



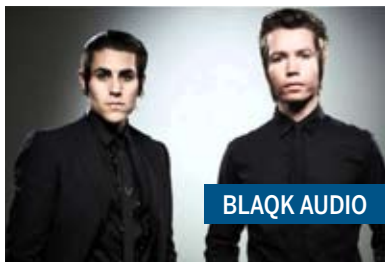
Metallica ★ ★ ★ 1/2
Kill 'Em All: Remastered Deluxe Box

Ride the Lightning: ★ ★ ★ ★
Remastered Deluxe Box

No remorse. Just reissues. Metallica's first two indie albums get the deluxe makeover treatment in boxes that include newly remastered versions of the original album on vinyl and CD, joined by demos, non-album cuts, bootleg-quality live gigs, live DVDs, download cards and hardback books. The 10-disc version of their 1983 debut *Kill 'Em All* is OK (though the old tracks still sound too tinny), but the 11-disc set of 1984's superior *Ride the Lightning* definitely delivers bigger and better bang for your \$150 US. Ask not for whom the cash register bell tolls.

Guided by Voices ★ ★ ★
Please be Honest

Well, if we're being honest: Robert Pollard's latest version of GBV basically consists of him, the drummer and a bunch of new guys — none of whom reportedly appear on this one-man-band album. But if it's just RP's latest solo album, it's not a bad one: Most of the tracks are crunchy little indie-rock nuggets that will placate the faithful. All in all, pleasing.



Blaqk Audio ★ ★ ★
Material

You ain't the only one pining for the synth-pop '80s. AFI moonlighters Davey Havoc and Jade Puget share your affliction. And spread it around on their third Blaqk Audio album. From the basic programmed beats and synths to Havoc's romantic vocals and poppy hooks, this is a throwback to the glory days of Human League and their ilk. You want them, baby.

Wild Belle ★ ★ ★ 1/2
Dreamland

What a difference a groove makes. Chicago siblings Natalie and Elliot Bergman could easily have ended up as pop also-rans — but thanks to a dark undercurrent of reggae in their songs, some honking horns and (most crucially) Natalie's scratchy pipes, they sound more like Lana Del Rey on a Caribbean vacation. And manage to avoid the sophomore slump.



Sturgill Simpson ★ ★ ★ ★
A Sailor's Guide to Earth

Fame and family don't always mix. Especially when they're both fairly new. Alt-country phenom Sturgill Simpson has apparently learned that lesson over the past few years. And he shares it eloquently and artfully on his third album *A Sailor's Guide to Earth*, his first release since the birth of his first child and the overnight success brought on by his 2014 release *Metamodern Sounds in Country Music*. Beginning with the opening cut *Welcome to Earth (Pollywog)*, the 37-year-old singer-songwriter spends much of the album talking to his son — offering fatherly advice, sharing life lessons and apologizing for a job that takes and keeps him away from home, much like a sailor. If it seems maudlin, it's not, thanks chiefly to Simpson's frank lyrical sincerity and tender vocals. And speaking of wanderlust, Simpson doesn't rest easy on the musical side; the self-produced effort trades the country-psychedelia of *Metamodern Sounds* for a more suitably soulful approach, complete with country-politan sophistication, brash horn lines and funky backbeats featuring members of Brooklyn's Dap-Kings. Top it off with a woodsmoked, disarmingly intimate cover of Nirvana's *In Bloom* and you've got an album that cements Simpson's place at the forefront of modern country music. And a disc that could make it even harder for him to balance fame and family.

ALBUMS OF THE WEEK

Jesper Munk ★ ★ ★ ★
Claim

He's 22. He's German and Danish. And he's a rail-thin pretty boy with cheekbones and hair that will make the girls swoon. But surprise! Jesper Munk isn't the latest vapid Euro-pop idol. He's a blues-rock prodigy who was supposedly discovered busking on the street. And the singer-guitarist's second album (and North American intro) just might be one of the best debut discs of 2016. Partly produced by likeminded forebear Jon Spencer, it's a ragged blast of gritty blooz and rawk straight from the garage and the gutter, fuelled by Munk's dusty vocals and fuzzy Texas-style fretwork. He isn't just some one-trick pony either; he can straighten up and fly right, as several soulfully sweet cuts here attest. But he's at his blistering best when he cranks up and cuts loose on barnburners like *Courage For Love*, *Smalltalk Gentlemen* and *101 Proof*. Bottom line: He's the real deal.



