HIGHLIFE WORLD MUSIC

BEST OF 2011 – OUR FAVOURITE ALBUMS OF THE YEAR
1317 Commercial Drive Vancouver, BC **tel:** 604-251-6964
email: info@highlifeworld.com **web:** highlifeworld.com

BEST OF 2011

BOMBINO *Agadez* Niger
From the Saharan sands of Niger comes this recording by the brilliant guitarist/vocalist Bombino, who manages to create a distinctive desert blues style with echoes of both Ali Farka Toure and Tinariwen. An essential recording!

TOM WAITS *Bad As Me* USA
Gravelly-voiced poet and musical maverick Tom Waits returns with this strong batch of rocking blues stompers and tender ballads, joined by the likes of Keith Richards, Marc Ribot and David Hidalgo. Beginning with a train journey north to Chicago and ending in a bar on New Year's eve (singing 'Auld Lang Syne' no less) this is a trip worth taking. Highly recommended!

KIRAN AHLUWALIA
Aam Zameen: Common Ground Canada
Indo-Canadian vocalist Kiran Ahluwalia, known for her beautifully updated Ghazal music, this time does some continent hopping as she collaborates with desert blues sensations Tinariwen and Terakaft. From the opening take on Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan's classic 'Mustt Mustt', propelled by handclaps and call and response vocals, we are in for an exciting cross-cultural musical feast.

WILCO *The Whole Love* USA
The 8th release by Jeff Tweedy and cohorts impressively reprises the various musical inclinations of this effortlessly creative group. From the off-kilter whirlwind of the opener to the epic beauty of the 12 minute closer, this is an album by a band at the top of their game.

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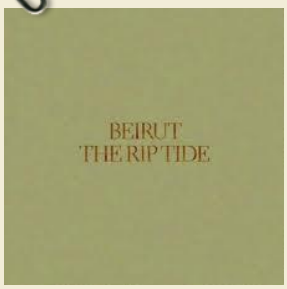
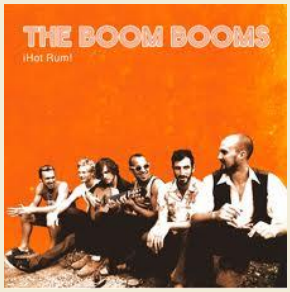


BEIRUT The Rip Tide USA

Zach Condon, who has previously regaled us with his Balkan, French and Mexican themed albums, this time takes his music back home on this wonderfully evocative recording. The familiar brass, strings and baritone vocals are back on these songs of epic melancholy as the music once again carries us away.

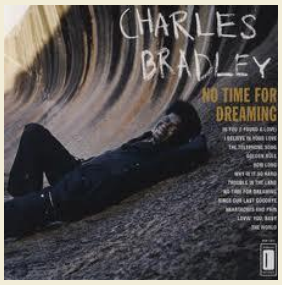
BON IVER *Bon Iver* USA

Following the hushed beauty of 'for Emma, forever ago', Justin Vernon and cohorts have managed to deliver another shimmering jewel. Strings, woodwinds and horns (including Colin Stetson's sublime sax) add colour to these tone poems that explore a variety of moods on this impressive recording.



BOOM BOOMS *Hot Rum* Canada

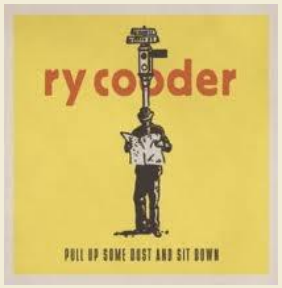
East Van wunderkinds offer this great new album full of reggae got soul with a Latin twist. With echoes of Bedouin Soundclash and Michael Franti, these up-full tunes will have you singing along.



CHARLES BRADLEY

No Time For Dreaming USA

At the ripe age of 62, Charles Bradley deemed it time to release his debut album, and we're glad he did. On the Daptone subsidiary Dunham, with the wonderful Menahan Street Band backing him up, Bradley brings us his tales of struggle and triumph, with echoes of classic JB and Stax, as well as the more recent Lee Fields. Get up on the soul revival!



