



Starmaker, picks up where PM left off two years ago, creating a beautiful and engaging tableau of fuzzy indie-rock splendor. Concerned with the atmosphere and space in the music created by a wash of dreamy layered guitars, oft-times portentous keyboard chords and hazy, reverb-drenched backing vocals, Waver brings to mind Ben Gibbard fronting Broken Social Scene or Teenage Fanclub, while the two instrumental tracks evoke the Berlin Trilogy-era David Bowie/Brian Eno collaborations. Aurally complex and immediately enjoyable, Waver simultaneously pleases the shoegaze fan in us all, while packing plenty of hooks to keep you humming after the album is over.

— Dan Fitzpatrick



JACOB JEFFRIES BAND

Wonderful!

Eleven:11 Entertainment

If you like The Fray and Snow Patrol, you'll like Jacob Jeffries Band. *Wonderful!*, the second of three EPs released over six months, is inundated with catchy lyrics and piano lead-ins. The tracks on the album are songs you would probably hear on an episode of Grey's Anatomy, with the exception of the first one, which doesn't seem to fit in with the rest of the album but is still a catchy song. In the last track, Jeffries

takes a little over 10 minutes to thank different people who have helped him, including ex-girlfriends for giving him something to write about. — Allison Candreva



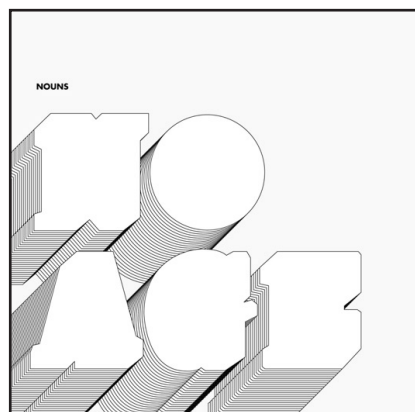
THE AVETT BROTHERS

The Second Gleam

Ramseur Records

The Avett Brothers know how to write songs that are honest and true, and their new album *The Second Gleam* might be their best example. "Tear down the House" is the standout track, and might be the best song ever written about heartache and moving on. If you have no idea who The Avett Brothers are, I highly recommend checking them out before they are the biggest band around (their new album is being produced by Rick Rubin). The vinyl release comes with two amazing bonus songs. If you have ever had your heart broken, and you need a soundtrack to go along with your freakout, buy an Avett Brothers record.

— Jake Crown



NO AGE

Nouns

Sub-Pop Records

I used to get too self-conscious thinking about music too long and unapologetically. No Age

understands, and these songs stand as irrefutable testimony to keep playing, keep listening and maybe even enjoy some things in life. Their songs last an average of two very expressive minutes of breakaways and sentimental meanderings. Just two players here, guitar and drums, with a commonality of triumphant fuzz. Like saying: stop overanalyzing and just play. As though they'd escaped the trappings of labels like DIY or lo-fi or all-ages, and instead herald them as superior virtues. The vocals affirm: "With passion it's true."

— Travis Fristoe



EYE ÅLASKA

Yellow and Elephant

Fearless Records

The accompanying press release with this disc describes this band's musical style as "cinematic rock." From the tempo and vocals of the opening track, "I Knew You'd Never Fly," I'd be more pressed to call them "extreme emo." The big synthesizer sound at the song's introduction may hint at melodrama, but the vocalist sounds like the dude from that Evanescence song. This EP does have its moments, though. "Roll Right Over" recalls some of Was (Not Was)'s more soulful moments – which was a pleasant surprise. That's not to say that you'd find these guys out of place at the Warped Tour next summer, though.

— Fred Sowder

GOLDCURE

Portuguese Prince

Sorin Records

If, on your debut album there is a song called "Make it Stop," you would be wise to make your music eminently listenable. Which Goldcure



wisely does. From the unapologetic rock of the title track to the hymn-like "Never Alone," Goldcure's versatility is a pleasure. Though we could do without the gimmicky instrumentation of "Stanley" and the bubbly pop of "Rubber Inside," Goldcure does treat us to one ballad, the soaring "Lucky to See," perhaps their most intimate offering. The lyrics are earnest, if a little undercooked, even contradictory at times: lead singer Adam Buhrman can't seem to figure out if "it's not over yet" or "it's over now." But if all that means is that they haven't got everything figured out, it should endear them to us all.

— Sarah Wears-Garcia



OFF WITH THEIR HEADS

From the Bottom

No Idea

This might be the best punk record of 2008. Every single song is a sing-along, fist in the air, basement punk song. They sing tales of sadness, loyalty, heartbreak and moving on, backed up with a mix of pop punk, street punk and catchy melodies. Any kid living in a small town with no clue what to do with monotonous life will completely relate to this record. This is the band I will sit in line for two hours at The Fest 7 to see. Good job boys, this album rules.

— Jake Crown