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Exploring the vast world of live music – Phish, Grateful Dead, and otherwise.

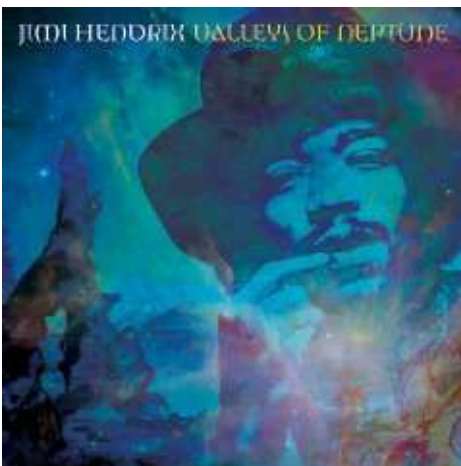


[The Listening Station: The 10 Best Albums of 2010](#)

Once again the end of the year is nearing, and again it's time to look back on the last 12 months in music. Lots of great albums were released in 2010, several of which consumed my listening for weeks or even months on end. Today, I share with you 10 of these albums that provided the soundtrack to much of this year for me.



1. Jimi Hendrix – Valleys of Neptune



When word of this release came a little over a year ago, many suspected another rerelease of the endless outtakes from Hendrix's studio sessions. Instead, what came was a masterpiece that had somehow evaded everyone's ears for all this time. Waking up on a cold January morning I remember calling the record store to see if it was in. It was. And so I went down and picked it up right away. I'll never forget what happened next. Upon first hearing this new version of "Stone Free" it was like being transported back to a time when Hendrix was continually breaking down musical barriers with each record he created. With *Valleys of Neptune*, Jimi is still

breaking down barriers in 2010.

["Lullaby for the Summer"](#)

2. Pat Metheny – Orchestrion



This album would be first, simply for the brilliancy that went into creating the album, but I think even Pat would agree Jimi deserves the top spot. For those of you who don't know, Orchestrion is the newest album from jazz guitar wizard Pat Metheny. While the music itself would earn this spot alone, it's the process in which the music is created that amazes me. Using a process that I simply cannot explain, Pat, along with a small orchestra of mechanically controlled instruments, created a "Movement" that goes beyond words. I had a chance to see Pat perform the Orchestrion Movement live and it easily ranks up there with my top musical experiences. A truly unique album and yet another work of art in Pat's arsenal of masterpieces.

["Orchestrion video"](#)

3. The Barr Brothers – Self Titled



I can't say enough about this record. This is the debut and most recent project from Brad and Andrew Barr of The Slip and Surprise Me Mr. Davis. Taking a new direction from anything they have ever touched on before, this self titled release sees the brothers in an acoustic, stripped-down format for much of the record. The addition of a harp brings to life a sound that is rarely heard in music these days, and one that seems to dance around Brad's guitar playing. Brad emerges as a poetic songwriter and together the brothers deliver an album that ranks among the best they have ever created.

["Beggars in the Morning"](#)

4. Dungen – Skit I Allt



In my opinion, these are some of the most talented musicians on the scene today. Whether they sing in English or not, the music behind the Swedish vocals is simply brilliant. The songs combine colorful melodies and spacey psychedelia to create a sound that is truly original. If you ever have a chance to see these guys live, take my advice and check them out. It's an unforgettable experience.

["Skit I Allt"](#)

5. Tame Impala – Innerspeaker



First it was just a few of us. Then it us and our friends who we kept telling how awesome this record was. Then it was everyone and their hipster friends, and all the rest of us. This album is a work of art, front to back and everyone seems to realize that. Through the mix of effects and reverb the band creates numerous psychedelic journeys, each unique in its own way. If you're one of the few who hasn't heard this one yet, I highly recommend it.

["Expectation"](#)

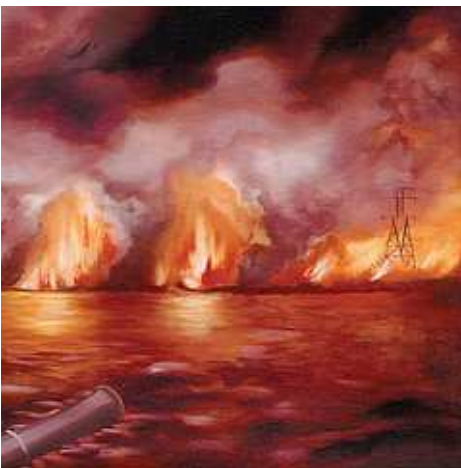
6. The Arcade Fire – The Suburbs



It seems that everything these Canadian indie rockers put out can be justifiably labeled "epic." The entire album builds on this concept of the suburban life through intimate, revealing lyrics and grand arrangements that come together to form an unforgettable piece of music, and poetry. This is an album that we will be listening to for many years.

