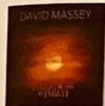




Florida-based **MICHELE ARI** returns with a richly ambitious EP, *New Page*, further expanding her musical adventuring. This time John Ashton, former Psychedelic Furs guitarist joins her, alongside a particularly solid rhythm section that enables the compelling opener, 'Explode', to live up to its title. The remaining four tracks prove an engaging selection, displaying a new-wave pop-rock influence and Ari's impressive vocal ability, reminiscent of early Debbie Harry, especially on 'Depraved Heart Murderer'. Elements of 60s rock take over in the melody-sodden closer, 'Little Parties', ending things on a real high. www.micheleari.com



Toronto's **SUZIE VINNICK**'s music straddles the periphery of Americana and blues, covering similar ground to Lucinda Williams but with less gravel in both the voice and lyrics. *Fall Back Home* demonstrates Vinnick's solid songwriting but really hits its stride on the covers, as with the jazzy 'Let Me Make It Up To You Tonight'. www.suzievinnick.com



Darkness At Dawn is another EP from **DAVID MASSEY** showcasing his laid-back songs, carefully wrought from stories and experiences and performed with restraint and precise production. 'Watch Your Back In Hell' steps up the pace a little. www.davemasseymusic.com



Drawing on influences from the melting pot of music before there were genres is **THE MYSTIX**'s stock in trade. Jo Lily's deep Larry Love-style vocals on *Tru Vine* are backed with fine, sweaty guitar from Bobby Keyes and Stu Gimball. 'I Guess I Lose' is superb country-blues whilst 'Devil Trying To Steal My Joy' is a swampy blues delight. www.themystix.com



Hailing from Wellington, New Zealand **PAUL GURNEY** is an accomplished songwriter whose template, on *Blue Horizon*, tends towards the more esoteric themes and existential struggles of low-key Americana, exemplified on 'Fragile'. Lyrical, introspective and intimate. www.paulgurneymusic.com



Swedish retro rockers **MÖNSTER** take their cues from 70s psychedelia, indie and art rock. On *Life Science* the Swedish language 'Skogens Män' takes a folk-rock, organ-based approach; 'Save Me' builds to a celebratory crescendo; and 'Into The Sea' sprinkles a touch of Stranglers-esque punk into the mix. Difficult to pin down, but full of energy. www.moenster.se/en/



Smoky, sensual and literate jazz dominates **NICKI LEIGHTON-THOMAS**'s *One Good Scandal*. Lyrics by poet Fran Landesman explore fragile relationships exemplified in

titles like 'Overture To Corrupt And Deprave' are paired with Simon Wallace's swinging, slow blues ballads, producing very grown-up jazz. Leighton-Thomas has a superb voice that conveys intense emotions without resorting to histrionics. www.nickleightonthomas.com



The opening track from **LIGHT**'s *The One* EP could almost be Pink Floyd's take on Covid. The 70s Belfast blues-rock stalwarts produce a sterling and impressive range of rock and folk-rock styles across five tracks. www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100076305195169



HALF SONG don't give much away in their press release, but appear to be a pair of songwriters living in Scotland with, if *The Prize Of Love* is anything to go by, a healthy reverence for Bowie-esque pop. 'Suicide Sally' delves into more of a Tom Waits style. An excellent album, well worth exploring. www.halfsong.com



New Orleans-based, Australian-born Delta blues maestro **IVOR S.K.** is a bit of a discovery. Updating the down-home acoustic blues format with elements of ska and soul, *Mississippi Bound* takes us on a stunning personal journey. Easy and laid-back and dealing with subjects like sex and money in the same casual way as the original bluesmen, it's fabulous stuff. www.ivorsk.com



Finding Time is the debut album by Brighton singer-songwriter, **ROBIN DOODY**. He's a man who has done a real job before turning to music later in life and all but two songs are originals – he plays every note, too. This isn't your typical debut: it's a rich, sophisticated work, heavy with synthesised sounds and intriguing lyrics. www.robindoody.net



Texan singer-songwriter **COURTNEY HALE REVIA** has a voice as big as her home state. Her latest album, *Growing Pains*, is a bit rock'n'roll, a bit blues, mostly country and a whole lot of fun. Top tracks may be 'They've Poisoned The Well' and 'Coffee Beans (The Logon Café Song)' but you won't nod off when this is playing. www.courtneyhalereviamusic.com



Myriad Of Colour is the fourth solo album by veteran musician **SIMON COUSINS**. Predominantly original compositions, it includes covers of 'Woman Of Ireland', 'John O Dreams' and the traditional 'Spencer The Rover'. Simon can make a song out of just about anything – 'Patina' was inspired by an old, broken table. Add a number of excellent guest musicians and you have a really fine album. www.sicousins.co.uk



