



the cut

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Dazzletine
Aftersound**

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LETTER

FROM THE EDITOR



So begins another freezing warm November in Pittsburgh. The sun setting at 5pm every day has put most of us in a funk, but I hope the anticipation of WRCT's Fall Dance Party has kept you all going. From my personal experience, the next best thing to a seasonal affective disorder lamp has been walking through the rain to get a seitan melt at Spak's followed by a show at the recently saved Roboto Project (woo!).

This month we're bringing you a real humdinger of an issue. We've got reviews of shows from all of over Pittsburgh, including the brand new 31st Street Studios, as well as an overview of the fantastic goings-on at the Miller Gallery for the Aftersound exhibit. On top of that we've got a review of a new Broadway musical, a review of Morrissey as a person, and we even got two

of our writers to pound out the perfect playlist for the well-rounded sadboy.

For this issue, we spoke with the electro-pop duo Cherub before their show at Mr. Small's as well as local band Dazzletine before they put on one hell of a glam rock show at Spirit. Ina Rastegar also gave us a piece of her mind about the rise of foreign language in popular music.

It may be getting cold outside, but The Cut's got you covered with this month's best reason to stay inside and read.

- Arun Marsten

Recommended Albums



Top Row from Left to right: Thank your Lucky Star by Beach House, Sun Coming Down by Ought, Such Things by Saints Seneca, VEGA INTL. Night School by Neon Indian, You Look A Lot Like Me by Mal Blum

Bottom Row from Left to Right: Confident by Demi Lovato, Colour Blind by Seaway, Careers by Chamber Band, The Second Floral EP by Floral, The Agent Intellect by Protomartyr

10 Songs You Need To Hear

- 1 **All the Same** Deerhunter
- 2 **All The Same** Wavves
- 3 **High High** Open Season
- 4 **Beautiful Blue Sky** Ought
- 5 **Dancing in the Dark** Hot Chip
- 6 **Come Back Home** Haut
- 7 **Hour** Porches
- 8 **Robert Frost** Mal Blum
- 9 **Mercy** BOOTS
- 10 **Oh, Susquehanna** Defiance, Ohio



Music News

By Arun Marsten

⌘ Chamber Band's Kickstarted second album "Careers" was released, and it's phenomenal. Their first album was set in the world of Dungeons and Dragons, but this time they go into the world of The Hunger Games. That's right, it's a concept album based on young adult fiction.

⌘ Busta Rhymes pled guilty to a misdemeanor harassment charge for throwing a bottle of Muscle Milk at a gym employee. Sources report that after the incident, Rhymes was careful to keep his hands where their eyes could see, but threatened that, if pushed, he could break ya neck and (woo hah!) he had us all in check.

⌘ Miley Cyrus and The Flaming Lips have announced that they will perform a concert entirely in the nude. Need I say more?

⌘ Conde Nast purchased totally-not-indie-anymore-anyway music journalism site Pitchfork, so now you *really* need to lie to your friends and say you don't read the site.

⌘ A Russian radio station announced that recording for Radiohead's 9th LP was finished. Then Radiohead denied ever saying that. Consequence of Sound announced that LCD Soundsystem was reuniting, but was unable to provide a source when challenged. Maybe you shouldn't trust our news either?

⌘ Drake released a blockbuster video for his single "Hotline Bling" exclusively through Apple Music, but he missed the top of the charts since they don't report video streams to Billboard. It might be more accurate if his single cover said 2-800-HOTLINE-BLING.

⌘ Demi Lovato and her producers were accused of sampling two Sleigh Bells songs, "Infinity Guitars" and "Riot Rhythm", without permission on her song "Stars". Though they deny that anything was taken from Sleigh Bells, the band plans on "seeking all available remedies."

⌘ Weezer released two new singles, "Thank God for Girls" and "Do You Wanna Get High?", to mixed reviews. But, let's be honest: if we want another *Pinkerton*, Rivers Cuomo is going to have to break his legs again. Not that I'm advocating violence, but...

⌘ Death Grips have apparently re-unbroken-up again, announcing a new album called *Bottomless Pit*. The album announcement was packaged with a 15 minute video of late actress Karen Black reading a script by drummer Zach Hill.

⌘ Urban Outfitters has announced that it will begin selling cassettes and cassette players in its stores. This is good news for people with cars that are at least fifteen years old, but it's bad news for people who haven't finished complaining about the vinyl resurgence yet.

REVOLUTIONIZING BROADWAY

By Brooke Ley

Recently, a recording of Lin-Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton* debuted at number 12 on the Billboard 200 and, more surprisingly, number 3 on Rap Albums. Although the concept of a hip-hop Broadway musical about founding father Alexander Hamilton might seem to appeal only to a niche audience, *Hamilton* has proven its ability to surpass this expectation. Instead, by utilizing a more modern genre, it has been able to add an exciting perspective to the story of Alexander Hamilton. Lin-Manuel Miranda believes his legacy "embodies hip-hop"; Hamilton overcame poverty to become a major figure in American history through his words. The rap style is powerfully integrated into a story of those fighting for revolution and freedom from oppression.

Although *Hamilton* is often described as a hip-hop musical, it has also taken influence from R&B and jazz while still integrating some Broadway traditionalism. This has both piqued the interest of the traditional Broadway audience while expanding it to those who might not typically enjoy musicals. The rapping within the musical has also allowed for a fast-paced story to be told. The average words per minute within

the show is 144, and its song "Guns and Ships" has claimed the title of being the fastest song in musical theater history.

Through my own experience listening to the soundtrack, I was surprised at the musical's ability to make history "cool" without being cheesy. The actors are undeniably skilled in their singing and rapping throughout the pieces, but, even further, they seem genuinely excited to play their roles that, in other situations, may be thought of as boring. The raps also have a nice flow and are able to combine both historical and modern references very cleverly.

The non-hip-hop songs should not be overlooked; they showcase the cast's singing talent. They also parallel the characters well. The rebellious protagonists sing the more rap style songs while antagonists such as King George have slower ballad pieces.

Unfortunately, tickets for the Broadway show have been sold out until January. However, the entire cast recording is available for download on iTunes or streaming through Spotify.

WHY MORRISSEY SUCKS

In late September, the internet was brimming with commentary and criticism regarding Morrissey's debut novel *List of the Lost*. The book became a viral hit due to its convoluted plot about a demon-summoning relay team and awkwardly written sex scenes which rival even 50 Shades of Grey material. One particularly terrible line read: "His bulbous salutation extenuating his excitement as it whacked and smacked its way into every muscle of Eliza's body except for the otherwise central zone."

