



Minas
All My Love Has Failed Me
Libertino
Punk take on Tories

Soulfully punk but physically electronic, Welsh singer/producer Minas operates with a savage alchemy of Idles-like rageful incandescence and loose-limbed, woozy Mike Skinner-like beats. It's a fusion that's been brewing since 2018, but right now it's bubbling right over. Reflective, furious, sorrowful — this powerful document captures life growing up in Caerphilly under stormy Welsh clouds of Tory austerity and spending your 20s lost in a self-medicated, self-sabotaging, anxious state. A new hymn sheet for the modern jilted generation(s), he incites joy through aggression and frustration and euphoria through blues and regret as we sway and stomp between highlights such as the tick-clucking ADHD disco fizz of 'Payday', the mournful Burial-meets-Sleaford Mods dirge of 'Fight One' and the brittle spit and scrappiness of 'Stress'. Hazy, heavy, full of hurt and caustic clarity. **DAVE JENKINS**



Leftfield
This Is What We Do
Virgin Records
Still doing it

There's no denying Leftfield as just Neil Barnes and engineer Adam Wren is different to its first incarnation with Paul Daley. But 'This Is What We Do' arrives out of global and personal strife with a new-found self-assurance. There are clubby, breaky moments — the title track, lead single 'Pulse' — and techno cut from similarly large sounds, such as 'Accumulator' and 'The Power Of Listening'. But 'Machines Like Me' and 'City Of Synths' also take Leftfield's electro-leaning further back, nodding to Kraftwerk and Kosmische. Singer Earl 16 provides a warm continuity over the rasping bass of 'Rapture 16', as does poet Lemn Sissay shining through the dark of 'Making A Difference' — and both appearing on 'Leftism'. But it's 'Full Way Round', featuring Fontaine D.C.'s Grian Chatten, that explodes out of the speakers, colliding worlds to incendiary effect. Which is what they do. **JOE ROBERTS**



ZDBT
Evening Star
Specials Worldwide
Urban experimental grit

Already an accomplished purveyor of techno, ambient, and experimental under his 1800HaightStreet and Phost pseudonyms, Vancouver's Zachary Treble turns his attention to R&B, soul and hip-hop, for an album project that cleverly channels his existing studio talents into urban music with an edge. As much as 'Evening Star' showcases an embrace of the more accessible side of R&B, equally, there's a quieter introspection that remains, and a dash of experimentalism present even on standouts like 'What You Told Me', which see him lean right into the pop stylings. Treble already has a back catalogue rich with collaborations and he's assembled an impressively diverse cast of rappers and vocalists across the album's 16 tracks. What's more impressive is the sheer breadth of urban tempos that he's able to produce across, seemingly with ease. **ANGUS PATERSON**



Saine
Ceramics
Omena
Soothing sonic bath

Finland's Saine is a real album specialist. As good as his 12" have been since 2008, his sound works best when stretched out over the course of a journeying LP. And that's just what 'Ceramics' is, an immersive listen, full of stylistic twists and turns. Sounds bleed, melodies drift and vocals decay before your very ears. Like lava oozing in a lamp, tracks are in constant flux on this sixth superb album. On 'Moonbather', painterly synths leave wispy tails as muddled beats make for suggestive rhythms. Hazy pads bring dreamy nostalgia, while wiggling bass gets you doing the moving the same way during 'The Ropes'. The superbly cuddly 'Bounce' is muted dub house funk and 'Escape U' has kaleidoscopic colours and a charming sense of naivety. Beautiful and intimate, leaves you feeling all warm and gooey inside. **KRISTAN J CARYL**



TUKAN
Atoll
MAGMA/N.E.W.S.
Computerless math rock

Brussels-based quartet TUKAN have challenged themselves to take listeners on a "computerless electronic journey" for their debut album. Their analogue-only set-up is testament to their forensic musicianship, which hears zippy guitars, funky bass riffs and starry keys wind around complex time signatures. It's electronic math rock, at once strung taut by house beats and loosened by jazz rhythms, reflecting the free-flowing, improvisational nature of their songcraft. Despite tracks being ocean-themed (see 'Lagoon' and 'Black Pearl'), a space rock feel permeates the album. Dusky delay is cranked up for the guitars on the electro stomp of 'Opal'. The dexterous dynamics, guitar blips and wildly shifting rhythms of 'Raymond' summon an image of an astronaut's troubled mission. A vivid odyssey of space and sea. **CHARLOTTE KROL**



Soweto Kinch
White Juju
LSO Live
Takedown of modern Britain

By naming this 75-minute takedown of modern Britain 'White Juju', award-winning British saxophonist and rapper Soweto Kinch inverts the 'savage' or 'primitive' connotations surrounding the word juju. Recorded live at the Barbican with the London Symphony Orchestra during last year's London Jazz Festival, tension accumulates and dissipates across the album as sweeping violins and staccato horns underpin scathing spoken word. Kinch holds a mirror up to the recent surge of chaos and regressive policies that have seized this era with a defiant and eclectic mix of jazz, hip-hop and orchestral music. 'Chaos,' an early offering, lives up to its name and more. Urgent free jazz notes sprawl over soundbites of Boris Johnson announcing lockdown rules, a stark reminder of pandemic instability. Unsettling, yet ultimately cathartic disturba. **EMEKA OKONKWO**



Mehmet Aslan
The Sun Is Parallel
Planisphere Editorial
Polyphonic futurism

Since cutting his teeth on the 2014 EP 'Mechanical Turk', Mehmet Aslan has gained a formidable reputation for his multi-genre multicultural compositions. His debut album here cements this eclecticism with a moody fusion of rock, hip-hop, Turkish folk and a dash of hauntology. 'Domo' bears a striking resemblance to instrumental hip-hop maestros Kid Loco and Ancient Astronauts, angsty guitar flourishes mingling with a scraping snare. On 'Tangerine' a gnarly bass riff frames the mournful vocals of flamenco vocalist Niño de Elche, who sings in Spanish about the struggles of displacement. The record's central thesis comes through in a ghostly sample on 'Private Soundscape', where composer R. Murray Schaefer says, "In a way the world is a huge composition... we can add more beautiful sounds." A well-sculpted tapestry of textures. **BECCA INGLIS**



Augenwasser
The Big Swim
Bongo Joe
Electro-folk frisson

On his third outing as Augenwasser, Swiss polymath Elias Raschle enmeshes his warm, folk roots with a growing proclivity for left-field electronica. Fatigued by a daily grind, he dreamily and hypnotically drifts through a suffusion of Casio preset rhythms, snozzled and floaty saxophone, and padded electronic drums, pausing only to pour over half-spoken, semi-poetic ramblings. It's an unease that diffuses somewhat as the 'The Big Swim' presses onwards, and, amidst the trademark slurred, synth-noir downers, we find Raschle paddling into warmer waters. Melodious ascending keys and a surprisingly liberal use of the major key flesh out a mid-album mover so catchy it forgets to be portentous ('Speak Your Mind') before diffusing into a synth ode to staying afloat on 'Keep It Together'. This is Raschle breathing new life into the ballad just when it needed it. **OLIVIA STOCK**