

# HIGHLIFE RECORDS ~ BEST OF 2018

Excellent cross-border travel, without the bag searches.

MÉLISSA LAVEAUX  
RADYO SIWÈL



## Melissa Laveaux

*Radyo Siwel*

Canada

Canadian born, of Haitian descent, singer-guitarist Melissa Laveaux has fashioned one of the year's most seductive and original offerings. With strong hints of Lhasa's compelling vocal delivery, and with an overall sound arrangement that is both familiar and exotic, this album has spent more time on the Highlife sound-system than any other this year. Intriguing cover art as well.



ECHO PAINTING  
PEGGY LEE

## Peggy Lee

*Echo Painting*

East Van

In my books, the best first and second track one-two punch of the year. The whole thing is stunningly rich and beautiful. As Vancouver's improv music scene seasons into form, here are some of the delicious fruits of its labours by many of its prominent participants. A big band presenting a richly varied tapestry, unfolding as though through history and fully in the here and now.



## Prince

*Piano & A Microphone, 1983*

USA

Recorded between his 5<sup>th</sup> album "1999" and his breakthrough 6<sup>th</sup> "Purple Rain", this intimate set brings the listener into a studio, where it is just us, Prince, and a piano, as advertized. Throughout the songs chosen here, we are – again and again – brought face to face with both Prince's legendary funky use of space and time and his mercurial lyrical creativity.



## Orquesta Akokan

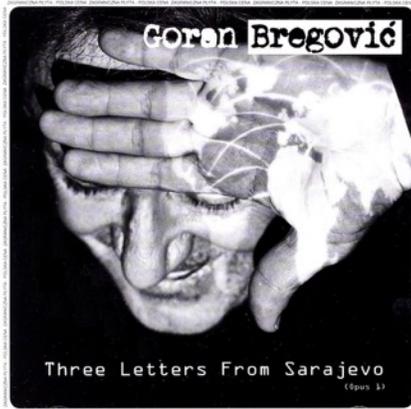
*Orquesta Akokan*

Cuba

Listening to this new LP by Orquesta Akokan, one can't help but feel the spirits of Cuba's musical giants rising from the speakers. The arrangements carry the exquisite beauty, pathos and playfulness of the renowned dance orchestras of the 1940s and 50s who had recorded in the same Areito studios in Centro Havana. (Martin Perna) Trust the ever-reliable Daptone Records to find and release this gem.

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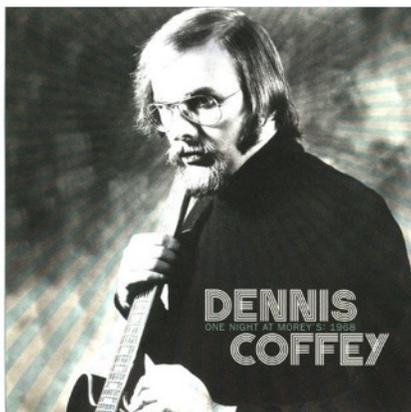
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## Goran Bregovic

*Three Letters From Sarajevo*  
Bosnia / Herzegovina

The Balkans is home to a richly varied musical culture, full of soulfulness, sorrow and wild exuberance. Legendary bandleader Goran Bregovic brings it all with *Three Letters From Sarajevo*, featuring singers and players from the three religions, exchanging and interacting with the various traditions. A beautiful piece of work.



## Dennis Coffey

*One Night At Morey's: 1968*  
USA

In 1968 guitarist Dennis Coffey was a member of the Funk Brothers, had played on many hit sides for groups like the Supremes and the Temptations, and was also an in-demand session guitarist at Motown and other Detroit-based labels. This record catches him in blazing form on a live set as part of a trio led by fellow Detroit session wizard, organist Lyman Woodard. The music they make here is nothing short of astounding, a brilliant mixture of soul, jazz, funk and rock.



## Jeremy Dutcher

*Wolastoqiyik Lintuwakonawa*  
Canada

Toronto-based composer and classically trained operatic tenor Jeremy Dutcher draws from well beyond his 27 years on *Wolastoqiyik Lintuwakonawa* (*Our Maliseet Songs*), literally duetting with ancestral voices from his Wolastoq community in New Brunswick (he's from the Tobique First Nation, one of several Wolastoq communities) on songs that combine genres to create what he calls a constellation of influences: opera collides with electronic, pop, rock and jazz, all interwoven with traditional Wolastoq songs and melodies, many of which haven't been heard by the community — or anyone — for over a hundred years.



