

**Between the Buried and Me**

**Automata II**

Sumerian Records  
 Producer: Jamie King

Between the Buried and Me's 2018 concept has reach its conclusion on this, *Automata II*. The four-track finale will bring the BTBAM faithful to its knees with a re-birth of the quintet's most prog-metal form since *The Great Misdirect*. On "Voice of Trespass," frontman Tommy Rogers toys with varying vocal melodies above big-band jazz horns, beatnik finger snaps, walking bass, old-timey drum solos and, of course, some serious guitar shredding. While the lyrics continually scream "THIS IS NOT PERFECTION!," we can't help but disagree. — **Andy Mesecher**



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**Chromeo**

**Head Over Heels**

Big Beat/Atlantic  
 Producer: Chromeo

Like most Chromeo's releases over the past decade, songs from their new *Head Over Heels* are deeply rooted in Minneapolis funk, dance pop and nu-disco. Nevertheless, this release marks the first time the Canadian duo has collaborated with rappers for studio recordings. Many of the tracks include moderate narration from west coast rap legend DJ Quik, while the funky basslines from the electro-funk love song "Don't Sleep" feature French Montana and Stefflon Don. Most sensational is "Right Back Home To You," as its neo-soul groove reveals the band's sensitive side and the splendid vocal range of lead singer Dave 1. — **Miguel Costa**



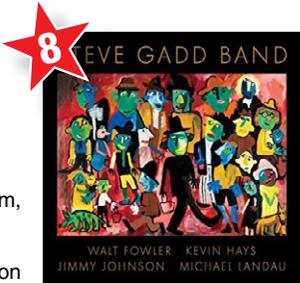
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**Steve Gadd Band**

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BFM Jazz  
 Producer: Steve Gadd

On the Steve Gadd Band's spirited, hook and improvisation filled, tightly funky then polyrhythmic groove-a-second fourth album, the legendary drummer and his longtime cohorts from James Taylor's band—Walt Fowler (trumpet/flugelhorn), Jimmy Johnson (bass), Michael Landau (guitar)—add a sparkling retro-minded new member to the group: Kevin Hays on Rhodes, who leads the band through irresistible Steely Dan-esque romps. A wonderfully unselfish leader, Gadd provides the backbone for his compatriots, some of contemporary jazz's greatest, to solo galore on this adventurous but invitingly accessible set. — **Jonathan Widran**



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**Pusha T**

**Daytona**

GOOD/Def Jam  
 Producer: Kanye West

*Daytona* is dope, fresh and under the influence like its album cover, which pictures Whitney Houston's bathroom the day she passed. Pusha T delivers a concise offering to add more fuel to hip-hop's fire. According to Push, Eazy-E is the only rapper to sell more crack cocaine than him; however, lyrically Push pushes that "soft/hard white" to his clientele, giving fiends the audio candy that they've been eagerly waiting for. In short, to summarize *Daytona*, on "The Games We Play" Push raps "To all of my young niggas, I am your Ghost and your Rae, this is my Purple Tape, save it for Rainy Dayz"; "If You Know, You Know" like real hip-hoppers do. — **Adam Seyum**



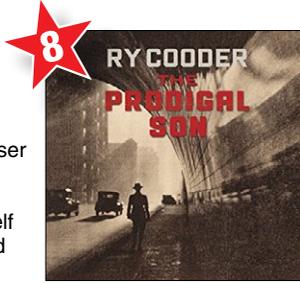
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**Ry Cooder**

**The Prodigal Son**

Perro Verde/Fantasy  
 Producer: Ry Cooder and Joachim Cooder

Legendary singer-songwriter, film composer and eclectic session guitarist Ry Cooder is back with his first album in six years. Cooder, who has made a name for himself as a musicologist of Americana and world music, applies it here through the lens of spirituality, mixed with a socio-political and humanistic bent. It's a seamless blend of folk, gospel and rustic blues. Songs like "Straight Street" and "Nobody's Fault but Mine" center on faith, redemption and forgiveness. "Gentrification" is a sly commentary on the changing landscape of urban America, while the title track is a trad tune dedicated to steel guitar pioneer Ralph Mooney. — **Eric A. Harabadian**



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**Deva Mahal**

**Run Deep**

Motema Music  
 Producer: Scott Jacoby, Jared Wetherall

On her intensely heartfelt, soul-searing full-length debut, the daughter of blues legend Taj Mahal celebrates her family's legacy—but, as per the album title, takes it into the modern era with a deeper sense of hip, edgy R&B and gospel that taps into Amy Winehouse, Sharon Jones, even the militant side of Stevie Wonder. Deva Mahal couches her anthems in fresh, funky beats, jangling guitars and sizzling brass, but a more personal artistry emerges on the ballads, where her voice and minimal instrumentation carries the rich emotion. The songs started life as personal letters to herself, and that intimacy shines through even the most boisterous tunes. — **Jonathan Widran**



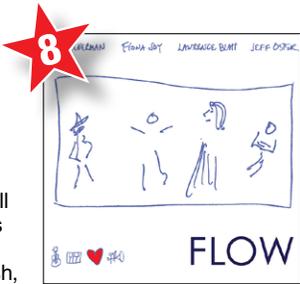
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**FLOW**

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LMB Music  
 Producer: Will Ackerman & Tom Eaton

Forty years after Windham Hill became a catalyst for the global new age music phenomenon, its founder, acoustic guitarist Will Ackerman joins forces with genre stalwarts Fiona Joy (piano), Jeff Oster (flugelhorn) and Lawrence Blatt (guitar) to create a fresh, seamless, rhythmically seductive and soulfully melodic vibe grounded in their deep personal chemistry. Each plays an equal part in the infectious sonic magic, but one standout is how Ackerman's stark introspection complements Blatt's more rhythmic approach to the acoustic guitar. Though an unusual anagram of their names, the FLOW concept is all about the way the music moves. — **Jonathan Widran**



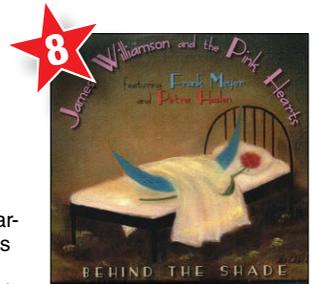
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**James Williamson and the Pink Hearts**

**Behind The Shade**

Leopard Lady Records  
 Producer: James Williamson

The burning question for us rabid and greedy fans is why does ex-Stooges guitarist Williamson only play his fabulous leads on 2/3 of the songs?! That said, craftsman Williamson delivers some stone solid classic rock & rhythm here, with OG L.A. veteran musicians Frank Mayer and Petra Haden providing heartfelt vocals, both together and separately. Songs are embellished variously at times with keyboards, violin or horns, and every song works as an anthem of sorts. And, as the credits mention, "James Williamson—Guitars on everything!" — **David Arnsen**



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