

Rolling Stone

Issue 1181 >> April 25, 2013 >> \$4.99

rollingstone.com

**THE CLIMATE
MOVEMENT'S
ANGRY NEW
LEADERS**
BY BILL MCKIBBEN

**YOUNG,
BLACK,
UNARMED
& DEAD**

**STAND YOUR
GROUND'S
LATEST
VICTIM**

**THE
YEAH
YEAH
YEAS**

**MIAMI
RAVE**

**DANCE
MUSIC'S
MOST
DECADENT
PARTY**

**GAME OF
THRONES**
**THE GIRL
BEHIND THE
DRAGON QUEEN**

PHOENIX

**THE DIRTY
WISDOM OF
LOUIS C.K.**



Charli XCX

A 20-year-old goth-pop-rap diva with a flood of hot ideas

True Romance Iamsound ★★★½



"We use to be the cool kids/ You were old school, I was on the new shit," chants Charlotte Aitchison, a.k.a. Charli XCX, on "You (Ha Ha Ha)." She's on it still: Built from a shining sample of EDM artiste

Gold Panda, the single highlights a dazzling electro-pop debut that splits the difference between Grimes' art-school affect and Robyn's emo disco. Raised in semirural Hertfordshire, England, Aitchison got her performance legs by spitting verses at raves, and fittingly, she's a Jedi master of potent motifs: the doo-woppy refrain of "Stay Away," the rapped kiss-off on "So Far Away," the orgasmic overlapping vocal lines on "Grins," the digi-vowels resolving the chorus of "Nuclear Seasons." Similarly, her rhymes – all street swagger and steamy gothic heartache – flash like low-rent neon. The effect can be breathtaking, even when the pieces don't cohere into memorable songs. But apropos of the new shit, you might never notice; *True Romance* is the pop-album equivalent of a wicked Tumblr.

WILL HERMES

KEY TRACKS: "You (Ha Ha Ha)," "Grins"



X-factor: Charlotte Aitchison

KEY FACTS

HOMETOWN

Hertfordshire, England

BACKSTORY Aitchison began posting songs online at 14 and soon wound up performing at raves. By 16, she had a record deal and built buzz with goth-y, seductive singles like "Stay Away."

NOT X-ACTLY TRUE

"XCX" stands for "Kiss Charli Kiss," formerly Aitchison's MSN Messenger ID. "Then I got signed," she said, "and I thought, 'Maybe I need to make it cooler,' so I told the record label it stood for 'X-rated Cunt X-rated.'"



James Blake

Overgrown Republic

★★★½

Singer-DJ tones down the sound effects, zooms in on tunes

On his 2011 debut, James Blake was a bedroom beat maestro with soul-singer ambitions: a composer of beautiful, somewhat blurry songlets that were spangled with dubstep bass groans and glitchy electronics. His new album marks a shift: Blake has toned down the twitchiness and concentrated on the tunes. "Retrograde" is a surging torch ballad; "Our Love Comes Back" is a shuddering plea for rekindled romance. Blake's music is still a bit out of focus. He sings in a pretty, dusky warble, but often doesn't enunciate his lyrics; he's less a songwriter than a conjurer of melodies. But at its finest, Blake's mood music has some magic in it. It holds you in its spell.

JODY ROSEN



The Black Angels

Indigo Meadow Blue Horizon

★★★½

Texas rockers work up a witchy but forgettable buzz

As twee as they are trippy, Austin garage-psych revivalists the Black Angels have built a respectable cult-level career out of fuzzy, midtempo rock that might've felt ominous in 1966. The band's fourth album flirts intermittently with heaviness without ever risking metal; suggests spaciness without ever blasting into the stratosphere; evokes combat ("Don't Play With Guns," "War on Holiday," "Broken Soldier") without ever clarifying why. Two different songs compare non-vine-y things to vines, and frequent Eastern drones descend from the Yardbirds and the Velvet Underground. It's a pleasant-enough swirl – more so whenever vintage organs pipe in. But it never expands your mind.

CHUCK EDDY



Robyn Hitchcock

Love From London Yep Roc

★★★★

U.K. veteran takes on dark days with gentle psychedelia

This British singer-songwriter and psychedelic cult hero keeps issuing delightful, incisive records, and this is one of his recent best – an album Syd Barrett might have made if he'd stayed cogent and seen the end of days. *Love From London* is 10 songs of chiming folk-rock grace and slippery black humor in which apocalypse falls gently, to spidery picking, in "Be Still," and with stately Beatlesque piano in "Stupefied." Hitchcock also evokes the radical-Seventies John Lennon with the crunchy contempt for thieving financiers in "Fix You." "Day breaks/Like an egg," Hitchcock warns in the closing "End of Time," but with the trippy reassuring tone of someone who plans to fully enjoy the time he has left.

DAVID FRICKE



Willy Moon

Here's Willy Moon

Cherrytree/Island

★★★

Retro dude from iPod ad has cool concept, decent execution

"Bo Diddley remixed by Swizz Beatz" is how this New Zealander describes his music. His debut doesn't quite sound like that – Moon's a frail flower compared with Diddley, and his beats are pedestrian next to Swizz's. But conceptually, he's on to something. His songs take the ferocity of early rock & roll, add hip-hop-flavored beats, ladle on some feedback – and move on before wearing out their welcome. You know "Yeah Yeah" from an iPod commercial; "My Girl" could be a girl-group tune; and "I Wanna Be Your Man" has a Buddy Holly vibe and deft bare-bones production. Moon looks like a fashion victim playing dress-up, but his music has smarts and bite.

JODY ROSEN



Tom Curren

In Plain View

Wolfbomb Productions

★★★★

Ex-surfing champ tours Laurel Canyon on elegant debut LP

Surf legend Tom Curren was a pro by age 17 in 1981, and went on to win a record 33 championship events. Turns out the longtime drummer and guitarist can navigate a studio as well as a wave. His first full-length is steeped in the Laurel Canyon vibes of home-state heroes like the Eagles and Jackson Browne, with Curren flashing a rich tenor and fluid guitar leads on the feel-good anthem "Unconditional." But it's not all peaceful-easy feelings: A famous recluse, Curren grapples with a ravaged relationship on "Feel" and, on the slow-building standout "Moon," derides "the new generation, watching movies on a phone." Considering his own badass youth, can you blame him?

PATRICK DOYLE