["City With No Children"](#)

7. The Besnard Lakes – The Besnard Lakes Are The Roaring Night



Yet another Canadian band from Montreal. I want to say that a lot of the bands and albums on this list sound like they're from a different time. And maybe that's true. Maybe they're from a time that has yet to come. And if that didn't trip you out enough, this album probably will. The Besnard Lakes are like a band from another planet, sent here to deliver us this great music. This most recent release is a space rock adventure that takes the listener through a psychedelic journey from start to finish. You don't listen to this album, you experience it.

["Like the Ocean, Like the Innocent" Pt. 1 & 2](#)

8. Jesse McReynolds – Songs of the Grateful Dead



Legendary bluegrass musician Jesse McReynolds is half of the McReynolds Brothers duo Jim & Jesse that Jerry Garcia and Sandy Rothman followed on the road back in the spring of '64. When Jesse first heard of the Grateful Dead's music several years back, he immediately found a connection and decided to put together an album of their songs. The result isn't just another 'pickin' on' album, but an authentic bluegrass take on the Hunter/Garcia tunes. As Dennis McNally, well-known Dead writer and publicist for the band, [recently said to jambands.com](#):

"It isn't GD music bluegrass-ified. Instead, he picked out great ballads like "Standing on the Moon" – his performance of that at the Rex left me and lots of others in tears – and "Black Muddy River." He'll be at the festivals next summer, and he's special."

["Standing on the Moon"](#)

9. Masters of Reality – Pine/Cross Dover



The band that once featured Ginger Baker on drums finally put out their much anticipated new release this year. And it rocks. This is a great album throughout that ends in one of the best jams of the entire year (live or studio) in a 12 minute piece of improvisation called "Alfalfa." The album is masterfully produced, as should be expected from frontman/producer Chris Goss.

["Up In It"](#)

10. Blitzen Trapper – Destroyer of the Void



On Destroyer of the Void Blitzen Trapper delivers an album that combines their 60's folk sound with a dose of proggy psychedelia that sees the band venturing into new waters. The epic title track opens the album featuring queen-like vocal arrangements and rich guitar lines. The rest of the album is more in-line with the band's past works, and relies heavily on strong poetic lyrics and graceful guitar melodies. A great album all around.

["Destroyer of the Void"](#)

Honorable Mentions:

Steve Hackett – Out of the Tunnel's Mouth
 Local Natives – Gorilla Manor
 The Black Keys – Brothers
 Endless Boogie – Full House Head
 Sharon Jones & the Dap Kings – I Learned The Hard Way
 Railroad Earth – Railroad Earth
 Field Music – Measure
 Yeasayer – Odd Blood
 Wolf People – Steeple

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~ by doggoneblog1 on December 23, 2010.

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4 Responses to “The Listening Station: The 10 Best Albums of 2010”

1. Awesome list with more than a few records to check out. Funny how the Montrealers seemed to make up a heavy
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portion of virtually everyone’s “Best Albums Of 2010” list this year.



[pushlife](#) said this on [December 23, 2010 at 9:48 am](#) | [Reply](#)

- 2. Thanks man! Loved the Pushlife picks too. Montreal is definitely a budding music scene. I’m excited to see more great bands come out of it in 2011.



[doggoneblog1](#) said this on [December 23, 2010 at 6:01 pm](#) | [Reply](#)

- 3. Great list, well reasoned and written. There’s a couple on there that I’ve put on my need to listen list.

Additionally, I’d add a couple to the list as well:

Robert Plant- Band of Joy
Band of Horses- Infinite Arms

And worth mentioning:

The Tallest Man On Earth- The Wild Hunt
Carolina Chocolate Drops- Genuine Negro Jig



[parker/ @tmwsiy](#) said this on [December 27, 2010 at 10:49 am](#) | [Reply](#)

- 4. Tame Impala is one of the best new bands I’ve heard in years – hands down. Not since The Black Keys have I been this blown away by a band. I saw them live at the Bowery Ballroom and they were just amazing, even with Kevin being sick. “Runway houses city clouds” is just a simply awesome song that takes you on a trip inside your mind – even sober. I highly suggest the song “Flow” a demo song, and more rare for downloading purposes.

Great choices over all for albums of the year – and thanks for including Tame Impala!!!



[karaoke activity partner](#) said this on [January 6, 2011 at 3:14 pm](#) | [Reply](#)

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