STEVE WARNER releases a powerful new album, *The Corran Ferry*, a vessel which sails through Loch Linnie linking remote communities including, as Steve notes in the title track, Fort William and

Ardnamurchan, with the themes of travel, identity and home, particularly, returning to make that ferry trip. 'Mighty Ben' is a really captivating song. www.stevewarnerfolk.com



Satchel Of Songs is the seventh solo album by **DIANE PATTERSON**, a woman with a powerful voice and a unique approach to music. She switches from the reggae beat of 'Roots Heart Rhythm' – it really should have commas – to the country tinge of 'Silk And Honest Pay', and it is only a tinge, maintained by violin over pounding percussion. The title track has strings and a kora. Think of a link between Buffy Sainte-Marie and The Slambovians and you might get a glimpse of Diane Patterson. www.dianepatterson.org



STEVE MCNAUGHTON is an Australian singer-songwriter who really should be American. *Journeyman* is his fourth album and you hope it isn't autobiographical because he's had a tough life if it is. His style might be described as country'n'boogie and he throws in the strangest version of 'Skye Boat Song' you'll ever hear. Actually, it's all rather good. www.facebook.com/stevemcnaughtonofficial



MICHAEL VEITCH brings us a calendar with his new album, *Wachtraum* (Wake Dream), beginning with 'First Day' and closing with 'First Snow Of The Year' and 'One Wish'. Based on jangling acoustic guitar, it sometimes explodes into all-out rock'n'roll, as on 'April Fools'. It can be a little soppy at times but there are some excellent songs here. www.michaelveitch.com



By an odd coincidence, *Tid* (Time) by Swedish singer and composer **NINA ÅKERBLOM NIELSEN** is also in the form of an annual cycle beginning with 'Septembersång', which is easy enough to translate. There is also tragedy, as Nina's partner died during the recording but, without having a word of Swedish, the album simply comes across as some rather beautiful music with a hint of the Gaelic about it. www.ninaakerblom.com



Californian singer-songwriter **DAN NAVARRO** is as well known for his film soundtrack credits as his solo and group work. New album *Horizon Line* is big and powerful. A big ballad, 'She Dreams In Music', is followed by the bluesy 'Come And Find Me', and the huge cast of supporting musicians never gives up until the last notes of 'Sleep Tonight'. 'Circling The Drain' is particularly good. www.dannavarro.com



DINA GRUNDBERG is a Swedish jazz singer-songwriter with a band leaning heavily on its brass section. Her debut album is *Jag Ljuger Mest Om Allt* with a very traditional jazz sound that could have been

recorded any time in the last seventy years. It sounds great but if you don't speak Swedish you'll be none the wiser. www.dinagrundberg.com



Swedish duo **Marit and Martin Deubler Holmlund** probably named their band **THOSE BARREN LEAVES** after a novel by Aldous Huxley and *W.I.A.B.R.* is their second album, recorded during the pandemic with support from a drummer and keyboard player. Their music is the sort of prog-rock that is still popular in mainland Europe but is largely forgotten here. www.hemifran.com



Music For Small Rooms by another Swede, pianist and guitarist **ERIK DAHL**, might be considered chamber-rock if you were so inclined. It's fascinating stuff but not what you'd call easy listening, particularly the heavy chords of 'Natural Home'. www.facebook.com/erikdahlsolopiano



SOPHIE JAMIESON's album *Choosing* isn't a particularly easy listen but it is a compelling one. Backed by spare acoustic accompaniment from cello, bass, drums and piano, it's a painfully personal chronicle of her journey from despair to hope. Jamieson opens herself up in her emotionally raw songs, on an album that's by turns heartbreakingly sad and hauntingly beautiful. www.facebook.com/sophiejamiesonmusic



A head-on collision of punk, psychedelia and head-banging rock woven through with melodic introspection, *Miffed* is the latest outpouring of twisted glam-rock from London trio **JEMMA FREEMAN AND THE COSMIC SOMETHING**. Lyrically these powerful and timely songs show solidarity for the people trying to make sense of a world in a world that makes no sense. Just about everybody, then. www.facebook.com/cosmicssomething



Veteran native of Southern Idaho **BILLY TRUITT** brings several decades' worth of experience into play on latest recording, *Abstract Truth*. Drawing on influences as broad as zydeco, country, rock and blues, it's an enjoyable trip through wide-ranging American styles lifted by great writing and the classy presence of some of his Vegas Strip Kings band mates. www.justintruitt.com



Featuring Keith Marlowe's exceptional songwriting, *Megunticook* is the latest from US quartet **THE MINERS**. Leaning towards the country end of the country-rock spectrum, these timeless songs consistently strike a chord. Whether coming to terms with a life-threatening illness, being turned upside down by children leaving home, or becoming emotionally invested in a homeless teenager, Marlowe's deceptively simple songs are deeply personal and emotionally powerful. www.minersmusic.com