



Paul Banks

★★★★★

Banks

MATADOR. CD/LP/DL

The Interpol singer makes his second solo album.

Solo albums by band frontmen typically reveal a craving to swap identities. That's evident by Banks's recent EP *Julian Plenti Lives* (which followed 2009's *Julian Plenti Is... Skyscraper* album), which stretched from electronic-tinged instrumental covers of Harold Faltermeyer and J Dilla to a version of Frank Sinatra's *I'm A Fool To Want You*. Yet the new album not only ditches the Plenti alter-ego, it firmly re-enters Interpol's cold, black, steely universe. Fortunately, it makes a terrific album, stronger than Interpol's last two, with enough detail in the arrangements – a smattering of strings, spoken-word samples, electronics and less cascading guitar – to separate Banks and his day job. The closing *Summertime Is Coming* embraces both strands, a fantastic, rousing old-school piledriver with an unexpected, delicate coda of wobbly Sinatra-style crooning. That's the alter-ego we want more of.

Martin Aston

TOPS

★★★★★

Tender Opposites

ARBUTUS. CD/LP/DL

Canadian indie foursome pack unpredictable punch.



The sound Montreal's TOPS make could create the impression they're delicate, singer Jane Penny's voice thin and high enough to induce altitude sickness, synths and guitars wobbling about like somebody with influenza. Yet there is more to this quartet – formed around Penny and her partner, guitarist David Carriere – than a desire to trade Dolly Mixture tapes through the post. Queasy melodies, light-headed keys and emaciated Smiths guitar flourishes slowly generate a dank unease: the rushing synth-pop of *She's So Bad* and *Double Vision*, apparently inspired by late-night St Elmo's Fire marathons, sound blankly disconnected, while *Turn Your Love Around* cracks into a sudden fury

that points to depths beyond being pretty in pink. Beware the iron fist in the fingerless lace glove.

Victoria Segal

No Doubt

★★★★

Push And Shove

INTERSCOPE. CD/DL

The Californian ska poppers return after 11 years with a disappointing sixth album.



Since 1995's breakthrough *Tragic Kingdom*, No Doubt have successfully re-invented themselves on each subsequent album. 2000's *Return Of Saturn* was filled with hawk-eyed self-analysis, 2001's *Rock Steady* with joyous new wave frivolity. So it is with *Push And Shove*, which finds them going for stadium bombast. The bad news is that upgrading *Rock Steady* mixer Mark 'Spike' Stent to producer was the wrong decision. Bathing the album in an atypical widescreen sound, he sucks all the energy out of the songs. The musical equivalent of tranquilizers, the reverb heavy technique leaves the album severely over-egged and sounding like the very dreariest of Stent's former clients (The Script, James Blunt). It doesn't help that the album features a glut of dull mid-tempo, with only the lead single *Settle Down*, the Major Lazer collaboration of the title track and the swirly pop of *Heaven* escaping the reach of this steamrolling sonic punch.

Priya Elan

Delta Spirit

★★★★

Delta Spirit

ROUNDER. CD

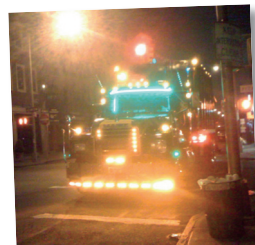
Band stepping away from Americana roots.



Named after the taxidermy company of their bassist's great uncle, San Diego-formed

quintet Delta Spirit are a radically changed (though thankfully not glassy-eyed and moth-eaten) beast these days. Gone are the barroom pianos and lazily strummed acoustic guitars of their 2008 debut *Ode To Sunshine*, producer Chris Coady (Yeah Yeah Yeahs; Beach House) here overseeing a dense, fervent, riffy drums and electric-guitar driven album which variously conjures The Strokes channelling The Beach Boys (California), late '80s U2 (*Into The Darkness*), and the jinking Afro-pop of Vampire Weekend (*Tear It Up*). With one eye on the enormodomes and the other on Noughties exponents of NYC indie cool, DS, now based in Brooklyn, may be in danger of falling between two stools. That said, the aforementioned California and the similarly euphoric Otherside are winners in anybody's language.

