

BY JEFFREY SISK

'Badlands'

Trampled Under Foot (Telarc)

★★★★
Led by siblings Danielle, Nick and Kris Schnebelen, Trampled Under Foot is one of the rising stars in modern blues. Their parents were fixtures on the Kansas City blues scene and their talented offspring keep the family tradition alive — and then some — on latest gem “Badlands.” Danielle and Nick anchor the 13-track proceedings with their jaw-dropping vocals, and put those gifts to good use on keepers “Bad Bad Feeling,” “Don’t Want No Woman,” the title track, “Pain in My Mind,” “Down to the River” and a spine-tingling rendition of “It’s a Man’s, Man’s, Man’s World.” Highly recommended.

'That's It!'

Preservation Hall Jazz Band (Legacy)

★★★★
It’s pretty hard for an outfit that’s been plying its trade for more than half a century to come up with many firsts, but that’s just what New Orleans icons the Preservation Hall Jazz Band have done on latest release “That’s It!” The 11-track CD marks the first time the band has recorded an album made up entirely of original material. Fans will have little trouble embracing tunes like “Dear Lord (Give Me the Strength),” “Come With Me,” “Rattlin’ Bones,” “I Think I Love You,” “Halfway Right, Halfway Wrong” and “The Darker It Gets.”

'Heart of the Piano'

Geoffrey Keezer (Motema)

★★★★
Grammy-nominated ivory-tinkler Geoffrey Keezer is one of the most respected jazz pianists around and he’s spent more than two decades playing mostly with others. The compelling “Heart of the Piano” is his first solo project in 13 years and it’s well worth the wait. He puts an instrumental spin on songs from artists as eclectic as Rush (“Limelight”), Eva Cassidy (“My Love Is Like a Red Red Rose”), K.T. Tunstall (“Suddenly I See”) and his mentor James Williams (“Take Time for Love”). Keezer is a master of his craft.

'Music for Television'

The March Divide (Dead Letter)

★★★★
Having made a nice splash with “Music for Films” back in February, Jared Putnam-fronted the March Divide wasted little time getting back at it with the release of follow-up EP “Music for Television.” The seven-track release serves up more of the same infectious indie rock and is a companion piece for its fantastic predecessor. The opening tandem of “Like I Do” and “So It Goes” set the tone for the EP, and the March Divide also score with “Small Differences,” “Write Off” and “Trying Now.” Keep up the good work, fellas.

'Blue Ruin'

Head for the Hills (self-released)

★★★★
Ever wondered what the musical love child of bluegrass, hip-hop, jazz and indie rock might sound like? If so, look no further than the fourth full-length from newgrass quartet Head for the Hills. The guys put a fresh spin on string music and the 12-track release is loads of fun. The Colorado-based collective clearly has fun making music together and their chemistry is on full display with keepers “Never Does,” “Priscilla the Chinchilla,” “Look at You Now,” “Lover’s Scorn,” “Bosun Ridley” and “Scrap Metal.” Highly recommended.

'Sunken'

Twin Peaks (Autumn Tone)

★★★★
With its members barely a year removed from high school, up-and-coming indie outfit Twin Peaks seem destined for big things in the aftermath of debut album “Sunken.” While clearly the work of a band in progress, the eight-track, 19-minute album — recorded in band member Cadien Lake James’ basement — shows flashes of brilliance and

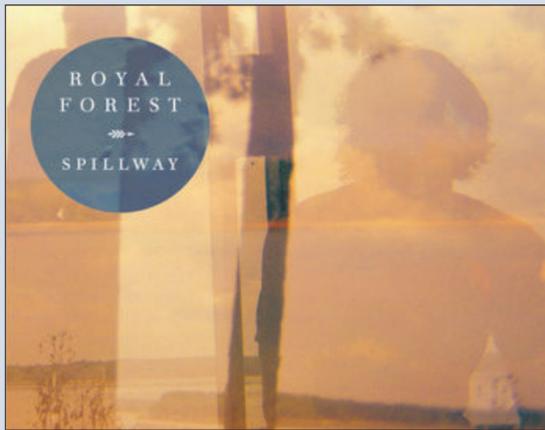
Texas-based rockers impress

BY JEFFREY SISK

'Spillway'

Royal Forest (Mollusc)

★★★½
When I read the press material accompanying the sophomore release from Austin, Texas-based indie rockers Royal Forest, I was a little leery. The lads are fond of experimentalism and make liberal use of field recordings (inside a World War II-era submarine, in the midst of a lightning storm, high above the ground in a single-prop airplane), which too often can turn an otherwise quality album into a self-indulgent mess. Well I’m happy to report that my concerns were (mostly) overblown, as “Spillway” is a darn good album. There are still too many quirky aspects for my lik-



ing — and that prevents the 10-track release from being an essential addition to your collection — but Royal Forest impress on keepers “John Denver,” “Goldwallpaper,” “Castro,” “Near the

Spillway” and “On the Sun.” Give ‘em a shot.

