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THE BEST POWER POP OF 2013 – By Mike Baron

Posted on 11 December 2013



THE BEST POWER POP CDs OF 2013

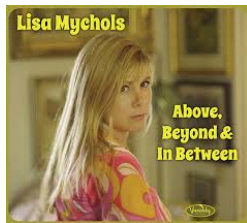
by Mike Baron

The time has come the Walrus said to put together the list of the ten best power pop records of the years. As always, this is a highly subjective list and reflects our tastes here at Pop Geek Heaven. I say it every year and every year it's true: this has been a great year for pop but you'd never know it via the dinosaur media. In a world of whippet-fast technology who knows how much longer bands will even produce whole albums? Many bands simply post a song on the internet and hope for

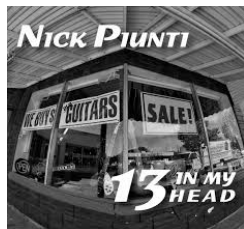
downloads. The times they are a-changin'.



ONE: Corin Ashley, *New Lion Terraces*. The Boston-based former Pills member has put together a beguiling circus train of inventive melody, pop smarts, and hooks the size of dock cranes covering an expanse of styles. "Second Hand Halo" has the most massive hook of the year while "Badfinger Bridge" simultaneously evokes Badfinger and Queen. Ashley can bring it with a full band or just guitar and his songs pack an emotional wallop.



TWO: Lisa Mychols, *Above, Beyond & In Between*. The former bass player with The Waking Hours has put together a brilliant pastiche of classic early-sixties good girl rock drawing inspiration from the Ronettes, the Shangri-Las, Dusty Springfield and Motown. "Hearts Beat in Stereo" is pure shimmering perfection, but every song is good and will invoke echoes of the past as well as pointing to the future. Credit also producer and sometime song writer Tom Richards.



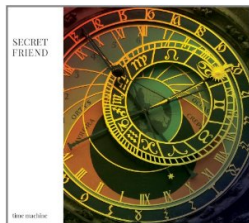
THREE: Nick Piunti, *13 In My Head*. A sublime record with hooks that keep coming at you and coming at you like the overhead rail at a packing plant.



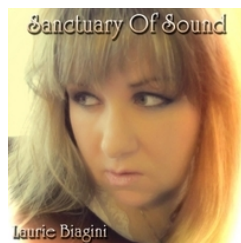
FOUR: Your Gracious Host, *Falling Off the Earth*. YGH is Tom Curless with Brian Leach. Curless' broad, expansive view of a power pop landscape constantly surprises with fresh chords and unexpected hooks. There's not a single song based on first, fourth and fifth chords to be found.



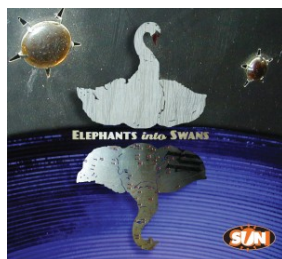
FIVE: Ulysses, *Kill You Again*. A throwback Brit pop quartet channeling Kinks, Yardbirds and Hollies, Ulysses brings both grit and luscious harmonies. The title track should be a James Bond theme and "April Showers" washes over you like a warm spring rain. The last two tracks, "Taxi Driver" and "Oh Yeah Huh Huh Huh!" are pure adrenalin.



SIX: Secret Friend, *Time Machine*. From out of left field a power pop masterpiece by a guy who doesn't even perform on the album! Steven Fox, whose liner notes biography raises more questions than it answers, wrote this material which is performed by Linus of Hollywood, Roger Manning, Willie Wisely and Kelly Jones. Lush, sometimes shockingly confessional pop masterpieces draw on Burt Bacharach, the Beach Boys, and ELO.



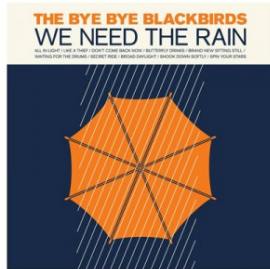
SEVEN: Laurie Biagini, *Sanctuary Of Sound*. Vancouver native does it all here in the Greg Pope, Ed James, Stevie Wonder mode, drawing inspiration mostly from early to mid-sixties surf music, particularly the Beach Boys. But Biagini hits her own groove on unforgettable, haunting songs like "Rise Up," "Gold Plated Girl," and "Two of a Kind."



EIGHT: The Sun Sowed in 1/2, *Elephants Into Swans*. Tim Rose has a unique melodic gift on display on every one of Sun's albums. This one is no exception, filled with bubbling hooks that morph from major to minor to major as all great songs must.



NINE: Glenn Case, *Throw Money*. Another circus train of fandangos, fanfares and deeply satisfying chord changes. Starts out light and sweet but by the time you get to the fifth or sixth song you realize this is one of those rare albums where the sum is greater than the whole. The same could be said of every record on this list.



TEN: The Bye Bye Blackbirds, *We Need the Rain*. Bay Area trio plays canyon rock with a very strong Beachwood Sparks influence, echoes of the Dead, Byrds, Crosby, Stills and Nash. "Brand New Sitting Still" has the impact of "Uncle John's Band."

4 Responses to "THE BEST POWER POP OF 2013 – By Mike Baron"



1. *John Cross* says:
[December 12, 2013 at 6:52 pm](#)

I need to do my homework and get these albums. Thanks Baron for scouring the new pop universe and always hiping me to great music! JC

[Reply](#)



2. *RanDair Porter* says:
[December 12, 2013 at 9:38 pm](#)

#1 Corin Ashley, New Lion Terraces. Great record!, beautifully mixed by sonic mastermind Ducky Carlisle.

Also engineering/mixing our stuff! Ransom and the Subset –
<http://www.ransomandthesubset.com>

[Reply](#)



3. *tim rose* says:
[December 14, 2013 at 6:30 pm](#)

Thanks for including the Sun Sawed in 1/2's "Elephants into Swans!" It was a labor of love to make and hopefully one of many to come.

[Reply](#)



4. *Nick Piunti* says:
[December 21, 2013 at 4:00 am](#)

Michael, Thanks for selecting 13 in My Head #3 on your Best Power Pop of 2013. In great company!

[Reply](#)