

A collection of song reviews by Dana Getz, as published on EW.com.

The Growlers, “I’ll Be Around”

The Growlers have always toed the line between SoCal calm and southern grit, lacing lax, sun-dipped soundscapes with a rough-and-tumble kick. On their latest, “I’ll Be Around,” they set their sights much further, borrowing a little New York cool from The Strokes’ Julian Casablancas, who also produced their aptly named upcoming album, *City Club*. Brooks Nielsen’s graveled howl is arresting as ever, but it’s the instrumentals that ultimately steal the show: clattering drums and funky guitars give way to scuzzy psychedelics. “I’ll Be Around” is their most divergent track in recent memory, but it’s also their most polished. **B+**

M.I.A. ft. ZAYN, “Freedun”

The most anticipated track on [M.I.A.’s *A/M*](#) was also her most controversial, sparking backlash online after a lyric was [inaccurately quoted](#). But the uproar that trailed its release was tame by M.I.A.’s standards, and the song itself is actually one of her most subdued in years. On it, she dials back her smug, subversive rhymes to match guest star ZAYN’s ultra-melodic croon, recalling the summery, free-floating glide that made “[Paper Planes](#)” a late aught smash. It’s refreshing to see the Sri Lankan rapper can still shine even without her outlandish shtick. **A-**

Kanye West, “Saint Pablo”

[Last week, Kanye West plucked](#) *The Life of Pablo* from its Tidal home for yet another round of post-released tweaks, adding surprise new song “Saint Pablo” to its already mammoth tracklist. Assisted by Londoner Sampha’s melancholic coo and a brooding set of minimalist production, Kanye bites into the tailspin of headline-grabbing behavior that’s trailed him since the album’s initial February release. “The media said it was outlandish spendin’ / The media said he’s way out of control / I just feel like I’m the only one not pretendin’ / I’m not out of control, I’m just not in they control,” he opines. If *TLOP* served as a brilliantly bizarre dive into Kanye’s various psyches, “Saint Pablo” may be the rapper at his sanest: refreshingly self-aware and still not giving a fuck. **B+**

Sylvan Esso, “Radio”

Two years after unleashing their delightfully offbeat self-titled debut, Sylvan Esso resurfaced for the second time with “Radio,” a technicolor dancefloor bop that’s equal parts sweet and sardonic. Singer Amealia Meath buries industry digs beneath a jittery electro pop beat, veiling her disdain for music’s machine-like demand with the duo’s most addictive hook to date. It’s not an overly inventive track, but it’s certainly their most commercial, and that’s sort of the point. **B+**

Danny L. Harle ft. Carly Rae Jepsen, “Super Natural”

Since Carly Rae Jepsen first scaled the charts with 2012 sleeper smash “Call Me Maybe,” we’ve heard two variants of the Canadian breakout: the bouncy, bubblegum soar of *Kiss* and the synthy ‘80s froth of *E•MO•TION*. “Super Natural,” her collaboration with British newcomer Danny L Harle, straddles the two styles, padding her featherlight coo with swirling electronics and techno throbs. But the song feels dull against the high-beam gloss of *E•MO•TION*, reverting to boilerplate dance pop rather than breaking new ground. **C+**

Sad13, “Get A Yes”

Lurching melodies and jagged riffs have oft defined Speedy Ortiz’s work, so it’s initially puzzling that frontwoman Sadie Dupuis opted to cut them from her debut solo track as Sad13, “Get A Yes.” Instead, she favors shimmering, synth-assisted pop, thrusting her weight behind the poignant lyricism that’s long informed her output. Here, she rallies behind a powerful, hyper-relevant message about the importance of sexual consent. It’s an odd pairing, but Dupuis has never played by the rules. **B**

Peter Bjorn and John, “Dominos”

On June 10, Peter Bjorn and John will reemerge from a lengthy hiatus with *Breakin Point*, their seventh effort and first in five years. The Swedish trio previously teased a pair of sunny pop tunes, and now they’re back with the most electric yet. “Dominos” unfolds like a pent-up spring, slicing jittery disco beats with an echoic cascade of a chorus. “We fall like dominos,” singer Peter Morén chants atop its high-powered pulse. Sounds like they’re gearing up for a smash. **A-**

Frank Ocean, “Nikes”

On Saturday, Frank Ocean finally unveiled *Blonde*, his highly anticipated, long-delayed follow up to *Channel Orange*, and second record in as many days. The ensuing album is a quietly commanding, minimalist effort best consumed with careful listening, but opener “Nikes” serves as a suitable snapshot: soft, ethereal melodies waft through warped vocals and sluggish bass, letting meditations on life, hedonism, and police violence bleed deep. Ocean’s echoic second verse engulfs the back half of the song, ending with a beautifully subdued end-of-summer toast to fleeting love and living with abandon. And, true to form, he’s got two versions. **A**

Miguel, “Cadillac”

Miguel’s sultry tenor might be built for the bedroom, but he polished off his dancing shoes for “Cadillac,” his soundtrack entry for upcoming ‘70s drama *The Get Down*. Teasing a hot-blooded backseat romp, the retro jam recalls many of the era’s signature grooves without going full-blown re-run. Soaring disco strings and funky horns give way to seductive psychedelics, proving his slinky tunes sound sexy in any decade. **B+**

Major Lazer ft. Justin Bieber and MØ, “Cold Water”

