

Releases of the Year

1-50



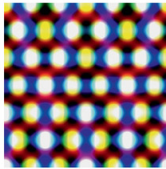
1 Yo La Tengo
This Stupid World
(Matador)

The indie rock veterans returned with their strongest set since 2000's *And Then Nothing Turned Itself Inside-Out*. The fuzzy motorik of "Sinatra Drive Breakdown" drove one of Ira Kaplan's spikiest guitar freakouts, while the Georgia Hubley ballad "Aselestine" captured them at their most delicate. Neil Kulkarni said: "I was wondering whether I needed a new Yo La Tengo album... I curse my slackness – they're on fire here and now... sounding freer, looser and more magnificent than ever." (March/469)



2 Philip Jeck & Chris Watson
Oxmardyke
(Touch)

Completed before Jeck's death in 2022, *Oxmardyke* is a meditation on place and loss, via Watson's railway gate box recordings enhanced by Jeck's electronics. Spenser Tomson said: "The most striking aspect of *Oxmardyke* is the sense of loss running through it... Watson's input catalogues a sense of recent loss, Jeck's murky electronics probe deeper, making contact with everything that has soaked into the ground where *Oxmardyke* stands." (July/473)



3 Darius Jones
fLuXkit Vancouver (its suite but sacred)
(Northern Spy/We Jazz)

Emerging from a series of residencies at Vancouver's Western Front, Jones's suite for saxophone, drums and string quartet made inspired use of Western and graphic notation, Greek myth and archival research. Emily Pothast said: "The overarching ethos of Jones's work lies in the belief that both musical ensembles and the sonic forms that emerge through them can serve as models for methods of social interaction... a sweetness forged in the secret fire of creative." (October/476)



4 Khanate
To Be Cruel
(Sacred Bones)

Marking the avant metal quartet's return after 17 years, *To Be Cruel* was a seething mass of curdled riffs and oppressive silences, harrowed by Alan Dubin's vocals and Stephen O'Malley's experimental guitar, with bassist James Plotkin and percussionist Tim Wyskida bringing an orchestral density. James Gormley said: "Their blueprint isn't really the feted drone/doom metal paradigm; more so its bluesier, jagged sibling, sludge, which they abstract to the very limits of its form." (July/473)



5 Matana Roberts
Coin Coin Chapter Five: In The Garden
(Constellation)

The latest in Matana Roberts's *Coin Coin* series wove together free jazz, modern composition, folk and electronics to tell the grimly relevant story of a female relative who died from complications after an illegal abortion. Daniel Neofetou said: "An account of stifling domesticity plays out over a propulsive 4/4 rock beat and swirling woodwinds, which serve to evoke how, in spite of everything, she felt *"electric, alive, spirited, fire and free"*." (October/476)



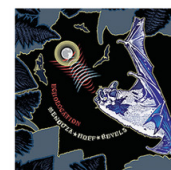
6 Mariam Rezaei
BOWN
(Heat Crimes)

A virtuosic display from composer/turntablist Rezaei, who transformed samples made by herself and Teresa Winter, Gwilly Edmondez, Bobby Glew and Lukas Koenig into constantly shifting new forms. Xenia Benivoltski said: "*BOWN* starts off with a witchy hum... that quickly becomes more demanding and playful as a yelping, whistling vortex of distorted vocals whirr around in a manic swarm. It's like being in the eye of a possessed tornado. But that's just the beginning." (November/477)



7 Irreversible Entanglements
Protect Your Light
(Impulse!)

For their Impulse! debut, liberation jazz collective Irreversible Entanglements delivered their warmest work to date, rhythms and sunny melodies, the title track and "Free Love" in particular being odes to collective joy. Yet Moor Mother aka Camae Ayewa's polemics remain as sharp as ever. Phil Freeman said: "This is a major statement from artists who are as much the new wave of jazz as John Coltrane, Albert Ayler, Archie Shepp et al were in their day." (September/475)



8 Mendoza Hoff Reveals
Echolocation
(AUM Fidelity)

One of the most gifted guitarists of her generation, Ava Mendoza teamed up with bassist Devin Hoff, saxophonist James Brandon Lewis and drummer Ches Smith to deliver an exhilarating set of 21st century jazz rock. Edwin Pouncey said: "Each member of the group plays their own essential part in making the sound materialise like a single physical entity, with all of them coming together to pump the beating heart and active brain inside the body of music created." (December/478)