

THE BLARG

THE SITE OF JUSTIN SHADY + WAYNE CHINSANG

Two books, five CDs...

February 3, 2010 in [Blogs!](#) | Tags: [Mike Relm](#), "[Spectacle](#)", [Tom McRae](#), "[The Alphabet of Hurricanes](#)", [Nneka](#), "[Concrete Jungle](#)", [Joyo Velarde](#), "[Love and Understanding](#)", [Cosmo Speedway](#), "[Alligator/Alligator](#)", "[Tiny Acts of Rebellion](#)", [Rich Fulcher](#), "[Copper](#)", [Kazu Kibuishi](#)

...right here:

Books:

Copper by Kazu Kibuishi (Graphix/Scholastic)

Wow... this book is awesome. Creator Kazu Kibuishi (who is also responsible for the *New York Times* bestselling graphic novel *Amulet*) has created a comic strip series that doesn't rely on bad puns and cheeseball laughs. Instead, we're given a simple idea (the ongoing lives of a child named Copper and his dog/best friend Fred) with surreal twists and adult themes. From love and war to adventure and death, each topic is touched on with enough simplicity for a child to get, and enough intelligence for an adult to admire. Check out a free taste [here](#), and then hop on over to [Amazon](#) and add it to your book collection.

Tiny Acts of Rebellion by Rich Fulcher (Independent Publishers Group)

Comedian Rich Fulcher of the British TV show *The Mighty Boosh* gives us 97 different ways to rebel against normalcy and stick it to The Man. Each scenario is *supposed* to be humorous and might even leave readers "...running from the law." Unfortunately, what we're *really* given are a hundred not-so-funny stunts that are, at best, painfully dumb. Example: "Yell out 'I love fudge!' while at a funeral!" Rebellious? Not so much. Stupid? Indeed. This anecdote is on par with the rest of 'em. Wanna be a rebel? Pick your nose while standing in the background of a remote newscast! Or the next time you're at the supermarket, place a box of condoms next to the bananas! Hilarious! Sigh.

CDs:

Cosmo Speedway "Alligator/Alligator" (Catch Camera Records)

This might be the fourth full-length from the California duo of Shane Reed and Nick Grosvenor, but it's the first I'm hearing of them. It's about time. Cosmo Speedway has somehow managed to effortlessly blend eighties-inspired pop melodies with a sincere singer/songwriter aesthetic. It's a new sound, a fresh sound, and I'm glad I finally came across them. Learn more about Cosmo Speedway [here](#).

Joyo Velarde "Love and Understanding" (Quannum Projects)

After playing Robin to [Lyrics Born's](#) Batman for many years, songstress Joyo Velarde finally dons the solo cape and cowl, giving listeners a front row seat to what happens when the Queen of Quannum handles a dozen songs all by her lonesome. The disc is more soul than it is hip hop, and some of the ballads slow down the pacing of the album; but Joyo's vocals can make any genre sound good... and it's nice to see Lyrics Born playing the role of sidekick for once.

Nneka "Concrete Jungle" (Decon Records)

I can't listen to Nneka's US debut and *not* think of Lauryn Hill's miseducation. With that being said, I'm careful not to just chalk it up as a quick comparison, because Nigerian-German artist Nneka Egbuna is most definitely her own thing. Yes, the similarities *are* there; from the soulful voice to the solid production. But

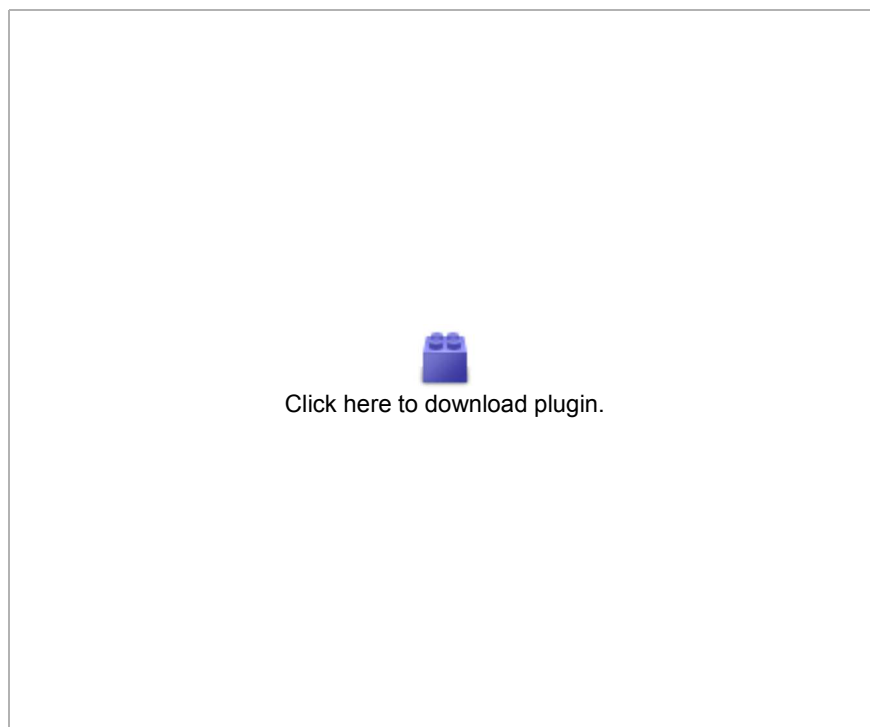
Nneka and producer DJ Farhot add the sounds of Africa into the mix, giving listeners an album that is as much Fela as it is Mos Def. It's a new take on an old sound, and I love every minute of it.

Tom McRae “The Alphabet of Hurricanes“ (Cooking Vinyl)

UK singer/songwriter Tom McRae's hushed and whispered vocals fall on a bed of lush instrumentation including everything from ukulele and banjo to harp and hand claps. “The Alphabet of Hurricanes” is a soft and subtle album, and in being so it might come across and being a *simple* album. But the disc is actually very layered and complex; one only needs to go as far as the rolling and rambling track “Told My Troubles To The River” for proof.

Mike Relm “Spectacle“ (Radio Fried Records)

[DJ Mike Relm](#) is back, and he left all of his movie/television/Internet audio clips at home this time around! Of course, if you're *used* to seeing Mike Relm like this, you might be a little nervous:



But fear not, people of Earth! Relm's first-ever album of all-original material does not disappoint! If this album proves anything, it proves that Relm is a serious musician and producer, not a one-trick pony. An impressive list of guests show up, including Del tha Funkee Homosapien, Mr. Lif, Lateef and Gift of Gab. Relm has found his sound with this album, and it's damn pretty.

Never ending,

-Shady

1 comment

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[February 5, 2010 at 9:04 am](#)

[Frank Cvetkovic](#)



Mike Relm is amazing. I've been waiting for him to put out an album for YEARS.

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