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plenty of promise. Twin Peaks deliver the goods on “Natural Villain,” personal favorite “Fast Eddie” and “Stand in the Stand.” With a bit more seasoning, I fully expect a great album from them.

'Everything Happens for the First Time'

Eli Mardock (Paper Garden)

★★★★
Eli Mardock earned his stripes fronting underground indie favorites Eagle Seagull, and he steps out on his own with full-length debut “Everything Happens for the First Time.” The results are first-rate, as Mardock mesmerizes throughout the nine-track offering. The lid-lifting title track is the best of a very good bunch, and Mardock scores with “Everything Is Good,” “Theologians Tell Me,” “If You’re With Me, Then You’re Against Me,” “The King of Crickets” and “The Way of the Future.” Good stuff.

'Runnin' With the Wolf'

Omar Dykes (Provogue)

★★★★
Omar Dykes & the Howlers have been playing the blues for 35 years, and on latest release “Runnin’ With the Wolf” they tackle the songbook of one of the all-time greats. The 15-track release includes 14 covers of Howlin’ Wolf classics, plus the original title track that serves as further tribute to the late, great bluesman. Armed with terrific source material, Dykes delivers the goods with blistering readings of “Killin’ Floor,” “Howlin’ for My Baby,” “Back Door Man,” “Smokestack Lightning,” “I’m Leavin’ You” and “Wang Dang Doodle.” A must for blues fans.

'Other Voices'

The Orwells (East End/Canvasback)

★★★★
Windy City five-piece the Orwells emerged on the indie rock scene last year with the release of first-rate debut “Remember When,” and the lads are looking to build on that momentum with high-octane EP “Other Voices.” The five-track release is appealingly rough around the edges and the songs lift the project to something more than a mere placeholder until the next full-length. The title track is fantastic (and appears in here in both original and “Basement Version” form), and the guys score with “Blood Bubbles” and “Head.” There’s even an “Audiotree Live” version of “Mallrats,” one of the keepers on the full-length. This is a band on the rise.

'Me Moan'

Daughn Gibson (Sub Pop)

★★★★
Pennsylvania native Daughn Gibson (Pearls & Brass) parlayed his unexpectedly

excellent debut (last year’s “All Hell”) into a deal with Sub Pop and you can see for yourself what the fuss is all about on sophomore set “Me Moan.” Armed with a rich baritone and a healthy cache of samples, Gibson has crafted an interesting collection of 11 tunes. It’s a front-loaded album, with the best material (“The Sound of Law,” “Phantom Rider,” “The Pisgree Nest” and “You Don’t Fade”) coming early. The momentum wanes some on the back half of the platter, but Gibson is one worth keeping your eye on.

'Yannash Nahollo'

Mission Dorado (self-released)

★★★★
Trey Brown & Mission Dorado opened a few eyes in 2011 with their self-titled debut album as their laid-back brand of psych-tinged indie folk struck a chord with listeners. For album No. 2, their first as Mission Dorado, the quartet has crafted another winner in “Yannash Nahollo.” Brown’s vocals still anchor the set, but bandmates Matt Shepherd, Christopher Cox and Simon Page shine on several instrumentals on the nine-track release. Opener “On the Range” sets the tone, and after effective instrumental “Terlingua Dawn,” Mission Dorado score with “White Buffalo,” “Call Up Dem Children” and “Tangled in Deep.” Can’t wait to hear more from these guys.

'The Missing Years'

John Prine (Oh Boy)

★★★★
John Prine’s career stalled a bit in the 1980s and after the middling reception to ninth studio effort “German Afternoons” in 1986, he spent five years putting together tunes for his next album. That record was “The Missing Years,” a remarkable set of tunes that went on to win a Grammy for best contemporary folk album. It makes its vinyl debut this week as a double album featuring the original 14 tracks, plus previously unreleased bonus cut “The Third of July.” The album holds up amazingly well two decades later, with tunes like “Picture Show,” “All the Best,” “Everybody Wants to Feel Like You,” “It’s a Big Old Goofy World,” “Take a Look at My Heart,” “Way Back Then” and “Jesus the Missing Years” every bit as awesome as they were in 1991. A must for Prine fans.

