

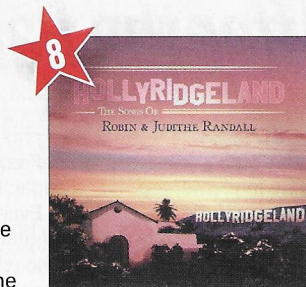
Robin & Judithe Randall

Hollyridgeland

Melodic Rock Classic

Producers: Andrew McNeice & Robin Randall

Renowned lyricist Robin Randall pays tribute to masterful melodic pop songwriting partner (and mother), Judithe Randall in this 8-disc set, featuring previously unreleased original demos. The anthology of AOR, pop and melodic hard rock includes Marcie Free (Signal), James Christian (House of Lords), Airkraft and After Hours. Classics—along with 17 reimagined songs adding Robert Tepper, Curt Cuomo, Kelly Keagy, and others—delivers a beautifully remastered soundtrack of the '80s. **-Andrea Beenham**



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MacKenzie Grant

Wonder World

Blackbird Record Label

Producer: Phil Dubnick

Nashville-based singer-songwriter Grant, after being away from the music biz for over a decade, returns with a cache of touching and well-crafted tunes. The album is about truth telling and shedding personal conflict ("Memo to My Sister" and "Little Girl") with hypnotic, compelling and dreamy sonic landscapes. "Turn the Other Way" explores the end of a relationship, with a rhythmically dense and jazzy lilt. "Coffee and Wine" and the uplifting "Putting Down Some Things" are emotionally charged and lyrically astute. **-Eric Harabadian**



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Mild Orange

Looking For Space

AWAL

Producer: Josh Mehrtens

Everyone keeps saying rock is dead. Based on the popularity of New Zealand-based dream pop sensation Mild Orange, they may be right. This nu-psychedelic quartet gushes kaleidoscopic cadences alongside lyrics that inspire bellybutton gazing. Never do they act as a pressure release for societal angst, which feels out of step. That said, there's a place for every artist, and these boys have built themselves an admirable niche. For their first outing in a proper studio, the results are satisfying if not earthshattering. **- Andy Kaufmann**



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Nas

Magic

Mass Appeal

Producer: Hit-Boy and Corbett

Nas released his 15th studio album (again produced by Hit-Boy) under his Mass Appeal records imprint. This nine-track release serves as an "appetizer" to hold fans over for the third and final installment of Nas' *King's Disease* album series. Nas continues to impress fans, as he's still sharp with his pen. Moreover, Hit-Boy is on-point with production and shows that these two workaholic creatives, displaying their incredible dexterity for hip-hop music, serve as a combination for timeless music to occur. **- Adam Seyum**



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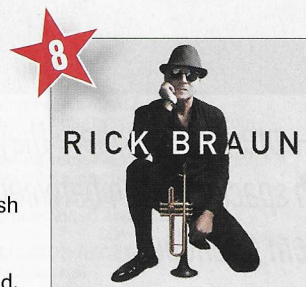
Rick Braun

Rick Braun

Brautsoarus Music

Producer: Rick Braun

The veteran smooth jazz hitmaker, trumpeter and flugelhornist manifests the fresh sonic directions he hinted at on his 2018 album *Crossroads* as he celebrates 30 years since his debut with a multi-faceted, self-titled urban funk/jazz meets exotica set. In lieu of all-star genre guests, Braun—who also dazzles on keyboards, particularly piano and Hammond B-3—digs deep instead with some of its top sideman, most prominently developing a collaborative relationship with guitarist Tony Pulizzi. **- Jonathan Widran**



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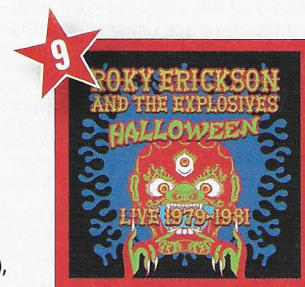
Roky Erickson and the Explosives

Halloween (Live 1979-1981)

Freddie Steady Sound Recordings Records

Producer: Freddie Steady Krc

After helping found America's first psychedelic band (The 13th Floor Elevators), Erickson was busted for cannabis—and sentenced to three years in a mental institution. For his second musical incarnation, he wrote undeniably compelling songs based on horror films, and hooking up with fellow Texans, The Explosives, arguably gave him the most high-energy performances of his career. These semi-raw live recordings show a band in peak form. **- David Arnson**



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Various Artists

Ocean Child: Songs of Yoko Ono

Canvasback Music / Atlantic Records

Producers: Various

This benefit compilation tribute, curated by Death Cab for Cutie's Ben Gibbard, features reimaginings by: Death Cab, Sharon Van Etten, David Byrne, Yo La Tengo, Thao Nguyen, U.S. Girls, Deerhoof, Japanese Breakfast, The Flaming Lips and more. Tracks vary from familiar to obscure, from faithful covers to original interpretations, with honorable mentions of: "Yellow Girl," "Waiting for the Sunrise," and "Dogtown." Fans of Ono and any of the aforementioned artists on the project should definitely make the donation to WhyHunger and listen. **-Joseph Maltese**



8

Inon Zur

Syberia: The World Before

Decca Records U.S.

Producers: Davis John Patton & Patrick Cunningham

Emmy-winning composer Inon Zur (*Starfield*, *Fallout*, *Dragon Age* and *EverQuest*) has released his third soundtrack for *Syberia*. The collection navigates Benoît Sokal's narrative of two women's life journeys in 1937 and 2004, and features Grammy-nominated Emily Bear on solo piano. Pensive string and woodwind lines ("Forgotten Train," "Moonlight Tension") create suspense, and rhythmic pizzicato ("Resistance") adds intrigue, while orchestral flourishes ("The World Before") shape Zur's trademark intensity. A dreamily romantic collection that stirs the imagination. **- Andrea Beenham**



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To be considered for review in the Album Reviews section, you must have a record deal with a major label or an independent label with an established distributor. If you do not, please see our New Music Critiques section.