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La Machine's 'Phases & Repetition' remastered, re-released

By Jeffrey Sisk

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'Phases & Repetition'
La Machine (Castle Face)

★★★

It's been 17 years since underground psyche rock band La Machine released "Phases & Repetition," and the record is getting a reissue courtesy of the folks at Castle Face. Remastered and repressed from the original cassette tape master — and sporting new original cover art — the seven-track release is an acquired taste to be sure. But while the songs probably won't appeal to everybody, it's obvious La Machine was ahead of its time with "Rock Crash," "Chop Shop," "Find the Way" and "Sucks to Come Down."

'In Search'

Chance (Paradise of Bachelors)

★★★½

Chance Martin has always marched to the beat of his own drummer. The Nashville native has gone by a variety of handles over the past 40 years — the Voice in Black, the Stoned Ranger, Mr. Freedom Man, Johnny Chainsaw, Captain Quick Tour — and was Johnny Cash's right-hand man for the better part of a decade. "In Search" is a bizarre but always interesting mix of country, rock and funk that first dropped in 1981 and is getting a deluxe reissue some three decades later. "Love By Chance," "Sunn of Gunn," "Don't Cry Wolf," "Angel," "Dusty Roads of Yesterday" and "Too High to Land" must be heard to be believed. If you like music that pushes boundaries, "In Search" is the record for you.

'The Hoss, The Candle'

White Dove (RSRCH & DVLP)

★★★½

Your enjoyment of White Dove, the California indie trio once known as Monster, probably comes down to one thing — how much you like singer and primary songwriter Alex Johnstone. She holds the 11-track release together with abstract lyrics and borderline quirky vocals, and gets a boost from guitarist Jack Long's silky melodies. There's a lot to like here — "I Saw You," "Cold Mountain," "Come On in to Hell," "Old French Clothes," "Please Give Up" — and if you buy what Johnstone is selling, White Dove should have little trouble sweeping you away.

'One'

Sarah Miles (Rock Ridge)

★★★½

Folk/pop newcomer Sarah Miles has crafted a perfectly enjoyable debut full-length in "One," but the New Jersey native will need to continue to evolve as an artist if she's to truly make a name for herself. Miles' biggest asset is her voice and with consistently strong material to sing, she could be something special. "One" serves as a nice introduction (and Miles shines on "Just So You Know," "Stand Up," "Break in Two" and "Take the Lead"), but a few too many nondescript tunes prevent the 11-track release from being an essential purchase. Miles has laid a solid foundation and here's hoping she builds on it.

'Soft'

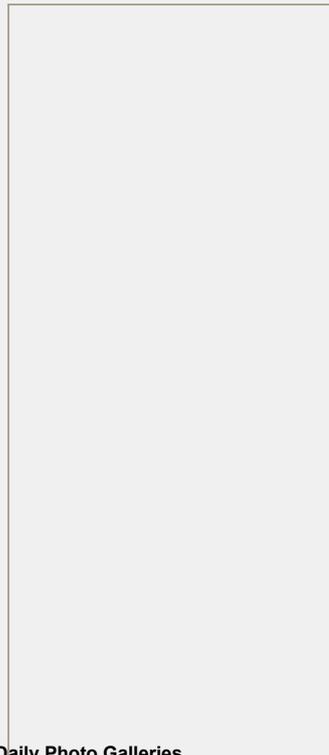
Rathborne (Dilettante)

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Brewers shut out the Pirates

Manager Clint Hurdle talks about the Pirates' 4-0 loss to the Brewers at PNC Park.

★★★★

Singer/songwriter Luke Rathborne first appeared on my radar a couple years ago with the split EP "Dog Years/I Can Be One," a world-weary collection of tunes that heralded the arrival of a talented new player on the indie scene. Ironically titled full-length "Soft" is anything but, as Rathborne and his bandmates kick out the jams on this infectious release. With nods to New Wave, garage rock and power-pop, the 11-song slab whisks by in less than 29 minutes. The so-so title track launches the set, but Rathborne finds his groove on "What More," the Cars-inspired "Eno," "Little Moment," "Last Forgiven" and "Deal." Good stuff.