Rufus Wainwright ★ ★ ★ ★
Take All My Loves: 9 Shakespeare Sonnets

Shakespeare: Exits & Entrances ★ ★ ★ 1/2
Various Artists

All the world's a tribute. There's more than one way to mark the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's passing this weekend. Start with Rufus Wainwright's gorgeous and magnificent *Take All My Loves*. It features dramatically orchestrated (and sometimes, grandly rocking) renditions of the Bard's sonnets mixed with spoken-word renditions — all elegantly voiced by an all-star cast that includes Rufus, sister Martha Wainwright, Anna Prohaska, Florence Welch, Helena Bonham Carter, Carrie Fisher and William Shatner because of course. For a more Dench-centric tribute, there's Shakespeare: Exits & Entrances, with Dame Judi, brother Jeffery and grand-nephew Oliver (among others) intoning classic soliloquies and sonnets over a generic Renaissance-fair soundtrack. Rufus wins hands-down, but either might prove the perfect ceremony of your love's rite.

J Dilla ★ ★ ★ ★
The Diary

Everyone rightfully worships Dilla for his beats. But this long-buried treasure exposes a lesser-known side of the late great hip-hop producer: His mic skills. Recorded in 2002 but shelved, *The Diary* is impressively strong, with Dilla dropping bold and witty rhymes over low-rolling tracks from peers and pals like Madlib and Pete Rock — and tossing in choice revamps of Gary Numan's *Cars* and Vanity 6's *Drive Me Wild* to boot. Better late than never.



Candlebox ★ ★ ★ 1/2
Disappearing in Airports

And reappearing on your streaming service. Whether you like it or not. Back in the grunge heyday, these Seattle rockers were the ugly stepchild of the scene. And based on the radio-ready blend of '90s alt-rock and post-grunge that dominates their sixth studio album, earnest frontman Kevin Martin and his latest lineup aren't exactly due for reappraisal.

Robin Trower ★ ★ ★
Where You Are Going To

The real question, of course, is where Trower is going. The answer, reassuringly, is absolutely nowhere. The 71-year-old British singer-guitarist's 21st solo outing since leaving Procol Harum delivers the same Hendrix-flavoured, power-trio blues-rock that has been his stock in trade for his entire career. It's nice there are still some things you can count on.

The Last Vegas ★ ★ ★
Eat Me

"Here we go again," promises Chad Cherry. He's not kidding. As usual, these old-school Chicago glam-slammers would be more at home on the '80s Sunset Strip than the Miracle Mile on their cheekily titled seventh album (which features a birthday cake on its cover). Didn't get tickets to Guns N' Roses? These guys are likely rocking a sports bar near you.

Hawkwind ★ ★ ★
The Machine Stops

Machines stop, but Dave Brock keeps on ticking. For his zillionth release, the space-rock king turns E.M. Forster's dystopian 1909 story into a moody concept album about a society where everyone lives in isolation and worships technology. Remind you of anyone? Thankfully, amid the atmospheric synths and robotic voices, there are enough guitar-driven flights of interstellar fancy to remind you of classic Hawkwind. All hail.

The Jungle Book Soundtrack ★ ★ ★ 1/2
Various Artists

Speaking of bare necessities: This soundtrack to the Disney remake has just four songs — two NOLA-flavoured takes of *Bare Necessities* by Dr. John and Kermit Ruffins with, um, Bill Murray, plus Scar Jo's Bond-themed *Trust in Me* and Christopher Walken's zippy *I Wan'na Be Like You* — wrapped around John Debney's hour-long orchestral score of Rainforest Cafe muzak. That's one long safari.

Barbershop: The Next Cut ★ ★ ★
Various Artists

Make that 16 cuts — and no waiting. Naturally, the companion disc to the stylin' threequel includes new fare from stars like Ice Cube and Common (though Nicki Minaj is AWOL, sadly). But it also clips along nicely, mixing recent gems by the likes of Lizzo and CeeLo with oldies from James Brown, Curtis Mayfield and more. A cut above.



Charlie Faye & The Fayettes ★ ★ ★ 1/2
Charlie Faye & The Fayettes

First things first: Charlie Faye is a she, not a he. And the Austin singer-songwriter and her female cohorts aren't roots-rockers; they're pop throwbacks who creatively channel the classic melodies and harmonies of '60s girl groups and Memphis soul — flecked with enough guitar twang to make it clear they're not from Motown. But they are from this century.



