

Album of the Issue

The Postmarks

Memoirs At the
End of the World
Unfiltered Records



With a classic feel, a modern and contemporary twist, this album has something of the I've-heard-this-before, but then surprise, surprise it presents a new dynamic.

The Florida-based trio has created something of a sublime, yet experimental record. Often with a cinematic feel encompassing classic soul harmonies, brass horns and sultry vocals, this album is divine.

Hooked from the first track, *No One Said This Would Be Easy* it's evident that this record is emotive, could we be in a James Bond film? Taking the timeless and crossing it with layered arrangements and experimentation, this is the type of sound that very rarely comes around. *Go Jetsetter*, penned by female singer, Tim Yehezkely, explores the pursuit of material pleasures.

This is an album for the thinking person. Reminiscent of The Sundays, The Cardigans and Henry Mancini, *Memoirs At the End of the World* is dynamic and real. It makes a nice change compared to the droning sound of manufactured pop. For further information visit www.thepostmarks.com.

Cherie Federico

First Aid Kit

The Big Black
and The Blue
Wichita



Klara (16) and Johanna (19) Söderberg (AKA First Aid Kit) have really taken the neu-folk scene by storm. Since their *Drunken Trees* EP was released back in February, the sisters have gone from being relatively unknown Swedish teenagers to the darlings of this year's festivals.

The narratives that exist within each song take listeners on a journey through country-tinged pop, seeming much older than they are; their music has a certain tender universality. Opening with *In The Morning* a delightful stage is set, vocals harmonising with that warm fuzzy feeling. *Waltz for Richard* continues the love-and-lost theme, asking, "Were you ever even there?"

With First Aid Kit each song is an experience, often reflecting a path we've all trodden. Beautiful and charming with its Americana sounds underpinned with autoharps and unfolding melodies recalling the Indigo Girls, but this album is distinctly their own. There's no other way to put this: *The Big Black and The Blue* is a treasure trove. For tour dates visit www.myspace.com/thisisfirstaidkit.

Shirley Stevenson

Asobi Seksu

Acoustic at
Olympic Studios
One Little Indian



This album finds Asobi Seksu's core duo – vocalist Yuki Chikudate and guitarist James Hanna offering a fresh take on songs spanning the band's career with new acoustic arrangements. The result is a beautiful departure from their more punk edge, matching the sweet vocals to the instruments behind them. They haven't simply used acoustic instruments; instead, the songs created on this album are a whole new take on their previous counterparts. For example, *Thursday*, previously on *Citrus* (2006), which has been given a complete turnaround.

It illustrates the skill of the band to be able to switch seamlessly from an abrasive punky guitar-filled sound to the ethereal dreamscapes of *Acoustic at Olympic Studios*. It must be heard to be believed, and you won't be disappointed. The album also features tracks previously only available as B-sides, reflecting on the band's past while looking towards the band's future.

The *Acoustic at Olympic Studios* was released 16 November, and Asobi Seksu tour as White Lies' main support this winter. www.asobiseksu.com.

Sophie Gordon

Ólóf Arnalds

Við og við
One Little Indian



If mellow is your thing, then this is the album for you. Well, that's not entirely fair, Ólóf Arnalds, is something of an Icelandic gem. Whenever, we hear Iceland, for some reason Björk is emblazoned in our minds, followed by Sigur Rós, but Arnalds recalls a bit of Regina Spektor with her yearning and tender vocals.

Við og við having first been released in 2007, it won Best Alternative Album at the Iceland Music Awards and since then it has received many accolades and plaudits. A big hit in the USA, Arnalds has played with the likes of Blonde Redhead and The Dirty Projectors. She has received widespread acclaim, having been on the Icelandic music scene for years, as a founding member of Múm.

Released for the first time in the UK, *Við og við* is enchanting and wholesome. Although, us English-speakers are not accustomed to listening to music with words we can't understand, Arnalds transcends that barrier through captivating lullabies. Her second album in both English and Icelandic will be out early 2010. www.olofarnalds.com.

Finnegan Durfee

Laura Gibson

Beasts of Seasons
Souterrain Transmissions



Portland-based Laura Gibson's first full-length album for UK release is immediately arresting. Her beautiful musings on love, life and death are simple layers of guitar picking and soft, haunting vocals. Produced by Tucker Martine of The Decemberists and aided by friends including Rachel Blumberg of Bright Eyes, Gibson is in good company. However, it is clear that *Beasts of Seasons* is entirely personal, as the songs are full of sharp lyrical observations about the human condition.

The more upbeat *Spirited* makes a stunning contrast to the more meditative *Come By Storm* with its rumbling string accompaniment. The album opener *Shadows On Parade* features the sounds of a real parade that happened to be passing at the time of recording, which gives a taste of Gibson's quirky vision for this album.

When listening to *Beasts of Seasons*, you get the feeling that whether she is happy or not, she is not unhappy about it. Enjoy this album with a delicious melancholy and revel in it. www.myspace.com/lauragibson.

Sophie Gordon

The Twilight Sad

Forget The Night Ahead
FatCat



The new album from Kilsyth quartet, The Twilight Sad is shadowy and tumultuous and won't disappoint fans of its predecessor. The lyrics are unsettling, dark and personal which is emphasised in singer James Graham's strong Caledonian accent. When asked what the album was about, Graham gave little away, "I would like to keep it close to my chest..." it's about, "situations I have found myself in, and being none too proud of myself. It's also about finding and losing people." The overtones of melancholy suggested in his answer and melodies are relieved by the indulgently discordant moments of release.

The forthcoming single, *I Became a Prostitute* has the satisfying combination of catchy, loud, thrashing choruses and brooding verses. A perfect contrast to this is *The Room*, utilising My Latest Novel's Laura McFarlane playing violin, which culminates in a rich, immense sound that conveys the anger of the lyrics to a backdrop of pulsating drums. An explosively personal album. For further details visit www.myspace.com/thetwilightssad.

Sophie Gordon