But somehow, lines like that aren't even the worst part of the novel. Nearly every page hosts transparent metaphors that serve as Morrissey's platform, allowing him to rant about old grudges from decades past. Although his early solo career was innovative, his latest works have been plagued with the ghosts of his misfortunes. Most songs hold reference to his tortured past, be it the betrayal of Mike Joyce and Andy Rourke or government corruption, which have made his new music lyrically repetitive. Additionally, his sound seems to be stuck in a post-Smiths depression.

Why *does* Morrissey suck? It's a simple answer: He can't let go of the past. His fixation on the obsolete prevents him from concentrating on the present, leaving him behind in time. Conversely, his contemporaries continue to develop new projects, ensuring themselves modern relevance. The duo Sparks collaborated with rock band Franz Ferdinand to form supergroup FFS, while Depeche Mode's lead singer Dave Gahan recently released a joint album with composer team Soulsavers. But Morrissey has done nothing of the sort. Instead, his latest work, *World Peace Is None of Your Business*, has received only generally mixed reviews. This is an unfortunate fact to consider, as it is one of the better albums he has released in the past decade.

Objectively, Morrissey is a true symbol of and innovator in the British alternative scene. But on the other hand, these accomplishments do not excuse his glaring inability to let go of grudges. Music is forever changing, and it will not wait for Morrissey to catch up.

By Sophia Suarez

THE TRANSITION FROM CHILD STAR TO SUPERSTAR: CAN IT BE DONE?

By Stephen Yamalis

We are all too familiar with child stars who rise to fame, manufactured by the Disney machine to produce the catchiest, most generic pop music imaginable in order to catch the full attention of young, enthusiastic fans. The real problems begin when these artists grow up, leaving behind a brand catered exclusively to teens, instead trying to create their own names and individual places in the industry. Two artists in this position are 23-year-old global sensations Selena Gomez and Demi Lovato, whose careers, up until now, have very closely paralleled each other. They both started off on *Barney & Friends* before starring in their own Disney Channel TV shows and then launching music careers. This October, both artists took the opportunity to break free from the restrictive teen idol mold by releasing “more mature” albums.

Although this seems to be another identical career move for these two, considering the albums were released just one week apart,

Gomez and Lovato sharply diverge with their respective albums. For instance, Selena’s *Revival* takes a modest approach, as an infectious, mid-tempo collection of tracks heavily saturated with glittery pop production and laid-back, sensual vocals. In contrast, Demi does not hold back on *Confident*, making sure to display her impressive vocal abilities, channeling both pop-rock and soulful influences in an exciting mixture of bold and vulnerable songs. Thus, for the first time, there is something distinct about these two artists’ individual styles, and they have finally established a unique identity within the music industry.

While many of these teen stars slip through the cracks as they grow older—What’s the oldest Jonas brother’s name again?—Selena and Demi have proven that even their new “adult” sounds will bring them success. They debuted at first and second, respectively, on the Billboard Hot 200 album chart. One might argue that not

much has changed if a new brand is being created for these artists under a new label. However, what is important is that these artists embrace their own individuality, forming a brand that represents how they want to be viewed as artists rather than being interchangeable stereotypes.

GREATNESS DEFINED

By Dhruva Krishna

We’ve all heard it: “X Artist is *sooooo* great!” But what does the term “great” really mean? Is there a point where an artist truly and objectively becomes “great?”

I’m going to argue that greatness can be *objectively judged*. I believe greatness relies on a test of three factors: Innovation, Inspiration, and Ingenuity. If a musician can pass this test, he or she can be deemed great. Since he has been a subject of much debate among my friends and I, I’m going to use the guitar player Johnny Marr of The Smiths as the subject of my greatness test.

Beginning with innovation, Johnny Marr innovated what it meant to be a “lead guitarist” within the context of a rock band. The Smiths existed alongside Van Halen’s overdosed two-handed-tapping, shred ballad solos, and over-the-top performances, but Marr only recorded a handful of true “guitar solos” within their entire discography. Instead, he synthesized a new style of guitar playing reliant on melodic chord and arpeggio work. Listen to “How Soon Is Now,” to hear how incredibly innovative Marr is in blending different styles into his guitar work.

Marr’s influence can be heard in dozens of modern guitar players. Marr reclaimed the Rickenbacker in modern rock music, bringing its jangling tone to the forefront of rock music. The Stone Roses and Oasis are just a few bands that have stated how Marr heavily influenced their guitar work by emphasizing melody and chords over technical work.

Marr’s ingenuity is best heard in his guitar tone. The combination of utilizing a Rickenbacker, signature echo/delay sounds, and melodic lead work distinguish Marr from his contemporaries. If you put Marr in a blind guitar lineup, chances are you’d be able to pick him out of the group.

Of course the question of whether greatness can truly be objective will always be controversial. However, it is important that we try to unpack these terms that are thrown around so generally. By doing so, we can give the truly “great” musicians the credit they deserve.



S at Spirit
Photo by Mark Egge

Pet Sounds

**“5000 Candles in the Wind”
by Mouserat**

“You trade your legs for Angel Wings”.
RIP L.S.

Dhruva Krishna

**“Alley Cats”
by Hot Chip**

If you and your significant other were actually sad cats.

Lucy Denegre

**“Marshmallow Unicorn”
by Rachel Sermani**

What? A song about marshmallows and unicorns? Haha no. Expect Sermani’s genius to write a wonderfully sad song and title it something as hopeful as ‘Marshmallow Unicorn’.

**“Dogs”
by Pink Floyd**

Classic psychedelic rock with actual dogs barking on the track! Wow! If you’ve only ever heard *Dark Side of The Moon*, give Pink Floyd’s *Animals* a listen.

Jack Taylor

Smokey Dyar

**“Martha My Dear”
by The Beatles**

Turns out this McCartney classic off the *White Album* was actually about Paul’s sheepdog “Martha.” It’s probably for the best, since the phrase “silly girl” wouldn’t flatter many human females.

**“Elephant”
by Tame Impala**

A song guaranteed to make you feel like a psychedelic, 2-ton mammal, as its title would suggest.

Donovan Powers

Arun Marsten

**“Bird Gerhl”
by Antony and the Johnsons**

A very beautiful song if you’re into birds or, more specifically, girls being birds.