Gergely tour touts road, flood fixes in Mon Valley

'Close to the Floor'

Patrick Sweany (Nine Mile)

★★★★½

Nashville-based blues rocker Patrick Sweany has been making records since 1999 and latest slab "Close to the Floor" certainly ranks among his better efforts. Whether performing solo or fronting the rotating lineup of the Patrick Sweany Band (whose members included once future Black Keys founder Dan Auerbach), Sweany is a master of electric blues. "Close to the Floor" is a 10-track delight, with Sweany particularly effective on "It's Spiritual," "Every Night Every Day," "The Island," "Every Gun" and "Just One Night."

'Lickety Split'

Robert Randolph & the Family Band (Blue Note)

★★★★

Considering he's on the road for almost 300 days a year, it's easy to understand why three years have passed since Robert Randolph's last studio album. The master of the pedal steel guitar and leader of his first-rate Family Band, Randolph impresses us all over again with "Lickety Split." Randolph enlisted some famous friends for the 12-track release, including Carlos Santana ("Brand New Wayo," "Blacky Joe") and Trombone Shorty ("Take the Party"), and in addition to the stellar original tunes serves up a blistering cover of the Ohio Players classic "Love Rollercoaster." Welcome back, sir.

'Glimmers'

Them Swoops (+1)

★★★★

Just in time for the dog days of summer comes the sun-drenched debut "Glimmers" EP from Aussie indie pop duo Them Swoops. Dave McGann and Chris Goff serve up a four-track appetizer in advance of a full-length to come (hopefully) later this year. Infectious single "Work Around It" launches the EP (and brings it to a close with a superfluous but still lots of fun Ben Browning's remix of the tune) and Them Swoops also score with "Too Fast for Love" and "Rollerskate." "Glimmers" makes for some ideal poolside listening.

'Lenses'

Soft Metals (Captured Tracks)

★★★★½

Soft Metals generated some nice buzz with their 2011 self-titled debut, but I found the music of the indie pop duo (Ian Hicks and Patricia Hall) to be a little cold and off-putting. Things have warmed noticeably over the past couple years and though sophomore set "Lenses" still has some flaws, it's definitely a step in the right direction. After a ho-hum start to the eight-track release with the title track, Soft Metals take shape with standouts "Tell Me," "When I Look Into Your Eyes," "Hourglass" and "In the Air." A similar leap next time out could result in something truly special.

'The Definitive Doc Watson'

Doc Watson (Sugar Hill)

★★★★½

One of the most influential bluegrass musicians to ever grace the planet, Doc Watson died last year at age 89. He leaves behind a musical legacy that dates back more than half a century, and two-disc set "The Definitive Doc Watson" brings together much of his best work. These 34 tracks span Watson's entire career, and include classics "Black Mountain Rag," "Greenville Trestle High," "Blue Railroad Train," "Tennessee Stud," "Your Lone Journey," "Big Spike Hammer," "The Wreck of the Number Nine," "Shady Grove," "I'm Going Back to the Old Home" and many, many more. A fitting tribute to one of the greats.

'Hold'

WL (Prospect & Refuge)

★★★★½

What sets Portland-based indie trio WL apart from many of their peers is the moody vocals of singer/bassist Misty Mary. She's the anchor of "Hold," a raw and noisy gathering of 10 tunes characterized by distorted guitars and droned-out melodies. Amid all the chaos, however, Mary's voice stands out like a beacon and almost single-handedly makes me want to revisit keepers like "Sugar Pill," "Wasted Thoughts," personal favorite "It Doesn't Matter," "Point of Focus" and "In the Window."