RY COODER USA

Pull Up Some Dust And Sit Down

As he sees the new depression swirling around him, Ry Cooder thought it time to channel Woody Guthrie on these tales of hard times, leavened with his biting satire and wit. He brings accordion maestro Flaco Jimenez and son Joachim on board this entertaining disc.

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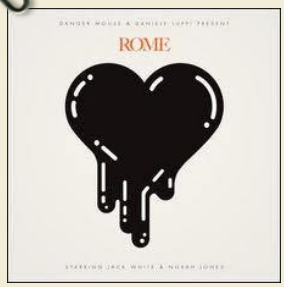


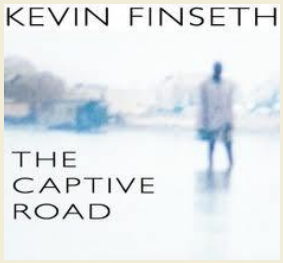
DANGER MOUSE & DANIELE LUPPI

Rome USA/Italy

This tribute to the classic Italian soundtrack music of the 60's and 70's, incorporating an Italian choir which graced some of those magical recordings, as well as the vocal talents of Norah Jones and Jack White, stands on its own as an album of immense grace and beauty.

FEIST *Metals* Canada

After the huge success of her bouncy 'The Reminder' album, Feist offers a more introspective, but no less affecting album that conjures a remarkable range of moods and musical quirks. Once again collaborating with maestro Chilly Gonzales, she manages to channel her muse and wondrous voice while redefining her music.



KEVIN FINSETH *The Captive Road*

Highlife's own music maestro steps up with his second album of translucent piano melodies, this time joined by Peggy Lee's sublime cello, Frazey Ford's soulful harmonies and Alpha Yaya Diallo's mercurial guitar. An East Van triumph!

PJ HARVEY *Let England Shake* UK

The always unpredictable PJ Harvey, previously focused on inner turmoil, this time around looks outward on these meditations on Englishness and the costs of war. Dramatic vocals and gorgeous tunes abound, as she leavens the dark lyrics with humour and inventive musical settings.

MALI LATINO Mali/UK

Afro-Cuban music never sounded better than this wonderful collaboration between British piano/B3 wiz Alex Wilson and some great Malian singers and players. Featuring Madou Sidiki Diabate on kora and multi-instrumentalist Ahmed Fofana, this is definitely a more dynamic sibling to the stately 'Afrocubism' project. Essential!

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DAN MANGAN *Oh Fortune* Canada

Vancouver indie-hero Dan Mangan, whose perky 'Nice, Nice, Very Nice' album propelled him around the globe, returns with a darker, denser recording that sees him exploring new musical horizons. With his impassioned vocals still front and centre, his crack band (led by guitar-wiz Gord Grdina) is augmented by elegantly orchestrated horns and strings. Another winner from Dan!

POMEGRANATES Iran

This welcome collection of forgotten 60's and 70's funk, rock and wide-screen cinematic pop from Iran opens a window on some little known but fascinating music. With one foot in Persian traditions and one foot in the West, these beguiling tunes offer myriad pleasures.

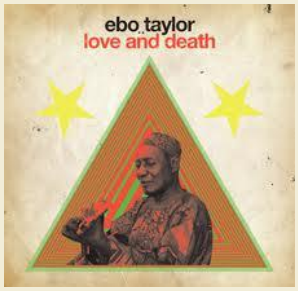
PRINCE FATTY *Super Size* UK

Producer Mike Pelanconi delivers his second impressive album of new classic reggae. Using vintage equipment to get that patented Studio One sound and utilizing the vocal talents of Hollie Cook, Winston Francis and Little Roy, this will thrill lovers of pre-digital roots reggae, complete with real horns and a cracking rhythm section.

TOMMY T Ethiopia/USA

The Prester John Sessions

Tommy T (Gogol Bordello bass player Thomas Gobena) gets back to his Ethiopean roots on this album that mixes 60's style Ethiopiques music with dub and other funky sounds, while Ethiopian vocalist Gigi lends her wonderful voice to a couple of tracks. This is a richly rewarding album.