Brooke Ley

**“Black Mambo”
by Glass Animals**

Because where else can you find a sloth, leopard, and snake together (besides the jungle).

Julie Heming



kaskade

Even for an avid electronic music concertgoer like myself, the buzz surrounding Kaskade's Automatic Tour was far greater than the usual. Kaskade is a veteran of EDM; he began his career in the early 2000s and still releases quality music today. Too big for the typical Stage AE show, his concert was planned for a new venue in the Strip District named 31st Street Studios. The venue is a gigantic, multi-purpose warehouse, and Kaskade gave the inaugural performance. This combination of an amazing artist, a cool, new venue, and the fact that Kaskade nor any big name DJ had come to Pittsburgh in recent years all added to the pre-show hype.

The show did not disappoint. Pittsburgh EDM fans packed into 31st Street Studios as Kaskade dropped the emotional chords to his hit with Deadmau5, "I Remember," marking the beginning of a two hour set. It progressed through different stages, beginning and ending with songs from his recent album *Automatic* and also exploring different sub-genres of EDM such as progressive house, disco, and trap music.

By Ben Alderoty &
Dylan Regan

the neighbourhood

After arriving at Stage AE on a cold autumn day, I waited outside in a seemingly never-ending line to see The Neighbourhood. I decided to check to see who the supporting acts were while I waited. Following some basic research into the bands, we were eventually granted entry into the venue. After we grabbed a bite to eat, the first opening act, Hunny, came out. They didn't have much material to perform, and lacked a strong stage presence. Still, the set was alright for an opener. Bad Suns performed afterwards, and the gap in experience was apparent. They performed extremely well. I had not heard their music prior to the concert, but following their performance, specifically of "Salt" and "Cardiac Arrest," I found myself desperate to hear more. With a fresh, alternative sound, Bad Suns was a perfect complement to The Neighbourhood.

by Daniel Deluca

After they finished, I took the opportunity to explore a bit of the venue, which was tiered so everyone could see the artists.

Many EDM artists play short clips of music between larger songs, with the intention of keeping the energy levels high. Kaskade opted to play quite a different set. He played many of his songs from start to finish, even with some short breaks in between his biggest songs for applause. At these times the show felt more like a traditional rock concert than the usual EDM show. This risk paid off in a big way as the fans belted out every word of these songs and the short pauses in between built up anticipation instead of killing the crowd's energy.

All in all, Kaskade's set satisfied fans both new and old. He seamlessly combined his own sound with the popular styles in electronic music today for an all-around fun show. The combination of a recent lack of big-name EDM acts, the debut of a new venue, and Kaskade's prowess as an iconic artist truly came together in a big way, as they each fed off each other and created a remarkable atmosphere (no pun intended).

However, while I was looking around, all the lights went out, signalling it was showtime for The Neighbourhood. Opening with "W.D.Y.W.F.M.," the band began the show with the intensity that would come to characterize the night. Using the theme of their new album, *The Flood*, the light show made the performance even better. The band followed up by playing hits from their first album, *I Love You*, interspersed with new singles. However, approximately halfway into the show, The Neighbourhood decided to change things. All the band members left the stage leaving behind only an intense beat, but after several minutes, the lead singer returned to deliver a completely different performance. In what was the most exciting part of the show, he performed several parts of their mixtape while dancing around the stage. Following that section, the other members of the band returned and finished strongly, performing their huge hit, "Sweater Weather." Overall, both the venue and band lived up to my extremely high expectations.

CERT NEWS



Photos by Jonathan Leung

The Virginia New Music Ensemble's performance at the Miller Gallery could not be described in any way as catchy, tuneful, or even pleasant. But that wasn't the point. The group, an experimental orchestra ensemble, performed eight pieces. The first was "Surfaces" by Jon Bellona, the ensemble's bass player. The members of the ensemble used the walls and surfaces of the gallery as a score. Differences of light and shadow, distance, height and texture affect the tone, pitch, and timbre of the music. The objective of the piece is to "sonically reconstruct" the environment it is played in. Within these guidelines, each musician is essentially improvising their own part, interpreting the space in their own way and having to listen to each other as they go. Honestly, I hesitate to call the result music. It was often tuneless, discordant and shrill, more of a sound experience, but an immersive one. It is not something I would listen to in my spare time, but the exploration of how visuals can be translated into sound was interesting.

This was the theme throughout the whole performance. The piece I had the most trouble with was "Relaxing at the Keyboard" by Daniel Goode. In it, the pianist literally

Despite Justin Hawkins ditching his classic look, a striped catsuit and untamed locks, The Darkness's performance at The Altar Bar was just as glitzy and glamorous as could be hoped for. They had an onstage ease and a command of the show that only comes with being seasoned performers, not to mention an incredible mastery of their instruments that was displayed most clearly by the precision with which they synchronized their blazing guitar riffs. Justin pulled off his incredible soaring vocals comfortably and naturally, hitting each and every impressive note spot on. Their hiatus clearly did nothing to damage their popularity as the crowd they drew filled the room and enthusiastically (and somewhat drunkenly) shouted their lyrics back at them.

The Darkness remained on stage for over an hour and a half, covering a wide range of their material. Unsurprisingly, their

took a nap on the keyboard. That was the whole piece. He walked out, laid his head down (queue discordant key smashing), and took a goddamn nap. Admittedly, I took this opportunity to also take a nap, but woke up in time for the performances of excerpts from graphic scores by Pozzi Escot, Herbert Brün, and Cornelius Cardew, which were also slightly bizarre.

