

Jeffrey Morgan: official biographer of Alice Cooper & The Stooges

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JEFFREY MORGAN'S MEDIA BLACKOUT #244

IT'S THE BEST OF JEFFREY MORGAN'S MEDIA BLACKOUT #244!

Here's my alphabetical 2010 Top Ten list of records, as they appear on my official ballot for this year's annual *Village Voice* poll, which I've been voting in since 1975. Next week I'll be serving up a sizzling platter of the best videos *and* books of 2010.

JEFFREY MORGAN'S TOP TEN RECORDS OF 2010:

01. **Bachman Turner Overdrive** – *Bachman & Turner* (Box Of Songs) :: So *what* if this album is technically credited to “Bachman & Turner”? I'm never afraid to call a spade a spade, which is why I'm tellin' ya that this is a BTO album as sure as the day is long—and the day'll *never* end as long as you've got this hot wax drippin' off your turntable on eternal auto-repeat. But don't take *my* word for it: just listen to the infectious “That's What It Is” with its thick hunka-chunka power chords and st-st-stuttering vocals 'cause in BTOland things ain't *never* gonna change.

02. **Marco Benevento** – *Between The Needles And Nightfall* (Royal Potato Family) :: Aided and more than ably abetted by Reed Mathis on bass and Andre Barr on percussion, quirky keyboardist Marco

serves up eleven excellent eclectically inventive electro acoustic instrumental essays which evoke aural ambient echoes of earlier like-minded albums, none more so than Paul McCartney's *McCartney* and Nash The Slash's *Bedside Companion*.

03. Black Country Communion – *Black Country Communion* (J&R Adventures) :: The vocals are of the scotch-garglin' style that made Steve Marriott and Bon Scott benchmark wailers; the bass is a bowel-buffeting beast that'll massage your innards from stench to stern; the slick-swervin' guitar is straight outta mid '60s studio nirvana; and the pulse-pounding drums with their thick bludgeoning beats sound uncannily just like John Bonham of Led Zeppelin—which they *oughtta* since the skin-smashin' stick man is none other *than* Bonzo's son Jason. Toss in some synth-soaked atmoogspherics and you've got a recipe for the kind of good old-fashioned "Black Country Rock" that Mom used to hate!

04. Kevin Eubanks – *Zen Food* (Mack Avenue) :: If all you know about Eubanks is his bandleader stint on the *Tonight Show*, then prepare to be very pleasantly surprised by this highly intelligent jazz album that starts out sounding like a cool classic cross between Stanley Clarke's *School Days* and Jan Hammer's *Oh Yeah?* before it veers into a vintage Prestige and Verve vein that alternates between being sensually spiritual and so seriously swingin' with funk as to be borderline heavy.

05. The Flowers Of Hell – "O" (Optical Sounds) :: The Flowers Of Hell made this album for you if you're addicted to dreamy minimalist drone music as expertly exemplified by such album as: Terry Riley's *Persian Surgery Dervishes*; Eno's *Discreet Music*; Gavin Bryars' *The Sinking Of The Titanic*; and Tony Conrad's *Outside The Dream Syndicate* because during its

languid 45 minute length, “O” will evoke *all* of these albums as everything coalesces to sculpt a seamless sonic soundscape that will transport your mind deep into an inner realm which records rarely seek to reach these days.

06. **Tim Hus** – *Hockeytown* (Stony Plain) :: Tim rambles from coast to coast to coast on numbers like the rail-rumblin’ “Canadian Pacific,” the molten-hammerin’ “Hamilton Steel,” the fish-flounderin’ “North Atlantic Trawler” and the patriotic title track. There’s no mistakin’ that Tim is the heir—and boy is it ever apparent—to the wood-splinterin’ cowboy singin’ legacy of the legendary Stompin’ Tom Connors. But don’t take *my* word for it, just ask Stompin’ Tom yourself the next time you see him and Tim Hus sharin’ a stage.

07. **Immolate** – *Ruminate* (MVD Audio) :: The album cover outside shows a skeleton awash in flames while the album music inside shows the vocalist buried alive in dense slabs of Spectorish sound; a sonic distinction that almost makes this the *Exile On Aladdin Sane St.* of death metal. Double bonus points for having a singer who actually sings instead of screams *and* for having a band that’s smart enough to take their musical cues from Powerman 5000—not that they’d ever *admit* it.

08. **Betty Moon** – *Rollin Revolution* (self released) :: This here Moonage Babedream is a heavy hard rockin’ revolutionary Hermanesque hellion who’s got a slinky ’n’ sly predatory eye on your danglin’ prize. Bonus points for having the refreshingly good taste to salute her roots by covering Grace Slick. Points deducted if she *doesn’t* call her next album *Moonage Babedream*.

09. **Robert Plant** – *Band Of Joy* (Rounder) :: Although I may listen to *Manic Nirvana* more than any other Plant platter, I know

deep down in my heart of hearts that *Fate Of Nations* is his artistic apex. Luckily, *Band Of Joy* happily straddles the sonic fence somewhere between the two in that it's much less manic than *Manic* and far less fateful than *Fate*. In other words, it's a relaxed romp that's part honeydrippin' desire, part flower power posy, and part tremolo trouble.

10. Randy Weston And His African Rhythms Sextet – *The Storyteller: Live At Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola* (Motéma) :: When ivory-tinkler Weston isn't smearcasing Keith Jarrett at his own game on the Latin jazz pioneer tribute "Chano Pozo," he's hunkered down and hammering away on "Jus' Blues" like a seriously schizoid Mike Garson. Then the band comes roaring in straight outta Heavytown like they've been depth charging Dizzy's "Manteca" for breakfast with a four-sided Miles *Dark Magus* chaser.

Be seeing you!

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2833

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