



Optometry

After Image

Palette Recordings

Dream team

From hooking up with Kompakt and hatching techno magic with Reggie Watts to remixing over 100 songs for acts including The Postal Service and Télépopmusik, John Tejada is no stranger to joining forces. His newest collaboration, however, comes a little closer to home in the dreamy apparition of Los Angeles-based vocalist March Adstrum; her plush tones and guitar work imbuing Tejada's stuttering techno with new-fangled intimacy.

Named after the imprint that lingers in the eyes after a period of exposure to an image, their debut pontificates on the threads of life, love, and in particular, loss. Adstrum reaches into a haze of grief populated by pin-drop synths and textured violin trills on 'Falling', before 'Faces Without Names' unfolds with a seshy rhythm-box beat to remind us to keep putting one foot in front of another. One to keep an eye out for. **OLIVIA STOCK**



Saeko Killy

Morphing Polaroids

Bureau B

Kraut meets downtempo club

Saeko Killy has stepped forward with a debut that's soaked up the scenes she's been embedded in. Killy grew up on jazz and Brazilian music, which inspired travels to São Paulo where she DJed at underground events. Techno parties in her native Tokyo were destined to lead her to Berlin where she's lived since 2018, spinning records at Sameheads. EPs have followed but 'Morphing Polaroids' is a thorough impression of Killy's music, and Germany has clearly left its mark; the album utilises krautrock's motorik beats to drive Killy's deadpan post-punk vocals and downtempo synthpop. Its second half thankfully moves away from its opening, jarring strains, with the melodious 'Alt!' and 'Intimate Flame' riffing on Killy's wish to rekindle a creative spark lost in Covid. This album has to some extent achieved that, although greater variation in sound would be welcome. **CHARLOTTE KROL**



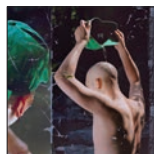
Kosaya Gora

Kajdoe Novoe

2MR

Ruminating landscapes

People can get so caught up in the method of how an album was made that they risk missing the brilliance of what's actually on the record. Other times, the approach itself is so evocative it informs the listening experience. Our minds wander, tracks playing out as we imagine time and place. Like this debut album from Kedr Livanskiy and Flaty's joint project, Kosaya Gora — or Oblique Mountain in English. Hitting the road with a mobile studio set-up, the two artists set out on a lockdown-era tour of remote Russian villages, crashing at half-ruined houses in half-desolate nowheresvilles, jam sessions taking influence from the sparse landscape. With no real destination, sonically at least, they wind up in places close to trip-hop, folk, dub, ambient, dark pop, and meditative acoustic, yet the final setting is completely unto its own. **MARTIN GUTTRIDGE-HEWITT**



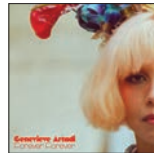
Tzusing

绿帽 GREEN HAT

PAN

Masculinity deconstructed

Tzusing's latest album opens with a glitched-out text-to-speech narration from a 2002 New York Times article, giving context to the album's title: "to wear a green hat" is the Chinese symbol of a cuckold." Tzusing hits a visceral note, exploring the role of masculinity in Chinese culture through EBM with a dash of MIDI-fied traditional Chinese instrumentation. '偶像包袱 (Idol Baggage)' plods along at around 65bpm, filling in the spaces between the kicks with ominous strings, frenetic cymbals and Ha crashes. There's a bit of a goom drive in 'Balkanize', whereas 'Exascale' bulldozes with industrial kicks before revving its engine with a Jersey club rhythm. The masculine voices appear in growls — the Daniel Plainview sample in '趁人之危 (Take Advantage)' or guttural whoops in 'Residual Stress' — laying bare the base desires that comprise the mythology of the green hat. **JAMES GUI**



Genevieve Artadi

Forever Forever

Brainfeeder

Jazz-fun(k)

It seems fitting that, beyond the indelible, whirling oohs of its opening interlude, the first word breathed on Genevieve Artadi's 'Forever Forever' is "visionary". Rooted in jazz, but winding up somewhere closer to maximalist rock or avant-pop, the LA native's second outing on Flying Lotus' label Brainfeeder is a transcendental composition. Citing inspirations including Bach (she learned some two-part inventions during lockdown), the Vietnamese Buddhist monk, Thích Nhất Hạnh, and Attack on Titan, and jammed fluidly into existence on location in Mexico at El Desierto Studio, it flexes the looser, more playful feel of a mixtape rather than a traditional album. From the Tangerine Dream synths and syncopated rhythms of 'Black Shirts' to 'Change Stays', where soft-focus melancholia dotes on the guiding lights in Artadi's life, this is an ambient-jazz-funk showstopper. **OLIVIA STOCK**



LAFT

New Objectivity

babading diskos

Home and heads-y listening

In European dance music terms, the Scandinavian scenes have always done slick things. Wearing cool sophistication like the iconic clean lines and cuts of their understated but infinitely buyable clothes, the region has never been known for producing homogeneous sounds. Yet, across the board, musicality and depth are omnipresent. As is often an aural warmth which contrasts stereotypes of weather up there. LAFT certainly match our expectations. Comprising Tomas Järmyr (Pantha Du Prince's Bell Laboratory) and Håkon Vinnogg (aka Vinny Villbass, resident at Oslo's Jaeger club), 'New Objectivity' is nothing short of exemplary (not to mention immersive and emotional) melodic house, gradually unveiling a richly textured soundscape of ever-evolving movements built from technically impressive improvised sessions. **MARTIN GUTTRIDGE-HEWITT**



I:Cube

Eye Cube

Versatile

Cosmic Cube

In a part of our heart, I:Cube will forever sound like Daft Punk's remix of 'Disco Cubizm'. But he's always been looking to the stars, and 'Eye Cube', his first album in over ten years, beams back from far out in the cosmos.

It's a trippy ride — a million light years from the disco of French touch — taking in swirling kraut on lift-off track 'Vantableu', expansive ambient, such as on 'Montsouris' and closer 'Infinite ∞ Melodies', and gorgeously lush melody on 'Kaszio Plus 1', the showstopper. '0/0/01/48' hints at house, an icy drum machine accompanied by throaty chants, but it's the throb of psychedelic boundlessness, not hedonistic excess.

His last album, 2012's 25-track 'M Megamix', went for breadth. On the eight tracks of 'Eye Cube', I:Cube plunges the depths instead, arriving home with this grand vision of wonder. **JOE ROBERTS**



Holly Waxwing

The New Pastoral

PC Music

Fun guy

If the gently burbling electronica of 'Sister Species' — Holly Waxwing's first single for PC Music — marked him out as a sensitive wallflower in the kitchen at that label's artificially sweetened pop-fuelled party, the album it trailed sees the Rhode Island-based producer out in the garden talking to the plants. Knowing that 'The New Pastoral' is inspired by his love of mycology, horticulture and birdwatching, 'Arvensis' sounds exactly like you expect it will: all New Age melodies, folktronica guitars and skippy Four Tet beats. Perfectly pleasant, but things get distinctly more interesting as it progresses. The pops, squelches and elasticated beats of 'Meridians' are like listening to ants getting on one to an insectoid Hudson Mohawke, while the giddily hallucinogenic synths and pitch-bent vocals on 'Softcorners' suggest Waxwing has been consuming as well as contemplating mushrooms. Marvellous stuff. **PAUL CLARKE**