They finished up the performance with an interactive game called "Frontier" programmed by another member of the ensemble, Paul Turowski. The game reacted to the pitch and tempo played by the group to steer a little ship through the virtual world, break down walls, and collect power ups. It relied on harmonies to control direction and was probably the most musically pleasant part of the performance. What I appreciated the most about the ensemble is that they didn't take themselves too seriously. They realized that a lot of what they were doing was potentially a little silly, and they embraced it. You could tell they were having a lot of fun, and it was contagious. The concert was a great introduction to experimental composition and performance.

wildly popular "I Believe In A Thing Called Love" got the crowd the most riled. I was pleased to find the rest of the rock n' roll listening populace of Pittsburgh seemed to relate to the chorus of "Givin' Up" just as much as I do, gladly singing back that they are "givin' up, givin' up giving a fuck." The crowd also responded well to the songs off their most recent album, *Last of Our Kind*, not only singing back the lyrics, but even shouting for some of the new songs to be played. Justin also used his quick wit to joke with the crowd and make the evening entertaining and enjoyable in every way possible. With their onstage antics, showy outfits, striking looks, and impeccable performance, The Darkness provided a rock n' roll experience that was reminiscent of the greats of the 70s and 80s, but in a way that did not come off as stale or dated. True to their words, they managed to prove that they really are the last of their kind.

virginia new music ensemble

By Lucy Denegre

the darkness

By Danielle Malý

Songs for the Evolving Sadboy

By Alex Voskuil and Chris Schuler

A: I guess I can sort of begin with an easy choice for someone who got into Deafheaven via *Sunbather*. “Printemps Emeraude” by Alcest sounds very similar to Deafheaven on *Sunbather*. The track “Please Remember” even has an appearance by the lead vocalist of Alcest. This album, *Souvenirs D'un Autre Monde* was released in 2007, and while having a more pronounced folk influence, you definitely get a similar blend of black metal and shoegaze.

C: I think I hear the shoegaze more here than on a lot of Deafheaven tracks. It’s got a noisier backing guitar track definitely.

A: Yeah, the melody is not quite as discernible in the heavier portions. Though in some ways Alcest is less “metal” than Deafheaven taking, as you mentioned, more influence from shoegaze. Alcest was actually the forerunner of the blackgaze genre so if you’re interested in this sound you should check out acts like Wolves in the Throne Room, Autumn for Crippled Children, and Agalloch.

C: You mentioned that the guitar in a lot of Deafheaven really tugs at you, and I feel like “I Believe in You” by Talk Talk is another track where the guitar has a

very strong emotional connection to the listener. Talk Talk was one of the bands that really invented post-rock, blending jazzy influences with rock in a totally fresh way.

A: I’m actually a big fan of Tortoise but never listened to Talk Talk. I really like the sound; it’s very pleasant and the midsection blends together creating this really trippy, warm feeling. Where do I go from here for this sort of sound?

C: Well they have two albums with this sort of style, *Spirit of Eden* and *Laughing Stock*. No one else really sounds exactly like them, although Bark Psychosis is another band from the late-80s and early 90s who drew a lot of influence from them. I’d check out their album *Hex*.

A: So, to continue with the shoegaze aspect of Deafheaven, I’m going to add Jesu’s “Friends Are Evil.” It’s something quite a bit heavier and noisier, though personally I think far more emotionally resonant. They have more of a drone and post-metal sound but I think there is a lot here for any listener.

C: The opening sounded like a garbage disposal, which was pretty cool. I can see how this would be the logical end point of the sound that My Bloody Valentine pioneered. If you had to suggest one of their albums to start with, what would you pick?

A: I would definitely pick the self-titled debut. I would also check out Angelic Process’s *Weighing Souls With Sand* for an even heavier guitar sound. If you prefer the “garbage disposal” opening I would look into Justin Broadrick’s previous work in Godflesh. Also, keep January 2016 on your calendar. Jesu and Sun Kil Moon are doing a collaboration, which should be really cool.

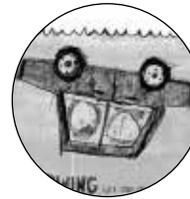
C: My next song is one you might be familiar with already if you like mathy stuff, but I think Slint’s “Good Morning, Captain” is a logical transition between Deafheaven/Talk Talk. This song is on *Spiderland*, which is one of the creepiest albums I know. I would also recommend their debut, *Tweez*, which isn’t quite as strong but still has some solid guitar work. As far as where else to go, I’d recommend Modest Mouse’s debut album and *The*



Good Morning,
Captain
Slint
Spiderland



Thirteen
Big Star
#1 Record



Methuselah
Rookier Card
Snowing
*Fuck Your
Emotional
Bullshit EP*



Printemps
Emeraude
Alcest
*Souvenirs d'un
autre monde*



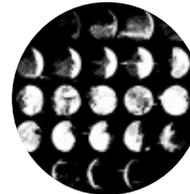
Friends are Evil
Jesu
Jesu



Dying
Merchant Ships
For Cameron EP



Obscura
Gorguts
Obscura



Aimless Arrow
Converge
*All Love We
Leave Behind*



God Alone
Altar of Plagues
*Teethed Glory
and Injury*



I Believe in You
Talk Talk
Spirit of Eden

Lonesome Crowded West for something that takes vocal and guitar inspiration.

A: Since you mentioned *New Bermuda* was sort of the album that got you thinking about listening to more metal, I'm going to suggest "Aimless Arrow" by Converge. It's more firmly rooted in the genre, with some post-hardcore influence as well. Kurt Ballou, their guitarist, is a beast. He's also a fantastic producer and has produced too many great metal albums to count. It's hard to say where to go from here because of just how influential Converge is. A good place to start would be more metallic hardcore acts like Coalesce and Botch.

C: I know that a lot of metal vocals use screaming, so that might be a good segue into the emo side of things that I listen to such as "Dying" by Merchant Ships.

A: The screaming definitely makes me think of black metal, so I think I'll go with a modern black metal group. Here's Altar of Plagues' "God Alone".

C: This is really gripping stuff. I can see myself getting down to this once I get

more used to the aggression. For a lighter sound I'm going to go with Snowing's "Methuselah Rookier Card".

A: This is great, all the energy, the frantic guitar playing. This is the kind of music you pay to see live, just to experience it firsthand. It sort of reminds me of Algonon Cadwallader.

C: I think the EP this is on, *Fuck Your Emotional Bullshit* is one of the definitive emo statements, and I recommend it to anyone looking to get deeper into the genre. Other than that, there are a lot of classic bands from the 90s like The Promise Ring, American Football, etc. that are incredible, and finally, I gotta plug Modern Baseball's new single "The Thrash Particle" for a poppier take on this sort of sound. For your last song, give me something harsh to close out.

A: Well, if I am going harsh there is absolutely nothing I know that is more insane in metal than Gorguts' "Obscura". This is the defining modern technical death metal record and what has, for the past twenty years, undeniably influenced every relevant extreme metal band since.

Why don't you give me a song that makes me feel everything?

C: Alright, I'm gonna take you back to one of the OG sadboys, from back in the 70s: Big Star's "Thirteen". This song might not have much to do with Deafheaven sonically, but it's like boiled down adolescent heartbreak. I heartily recommend Big Star's first two albums, *#1 Record* and *Radio City* if you want perfectly crafted throwback pop, but they really shine with their third one, *3rd/Sister Lovers* which is heartbreaking (all over) and experimental (in parts).