Steel Panther ★ ★ ★ 1/2
Live From Lexxi's Mom's Garage

You can take the band out of the garage ... unless that band is Steel Panther. The L.A. glam goofballs deliver their usual mix of rock and rude laffs on this DVD, playing an hour-long acoustic set for an all-female crowd in a fake garage. But when they aren't rocking never-were hair-metal classics like *Weenie Ride* and *Gloryhole* — along with the new tune *That's When You Came In* — they're yukking it up in sketches starring Bobbie Brown (a.k.a. the woman from Warrant's *Cherry Pie* video) as Lexxi's Mom. Help yourself to a cookie.



Judas Priest ★ ★ ★
Battle Cry

Victims of changes they are not. Unless you count costume changes. Chrome-domed shrieker Rob Halford goes through more outfits than a teen-pop diva on Priest's latest live DVD. That aside, the leather-clad vets (and K.K. stand-in Richie Faulkner) know better than to fix what ain't broke. So on this 90-minute show from the 2015 Wacken Festival, they deliver the nostalgic goods, cranking out '70s and '80s classics plus a few likeminded newbies. Don your aviator shades, drive your fake motorcycle 10 feet and rock forever, kids.

DVDS OF THE WEEK

Charles Bradley & Menahan Street Band ★ ★ ★ ★
Live From the House of Soul

Technically, it appears to be the Driveway of Soul. But location clearly doesn't matter to Charles Bradley. The retro-soul belter can work his mighty mojo anywhere and anytime — as he and his Daptone Records cohorts in the Menahan Street Band handily prove with this powerhouse performance taped in full daylight in the cramped, rubble-strewn backyard of the label's Brooklyn HQ. Too bad the intimate show — dominated by cuts from his 2013 *Victim of Love* album — only lasts half an hour. Still, make yourself at home.



Johnny Winter With Dr. John ★ ★ ★
Live in Sweden 1987



Pay attention to the preposition. It's Winter WITH Dr. John, not AND. Which is another way to say that the Texas bluesman and his touring rhythm section are the stars of this hour-long TV studio performance, with frequent collaborator the Night Tripper coming in about halfway through. But once he arrives, he and Winter split the spotlight and deliver the solid goods on gritty blues gems from Muddy Waters, the good Doctor and more — plus Winter's rollicking closer of *Jumpin' Jack Flash*. All in all, kind of a gas.



Glen Campbell ★ ★ ★ 1/2
Goodtime Hour Country Special

Goodtime, good times, good timing. Take your pick; they all apply. This 1971 episode of Campbell's variety show is a fine tribute to its host, who is now battling Alzheimer's. But with its guest list of late Nashville icons — Johnny Carter and June Cash, Jerry Reed, Buck Owens and most recent loss Merle Haggard, whose impersonations of his fellow artists are a hoot — this hour-long show also serves to remind us they just don't make 'em like that anymore. Pity the audio and video quality are about what you expect from the '70s.

The Heavy ★ ★ ★
Hurt & The Merciless

How will you like them now? Probably about the same as you did last time. Rather than change their tune, the British upstarts stick with what works on their fourth full-length — which is to say, they crash and bash through another slate of garage-band retro-soul, funk and R&B. Here's hoping Stephen Colbert likes them as much as David Letterman did.

Surgical Meth Machine ★ ★ ★ 1/2
Surgical Meth Machine

Who needs meth when you've got Al Jourgensen? As his new band name implies, Ministry's maniacal cult leader isn't slowing down on his umpteenth album. If anything, he kicks it up a notch, raging hilariously against Facebook, haters and Nickelback (while professing his love for Devo) atop a whiplash-inducing assault of industrial speed-metal. Have a hit.



Programm ★ ★ ★
A Torrid Marriage of Emotion and Logic

Some people prefer the darkness. They should be listening to co-ed Toronto synth-rock quartet Programm's debut album. Cavernous and bleak, gloomy and grey, yet undeniably intoxicating, its sweeping and seamless amalgam of post-punk, shoegaze, coldwave and industrial are the perfect antidote to all the repulsive colour and warmth of spring. Enjoy!

Xiu Xiu ★ ★ ★ 1/2
Plays the Music of Twin Peaks

In the words of Special Agent Dale Cooper: "Every day, once a day, give yourself a present." For Record Store Day, the choice was clear: This unsettlingly moody, fittingly twangy and magnificently Lynchian reinterpretation of the *Twin Peaks* score from Jamie Stewart and his experimental rockers. Next: That gum you like is going to come back in style.

