

ALWAYS A PLEASURE 古い友達



**Brian Eno**  
**The Ship**

When you've invetned the genre, there really are no missteps.



**Radiohead**  
**A Moon Shaped Pool**

Past prime, you say? I'll stop listening when they start making junk.



**Wilco**  
**Schmilco**

...ditto.



**A Tribe Called Quest**  
**We Got It From Here...**

Welcome back, boys.  
RIP Phife.

MOST HONORABLE MENTION 準優勝



**Big Star - Complete Third**

Really ties the room together. A friend called this "nothing earth shattering" and I somewhat agree because, what with the earth having already been shattered by Big Star the first time around. RSD Jesus Christ 10" was also a nice pickup.



**Boris - With Merzbow**

Creativity Award #1. Split LP with both sides meant to be played simultaneously. About as listenable as Metal Machine Music. Not their best, so why include it? If this blurb gets you to check out earlier Boris, it's worth it.



**Death Grips - Bottomless Pit**

Creativity Award #2. An assault on the senses of hearing and decency. Like Boris, not their greatest but hoping to prompt interest in their previous recordings. And yes, that is the Seinfeld synth bass line they sampled.



**Leonard Cohen - You Want it Darker**

Sony exec to LC, early 90's: "We know you're great, but we just don't know if you're any good." He was both. As with Eno, when you're the inventor, you don't follow the herd. When sheep want to fall asleep they count you. RIP.



**David Bowie - Black Star**

Really impressive that some of his final recordings didn't seem overtly legacy-obsessed but rather about what he was going through at the time. "Lazarus" was particularly stirring. Really inspiring songs. RIP.



**Hooper Pooper Looper - Whooper!!**

Local Kobe duo (drums, bass, samples), exploiting every stage and studio moment to cram as much sonic fun into songs that the technology will allow. Great live set too. Reminiscent of Keigo Oyamada's schizopop.

MEH よく考えてみたら...



**Parquet Courts - Human Performance**

Avoided this for months, as I reckoned this was the album I was *supposed* to like this year. Still scratching my goatee over it. It's okay I guess. No doubt being enjoyed as we speak, over vegan tacos somewhere near Berry & N.7th.



**Tortoise - Catastrophist**

What am I missing? A sizeable chunk of the groove element makes room for a David Essex cover? I'll be fine with TNT, Beacons, Standards, or Millions Now Living Will Never Die, thanks.

Mark, thank you for letting me (invite myself) back into the fold. I was always giddy around POOtime back in the day and I quite enjoyed doing it from this time zone as well. I am honored to fulfill the duties of POOlist's first overseas correspondent. よろしくお願ひします.

Japan boasts the world's second largest music industry. The independent music scene is massive. One impressive thing is not what's changed but what's stayed the same. Japan of course loves *stuff*; they can't just *hear* the music; they've got to hold the jewel case or cover in their hands and study the art and overthink it. Not unlike how you and I as kids examined gatefold covers and liner notes with wide eyes while the surface noise crackled away, waiting for that first song to kick in. I really love that about Japan. There is a respect and reverence for authenticity that helps to offset all the plastic.

There's as much downloading here as anywhere (legal and illegal), but Tower Records and HMV still do well. I have lived in Kobe for a decade and I still haven't found all of the used vinyl shops. High school kids have their favorite street musicians that they stop by and listen to after school. Rock clubs come with top-notch amps and drum kits; no need to lug much. The need for making noise is unanimously agreed upon. And we may be needing a lot more of it starting January 20th.