'Hypnosis for Happiness'

Grant Olney (self-released)

★★★★
Having never heard Grant Olney’s 2004 debut album “Brokedown Gospel,” my first exposure to the Austin, Texas-based singer/songwriter’s music is long-gestating sophomore album “Hypnosis for Happiness.” It

took longer than expected for the dynamite 10-track release to come to life, but it doesn’t disappoint. Mixing elements of folk, pop and rock, Olney has a winner on his hands. Keepers include the opening one-two punch of “Not From Body” and “Auntie Why,” and Olney soars high on “Josefin the Writer,” “Looking Over You,” “Let Love Be” and “Through and Through.” Hopefully we won’t have to wait so long for album No. 3.

'Black Friday'

Big Black Cloud (Eolian Empire)

★★★½
Experimental power trio Big Black Cloud are an acquired taste. And while I can’t quite make myself endorse their eardrum splintering amalgam of garage, punk, noise rock and avant-garde, second full-length “Black Friday” is, if nothing else, never boring. Partners in crime Nick Capello (guitar/vocals), Soo Koelbli (bass/vocals) and Travis Wainwright (drums) embrace the weird on this 11-track, 33-minute set. Opener “Cities of the Red Night” is the clear-cut highlight of an album that soon evolves into a cacophony of noise with songs like “Bomb My Brain,” “Barbaric, Mystical, Bored,” “Hate Myself” and “Human Host.” Explore this one at your own risk.

'Coming Out Swingin''

Candy Kane (Vizztone)

★★★★
Big-voiced blues babe Candy Kane’s musical career took off several years ago when she teamed up with guitar wizard Laura Chavez on 2009’s sublime “Superhero.” They struck gold again with 2011’s fantastic “Sister Vagabond” and “Coming Out Swingin’” makes Kane and Chavez 3-for-3. There’s a delightful retro feel to the 13-track release, with standouts “Rock Me to Sleep,” “I’m the Reason Why You Drink,” “You Ain’t All That,” “Barbed Wire Mouth” and “Marijuana Boogie” songs you’ll want revisit again and again.

'Grinning Streak'

Barenaked Ladies (Vanguard)

★★★★
The Barenaked Ladies just haven’t been the same since co-lead singer Steven Page left the Canadian pop/rock outfit in 2009. Their 2010 release “All in Good Time” is my least favorite of their 11 studio albums and as great as Ed Robertson was splitting vocal duties with Page, he struggled being “the guy” last time out. He seems more comfortable in the role on “Grinning Streak,” and that’s probably why the 12-track album is noticeably better than its predecessor. BNL aren’t as playful as they once were and they embrace that maturity on keepers “Boomerang,” “Off His Head,” “Odds Are,” “Best Damn Friend” and “Did I Say That Out Loud?” This is a pretty good record, but not good enough for me to stop hoping Page rejoins the fray.

'Wrote a Song for Everyone'

John Fogerty (Vanguard)

★★★★
As both a solo artist and the guiding creative force behind Hall of Fame rockers Creedence Clearwater Revival, John Fogerty’s status as one of modern music’s greatest songwriters is secure. He enlists some of his A-list pals to put a new spin on some of his best compositions on the enjoyable “Wrote a Song for Everyone.” The 14-track album has a pair of new tunes (“Mystic River” and “Train of Fools”), but the real appeal is Fogerty’s collaborations with artists as varied as Foo Fighters (“Fortunate Son”), Keith Urban (“Almost Saturday Night”), Zac Brown Band (“Bad Moon Rising”), My Morning Jacket (“Long as I Can See the Light”), Kid Rock (“Born on the Bayou”), Bob Seger (“Who’ll Stop the Rain”), Alan Jackson (“Have You Ever Seen the Rain”) and Jennifer Hudson, Allen Toussaint & Rebirth Brass Band (“Proud Mary”). Good stuff.

Jeffrey Sisk is an editor at Trib Total Media. He can be reached at 412-664-9161 ext. 1952 or jsisk@tribweb.com.

'Rebellion Hymns' explores Americana

BY BRIAN KRASMAN

'Rebellion Hymns'

Man’s Gin (Profound Lore)

★★★★
If you’re familiar with Cobalt’s heathen, violent black metal, you might be surprised to hear what that band’s multi-instrumentalist Erik Wunder can do when he turns things down (volume-wise, that is) and channels Roky Erickson and Dax Riggs. On his second Man’s Gin album “Rebellion Hymns,” Wunder and his bandmates take things even further, exploring Americana, traditional rock, and folk on these tracks that peak on “Inspiration” and “Varicose,” a tremendous one-two punch as openers, as well as “Never Do the Neon Light” and extended, gruff closer “Hibernation Time.” Wunder’s a spectacular musician, and Man’s Gin should find him acclaim beyond metal’s campfires.