DAZZL



GETTING

By Arun Marsten
Photos by Mark Egge



Photo by Mark Egge

Dazzletine is a band from Pittsburgh that's mixing glam rock styles and sounds with punk, pop, and their own je ne sais quoi. They played a show at Spirit on October 12th and their frontman, Dan Koshute, sat down with us afterwards to talk about writing music, playing shows, and blowing people's minds.

THE CUT: So how did you all meet?

DAN KOSHUTE: I met Darren my first semester at Duquesne. We lived in the same dorm and had a couple classes together. He had really long hair, so I thought, "This person is really cool." We started talking and it turned out

we liked the same music, so we started playing together. I was doing a solo project with Seth Chizek, our drummer, so I asked him to start playing with us and that project eventually turned into Dazzletine.

We all bonded over our love of early 70s glam rock: David Bowie, Queen, T. Rex, Gary Glitter.

TC: What were you guys listening to when you started out?

DK: We all bonded over our love of early 70s glam rock: David Bowie, Queen, T. Rex, Gary

Glitter. We like proto-punk/metal like the MC5, and we like The Smashing Pumpkins a lot. We also have contemporary influences, for example we really like the album *Album* by Girls. So it's pretty varied.

TC: Would you say that they influenced your live performances?

DK: Yeah, for us the live show is the most important part of being a band. We've always tried to make our shows an experience. I think that's why we like the early 70s rock so much because it was just this huge immersive, otherworldly experience, almost a religious experience that was really fun. That's what we've aimed at since day one. We try to have shows that are as unforgettable as possible.

TC: I noticed that you don't highlight the glam rock performance aspect of Dazzletine in your music videos as much. Why is that?

DK: We get pigeonholed as a glam rock band, and we butt heads with that, because it's very easy to label us and forget about it. We don't actually consider ourselves a glam rock band. We consider ourselves a pop band. We're trying to make art and challenge the way people categorize music. We've noticed that, at least in America, when you get lumped in with glam rock, people will think it's not serious. In England, on the other hand, it's very serious. Queen, Gary Glitter, and T. Rex were huge in England, but here they were almost seen as jokes. We just try to push people's buttons and keep them on their toes. We want to make something new.

TC: Where do you usually get inspiration for songs?

DK: Everywhere. I guess as an artist I've got an antenna up at all times picking up on things just going about my normal life. In the spaces between the daily grind you can get waves of inspiration for anything from music to lyrics to just creative ideas.

TC: How has your experience been as an up and coming band in Pittsburgh?

DK: This band would have never formed in a different city. It's very easy to live here and thrive just as a human being. In cities like L.A. and New York, people can be obsessed with fame and their image, but here you can just focus on making art and making the best thing that you can. Personally it's given us the freedom to be unique. That being said, we've never really considered ourselves to be part of any scene in Pittsburgh.

TC: How about being a band on the internet?

DK: It's sort of a double-edged sword. On the one side you it gives you ability to get your work to people all over the world. On the other side, it can be horrible because there are just so many bands. It can be hard to be heard over the noise.

TC: So you guys have a single and two EPs out at the moment. Any plans for new releases?

DK: We're making our debut full length album right now, and we're about halfway through. There are ten to thirteen new songs, and it's the greatest thing we've ever done. I've been making records since I was about 17 and I've never been prouder of an album. Everybody in the band is just beside themselves with excitement about getting it out.

TC: What's it going to be called?

DK: Orgonomy is the working title. It might stick. It's the title I've given it for the last two years while we were working on it, but now that we're actually recording it I keep thinking, "Well maybe it could be something else."

TC: Any favorite shows or venues you've played?

DK: Our favorite show of all time was when we sold out Garfield Artworks for the Heart, Mind, Bodies record release. That really meant a lot to us. It was the greatest night of my life.

We're trying to make art and challenge the way people categorize music. We've noticed that, at least in America, when you get lumped in with glam rock, people will think it's not serious.

Nov

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wedn
1 Mod Sun at Altar Bar Insane Clown Posse at Mr. Small's	2 Screaming Females at The Smiling Moose Combichrist at Altar Bar	3 Sufjan Stephens at Heinz Hall Cannibal Corpse at The Altar Bar	4 Jonathan Rich Warhol Museum Dave Rawling Byham Theater
8 Yonder Mountain String Band at Mr Smalls	9	10 The Chainsmokers at Stage AE	11
15 The Gotobeds at Brillobox	16 The Neighbourhood at Stage AE	17	18 Parkway Drive
22	23	24 mewithoutyou at Mr Smalls The Menzingers at Mr. Small's	25
29	30		

ember

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Man at Andy m s Machine at r	5	6 The Ghost Inside at Altar Bar The Polyphonic Spree at Mr. Small's Record Fest #14 at Spirit	7
	12 12 Public Image Ltd. at The Altar Bar	13	14 Neon Indian at Mr. Smalls Parliament/Funkadelic at Stage AE
e at Altar Bar	19	20 Knuckle Puck at The Altar Bar	21
	26	27 Night Riots at Smiling Moose	28

AFTER SOUND

frequency, attack, return

By Kabir Mantha



Photo by Lucy Denegre

For the longest time, music was considered a semantic system and, like any other language, its notation was designed to convey preordained meaning: what chord to play, how long to play it for, etc. Similar to writers realizing the limitations of traditional formats in language and typesetting, leading to nonsense poetry and ergodic literature, composers started to move away from the notion that a score is merely the vehicle of semantic content, instead believing that it could be a work of art in its own right. It is at this juncture that Miller Gallery's latest exhibition, 'Aftersound: Frequency, Attack, Return,' curated by Margaret Cox and Melissa Ragona, begins its narrative.

As soon as you walk in, you notice a version of the score of "Fonata Mix" by John Cage on the wall. It's not without reason this gets pride of place. Composed in 1958, this is one of the first major examples of a conceptual score. The score consists of a bunch of transparencies with curved lines, straight lines, dots and a grid on them. The performer, according to certain instructions, assembles these into a structure that is then interpreted aurally, with minimal performance guidelines and unspecified instrumentation.

From this starting point, you are led on a journey where each stop is a different interpretation of the concept of a score, from George Crumb's calligraphic scores, still largely using traditional musical notation, to Iannis Xenakis's scores inspired by Gaussian distributions and Boltzmann's kinetic theory of gases, and everything in between.