EBO TAYLOR *Love & Death* Ghana

After an extended hiatus, 74 year old Ghanaian legend Ebo Taylor makes a triumphant return. Guitars, horns and percussion create a whirlwind of rhythms that take us from classic Highlife to contemporary Afrobeat on this consistently captivating album.

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10 FOOT GANJA PLANT

Shake Up The Place USA

Venerable New York reggae posse returns with this impressive new album. With vocalists Sylford Walker and Prince Jazzbo on board, they channel Burning Spear, a youthful Bob Marley and classic 70's rockers sounds, as jazzy horns spice things up.

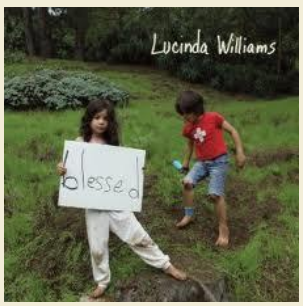
VIEUX FARKA TOURE *The Secret* Mali

This time collaborating with a few prominent American guitarists, including John Scofield, Dave Matthews and Derek Trucks, Vieux Farka Toure nonetheless is front and centre on this invigorating album. Whether on more traditional Mali-based tunes or more outward looking material, his riveting guitar is the standout, either alone or in some inspired company.

GILLIAN WELCH

The Harrow And The Harvest USA

Gillian Welch, along with musical partner David Rawlings, has been releasing some of the most beautiful roots music for the last decade or so. Back with this latest, after a hiatus of 8 years, we're once again blessed with an album of deeply satisfying harmonies on these tales of surviving life's challenges.



LUCINDA WILLIAMS *Blessed* USA

Back with her strongest recording since 1998's 'Car Wheels On A Gravel Road', Lucinda Williams inhabits her upbeat and downbeat songs with undeniable passion and warmth. Aided by Elvis Costello's scorching guitar, Greg Leisz's heart-wrenching pedal steel and Don Was' faultless production, this is about as good as this music gets.

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HIGHLIFERS TOP PICKS

DENNIS NELLA

1. **Gillian Welch** *The Harrow…*
2. **Bombino** *Agadez*
3. **Wilco** *The Whole Love*
4. **Bon Iver** *Bon Iver*
5. **Ebo Taylor** *Love & Death*
6. **Tommy T** *Prester John Sessions*
7. **Beirut** *The Rip Tide*
8. **Danger Mouse** *Rome*
9. **Kevin Finseth** *The Captive Road*
10. **Charles Bradley** *No Time…*

KEVIN FINSETH

1. **Tommy T** *Prester John Sessions*
2. **Mali Latino**
3. **Danger Mouse** *Rome*
4. **Wilco** *The Whole Love*
5. **Bombino** *Agadez*
6. **Lucinda Williams** *Blessed*
7. **Vieux Farka Toure** *The Secret*
8. **The Boom Booms** *Hot Rum*
9. **Marc Ribot** *Silent Movies*
10. **PJ Harvey** *Let England Shake*

NILS VON HAHN

1. **Seun Kuti** *From Africa w/ Fury...*
2. **Ocote Soul Sounds** *Taurus*
3. **Charles Bradley** *No Time…*
4. **Sharon Jones** *Soul Time*
5. **Feist** *Metals*
6. **Vieux Farka Toure** *The Secret*
7. **Tom Waits** *Bad As Me*
8. **Govinda** *Universal On Switch*
9. **Kevin Finseth** *The Captive Road*
10. **The Boom Booms** *Hot Rum*

RAUL ESPINOZA

1. **Bombino** *Agadez*
2. **Sofrito** *Tropical Discotheque*
3. **Sergent Garcia** *Una Y Otra Vez*
4. **Charles Bradley** *No Time…*
5. **Amon Tobin** *Isam*
6. **10 Ft. Ganja Plant** *Shake Up…*
7. **Seun Kuti** *From Africa w/ Fury…*
8. **Beastie Boys** *Hot Sauce Part 2*
9. **Quantic** *Best of*
10. **Kevin Finseth** *The Captive Road*