## Alanis Obomsawin

*Bush Lady*  
Canada

Originally released in 1985, this stunning recording from filmmaker and singer Alanis Obomsawin is utterly magical and otherworldly. Accompanied by spare orchestral sounds, the stories of displacement and survival rise from a simple but highly effective palette of drum and voice. Unique and timeless!

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## Tony Allen

*The Source*

Nigeria/UK

Long-time Fela Kuti drummer and originator of the Afrobeat drum sound, Tony Allen is found here working out some deliciously groovy jazz chops with the help of a large contingent of French jazz musicians as well as Cameroonian guitar ace Indy Dibongue. A joyful and elegant recording.



## Idris Ackamoor & The Pyramids

*An Angel Fell*

USA

“An Angel Fell” features a sextet with three lead instruments – Ackamoor's soulful tenor saxophone, a violin and electric guitar – along with some occasional chant-like singing, and instantly expands any musical genre you try to locate it within. The music contained in this set is probably most fairly categorized as jazz, and continues the soulful creative legacy of people like Pharoah Saunders, Sun Ra, Alice Coltrane and Albert Ayler. At the same time as respecting deep roots and tradition, this music also often makes you want to get up and dance.



## Angelique Kidjo

*Remain In Light*

Benin

Inspired by nascent hip-hop, Fela Kuti and the trance-like rhythmic rituals of Haitian voodoo, Talking Heads' 1980 LP *Remain in Light* – and its lead single *Once in a Lifetime* – served as a gateway into African music for many of us. It thus makes perfect sense for the Benin-born singer Angélique Kidjo to further “Africanise” the album. Where the Talking Heads' punk-funk was often jerky and machine-like, Kidjo's band add syncopated horn blasts, spangly high-life guitar and some astonishing rhythms, making this a worthy remake of a classic album. (John Lewis, *The Guardian*).

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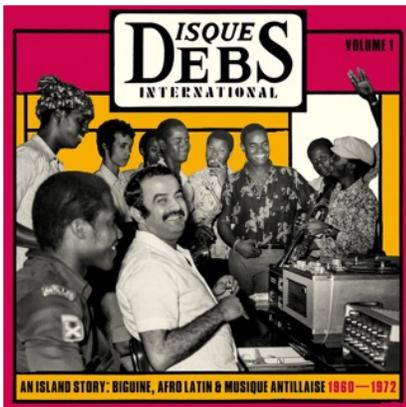


## Oxford American Magazine

*North Carolina Music Issue*

USA

This year's Music Issue (the 20th annual) of the Oxford American magazine takes us on a journey through some of the intriguing musical roots and branches from the state of North Carolina. Again, imagine an eccentric aunt or uncle - with the largest record collection in the world - has sent you a mix of recordings including work by people you know of - like Nina Simone, Thelonious Monk, Earl Scruggs, Elizabeth Cotten, Tift Merritt, Sun Ra, etc. - along with a whole bunch of other music you have never heard of (Ruby Johnson, Big Boy Henry, Malcolm Holcombe, the Teentones, Joe Thompson, etc.). Then imagine they also assemble and send you a 150+ page collection of powerful stories, background information, and historic details about all of this music and these artists. As usual, this issue comes with a CD (24 songs), and now also includes a download card (28 songs).

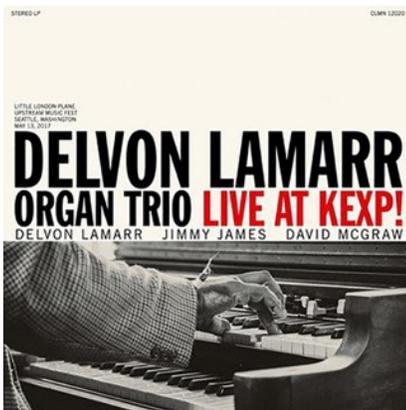


## Disques Debs International

*Vol. 1*

Guadeloupe

One of the most satisfying and surprising reissues of the year comes courtesy of the Strut label from the UK. It features vintage tracks from the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe, a group of islands in the Caribbean whose culture bears the imprint of a complicated colonial past, a history of slavery and bloody rebellion and constant, sea-going contact with Europe, Africa, the Middle East and other Caribbean nations. The 21 tracks here suggest a complex and vibrant local scene, with lots of cross pollination and, for a small island community, an astonishing supply of musical talent.