As part of the exhibit, the gallery has also hosted multiple performances. 'Null Set' by the Virginia New Music Ensemble was a survey of graphical scores from classics like Cornelius Cardew's 'Treatise' to their own compositions. It explored the balance between composition and improvisation, as well as determinacy versus chance. Some scores were algorithmically generated. The highlight of the performance was a video game, designed by one of the performers, in which the ensemble controls the main character while the pitch, bpm, and volume determine the direction and extent of motion - an experiment in goal-oriented improvisation. While a lot of the performance sounded stereotypically 'avant-garde,' at times it truly managed to transcend genre, particularly during Daniel Goode's 'Relaxing at the Keyboard.'

The next performance, created by Michael Pestel and performed by Alberto Almarza's flute studio, was truly amazing. Continuing with the theme of non-traditional scores, as well as Michael Pestel's recurrent environmental message, 'Floor Score for Messiaen' was a symbolic return of the birdsongs from Messiaen's 'Catalogue d'Oiseaux' to the birds they were taken from. The score of the Catalogue, the most comprehensive transcription of birdsong to ever be made, was cut into tiny placards and scattered all over the gallery floor. The flutes, ranging from piccolo to bass, represented the birds in search for their song, but they better hurry, before the 'broominet' (a large broom fitted with a clarinet mouthpiece) sweeps away their songs forever! Not only was it an aleatoric experiment with Messiaen, it was also a biting comment on the ever-increasing rate of extinction.

The next event will be a performance of John Cage's 'Twenty-Three', performed by the University of Pittsburgh Orchestra and Roger Zahab on Thursday, Nov 19th at 6pm, something definitely worth attending. The exhibit itself is staying in the gallery until Nov 22nd. I highly recommend going. You might not like it; you might be bored, disturbed, even angry. But the point was never for it to be merely pleasing to the senses. The point was to push you out of your comfort zone, help us recognize assumptions that you might not even realize we've made, and to make you question what exactly you consider music.



Photo by Lucy Denegre

“The point was to push us out of our comfort zones, help us recognize assumptions that we might not even realize we’ve made, and to make us question what exactly we consider music.”

cherub

By Abhi Kelkar



Photo by Imogen Todd

Cherub is a two-piece duo out of Nashville, Tennessee that combines the electronic vibes of the 80s, anthemic party music, and funk. After meeting in college, Jason Huber and Jordan Kelley play their hearts out on stage, constantly building their fanbase with their party-friendly, high energy music that always keeps their crowds and fans entertained. The Cut got the band on the phone the afternoon before their show at Mr. Small's Theater to talk about their ever increasing tour presence, what it's like to keep growing as a band, and their future plans.

The Cut: You guys have been to Pittsburgh before, right?

Jason Huber: It's one of those places that's not a city that people talk about a whole bunch, but I think it's a really, really cool city. It's really pretty, I don't think people realize how pretty it is.

TC: How did the band come about out of college?

JH: We had actually dropped out of college. We started it through a mutual enjoyment of music and a want to perform. It just ended up working out. We were able to start getting shows and tour and eventually start making enough money to pay rent.

TC: What sort of gigs were you trying to get when you were first starting out?

JH: We were trying to get any gig, like house shows and luckily, Jason and Bryan, our tour manager, had been working during festivals the year before we started the band. Through the connections that they made we were able to get a couple shows and kind of build from that.

TC: Bands that influenced you guys?

JH: Jason loves Dave Grohl. We got to see him recently at ACL. When the first album was being made, I listened to a lot of classics and Phoenix and The Bag Raiders, Miami Horror, and stuff like Empire of the Sun. I also listen to rap.

TC: Have you gotten to meet any of them?

JH: We've gotten to perform for a number of our influences which has been pretty cool. We even got to play with Sublime.

TC: How has it been touring with two openers?

JH: It's good. It's awesome. We have asked groups on tours and we've been super stoked. We've been able to reach out to artists that we enjoy playing with, so it's a show that we're proud of.

TC: So you guys have a good amount of input into choosing who you want your openers to be?

JH: It's all artists that we want to come on the road. If the artist wants to, we can make it happen. When we're picking our

“it's been a lot of fun to build this family of people that's all working together around us as we've been touring”

openers, the biggest part in the decision making process, in addition to being something we personally enjoy, we try to figure out what would be the best show for people to come out and see. We want the best acts out there possible.

TC: What do you think was the biggest factor in your support when you were starting out early on?

JH: A lot of it had to do with, in addition to going out and playing shows and getting a ton of people, sharing the music for free, being able to share with your friends. When we go out and play a show, then they have something to show their friends. Then the next time we show up, then there are more people there. Everything just came together with going out and playing live a lot and having music out there for free. That contributed to the way people were sharing our music.

Jordan Kelley: I 110% agree with what Jason said.

JH: Aw, thanks man.

TC: It's interesting how music has changed into bands having to tour a lot to really push their publicity; do you guys enjoy being on tour?

JH: We love being on tour.

JK: We do.

JH: It's a lot of fun. We've been touring for the last 5 years, pretty non-stop and kind of doing it in every different capacity so far. We were driving around just the two of us in our car for a while, then there were 4 of us in my car, then there was a van that we were driving around in. We've done a bit, actually, a lot, of flying around, and now we're on a bus, there's 13 of us. The crew has definitely grown and it's been a lot of fun to build this family of people that's all working together around us as we've been touring. So far, it hasn't gotten old yet and it's gotten more and more exciting. And, as more people are coming out, getting rowdier at the shows with us, it's only getting better.

TC: Yeah, that's kind of what you guys have been going for right?

JH: Yeah, live shows have been a huge part of what we do and because we haven't been incredibly dependent upon music being sold, we've been going out and really living off of our live show. It's allowed us to be very creative and not limit ourselves and not try to put too much pressure on the creative part of the process. As we're writing new music now, it's been really exciting to experiment with all the new stuff.

TC: Yeah, I'm guessing you guys just put it in a show and see how it works out.

JH: Yup.

TC: What inspired some of your stories?

JH: Life man. It's elementary school, preschool, life. From there on out, they've been calling me Dapper Dan.

TC: Now that you're touring with an album, what are your plans for the near future?

JH: Just keep treating Jason right. The key to our success is communication.





