



HIGHLIFE WORLD MUSIC

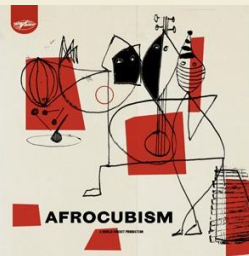
BEST OF 2010 – OUR FAVOURITE ALBUMS OF THE YEAR

1317 Commercial Drive Vancouver, BC tel: 604-251-6964

email: info@highlifeworld.com web: highlifeworld.com



BEST OF 2010



AFROCUBISM

Cuba/Mali

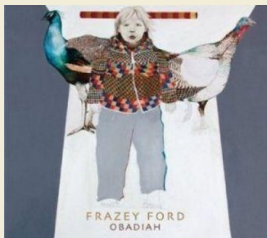
The original Buena Vista Social Club idea, to bring some of Mali's stellar musicians to play with the cream of Cuban music, has at long last born fruit some 14 years later. Here we have Eliades Ochoa and his superb band meeting some of our favourite African musicians, including kora master Toumani Diabate, n'goni great Bassekou Kouyate, guitar wizard Djelimady Tounkara and vocalist Kasse Mady Diabate. What results is music that is at once sublime, soothing and unique, the perfect cure for winter seasonal disorder.



LEE FIELDS *My World*

USA

Recording since the 60's, making his 'comeback' in '92 (when Sharon Jones was discovered singing backup for him), Lee Fields at last hits the musical jackpot with 'My World'. With his 1971 era Stax sound, Fields proves once again that classic soul music is alive and kicking.



FRAZEY FORD *Obadiah*

Canada

Our favourite East Van singer, formerly of Highlife faves The Be Good Tanyas, steps out on her own on this deeply soulful recording. Featuring her landlord, neighbour and Mom, among other guest artists, Frazey proves once again that homegrown is always freshest.



SHARON JONES *I Learned The Hard Way*

The reigning queen of retro soul has come a long way from her 70's disco roots, finding musical heaven with her Dap Kings band as they dig deeper and deeper into their 60's era Memphis soul style. On her latest, Jones refines her sound with impassioned vocals, cool backing singers and spot-on horn section, delivering a refreshing brew of sonic delights.



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TONY ALLEN *Secret Agent* Nigeria

The Nigerian drum sorcerer, who co-created Afrobeat music in the late 60's with Fela Kuti, is back with this surprisingly fresh recording. With the soulful vocals of Ayo on several tracks as well as a stellar horn section, this album offers many delights within its varied musical panorama.



ARCADE FIRE *The Suburbs* Canada

The Montreal pop powerhouse offers on their third album an overflowing bundle of potent, propulsive melodies and sonic ideas. These meditations on lost youth and disappearing neighbourhoods, compellingly delivered by vocalist Win Butler, comprise an album of myriad listening pleasures.



ALOE BLACC *Good Things* USA

Leaving his hip hop roots behind, Aloe Blacc finds inspiration in 70's era soul. With bass lines from the Curtis Mayfield songbook and a style that echoes Marvin Gaye, he's crafted an album of memorable songs about the challenges of life in America today. Check out his cool version of the Velvet Underground's 'Femme Fatale'.



JUSTIN TOWNES EARLE

Harlem River Blues USA

Kicking off his new album with a rollicking tune about drowning himself in the Harlem River, Earle proves himself to be a man of many moods and musical tastes. Echoing everyone from Johnny Cash to Woody Guthrie, he delivers a many-faceted collection of tales, set to everything from stripped down folk to rockabilly on this impressive disc.



GOTAN PROJECT *Tango 3.0* France

The leading nuevo tango outfit, often imitated but never equaled, is back with a fresh take on their patented sound. Back too is sultry Catalan vocalist Christina Villalonga, as well as sundry spoken word samples, adding an atmospheric, cinematic element to this impressive return.



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PATTY GRIFFIN *Downtown Church* USA
This beautiful new Patty Griffin release finds her teaming up with producer Buddy Miller to record a very atypical gospel album. Exploring various strands of gospel roots, from chain gang to southern ballad to Mexican folksong, this uplifting collection recalls the 'O Brother' soundtrack. Sublime!



KOTTARASHKY *Opa Hey!* Bulgaria
Here is a stunning meeting of timeless Balkan voices, folk instrumentation and digital technology. Based in Sofia, Bulgaria, Kottarashky's break-neck pace presents us with an alluring and addictive musical experience.



BASSEKOU KOUYATE *I Speak Fula*
The n'goni master, who created new versions of this ancient stringed instrument, is back with another exciting record. Led by four n'gonis and the wonderful Amy Sacko on vocals, they are joined here by Vieux Farka Toure and Toumani Diabate on this essential Malian recording.



RAY LAMONTAGNE *God Willin' And The Creek Don't Rise* USA
On his fourth album, Ray Lamontagne decided to self-produce in his Massachusetts home studio using his superb touring band. Led by Greg Leisz' stellar pedal steel and Lamontagne's resonant vocals, this album confirms him as one of the most consistently stimulating singer-songwriters around.



BETTIE LAVETTE *Interpretations: The British Rock Songbook* USA
Nearly 50 years after her first hit, Bettye LaVette brings us this remarkable album of her interpretations of songs by artists like The Stones, The Beatles and Pink Floyd. Finding the soul at the heart of each song, she re-invents many classics on this moving recording.



