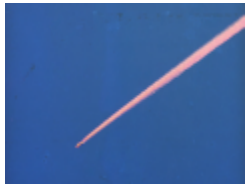


Max's Top Ten Favorite Albums of 2017

Added by Max Hannum on January 3, 2018.

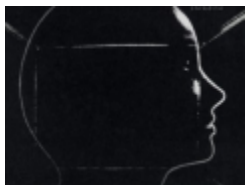
King Krule- The OOZ

I can't say I expected to enjoy this album as much as I did, and I enjoyed this album a lot. It's not often seen a piece drip with so much style and have just as much substance to back it up. Archie Marshall continues to be an intriguing character, but here now there's a lot more humanity to his personality. With the soft jazzy backdrop to compliment his deep vocals and slow demeanor, there's greater sense of maturity felt within the sound he has developed.



Slowdive- S/T

I had the pleasure of listening to a slew of shoegaze inspired albums this year. While I found excellence in all of them in their own way, deep down I knew the crown would end up going to the originals. The return of Slowdive was something that managed to be a breath of fresh air while still maintaining the sonic embrace we all know. It's a measure of the talent of a musician to stay true to their identity and still grow with the time.



Forest Swords- Compassion

In just the right capacity, a record can have enough ingenuity to give it a life of its own. There is such a high level of organic composition in this album that it almost could be conceived as a natural occurrence. Often experimental electronic music has layers of well calculated loops and sampling. Forest Swords managed this and gave his work legs to stand on its own, creating a living album.



Converge- The Dusk in Us

There is no questioning for the consistent quality that will come from a Converge record. Every snare still hits, the chords are still intricate, everything performed has been conditioned down to a science. Kurt Ballou has easily solidified as the greatest producer across the Metalcore genre and this album is proof enough.



Xiu Xiu- FORGET

Jamie Stewart at his peak is when he's most unsettling, but you can never quite pinpoint how he'll manage this when he comes up with something. *FORGET* is confusing as it is versatile. Stewart's haunting crier is present as always, yet there's so much daunting and suffocatingly bombastic instrumentation that you can't ignore his cries. Even at his slowest and softest ballads, there's this unobtainable intrigue on story Stewart is trying to tell. So comes the concept of *FORGET*.



The World is a Beautiful Place & I Am No Longer Afraid to Die- Always Foreign

"Inspiring" is not a word often meant to be used lightly. It often reaches down into the core of what someone believes to be so invigorating it upholds their sensibilities. The World is a Beautiful Place has shown to capture the anxiety and tragedy of learning how to make it through life, in both from the view of the adolescent and the mature. *Always Foreign* tackles something that is present across all ages, the mystery in what happens in the world around us. Now as we bear witness to an unfathomable political climate in an era where it's most accessible, one can not help but be overwhelmed. But TWIAP takes you by the hand, twinkling guitars and crescendos in all, and let's you know this isn't the end.



Rose Elinor Dougall- Stellar

To calculate my experience with this album, first listen I thought, “this was pretty good.” Second listen I thought, “this was pretty good.” But on the third listen, that’s when it all hit me at once. I couldn’t actually thoroughly elaborate why this record struck with me as much as it did. There’s the dazzling composition that’s noticeable in all great Indietronica. But if I had to wager a guess I’d chalk it up to Dougall herself in all her strengths and beauty as a front woman. Without her you would never feel the swelling curiosity that is made in this album’s mysticism.



Open Mike Eagle- Brick Body Kids Still Daydream

I would’ve predicted given my history with Open Mike Eagle that I would praise this record. There’s still a special facet *Brick Body Kids Still Daydream* that Mike Eagle demonstrates specifically here. It’s a monologue or even a conversation about life that not many people are told about. In its most bluntly personal moments, there’s still a humbleness to his demeanor. The story being told comes straight from the heart, and you do genuinely feel with him.



Protomartyr- Relatives in Descent

One of my favorite feelings in the world is listening to a great Post Punk record. Protomartyr made a damn immaculate record. Typically in an album there’s a clear structure to the sound being presented. Protomartyr tells a story that is dizzying but jaw-dropping. The tirades are muddled but all too palpable, it hits close to the reality we live in that everyone in the room will turn to them. Ravings of lunacy or truth can not quite be established, yet that’s all the more to love it for what it has done.



Mount Eerie- A Crow Looked at Me

On December 1, 2017, my grandmother, Ocie Kathleen Hannum, passed away at the age of 80. For a period of time there were many ailments affecting her body and she was suffering greatly from it. The last time I saw her was two weeks before.

When I first listened to this record, I did anticipate it to be the one I considered the best of the year. I've always had an infatuation with Phil Elverum's music. Established for years as a unique artist defining the Indie Folk sound with low-fi aesthetics. With his critical acclaim by his side, one would think his career was set.

When Phil's wife passed away due to cancer, many fans were left struck at the tragedy and felt greatly for Phil. Not many would have anticipated the release soon after the event occurred. But as a musician, Phil likely felt a need to output his thoughts.

This record is not something anyone should listen to. I had trouble getting through it the first time around. It feels like an invasion of privacy, as every track feels like a peek inside another person's secrets and vulnerabilities. Such thoughts are considered not meant for anyone else but the person who created it. Thing is, Phil never tried to make an album. This is not the work of a songwriter trying to make a song. This is Phil Elverum. Not Mount Eerie, not The Microphones, this is Phil and no one else.

For most of the albums on this list I listened to it once more to refresh my thoughts. I couldn't finish this album. The tenseness felt in my body caused too much pain with each listen. I think that's because anyone who has experienced death of loved ones, they see themselves in Elverum. All the gruesome, depressing, sensitive details match with each other. So with that being said, what can be learned here from Phil Elverum is what we all will go through, we move on. As Phil misses his wife, I miss my grandmother, but we all move on.

