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AN ALTERNATIVE TOP 10

The Anti-Hit List

Mar 14, 2009 04:30 AM

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JOHN SAKAMOTO
TORONTO STAR

10. BARENAKED LADIES

"Maybe Katie"

Anyone curious about what this band will sound like without Steven Page can get an inkling from this casual soundcheck, recorded just 10 days after news surfaced about the split. With Jim Creeggan singing harmony and trading off verses with Ed Robertson on this track from 2003's *Everything to Everyone*, BNL doesn't sound appreciably altered. Thanks to Marc Weisblott (via Twitter). (youtube.com/user/nettwerkbackstage)

9. JONATHAN JEREMIAH

"Happiness"

An unabashed throwback to the first heyday of the singer-songwriter, this London-based newcomer occasionally evokes such heavyweights as Cat Stevens and James Taylor but with phrasing that is both jazzier and less fluid than is typical of the genre. Melodically, this fleetingly recalls a sped-up version of David Sylvian's "Let Happiness In." (From *Fool in Love*, myspace.com/jonathanjeremiah)

8. JUDAS PRIEST VS. MGMT

"You Got Another Thing Comin', Kids"

Now that the seemingly indestructible "Kids" has been mashed up with David Bowie and covered, acoustic-style, by Ben Lee, we honestly thought we were done with it. But then along came another seemingly impossible combination, this time with the British metal anthem "You've Got Another Thing Comin'," and here we are writing about yet another productive subversion of the original. (insomniacentertainment.com/music)

7. PHISH

"Backwards Down the Number Line"

If anything captures the lightness permeating the reunion of these post-Grateful Dead jam-band legends it's this especially nimble new song. A highlight of the first of the band's three return shows this month at Virginia's Hampton Coliseum – very high-quality MP3s of which are being offered free (for a limited time) at the official livephish.com – this is to Phish's catalogue as, say, "Friend of the Devil" is to the Dead's. (livephish.com)

6. CAROLINE WEEKS

"Elegy"

Best known for lending her multi-instrumentalist talents to Bat For Lashes, Weeks has found the perfect lyricist for her folky playing and heartbroken voice: tragic American poet Edna St. Vincent Millay. Suffice to say that the music perfectly conveys the deathly pallor of the lyrics: "Your young flesh that sat so neatly/On your little bones will sweetly/Blossom in the air." (From *Songs for Edna*, out April 7, tinyurl.com/carolineweeks)

5. PJ HARVEY & JOHN PARRIS


"Black Hearted Love"

"When you call out my name in rapture/I volunteer my soul for murder." Yup, she's definitely back. All shadows, darkness and slashing minor chords, this preview of the follow-up to the duo's *Dance*

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Hall at Louse Point 12 years ago has as much in common with two other standout Harvey albums to feature Parrish's collaborations (though not his billing): *To Bring You My Love* and *White Chalk*. (From *A Woman A Man Walked By*, out March 31, tinyurl.com/pjandjohn)

4. HOCKEY

"Too Fake"

This four-piece out of Portland approximates either an electro version of The Strokes or an alt-rock version of The Rapture, depending on your perspective. Either way, it's catchy as hell. Thanks to the indispensable music blog *Pretty Much Amazing*. (From *Mind Chaos*, tinyurl.com/fakehockey)

3. SUFJAN STEVENS VS. OUTKAST

"Dumb I Sound"

Montreal-based remixer/mash-up artist Tor has finally realized his oddball goal to pair Stevens' acoustic indie pop with hip-hop acts such as Big Daddy Kane, Pete Rock, and, in this case, the early Outkast track "ATLiens," with its exaggerated "Throw your hands in the AY-err" refrain. The whimsical musical accompaniment, meanwhile, comes courtesy of "Dumb I Sound" from Stevens' first album, *A Sun Came*. (From *Illinoize*, illinoize.biz)

2. THE GOOD NATURED

"Rose"

Another strikingly accomplished British teen, Sarah McIntosh, sounds like a less carefree Lily Allen. Though the music is spiced with dancefloor rhythms and electro-pop flourishes, it is used to convey introspective lyrics. Thanks to the Guardian's Paul Lester. (myspace.com/thegoodnatured)

1. MORGAN DOCTOR

"There Were Horses"

Though this Toronto-by-way-of-California percussionist has another musical life in arty rockers The Cliks, she is equally known for her work with the Toronto Tabla Ensemble, not to mention her drumming on the theme to CBC Radio's *Metro Morning*. This atmospheric opener to her second album is graced with full-blooded vocals by Clara Engel, and calls for a film worthy of using it as a soundtrack. (From *Other Life*, info only: bearsuitpublishing.com/blog)

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