

## Talk Ain't Cheap

**Paul Rishell: *Talking Guitar* (Mojo Rodeo 1952; 39:54 ★★★★★)** On the first all-acoustic album in his long career, storyteller Paul Rishell uses his carefully controlled singing and expert guitar playing in several styles to bring out the beauty of a dozen Depression-era songs. The Cantabrigian has a natural, uncommon fluency for the idiomatic expression of emotion. The anguished heart of St. Louis street corner guitarist Clifford Gibson's "Tired Of Being Mistreated" is revealed. Blind Blake's caution over the criminal justice system in "Police Dog Blues" assumes a newly poignant authenticity. Rishell's own "Louise" and "I'm Gonna Jump And Shout" fit in perfectly. Annie Raines contributes harmonica to three tracks. In sum, the album's both a lively introduction to unplugged blues for novitiates and the place for seasoned listeners to reconnect with the music's mystery and romance.

Ordering info: [paulandannie.com](http://paulandannie.com)

**Amy Hart: *Congratulations* (Painted Rock 2011; 35:05 ★★½)** Amy Hart can really sing. A native Chicagoan based in Nashville, she wends her way through melodic blues-rock originals that are sunnier than one might expect from someone whose life was upended by the Gulf Coast oil rig calamity. This trouper picks herself up, dusts off and keeps moving on "Put Me Back" and "Be That Way." Kittenish and ironic, Hart has her entertainment needle at full throttle on the title track. This album would've been even better if she had ditched all the Music City studio pros and recorded with just Bob Britt on acoustic guitar.

Ordering info: [amyhart.com](http://amyhart.com)

**Alek Razdan & The A-Train Orchestra: *Two-Timin'* (ASR 003; 41:15 ★★)** 17-year-old saxophone whiz Alek Razdan and his quintet have an easy time extracting fun from old r&b (Red Prysock's "Jumbo") and blues (Albert Collins' "Backstroke"). It's no gimmick when this Tufts University student blows tenor and soprano simultaneously. Add a real singer and some brass, and they would give Roomful of Blues a run for their money.

Ordering info: [myspace.com/alekrazdan](http://myspace.com/alekrazdan)

**Lurrie Bell: *The Devil Ain't Got No Music* (Aria B. G. Records 2; 47:36 ★★½)** Grandson of an Alabaman minister and son of a blues harp master, Lurrie Bell—a fine Chicago bluesman in his own right—sings through layers of blessed dirt in his larynx and realizes the potential of text belonging to gospel songs older than Methuselah and to spiritual offer-

Paul Rishell



ERIC ARONOW

ings by Joe Louis Walker, Tom Waits, Muddy Waters and ringer James Taylor. Bell's acoustic guitar asserts blues drama with complete naturalness. His ecclesial community in the studio includes backup singers Mike Avery and James Teague, drummer Kenny Smith and guitarist Joe Louis Walker.

Ordering info: [lurrie.com](http://lurrie.com)

**Bo Diddley: *The Black Gladiator* (Future Days Recordings 600; 33:33 ★★)** After the Chess hits stopped in the early 1960s, Bo Diddley tried futilely to get in the good graces of the listening public again. This oddball funk and electric blues affair, released on a Chess subsidiary label in 1970, clears the ears the way horseradish clears the palate. When not fixating on Muddy Waters or Sly Stone, the man primps in the mirror, yodels, cracks jokes and has a great time telling women to shut up. Dated junk only worth a listen for Bobby Alexis' copious flows of organ sound.

Ordering info: [lightintheattic.net](http://lightintheattic.net)

**Big Brother and the Holding Company: *Live At The Carousel Ballroom 1968* (Columbia/Legacy 8869; 70:59 ★★½)** This concert "sonic journal" from the vault of soundman Owsley "Bear" Stanley features Janis Joplin's supersonic jet of a voice on staples like "Piece Of My Heart" and "Ball And Chain." However, the counterculture hero gets nowhere with wretched, far-out songs furnished by her noisy, amateurish and therefore admirable acid-rock band.

Ordering info: [legacyrecordings.com](http://legacyrecordings.com)

MARIA NECKAM



UNISON

SSC 1321 / in Stores June 5

On *Unison*, Maria Neckam comfortably inhabits the role of both singer and vocal instrumentalist artfully blending with her accompanists. She's joined on almost every track by a trio featuring pianist Aaron Parks, bassist Thomas Morgan, and drummer Colin Stranahan. Five tracks feature altoist Lars Dietrich and tenor saxophonist Samir Zari, while guitarist Nir Felder, altoist Will Vinson, trumpeter Kenny Warren, cellist Mariel Roberts and pianist Glenn Zaleski all make significant contributions.



Available on  
iTunes

DIEGO SCHISSI



TONGOS

SSC 1314 / in Stores June 19

On his new release *Tongos*, Argentinean pianist/composer Diego Schissi attempts to create a unique form of music inspired by Argentina's most important cultural legacy, tango. The Diego Schissi Quinteto focus on Schissi's contemporary take on the tango model. The ensemble features Schissi on piano along with violinist Guillermo Rubino, Santiago Segret on bandoneón, guitarist Ismael Grossman and bassist Juan Pablo Navarro. Grossman, Navarro and Schissi come from a strong jazz grounding.



Available on  
iTunes