

DisagreEeable

23 May 2022 | Jonah D, editor-in-chief, with contributions from Textbox'd

What I'm listening to:

album: Kid A | Radiohead

Disjointed blips and passages sewn together into an alien melancholy. Listen to this one from beginning to end and be rewarded with a complete story told as much through the sounds as it is by word.

track: Biomusicology | Ted Leo and the Pharmacists

Rousing and percussive, with swooping strings and starkly expressive frontman.

track: Swim and Sleep (Like A Shark) | Unknown Mortal Orchestra

Pushes the logical limit of the number of chord changes in a lush and catchy song.

Reviews:

Spoon

"Kill the Moonlight"

2002

Highlights: Small Stakes, The Way We Get By, Paper Tiger

Spoon. A band as adept at brevity as their monosyllabic name suggests. Britt Daniel made a career on obsessively removing all excess, all the time. Spoon is here to teach us the valuable lesson that what's amazing doesn't need to be drawn out. Their work over a 25+ year span proves that length or opulence for its own sake cripples the emotional effectiveness of a rock record. Their record *Kill the Moonlight* demonstrates this principle of negative sonic space better than any of their following works. This album opens with 'Small Stakes', which contains only a solitary organ, tambourine, and vocals. Right from the get-go, there's nothing but room on this. And yet, the song is full and more energetic than most any other rock you'll hear. Succinct and insightful lyrics like "Oh yeah small stakes ensure you the minimum blues / But you don't feel taken and you don't feel abused / Small stakes tell you that there's nothing can do / Can't think big, can't think past one or two" drive this point home and with two dozen words Daniel proves the folly in this narrative faster than an Ivy League Q.E.D.

Oh, and did I mention it's only 3 minutes long?

The best part is that every song on it takes after this, from the petty crime story-telling of 'The Way We Get By' to the atmospheric 'Paper Tiger', everything important hits at once

There's no point on Kill the Moonlight in which Spoon reaches past the realm of easy understanding, giving you a glimpse of the southwestern trailer-park-noir life but with the sense to get to the point before the authorities arrive.

The Beths

"Future Me Hates Me"

2018

Highlights: Future Me Hates Me, You Wouldn't Like Me, Whatever, Happy Unhappy

What happens to kids studying jazz performance at university after they graduate? Well, if they can write authentic punk-y hooks, execute killer 4-way vocal harmonies, and have government arts funding from New Zealand then they release the one of the brightest power pop records of the twenty-teens.

The Beths sing with a tipsy-while-over-caffeinated honesty about being young and human in a way that feels like it could even apply to anyone living. The album's energy reaches 'frenetic punk' levels, but it's leading lady Elizabeth Stokes cuts the snottiness and replaces it with an earnest resolve to grow through the pains of maturing-- while saying yes to just enough bad ideas and mistakes to have interesting stories to tell later.

Recommendations

If you like **Harry Styles** and his new take on the 2010-era chillwave, try:

1. Wild Nothing – Styles has that singular voice, but Wild Nothing (aka Jack Tatum) was a pioneer of the sound “Harry’s House” explores.

2. Beach Boys

Everyone's heard of the Beach Boys, but their seminal *Pet Sounds* may be the best Rock record of the 20th Century. It has the familiar brilliant hits like 'Wouldn't it Be Nice' and 'Sloop John B', but get deep with it starting with 'You Still Believe in Me' and 'That's Not Me', then move to 'Here Today'. You'll spot the early inspirations of chillwave inside the psych-surf instrumental 'Pet Sounds'.

If you like **Beach Bunny**, try:

1. The Beths

See review above. There's a similar power pop style shared between them, with a disposition toward a sound that bubbles over with ecstasy and happiness to contrast the youthful melancholy in the lyrics.

2. Rolling Blackouts Coastal Fever

Jangle-y rock from Down Under. This machine moves like a motorcycle on a highway out of Melbourne while they they do their best 'R.E.M on adderall' impression. Start with 'An Air Conditioned Man', and try 'Tidal River' and 'Talking Straight'.

3. Ben Folds Five

This trio takes a similar energy and lyrical flavor. Go to their self-titled debut first, and try the irresistible “Jackson Cannery” and the immemorial “Philosophy”.

If you would like to suggest bands to create recommendations from and/or albums to review, contact me at:

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