## Delvon Lamarr Trio

*Live @ KEXP*

USA

This record is the second album release by this band, this year, and features a set they played live at the KEXP studio, in Seattle. It includes a sizzling take on Curtis Mayfield's "Move on Up" and live versions of both sides of the trio's first single from their earlier 2018 release, the equally excellent "Close But No Cigar". In addition to Lamarr's consistently strong organ workout the set also features screaming guitar from his partner Jimmy James.

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## KEVIN FINSETH

1. Melissa Laveaux *Radyo Siwel*
2. Peggy Lee *Echo Painting*
3. Disques Debs International *Vol. 1*
4. Alanis Obomsawin *Bush Lady*
5. Orquesta Akokan
6. Fatoumata Diawara *Fenfo*
7. Goran Bregovic *Three Letters...*
8. Prince *Piano & A Microphone, 1983*
9. Angeliqe Kidjo *Remain In Light*
10. Tony Allen *The Source*



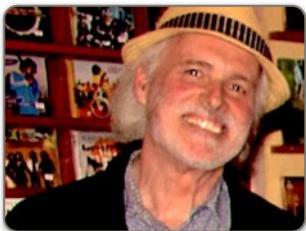
## RAUL ESPINOZA

1. Melissa Laveaux *Radyo Siwel*
2. Tony Allen *The Source*
3. Alanis Obomsawin *Bush Lady*
4. Orquesta Akokan
5. Cypress Hill *Elephants On Acid*
6. Everything Is Recorded
7. Prince *Piano & A Microphone, 1983*
8. Idris Ackamoor *An Angel Fell*
9. Pugs & Crows *Uncle!*
10. The Hobo Radio Show #1



## ANDY WARREN

1. Everything Is Recorded
2. Dennis Coffey *One Night At Morey's 1968*
3. Fatoumata Diawara *Fenfo*
4. Melissa Laveaux *Radyo Siwel*
5. Ólafur Arnalds *re:member*
6. Doyle Bramhall II *Shades*
7. Delvon Lamarr Trio *Live @ KEXP*
8. Idris Ackamoor *An Angel Fell*
9. Prince *Piano & A Microphone, 1983*
10. Peggy Lee *Echo Painting*



## BILL HOOD

- Idris Ackamoor *An Angel Fell*  
Goran Bregovic *Three Letters...*  
Dennis Coffey *One Night At Morey's*  
Delvon Lamarr Trio *Live @ KEXP*  
Melissa Laveaux *Radyo Siwel*  
Peggy Lee *Echo Painting*  
Orkestar Kriminal *Ryobra*  
Prince *Piano & A Microphone, 1983*  
Marc Ribot *Songs Of Resistance*  
Various *We Out Here*



## THEO FINSETH

1. Kamaal Williams *The Return*
2. Charles Bradley *Black Velvet*
3. Beach House *7*
4. Thievery Corporation *Treasures...*
5. Melissa Laveaux *Radyo Siwel*
6. Anderson Paak *Oxnard*
7. Kamasi Washington *Heaven & Earth*
8. Dur Dur of Somalia *Vol. 1 & 2*
9. Kali Uchis *Isolation*
10. Steve Lacy *Steve Lacy Demo*



## NILS VON HAHN

1. Charles Bradley *Black Velvet*
2. David Byrne *American Utopia*
3. Nickodemus *A Long Engagement*
4. Dur Dur Of Somalia *Vol. 1 & 2*
5. Orquesta Akokan
6. Angeliqe Kidjo *Remain In Light*
7. Various *Black Panther Soundtrack*
8. Prince *Piano & A Microphone, 1983*
9. Kaya Project *Up From The Dust*
10. Seun Kutí *Black Times*