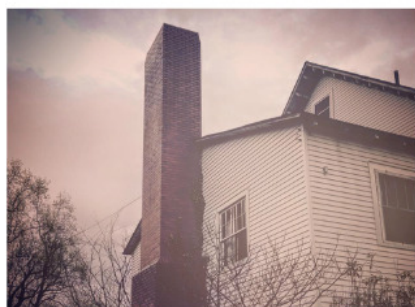
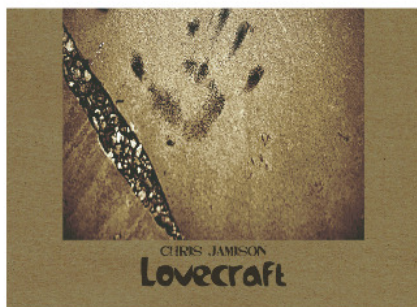


## Top 5 dreamiest local album releases of 2015

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It's hard to choose just five favorite albums because this is Western North Carolina and new music making its way to listeners via social media, CD release parties, collectible vinyl, independent radio and the very street corners. From hip-hop to soul and roots music to lush dream-pop, the offerings are as varied as the fanbase. Creativity reigns in and around Asheville, so while the area's music scene might not be to more mainstream tastes, that's exactly why we love it.

Some of my favorites from the past year — songs I've written about, but also keep close at hand on my iPod — have borrowed from elements of dream-pop, while adding unique variations on that theme.

- ***In Between Dreams* by Erica Russo** — In tone, mood, instrumentation and narrative, this is wildly creative but steadfastly consistent collection. Russo's strange and wonderful voice stitches those parts into a consummate whole.

- ***Can't Win for Losing* by Wintervals** — Melancholy that runs like a thread throughout Wintervals' writing, but it's a delicious sort of sadness that never devolves into gloom. Expression is valued over perfection and the occasional rough or raw tone only adds to the magic of the music.

• ***Gentle Spotted Giants* by Alex Krug Combo** — Each song on this EP is delivered with absolute care, even as its wrung from the singer’s guts. Final track “Sail With You” is perhaps the sweetest offering. It carries on the oceanic theme, and so too the vastness and loneliness of that metaphor.

• ***New Alhambra* by Elvis Depressedly** — From the languid opening notes of “Thou Shall Not Murder” — a breezily psychedelic track that winds its way between tranquil vocals and static-y, alien samples — the album offers itself up as a kind of summer soundtrack from within the cool recesses of a basement.

• ***Lovecraft* by Chris Jamison** — This is a collection of songwriting gems. “Mockingbird,” with its gentle melody, soft handclaps, otherworldly harp (Molly Cook) and compelling lyrics — “Scorpions in the shadows, serpents in the moonlight / a child’s heart open, beating, pulsing with the midnight” — deserves every kind of interpretation

*Find complete reviews for these albums at [mountainx.com](http://mountainx.com). —Alli Marshall*