

2009 poop Jim Meyers

Here we go again. I have to admit that I listened to loads more old vinyl this year than new music. However, some things rose above the miasma of modern music.

- 1 Neko Case *Middle Cyclone***
Grasping at straws and staring at clouds in a vain attempt to describe the heavenly gift and natural disaster that is Neko's voice. Can't outrun sorrow. Or beauty as harsh and wonderful as healing.
- 2 Wilco (*the album*)**
Heard this described somewhere as "dad rock", which is utter nonsense. I don't have children and yet this moves me more than any music I heard this year. However, I am staring down the barrels of the final weeks of my thirties, so perhaps it implies I'm old. Guilty as charged. If Jeff Tweedy sings me into senility and Nels Cline's cacophony causes me dementia and my love and I duet "You And I" I'll persist and perhaps perish, smiling.
- 3 Reigning Sounds *Love and Curses***
Exceptional garage/roots/rock that I initially thought would help me fill in The Hold Steady void. Became so much more.
- 4 Phoenix *Wolfgang Amadeus Phoenix***
I always resisted them because of um, a perceived and feared, how does one say, Frenchness? Resistance is futile, Francophobe or otherwise.
- 5 Peter Doherty *Grace/Wastelands***
An astonishing album that only reveals itself upon repeated listens. A slashed-heart romantic doomed poetic hymn to oblivion and hope. Traipsing from Idyllic pastorals to doped dubbed doubt and despair, acoustic accusations and semi-symphonic self-flagellation, barrelhouse bravado and the sense that blood spilled and poison and passion are an artists inevitable and unenviable onus.
- 6 Arctic Monkeys *Humbug***
I prefer the overtly English Monkeys, but this grew on me like mold and mildew. Josh Homme's most vital virtue, forget the Vultures.
- 7 Rhett Miller *Rhett Miller***
Old 97's front man grasps at the pop brass ring. Grabs said ring resoundingly, only to be met with deafening silence. What does this guy have to do? Inspirational verse, "Hollow your heart out and hold out for hope, God give me strength and a good length of rope."
- 8 We Were Promised Jetpacks *These Four Walls***
Reminds me of The Smiths while sounding nothing alike. Guitars and drama, reverb, romance and choruses for days. And nights.

- 9** Jay Reatard *Watch Me Fall*
Watched, listened, sad.
- 10** Yo La Tengo *Popular Songs*
Melodic genius gems and drones. I prefer the former.
- 11** Le Reno Amps *Tear It Open*
Approved by the Scottish Arts Board, whatever that is. Paul C. turned me onto this stylistic mishmash that sounds more like a mixed tape than a coherent album. That's a compliment.
- 12** Frightened Rabbit *The Midnight Organ Fight*
The rabbit is rabid, it seems. Ferocious guitars and unflinching lyrics, anthems of angst unapologetically brusque. "I'm drunk. And you're probably on pills, if we've both got the same diseases it's irrelevant girl."
- 13** Brendan Benson *My Old Familiar Friend*
"Don't Talk" is the single of the year.
The rest, um...

Cover Albums

Joe Pernice *It Feels So Good When I Stop*

The soundtrack to the novel. Whatever. Ranges from a bleary and beautiful "I'm Your Puppet", to Dream Syndicate's "Tell Me When It's Over" and a beguiling and bewildering "Chevy Van". The novel's quite good by the way.

Lemonheads *Varshuns*

Evan and Gabby Hayes rework songs no one has ever heard before. Except Lefsky, maybe.

Funniest song of the year/decade

Robbie Faulks *Fountains Of Wayne Hotline*

In which struggling songwriters ring up an 800 number and receive tips such as, "employing the radical dynamic shift". The end result is almost as good as any (slightly distorted melodic solo!) FTOW song.

Reissues

Big Star *Keep An Eye On The Sky*
Perfect pop bliss. Thanks John.

Congos *Fisherman Style*

Lee Perry works the Row Fisherman Row riddim over two discs and there's not a dud to be found. Plenty of dub, however.

Live shows

Wait, I didn't see any shows this year? Not one? First time in about 25 years.

Television

Spectacle: Elvis Costello With...
Best show ever?

Books

Jason Bitner *Cassettes From My Ex: Stories and Soundtracks of Lost Loves*

R.I.P. Jack Goldberg