

## Reviews

country-fried numbers and sunny, sweet pop rock tunes. When Bleeker gets it right, his songs are absolutely lovely—the gentle, shuffling “Home I Love” and the uptempo “Who Are You Seeing?” are a musical spring afternoon, chirping birds and all. At times, that haze bogs down the album’s flow—“Time Cloud” is exactly that, three minutes spent in a cloud without any momentum. *How Far Away* is not bad by any stretch, but it’s so feather-light that it just floats away. **Justin Jacobs**

### The Black Crowes

**Wiser for the Time**

SILVER ARROW/MEGAFORCE



Farewell tour? Thankfully, two decades weren’t enough for **The Black Crowes**. Celebrating their relaunch, **Chris and Rich Robinson** and their mostly long-running bandmates are releasing 26 tunes from a five-night New York City run from the band’s half-acoustic, half-electric 2010 tour—the tracks are available on four vinyl LPs and via digital download. Some hits are here, with an unplugged “Jealous Again” spiked with honky-tonk piano and



Alex Bleeker & The Freaks

Rich’s sprawling slide solo, and a version of “She Talks to Angels” pumped up with the kind of emotional drama and musical intensity that the Crowes bring on their best nights. There are more peaks than valleys, with highlights including an ambling “Smile;” a backwoods-stomping “Garden Gate;” a boozy, bluesy “Darling of the Underground Press;” a gospel-charged “Soul Singing;” a nicely crunchy, distortion-edged “Exit;” and an aptly raucous “Tied Up & Swallowed.” Wiser or not, the Crowes still bring the revved-up R&B and rawk. **Philip Booth**

### Terence Higgins' Swampgrease II

**Rage 'Til Sunrise**

GRIS GRIS BAG ENTERTAINMENT



It’s been half a century since New Orleans gave birth to funk music and if the work of groups like **Swampgrease** are any indication, then the genre is as alive as ever in the Big Easy. The band, led by drummer **Terence Higgins** (Dirty Dozen Brass Band, Warren Haynes Band), finds a way to flirt with all sorts of styles while keeping things grounded in filthy, funky grooves. “Destination” pays tribute to old school R&B, “Rage ‘Til Sunrise” explodes like rock and roll dynamite and “Def Of Fusion” showcases extended interplay that would put plenty of jambands to shame. Those tracks, along with a myriad of Meters-inspired tunes, make for a dense record. There’s a lot going on for sure, but with Higgins at the helm it’s all smooth sailing. **Sam D’Arcangelo**

### Jaga Jazzist

**Live with Britten Sinfonia**

NINJA TUNE



The live album isn’t anything new in the world of jambands. Normally, they serve as a document of how bands stretch and manipulate their songs in real-time before an audience. Rarely is any material rearranged for a live document, let alone composed specifically for a given performance. **Jaga Jazzist** buck all of those trends on their latest effort. Recorded at Rockefeller in Oslo, and performed with accompaniment from **Britten Sinfonia**, this album features selections from Jaga’s three most recent Ninja Tune releases, plus “Prungen,” an new original written by bass clarinetist **Lars Horntveth** for this collaboration. The older songs clock in at up to twice their original length—save for the already heavily orchestrated “Toccata” and the compact “Oslo Skyline”—thanks to the symphony-friendly arrangements,

as opposed to the extended solos typical of Jaga’s previous live output. The end result is a significant expansion of Jaga’s deep and modernist take on jazz. **Wayan Zoey**

### Mystical Weapons

**Mystical Weapons** CHIMERA



On their self-titled debut, **Mystical Weapons**, the thrilling instrumental improv trio of Deerhoof drummer **Greg Saunier**, multi-instrumentalist **Sean Lennon** and video artist **Martha Colburn**, explore a variety of aural ideas. The crunchy, bashing “Goddess Curlers” hews close to punk. “Silk Screen Eyes” meditates on mallet percussion. “Dirty Neon” is ominous, featuring ringing ivory tickling and subtle drumming. And with its spiky organ and sobbing underwater guitar, the psychedelic ballad “Distant City” could perfectly score a nightmare. Other pieces cycle through multiple moods. “Gross Domestic Happiness” seizes on a dark but catchy bass line that leads to punishing kit work—a hypnotic section that recalls Pink Floyd’s “On The Run”—cathartic guitar wailing and a big, hateful riff that swaps itself out for peaceful electric piano. **Brad Farberman**

### Mark Kozelek & Jimmy LaValle

**Perils from the Sea** CALDO VERDE



*Perils from the Sea* could prove to be the most intriguing album of 2013. No matter who makes a more musically adventurous one—or who writes catchier songs—it’s unlikely that any non-hip-hop album will tell as many stories in such a conversational context. The lyric sheet that comes with the album is a necessary friend. It unravels the mumbled lines of Sun Kil Moon’s **Mark Kozelek** that often sneak behind the synthesizer chords and muted beats of The Album Leaf’s **Jimmy LaValle**. Some tunes are truth barely altered, such as “Gustavo,” which pays odd and funny tribute to Koz’s errant general contractor, while “You Missed My Heart” is a tale of murder and death as poetic fiction. For Kozelek, there isn’t anything he can’t rhyme or make into song. LaValle’s occasional upbeat arrangements kick him past his slow and steady comfort zone for a few well-deserved surprises. **Rob O’Connor**

### Peter Rowan

**The Old School** COMPASS



Although he’s occasionally veered and experimented, **Peter Rowan**’s comfort zone has always been pure,

## ESSENTIAL ATHENS ROCK

### Dead Confederate

**In The Marrow** SPIDERBOMB/REDEYE



**Dead Confederate**’s latest album *In The Marrow* maintains the psychedelic/grunge/early-’90s alt-rock mash-up found on the Athens, Ga.-based band’s first two full-length albums. However, it abandons the raw anger that drove their 2008 debut *Wrecking Ball* and restores the personality lost on 2010’s *Sugar*. Most of the eight tracks are down-tempo, angst-driven, haunting rock ballads that build with intensity. Opener “Slow Poisons,” a high point that originally appeared as a demo on the band’s *Sunday Archive Series*, sounds like being stuck in the desert—desperate, delirious and alone. The hypnotic song puts the listener in a trance as drawn-out vocals melt into distortion. Other standout songs include the upbeat, guitar-heavy tracks “Vacations” and “Bleed-Through,” both of which sound almost euphoric compared to the darker tones that tend to overwhelm the rest of the album.

**Sarah A. McCarty**

### Futurebirds

**Baba Yaga** FAT POSSUM



Your typical alt-country bar band audience isn’t going to be all that enthralled with frictionless, esoteric fare, just like your average psychedelic, art-rock crowd isn’t going to go gaga for thoroughly down-to-earth music. Two EPs and a pair of albums into their career, Athens, Ga.’s **Futurebirds** have a pretty solid grasp on how to split the difference. *Baba Yaga*—their first Fat Possum release—has a little something for everyone who’s ever found anything to like on The Byrds’ iconic 1968 album *Sweetheart of the Rodeo*. *Baba Yaga* unfolds at a languid pace without losing its rock attack. Some of the shaggy, occasionally surreal songwriting even makes room for red-blooded, countrified hooks. But it’s the spindly Telecaster figures and the crystalline arcs of steel guitar—all of it positively doused in reverb—that do the most for the album’s allure. **Jewly Hight**