo croons his mystical pain salves, channelling Soulja Slim and Boosie if they grew up on Grape Street. But he shows his depth on the gorgeous anthem to his wife "Gettin' Ready".

Juvenile & Birdman

Just Another Gangsta

Cash Money DL

New Orleans immortals Birdman and Juvenile are practically old enough to be the grandparents of NLE Choppa, the 16 year old Memphis phenomenon who guest stars on the diamond-glittering finale "Dreams". But 20 years after the "Bling Bling" summer of Cash Money, Stunna and Juvie sound as ageless as any of Anne Rice's inventions. Within the first seconds of the record, Juvenile brags about how people respect him like a dad, and spends the next half hour reminding us why his bloodline spawned thousands off the "Ha" flow alone. "From Tha Block" sweats bourbon-drenched bounce, a nolia-clapping anthem for summer cookouts.

Billy Woods & Kenny Segal

Hiding Places

Backwoodz Studios CD/DL/LP

Somewhere between Robespierre and Roc Marciano comes rap's most erudite guillotine operator – unsheathing his best album in a discography that already ranks among the decade's finest. Woods delivers staccato Brooklyn gothic, waiting on Donald Glover at the Dakota ("Crawlspace") with Andrea Dworkin in the back of his mind ("Checkpoints"), losing no sleep over the loss of your white farm. These hiding places are figurative and literal: Saddam in the spider hole juxtaposed with the serrated traps that ensnare the systematically oppressed. Beats come courtesy of Project Blowed veteran Kenny Segal, whose cymbals crash like a midnight Tora Bora raid and whose drums sound submerged in tons of tar. For one hook, Woods booms "I don't want to see Nas with an orchestra at Carnegie Hall", a bruising reminder that Big Apple rap sounds better rotten than polished. □

**Jazz & Improv by
Stewart Smith**

Martin Archer

Another Fantastic Individual

Discus CD/DL

The first album Martin Archer has made as sole musician, but an ingenious studio construct rather than a 'pure' solo performance. Parts of the album recall The World Saxophone Quartet, with Archer stacking intricate tenor, alto and soprano lines over glutinous baritone riffs. As knotty and angular as things can get, there's a terrific sense of swing to tunes like "Pressure Shocks" and Roscoe Mitchell's "Jo Jar", with spiralling solos creating a sense of spontaneity. The title track is more abstract, with Archer's high-toned saxophones evoking animated dolphin song over glockenspiel and finger cymbals. With its combination of bass clarinet and flute, "Owl Joins In With The Morning Birds" could be a tribute to Eric Dolphy, but in a lovely twist, Archer adds melodic and electronic chirrups.

**Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra
featuring Marilyn Crispell & Evan Parker**

Parallel Moments Unbroken

FMR 2×CD

Commissioned by BBC *Jazz On 3*, *Parallel Moments Unbroken* was written for a large improvising ensemble and soloist. The version from December 2013 opens with an extended solo feature from pianist Marilyn Crispell, who sets up a series of parallel tones before launching into cascading runs over reverberant clusters. A short "Interlude" gives the orchestra time to feel their way into the piece. A judder of arco bass invites amiable whistling from Maggie Nicols, and fascinating micro-interventions from puckish guitarist George Burt and trombonist Nicole McNeilly. Evan Parker's tenor orients the 2014 version towards free jazz, with GIO playing skewed Ellingtonian vamps. As distinct as the two performances are, it's possible to discern structural similarities, not least in the closing "Parallel Songs", where Nichols and Cliona Cassidy vocalise folk and devotional forms.

Wayne Horvitz

The Snowghost Sessions

Songlines CD/DL

For Those Who Remain

National Sawdust Tracks CD/DL

On *Snowghost Sessions*, composer and pianist Wayne Horvitz aims for an

Jeffrey Brooks
Bang on a Can All-Stars
Contemporaneous
THE PASSION

Common Sense
Composers' Collective
SPARK

Juri Seo
RESPIRI

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