'Crash Course'

Young Lyons (self-released)

★★★★½

Billing themselves as a mix between the All American Rejects and Passion Pit, Oklahoma newcomers Young Lyons make a nice first impression on debut EP "Crash Course." The seven-track release (though a pair of the tunes appear twice on the platter) is a terrific introduction to their catchy, electro-pop sound. "My Own Town" gets the party started, and Young Lyons score with "Kill," "I Give Up" and "Girlfriend's Got Me Down." The single/radio edits of "Kill" and "Girlfriend's Got Me Down" seem unnecessary, but this is a band on the rise.

'In a Warzone'

Transplants (Epitaph)

★★★★½

A punk supergroup featuring Tim Armstrong (Rancid), Travis Barker (blink-182) and Rob Aston (Death March), the high-octane "In a Warzone" is the first album from Transplants since 2005's masterful "Haunted Cities" and third platter overall. It doesn't quite match up with its predecessor, which incorporated elements of hip-hop through Aston's rapping, as Transplants go the more traditional punk route on the 12-track, 30-minute slab. The set-opening title track sets the tone, and the guys also shine on "Come Around," "Something's Different," "Silence," "All Over Again" and "It's a Problem." Rock on.

'Let's Adjourn to the Garden'

Tangled Star (Hidden Shoal)

★★★★

Australian outfit Tangled Star tread the line between country, rock and pop, and fourth album "Let's Adjourn to the Garden" may be the one that ups their profile on our shores. Craig Hallsorth is the guiding creative force



This Week's Deals

1 of 8

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What's This?

behind Tangled Star and he's put together a gem of a nine-track platter. Among the highlights here are "Crazy Bit O' Truth," "In Bed With the Averys," "Hasn't Made for Freedom," "Attic Space Conversion #1" and "Head in the Sand." It's time you got to know this band.

'Team Spirit'

Team Spirit (Vice/WBR)

★★★★

Garage pop newcomer Team Spirit serves up a high-octane self-titled debut EP that's sure to get your heart racing over the course of 16 wildly enjoyable minutes. The opening tandem of "Jesus, He's Alright!" and "MRDR It's OK" lure you right in and Team Spirit doesn't let go the rest of the way. Additional keepers are "Teenage Love" and "Phenomenon." I can't wait to hear more from this band.

'Live On' & 'Danthology'

Dan Israel (self-released)

★★★★ & ★★★½

Minnesota-based singer/songwriter Dan Israel has been cruising along just outside the mainstream for almost two decades and he's dropped two new albums that I'm hoping will make others aware of this gifted musician. His 12th release "Live On" ranks among the best offerings of his under-appreciated career. There's an appealingly world-weary rasp to Israel's voice and he utilizes it to maximum effect on the 11-track gem. The first three songs — "Rollin' Away," "Ain't Gonna Let the World" and the title track — are nothing short of perfect and though Israel can't keep up that pace, he still delivers the goods on "Release," "Falling Short," "You Just Kept Playing Your Guitar" and "Mile After Mile."

Those who want to hear more should check out the two-LP vinyl release "Danthology." This two-album, 25-song set spans Israel's entire career and features his best material. While you won't find a bad song on "Danthology," pay special attention to standouts "Brings You Back," "Some Time," "Waiting So Long," "Until You See a Sign," "Jump Through the Rings," "Second to None," "Occasionally" and "Left Out." Both of these releases are worth your attention.

'Exile'

A.S. (Inedible)

★★★½

"Exile," the sophomore full-length from Paris-based indie duo A.S., is one of those albums that didn't blow me away at first blush but has grown on me steadily with every spin. Frontman Nick McRoberts (vocals/piano) has a haunting voice that dominates the 10-track release. It's not a feel-good record by any stretch of the imagination, but the songs "Do What You Want," "Probable Cause," "Invisible Kiss," "Pleasure and Pain" and "Reasonable Doubts" merit multiple listens.

Jeffrey Sisk is an editor at Trib Total Media. He can be reached at 412-664-9161 ext. 1952 or jsisk@tribweb.com.

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