



B-52S

Music on DVD

B-52s

With the Wild Crowd!

New Wave

★★½

Remember that New Year's Eve party your parents had when you were a kid? The one where they had way too much to drink, put on funny sunglasses and danced around the living room like idiots, singing old pop songs at the top of their lungs? Remember how you felt kind of sad and embarrassed for them, and wondered why they couldn't just act their age? Well, you're not alone.

Taylor Swift

American Beauty

Classic Metal

★★★★½

So, you want to make a documentary about Taylor Swift, but you don't have access. What to do? Well, if you're the makers of this 52-minute atrocity, you rewrite her Wikipedia page, interview some fans as if they were experts and — worst of all — recreate scenes from her life with actors. And you end up with one of the most hamfisted and unwatchable music DVDs ever created.

GARAGE BAND IDOL

Let us listen to your original song, and we'll tell you if it sucks or not

Step Echo
Niagara Falls, Ont.
www.stepecho.com

These Niagara post-grungers proclaim their sound is reminiscent of "Nickelback, Theory of a Deadman, Three Days Grace and a hint of Alice in Chains." And just so we're clear, they seem to think that's a good thing. In any case, they're more or less right — though here are six words I never thought I'd type: Nickelback are better than these guys. In any case, if your life is lacking in lunkheaded, amateurish, testosterone-fuelled riff-rock, this is the band for you.

Want Darryl Sterdan to review your homemade, original song? E-mail us an online link where he can hear it. If he chooses yours, he'll tell readers if it sucks or not. Send the link to darryl.sterdan@sunmedia.ca

DARRYL'S VERDICT
★
"Step away."

LISTEN FOR YOURSELF
www.stepecho.com

Decemberists

We All Raise Our Voices to the Air (Live Songs 04.11 - 08.11)

Folk-Rock

★★★½



Yep, it's true: People still make live CDs. And, in the case of this concert

compilation from the Portland folk-rockers, they even make good ones. The two-disc affair collects a variety of vibrant performances from their 2011 King is Dead Tour, but also includes highlights from their five previous albums — along with plenty of between-song banter from Colin Meloy. Shame it's not a DVD.

Download: *The Rake's Song; All Arise!*

White Rabbits

Milk Famous

Indie-Rock

★★★



Silly Rabbits? Not a chance. After their anything-goes debut disc and

its more concise successor, this Brooklyn outfit — which boasts dual vocalists and percussionists — find a happy medium with album No. 3. Balancing expansive production and freewheeling arrangements with subtly clever songcraft and poppy vocals, they fashion a beguiling work that is far more carrot than stick. **Download:** *I'm Not Me; Temporary*

Steve Howe

Time

Prog

★★★



More classical than classic rock. Yes and Asia guitarist Howe's

umpteenth solo album is a soothing and sophisticated affair. Unplugging his electric guitar for acoustic most of the time and joining forces with an orchestral ensemble, he tackles Bach, Vivaldi and Villa-Lobos between lush, like-minded instrumental originals. It won't rock your world, but it might score your brunch. **Download:** *Orange; Steam Age*



Phone Joan

+4791799466

Indie-Rock

★★★★

They've got your number. Again. Female-fronted Norwegian quartet Phone Joan dial directly into their dark side once more on their superb sophomore CD. Anchored by thundering bare-bones beats, laced with fuzzed-out guitar and psychedelic organ, topped with highflying powerhouse vocals, their slow-burning epics call out to fans of Heart, Led Zep and Dead Weather. Say hello. **Download:** *Taking It Back (Alive); Who Told You That the Devil is a Man*



Todd Snider

Agnostic Hymns & Stoner Fables

Roots Rock

★★★★

Snider's machine may not kill fascists, but it could tick off a few bankers. The Nashville singer-songwriter takes on the 1%, the religious and the right on his latest album, sharing sharp-witted tales of pension frauds, unemployment and hard times — plus a few sweet revenge fantasies — with the help of his gritty drawl and grittier acoustic country-rock. It will occupy your iPod. **Download:** *New York Banker; In Between Jobs*



Anti-Flag

General Strike

Punk

★★★★

Justin Sane has no time to lose. The Pittsburgh punk's ninth CD with Anti-Flag clocks in at a lean, mean 27 minutes — their shortest to date. But this is no case of diminishing returns: each of these dozen guttersnipe anthems is fully formed, explosively propulsive and solidly constructed atop of foundation of Clash-style intensity and rabble-rousing passion. Fast and very furious. **Download:** *This is the New Sound; I Don't Wanna*



Gord Bamford

Is it Friday Yet?

Folk-Rock

★★★½

Bamford knows what his job is. And how to get it done right. The Alberta singer-songwriter devotes his fifth full-length (and major-label debut) to one simple goal: Entertaining his audience with tales of working men, long-legged farm girls and loves that got away, voiced in his affably twangy baritone and set against a backdrop of straight-up old-school, country. His work is your reward. **Download:** *Must Be a Woman; Leaning on a Lonesome Song*

Coming up

NEXT WEEK

Bootleg IV: Soul of Truth
Johnny Cash

Locked Down
Dr. John

New Wild Everywhere
Great Lake Swimmers

Thick as a Brick 2
Jethro Tull's Ian Anderson

Curve
Our Lady Peace

TWOWEEKSAWAY

Stalingrad
Accept

Boys & Girls
Alabama Shakes

Don't Think
Chemical Brothers

Slipstream
Bonnie Raitt

Sweet Heart Sweet Light
Spiritualized

All release dates subject to change