For “Cold Water,” Major Lazer re-tapped the team that drove home some of their biggest hits: MØ helmed *Peace Is the Mission* earworm “[Lean On](#),” while Bieber led club staple “[Where Are Ü Now](#)” from frontman Diplo’s side project Jack Ü. Their latest release sounds simultaneously nostalgic and fresh, coating their bangers’ slick vocals with a subtle homage to an early ‘00s smash; Those opening bars are [peak Jesse McCartney](#). **B+**

Hamilton Leithauser + Rostam, “A 1000 Times”

Since [departing Vampire Weekend](#) in January, Rostam Batmanglij has road-tested a number of sounds, from the soft, ethereal swing of “[EOS](#)” to the pop rock clamor of Ra Ra Riot collab “[Water](#).” “A 1000 Times,” the debut single from his new band with The Walkmen’s Hamilton Leithauser, ditches his pristine falsetto for rough-hewn rock and Leithauser’s graveled howl. It’s his grittiest and most divergent track to date, but one that proves Rostam is more than a one-trick pony. **B+**

Miguel, “Come Through and Chill”

One year after sharing his excellent third LP, [Wildheart](#), Miguel rechristens his seductive R&B throne with a summery, blissed out ode to ex sex. “Just say you will, will, will / Come through and chill, chill, chill,” he beckons across a quivering, come-hither beat from Salaam Remi (Amy Winehouse, Nas, Fergie). His silky tenor definitely has us begging for something: more Miguel. **B+**

Chance the Rapper, “Blessings”

The first cut from Chance the Rapper’s *Coloring Book* is also one of his smoothest. On “Blessings,” the Chicago emcee reinvigorates the gospel-soaked sound he flaunted on Social Experiment team-up *Surf* last May, punctuating his spoken word-style flow with sizzling horns and a blown-out church choir. “I don’t make songs for free, I make them for freedom,” he proclaims. We’ll take them either way. **A**

Matt and Kim, “Let’s Run Away”

Just over a year after *New Glow*’s 2015 release, Matt and Kim treated fans to a [surprise EP](#), titled *We Were the Weirdos*, amid their April 24 Coachella set. Save for the spastic “Please No More,” much of the project sees the duo curb the caffeinated blasts they’ve made their trademark. Its second track standout, “Let’s Run Away,” lends the record an even keel, lacing erratic instrumentals with a sexy, “Oo”-heavy hook. It’s fun without being in your face, ramping up *New Glow*’s polished production without losing the group’s signature silliness; who could forget that weird-but-welcomed Kevin Bacon shout out? **B**

Billie Marten, “Milk & Honey”

Billie Marten has already raked in high praise for her small but burgeoning discography. On her latest, “Milk & Honey,” the British wunderkind proves why. Her gentle lilt coasts effortlessly across its spare but gorgeous expanse, swelling from sparse acoustics to a lush, brass-accented ballad. “Savor the taste of sugar, but all you want is milk / More than you can drink / All you want is honey, you can’t take the sting,” she croons on the sweet and sour ode. Not bad for a 16-year-old. **A-**

J Dilla feat. Nas, “The Sickness”

The Diary, J Dilla’s long-lost vocal album, is a posthumous exploration of the late rapper’s indelible stamp on hip-hop. On “The Sickness,” he seems electrifyingly alive, slicing Madlib’s menacing beat with verses as vehement as they are brash. Nas doesn’t retreat, either; his jabs are just as lethal. **A-**

Taylor Bennett, “Straight From the Bottom”

Taylor Bennett stepped from behind big brother Chance the Rapper’s shadow with his debut album, *Broad Shoulders*, taking a confident leap into Chicago hip-hop with an unsurprisingly polished LP. Just three months later, the rap wunderkind returns with a sleek new slow jam, “Straight From the Bottom,” solidifying his status as a promising up-and-comer with deft lyricism beyond his 19 years. **A-**

Erykah Badu, “Come and See Badu”

Drake and PARTYNEXTDOOR’s slow-fizz club ballad “Come and See Me” got two R&B makeovers last week, one courtesy of up-and-comer [SZA](#) and the other from industry heavy hitter Erykah Badu. As of late, Badu’s built a reputation as a remix pro, having put her wildly original stamp on everything from Kanye West’s “[Real Friends](#)” to the Isley Brothers “[Hello It’s Me](#).” Though her “Come and See Me” spin is relatively true to the original take, there’s something reinvigorating about her smoky, low down croon. A for talent, C for originality—we know Badu’s got better. **B**

of Montreal, “Let’s Relate”

of Montreal have delved into almost every genre across their decade-long career, but they’ve rarely drawn from the contemporary. For [Innocence Reaches](#), the Georgia band’s impending 14th record, frontman Kevin Barnes announced they’d unveil a sound fit for the 21st century. Third single “Let’s Relate” is their most modern to date, blending pulsating bass, glitched out echoes, and Barnes’ robotic monotone. The production isn’t earth shattering, but its bouncy electronics are enough to make your head bob. **B-**

Wolf Parade, “Automatic”

On the beloved (and newly reunited) indie-rockers’ new *EP4*, they bounce back with a quickie: four tracks in under 12 minutes. Oddball opener “Automatic” is the shortest of the collection, but perhaps most true to the Wolf Parade’s kinetic sound: psychedelic organs, springy beats, angular guitar riffs, and Dan Broeckner’s skittish vocals. **B+**