**Cherub at Mr. Small's
Photo by Imogen Todd**

Neon Indian VEGA INTL. Night School

By David Dwyers

VEGA INTL. *Night School* begins with a short instrumental called “Hit Parade,” and the title is appropriate for the songs that follow. Neon Indian’s third album, the first in four years, is stunning from front to back. Even though it isn’t their debut, it provides a great introduction to new listeners: it’s extremely cohesive and listenable. Throughout every song, Alan Palomo, the vocalist of the band, further details his nighttime experiences over the past couple of years as his voice weaves around buzzy, glitchy synths. The band successfully pushes itself outward from their chillwave roots and channels the 80s pop era. A few transitional tracks, like “Bozo” and “Slumlord’s Re-lease,” ensure that the energy between tracks stays consistent; these fourteen tracks are varied yet incredibly connected.

The scandalous subject matter of some of the songs is concealed at first by the energetic production. “Annie” sounds light, with a steady reggae bounce. However, the lyrics detail the protagonist’s unhealthy obsession with the namesake woman. Likewise, “Street Level” announces its chorus with a rush of brittle synths, but the song’s about surviving the night out on the street.

The album also has its share of meticulously crafted dance tracks. The centerpiece of the album, “Slumlord,” is a bustling and sprawling disco track; it smoothly transitions into “Slumlord Re-lease,” which contorts the previous song into a pulsing, sweaty house interlude. “The Glitzy Hive” recalls Daft Punk in its looped structure; its carefree energy is ecstatic yet understated.

Neon Indian’s third album navigates dark subject matter with confidence, and the bustling, eclectic tone is suspended throughout the hour of music. Alan Palomo pushes his band’s music to new levels, and the product is nothing less than incredible.



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Cult Leader Lightless Walk

By Alex Voskuil

Cult Leader makes their full-length debut with *Lightless Walk*, a crushing record that will leave you beaten, bruised, and emotionally drained.

Cult Leader is a progressive crust band that formed from the ashes of former mathcore outfit Gaza in 2013. The band has recorded a few EPs, including the record *Useless Animal* released earlier this summer (featuring a haunting rendition of Mark Kozelek’s “You Are Not My Blood”). *Lightless Walk* builds on these earlier releases and delivers something wholly more violent and heart-wrenching, something mythical and revolting like a sonic equivalent of Cormac McCarthy’s *Blood Meridian*.

Beginning with the crushing “Great I Am,” the album navigates through dizzying, blackened grindcore quickies like “Gutter Gods” and “Suffer Louder,” interposed between slower, sludgier pieces like “How Deep It Runs” and “Hate Offering.” The record’s greatest strength lies in its continuity, with one song bleeding into the next, taking the listener from noise-filled chaos to absolute emptiness and desolation in a cohesive, engaging way. Desolation here is the keyword: when the record eases up on tracks like the closer “Lightless Walk” and my personal favorite “A Good Life,” the listener is left with something that, while relatively subdued, feels apocalyptic and biblical, punctuated only by Anthony Lucero’s intimate and eerie baritone.



🔗🔗🔗🔗🔗/5

Though *Lightless Walk* delivers the expected chaos and dissonance, its real power lies in its ability to leave you emotionally stunned, as if you had just watched a tragedy unfold. I highly recommend this album to fans of the late Gaza, as well as fans of extreme hardcore acts like Nails and The Secret. *Lightless Walk* can appeal to those who enjoy bands like Neurosis and Swans, and even post-rock fans in general looking to expand their musical tastes can find their desire for something more raw and honest fulfilled in this album.

The Game The Documentary 2

By Ben Alderoty

With *The Documentary 2*, The Game has recreated what made him so successful in his major label debut, sticking to a simple formula that he makes clear on one of the songs: “I stayed the same, ain’t go weird like Lupe.” Coming ten years after the original, *The Documentary 2* is full of big beats from some of the biggest producers in the game, even bigger features, and the usual controversial name dropping. With raw lyrical ability and over a decade of experience, The Game can afford to feature anyone on his projects and still hold his own. This is evident in the lead single “100,” where The Game does just that with one of today’s biggest rappers, Drake. The result of The Game’s secret formula is an extremely enjoyable, car-bumping, classic hip-hop album any fan of the genre will enjoy. As Kanye West, Kid Cudi, Kendrick Lamar, and Lupe Fiasco among other rappers continue to diverge down different musical paths, The Game maintains his, which makes this album sound even better.



✂✂✂✂✂/5

Dave Gahan & Soulsavers Angels & Ghosts

By Sophia Suarez

The latest collaboration between Depeche Mode frontman Dave Gahan and electronica composer duo Soulsavers is a straightforward rock album. *Angels & Ghosts* provides an interesting composition of bluesy melodies and dark chords, which go well with Gahan’s dry yet smooth baritone vocals. While these elements compliment each other in some ways, the album’s streamlined rock seems to do more harm than good. Depeche Mode’s signature electronic flare is largely missing, replaced with raw guitar and drums that cannot replace the interesting textures and chord progressions characterized by the usual Gahan synth. The entire album is merely a derivative of DM’s last album *Delta Machine*, but does not manage to provide listeners with an equally satisfying experience. Instead *Angels & Ghosts* lives in the shadow of old sounds, but lacks their creativity.



✂✂✂/5

Deerhunter Fading Frontier

By Arun Marsten

I want to like Deerhunter’s new album, I really do. The problem is, I’m on my umpteenth listen and I still haven’t found anything exceptional about it. There are certainly a few decent tracks like “Leather and Wood”, “Ad Astr”, and “All The Same” (which sounds suspiciously like “Revival” off *Halcyon Digest*), but other than that, the whole album comes off pretty flat. The greatest offense would have to be the track “Snakeskin,” which sounds like it should be gracing some dance rock album far away from here.

Actually, that may not be fair. If this album had been released by “Beach Somethings” from Nowhere, USA, I might have written it off as a good effort and called it a day. However, this is BRADFORD FUCKING COX we’re talking about, so I’m offended that my brain hasn’t been broken by the gargantuan contribution to music that *Fading Frontier* should have been.



✂✂✂/5

Thank Your Lucky Stars Beach House

By Jack Taylor

Thank Your Lucky Stars is undeniably a Beach House album. All your favorite Beach Houseisms are here: the synthetic drum beats, the spacious vocals, the dreamy guitars. The problem is the band does not attempt to do anything new with their formula on this record. *Thank Your Lucky Stars* is a bit more skeletal and less reverberated than previous efforts, but that only makes most of the tracks feel familiar and weak.