James McNair



Deerhoof

★★★★★

Breakup Song

ATP RECORDINGS. CD/LP/DL

ATP faves hit new heights of fragmento-pop.

2011's *Deerhoof Vs. Evil* was, by the high standards set by San Francisco's awkward pop specialists, oddly subdued. Instant amends here as the title track leaps out of the speakers at near-distortion level, sounding every bit the mutant offspring of Aphex Twin and T.Rex. The rest of this short, dynamic return to form is similarly ear-wrenching. There's That Grin continues from where the first left off, albeit with a flatulent Roobarb And Custard vibe that lands the song in a neon-lit metropolis where a million computer games bleep on. As ever, bassist Satomi Matsuzaki's voice provides a melodic, sweetly robotic counterpoint to the quartet's electronic yell of angular, splatter-style guitars, hyperactive percussion and a range of beats that at times channel Perez Prado (*The Trouble With Candyhands*) and Grace Jones (*Mario's Flaming Whiskers III*).

Mark Paytress

You're breaking up! Deerhoof's Satomi Matsuzaki.

UNDERGROUND

BY ANDREW MALE



Morton Feldman

★★★★★

Crippled Symmetry

FROZEN REEDS. CDX2

A perfect 2000 recording of the New York composer's 1983 masterpiece finally sees the light of day.

THE LATE works of Morton Feldman are like little else in modern composition. Influenced by the abstract expressionism of Rothko and Pollock, and the complex patterns within Turkish rugs, Feldman created a transcendent new music, hushed in volume, slow in tempo and epic in length, immersed in a deep, ongoing rapturous now. Composed in 1983, four years before his death, for members of his own ensemble – flautist Eberhard Blum, pianist Nils Vigeland and percussionist Jan Williams – *Crippled Symmetry* is all about performance. Reading from their own notated parts, but with no indication of how they should synchronise over the piece's hour-and-a-half duration, the trio overlay individual harmonic patterns of flute/bass flute, vibraphone/glockenspiel, and piano/celeste, resulting in asymmetric juxtapositions of tonal sighs and melodic decay that soothe the listener like warm beams of morning light through a latticed arbor of trees.



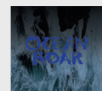
ALSO RELEASED

Mount Eerie

★★★★★

Ocean Roar

P.W. ELVERUM & SUN. LP/DL



Following the quest narrative of May's *Clear Moon*, Phil Elverum's second Mount Eerie release of 2012 unfolds in a storm-tossed present. Bookended by funnel-clouds of black noise, punctuated by dreamlike moments of frail melodic comfort, *Ocean Roar* exists deep in extreme nature, a journey's end of madness, memory and euphoria.

Emanuele de Raymondi

★★★★★

Büyükberber Variations

ZEROKILLED MUSIC. CD/DL



Utilising the 10-second reverberation in a Berlin loft, Italian avant-garde composer de Raymondi blended O'uz Büyükberber's hovering clarinet improvisations with the computer-manipulated rhythms of the room (clanging radiators etc). Both hypnotic and unearthly, the finished result suggests interlocking vapour trails of melody and discord trapped in a finite space, never to escape.

Loscil

★★★★

Sketches From New Brighton

KRANKY. CD/2XLP/DL



Although inspired by "an odd little ocean-side park" in Vancouver, British Columbia, Loscil's sixth full-length album of introspective electronic ambience could equally soundtrack the faded Merseyside seaside resort of the same name, such is the poignant, languorous power of Scott Morgan's ghostly melodies and delicate percussive loops.

Toxvaerd/Anderskov

★★★★★

Phone Book

ILK. CD/DL



If jazz is dead, no one has told Denmark the news. The saxophonist Laura Toxvaerd and pianist Jacob Anderskov here collaborate on four of the former's art-brut graphic notations (all incorporating scissored shards of a Danish phonebook) moving from lines of cautious beauty to detuned blasts of caged animal fury. AM