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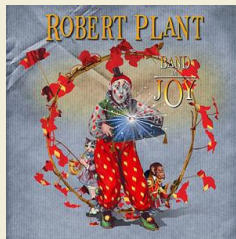


YOUSOU N'DOUR

Dakar-Kingston

Senegal

Senegal's greatest vocalist, whose pan-African focus has led to many rewarding collaborations, now heads to Jamaica's Tuff Gong studio to record with various reggae legends. Partly a tribute to Bob Marley and partly a uniquely Senegalese take on reggae music, this is a far-reaching recording full of joyous musical wonder.



ROBERT PLANT *Band Of Joy* UK

After having redefined himself on his previous 'Raising Sand' album, Plant continues his exploration of Americana roots on his latest. Teaming up with producer/guitarist Buddy Miller and singing duets with Patty Griffin, he shows that aging rock stars need not resign themselves to cranking out their old hits endlessly.



GIL SCOTT-HERON *I'm New Here* USA

The 70's era soul-jazz pioneer, whose commentaries on racial politics and the state of America were so influential on hip-hop (as the numerous samples of his work demonstrate) is back after a long hiatus. He teams up with XL Records main man Richard Russell on these striking song-stories as he reflects on his own life experiences, backed by gritty cinematic soundscapes.



SOUL JAZZ ORCHESTRA

Rising Sun

Canada

After two superb Afro-beat albums, this Ottawa-based group adds a strong dose of 60's era Coltrane-tinged jazz to its funky upbeat sound, bringing together two great musical traditions.



THE SPY FROM CAIRO

Secretly Famous

USA

Belly dance music meets Dub and Electronica on the latest by New York-based oud player/producer Moreno Visini (AKA Zeb). Sultry Tunisian singer Ghalia Benali's vocals grace a few tracks as the Egyptian and Moroccan melodies and rhythms meet urban beats and bass lines.



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ALI FARKA TOURE & TOUMANI DIABATE

Mali

Ali & Toumani

This last recording of the late Malian guitar legend Ali Farka Toure in collaboration with kora maestro Toumani Diabate is a beautiful farewell to his countless fans around the world. Aided by the great Cuban bassist Orlando 'Cachaito' Lopez (on what turned out to be his last recording too) and his son Vieux Farka Toure, the heart of these sessions lays in the magical interplay between guitar and kora on some timeless West African themes.



VAMPIRE WEEKEND

Contra USA

With its topsy-turvy rhythms incorporating everything from surf-rock to ska and African pop, to its inventive, at times delirious wordplay, Vampire Weekend have managed to carve a unique niche for their ridiculously catchy pop-rock. Guitars, marimbas, thumb pianos, M.I.A. samples and all manner of surprising twists spice their latest concoctions, sure to put a smile on your face.



ANIBAL VELASQUEZ Y SU

CONJUNTO

Mambo Loco

Colombia

Direct from the dancefloors of Colombia's Caribbean coast comes this blistering disc by one of the country's musical legends. Still going strong after 58 years of music-making, Anibal Velasquez spices up these cumbia, guaracha and son rhythms with his incendiary accordion playing. Essential!



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HIGHLIFERS TOP PICKS

DENNIS NELLA

1. Lee Fields *My World*
2. Afroclubism
3. Ray Lamontagne *God Willin'...*
4. Robert Plant *Band of Joy*
5. Kottarashky *Opa Hey!*
6. Vampire Weekend *Contra*
7. Frazey Ford *Obadiah*
8. Arcade Fire *The Suburbs*
9. Gil Scott-Heron *I'm New Here*
10. Bettye Lavette *Interpretations*

KEVIN FINSETH

1. Kottarashky *Opa Hey!*
2. Lee Fields *My World*
3. Youssou N'dour *Dakar-Kingston*
4. Frazey Ford *Obadiah*
5. Afroclubism
6. Soul Jazz Orchestra *Rising Sun*
7. Ali & Toumani
8. The Sadies *Darker Circles*
9. Paul Pigat *Boxcar Campfire*
10. Gotan Project *Tango 3.0*

NILS VON HAHN

1. Sharon Jones *I Learned The...*
2. Tony Allen *Secret Agent*
3. Lee Fields *My World*
4. Afroclubism
5. Frazey Ford *Obadiah*
6. The Spy From Cairo *Secretly...*
7. Adham Shaikh *Universal...*
8. Bassekou Kouyate *I Speak Fula*
9. Kottarashky *Opa Hey!*
10. Broken Bells

RAUL ESPINOZA

1. Chocquibtown *Oro*
2. Gil Scott-Heron *I'm New Here*
3. Lee Fields *My World*
4. Aloe Blacc *Good Things*
5. Root Manuva meets Wrongton
6. The Heavy *House That Dirt Built*
7. Erykah Badu *New Amerykah II*
8. Radio Citizen *Hope & Despair*
9. Tricky *Mixed Race*
10. Coco Rosie *Grey Oceans*

ENDURING HIGHLIFE CLASSICS FROM THE PAST DECADE

- 2000 St. Germain *Tourist*
- 2001 O Brother, Where Art Thou?
- 2002 Gotan Project *La Revancha Del Tango*
- 2003 Be Good Tanyas *Chinatown*
- 2004 Bebo & Cigala *Lagrimas Negras*
- 2005 Amadou & Mariam *Dimanche a Bamako*
- 2006 Ska Cubano *Ay Caramba!*
- 2007 Gaudi & Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan *Dub Qawwali*
- 2008 Thievery Corporation *Radio Retaliation*
- 2009 Steve Earle *Townes*