To be fair there are a few stand-outs here and there. “Common Girl” offers up some interesting lyrics and sounds. “Elegy To The Void” has a great synth melody and Victoria Legrand’s vocals feel energetic and inspired.

Unfortunately, most of the tracks are throw-aways. The opener “Majorette” is incredibly repetitive but somehow manages to be forgettable. The song “All Your Yeahs” is dreadfully boring and “One Thing” follows suit directly after.

Thank Your Lucky Stars ends up delivering one slow and uninspired track after the next, while barely offering any new or creative ideas.



✂✂✂/5

Foreign Languages in Music by Ina Rastegar

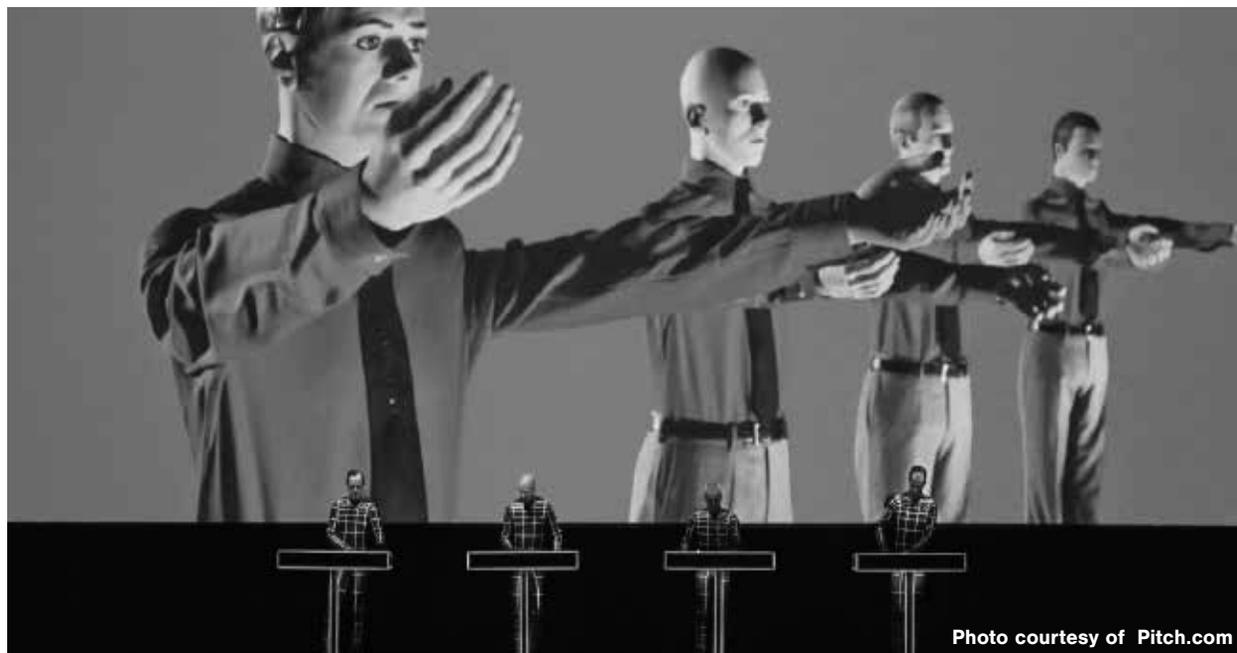


Photo courtesy of Pitch.com

In the last few decades, music with lyrics in languages other than English has become increasingly popular in the Anglophonic world. It used to be immigrants listening to the music of their home, but now almost everyone, regardless of national identity, enjoys music from all over the world. In addition, some multilingual musicians have begun singing in their native language instead of or in addition to using English. Beginning with bands like Kraftwerk in the 80s and Sigur Rós and Rammstein in the late 90s and early 2000s, who all became known outside of their native countries, more non-English speaking bands are being introduced to the English speaking world. The market for non-English language music is small and difficult to popularize in the Anglosphere, but some artists have been able to achieve recognition. The most popular non-English speaking bands in the English speaking world today have the ability to transcend language barriers better than most with their rhythms and complex instrumentation.

The United States and United Kingdom (among other English speaking nations) are countries with significant immigrant populations, and ones that are often outspokenly proud of their heritage. So it is time that the languages of the people who make up these nations becomes part of our everyday lives. Popular artists like Jennifer Lopez, Marc Anthony, and Selena have integrated Spanish into their songs for years. Because of the significant Hispanic population in the United States, hispanic

culture is beginning to become a part of the more mainstream culture of the U.S. This opens hispanic artists up to a larger audience and has been a factor in the more widespread recent success of lesser known latino musicians.

The majority of foreign language artists will not see the same popularity they have inside of their native countries when they arrive abroad, but some still achieve considerable fame and recognition. One prominent example of this is the meteoric rise of K-Pop and J-Pop groups (such as 2NE1 and Girls Generation) in the last few years. In addition, a Belgian artist, Stromae, is one of the best selling French-language artists, and just recently got recognition outside of Francophone countries. He became the first French singing artist to headline Madison Square Garden in which he played to a sold out audience of over 18 thousand people. The Iranian group named 127 was one of the first Persian rock bands to tour the United States, and then went on to play the South by Southwest music festival in 2008, performing in both their native Farsi and in English.

For many foreign artists, English is the go-to language because of the ability it gives the artist to reach a wide audience. As a result, they can succeed abroad and still achieve popularity in their home country. Also, some groups prefer to sing in English because they feel that it sounds better or that the range of thoughts and ideas that they are able to express is greater. For other

bands, singing in their native language is an integral part of their music, and defines the band as a whole. Sigur Rós is one of the most widely recognizable Icelandic bands, in part due to their commitment to integrating Icelandic language into their music, which is one of multiple aspects of their music that sets them apart from other bands of their genre. French collective Fauve also relies on their storytelling ability in their native French.

For a long time, English language music has been popular internationally, but recently, foreign language artists have become widely popular. There is definitely a long way to go in the acceptance of foreign music in English speaking countries— foreign language artist sales are nowhere near the sales of English speakers in English-speaking countries. However, I am sure that in the future, there will be more and more non-Anglophone artists making their break in countries like the United States, especially with the cultural mixing in our country and others. Many non-English speakers across the world still listen to and enjoy English language music, so why can't the reverse also be true?



The Darkness at The Altar Bar
Photo by Jonathan Leung



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