'In Us We Trust'

Beach (Short Story)

★★
I always thought Karen Mould was one of the more forward-thinking, challeng-

ing musicians in independent rock. But her new project Beach needs to be buried at sea. “In Us We Trust” is all over the map style-wise. That in itself is not a crime, but these electric violin-heavy songs have no cohesion as a collection, and at times seem to be trying so hard to be artistic and to make a point that they come off as laughable rather than intelligent. Mould’s a better artist than this.

'Stills'

Gauntlet Hair (Dead Oceans)

★★★★
Gauntlet Hair’s music is both tough and easy to explain. You can say they revel in pop and post-punk of the ‘80s and ‘90s, yet you still wouldn’t be giving a proper description of what this now Chicago-based band can do. The 10 cuts on the record are synth and shadowy, fun and punchy in other areas, and you might be reminded of MGMT and Yeasayer when hearing songs like “Spew,” “Bad Apple,” and “Heave” that sound a bit like early INXS.

Brian Krasman is a contributing writer for Trib Total Media.

CONCERT SCHEDULE

Jimmy Buffett, The Coral Reefer Band: 7 p.m. July 18, First Niagara Pavilion, Burgettstown. 800-745-3000

Steve Trevino: 7-10 p.m. July 18-21, Pittsburgh Improv, Homestead. \$18. 412-462-5233

fun., Tegan and Sara: 7:30 p.m. July 18, Stage AE, North Shore. \$35. 800-745-3000

Randy Jackson of Zebra with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra "Music of Led Zepelin": 7:30 p.m. July 18, Heinz Hall, Downtown. \$25-\$75. 412-392-4900

Samantha Crain, Luke Zach- erl of NOMaD, Bob Gilmore: 8 p.m. July 18, Club Cafe, South Side. \$8. 866-468-3401

Pittsburgh Blues Festival featuring Big Sam's Funky Nation, The Slide Brothers: 4 p.m. July 19, Hartwood Acres, Gibsonia. Benefits the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. 412-460-2583

The Clarks with Bill Deasy: 6:30 p.m. July 19, Stage AE, North Shore. \$25-\$28. 800-745-3000

Brian Halloran, Daniel Marcus: 7 p.m. July 19, Club Cafe, South Side. \$5. 866-468-3401

Jesse Dee: 7 p.m. July 19, St. Clair Park Amphitheater, Greensburg. 724-837-1851

Lynyrd Skynyrd, Bad Company: 7 p.m. July 19, First Niagara Pavilion, Burgettstown. 800-745-3000

ApologetiX: 7:30 p.m. July 19, Center United Methodist Church, Natrona Heights. \$10-\$15. 724-226-2300

The Stickers: 7:30 p.m. July 19, South Park Amphitheater. 412-350-2528

Bestial Mouths: 8 p.m. July 19, Garfield Artworks, Garfield. 412-361-2262

Hi-Life Wedding, Action Camp, Shutterdown, Antimony: 10:30 p.m. July 19, Club Cafe, South Side. \$7. 866-468-3401

Pittsburgh Blues Festival featuring Los Lonely Boys, Joe Louis Walker, Eric Lindell, Gina Sicilia: 1:30 p.m. July 20, Hartwood Acres, Gibsonia. Benefits the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. 412-350-2528

Alasdair Roberts & Friends, Pairedown, AppalAsia: 6:30 p.m. July 20, Club Cafe, South Side. \$10. 866-468-3401

Bosnian Rainbows: 7:30 p.m. July 20, Altar Bar, Strip District. \$17-\$20. 877-435-9849

Calypto Rose: 7:30 p.m. July 20, Kelly Strayhorn Theater, Downtown. \$20-\$35. 412-363-3000

Zac Brown Band: 7:30 p.m. July 20, First Niagara Pavilion, Burgettstown. 800-745-3000

Frankie Valli & the Four Seasons: 8 p.m. July 20, Heinz Hall, Downtown. \$39-\$129. 412-392-4900

Rehab, Legally Insane, 5 Elements, Insane Eric: 8 p.m. July 20, Mr. Small’s Theatre, Millvale. \$15. 866-468-3401

Mother Cool, After The Fall: 10 p.m. July 20, Hard Rock Cafe, Station Square. \$5-\$7. 877-435-9849

Emily Rodgers Band, Rebecca Pronskey Band: 10:15 p.m. July 20, Club Cafe, South Side. 412-431-4950

Pittsburgh Blues Festival featuring Tab Benoit, The Nighthawks, Billy Price, J.D. McPherson: 1:30 p.m. July 21, Hartwood Acres, Gibsonia. Benefits the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. 412-350-2528

★ Run for your life

★★ Not awesome

★★★ Not too shabby

★★★★ Pretty sweet

★★★★★ Awesome