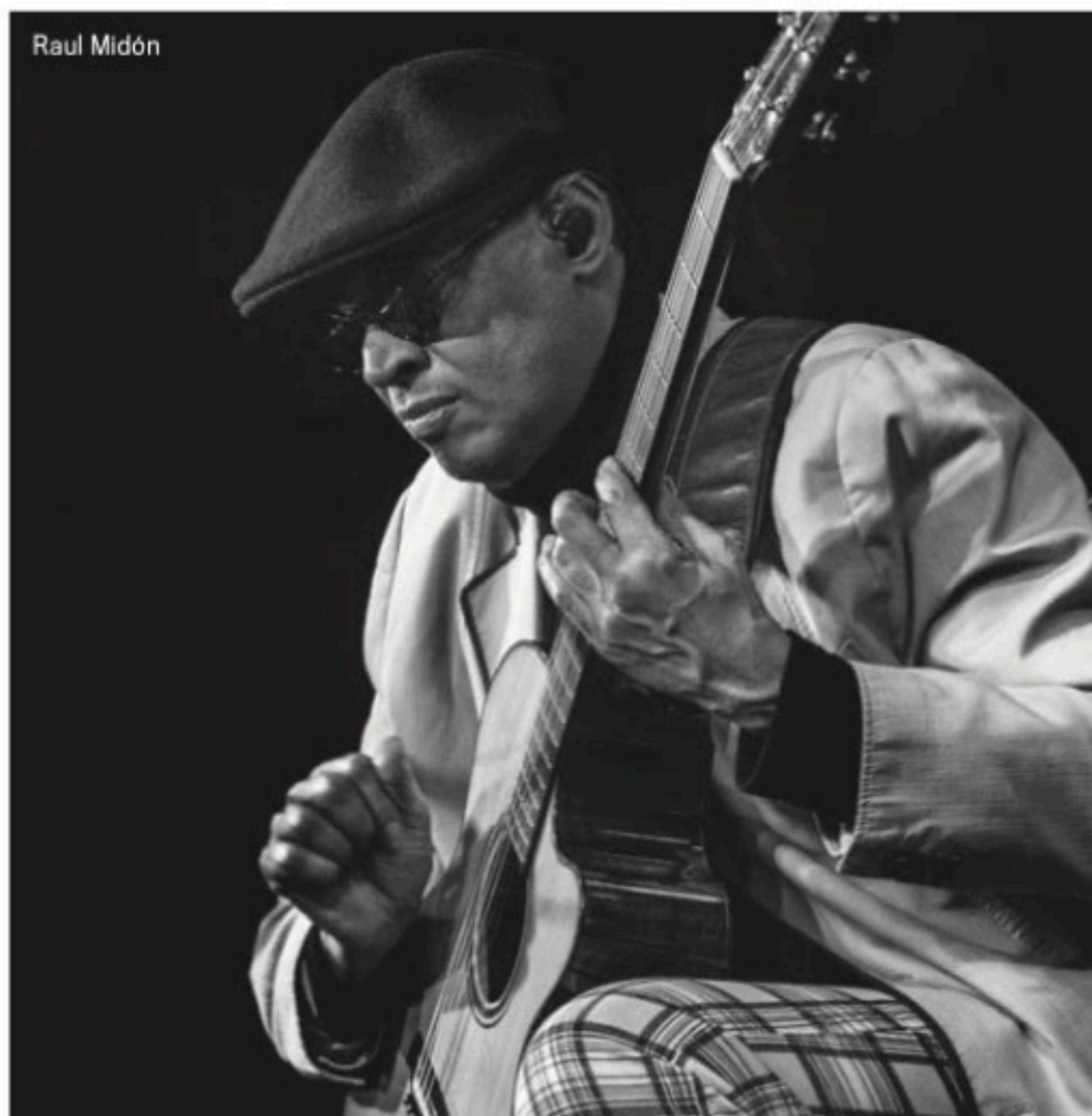


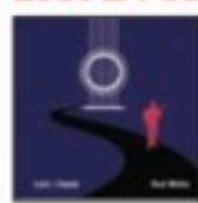
Raul Midón



been creating mystical, shadowy torch songs for more than 15 years. But she's never made something quite like *The Dream of Delphi*, a gorgeous, illuminating concept album about conjuring her daughter's spirit from the cosmos down to be born on Earth. It's no surprise, then, that these 11 cuts embody a heavenly, ethereal feeling—a far cry from the goth-tinged, drama-infused pop she's best known for. The journey begins with a title track, swirling harps and an ever-ascending synthesizer line that helps Khan conjure her daughter's spirit: "Playing with the angels/ Breathing a new transmission, falling from the sky." When the song breaks into a glitchy beat toward the end, it's about the closest *Delphi* gets to Bat for Lashes' old tricks. "Christmas Day" is all ambient piano and whispered vocals. The low hum and muted cool of "Home" find mother and daughter finally connecting, and the song's got an infectious contentment—this baby is on her way home. The sky seems to open up with fluttering keys on "Waking Up." If you're a Bat for Lashes newcomer, then *The Dream of Delphi* isn't the easiest entry point to her rich catalog. But then again, for the roughly half of humanity who can experience the magic that is childbirth, the album is a beautiful reflection on the miracle of life and all the magic we can't see. *Justin Jacobs*

Raul Midón

Lost & Found REKONDATE



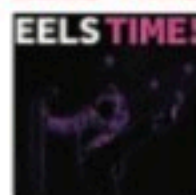
Over the course of his past few releases, **Raul Midón** has sometimes veered in directions he hadn't previously

explored: 2018's *If You Really Want*

found the singer-songwriter collaborating with the Dutch Metropole Orkest while 2022's *Eclectic Adventurist* eschewed vocals altogether in favor of spotlighting Midón's exemplary guitar work. *Lost & Found*, his latest, has more in common with *The Mirror*, the recording that came between those two, and with the majority of the artist's earlier output. Its 10 songs present the full package: All were written or co-written by Midón, and feature the leader both singing and working that guitar, usually in the company of two to four other musicians. The songs, some of the most intimate he's recorded, are accessible and uncluttered, elevating in spirit and never heavy-handed or harsh. Midón himself has described at least one tune as "smooth folk," and there are elements of jazz, country and rock in the mix. But within those easy tones and hybrid, listener-friendly settings polished by skillful musicians, Midón packs smartly crafted verbiage worthy of close scrutiny. The title track, featuring piano, bass and drums in addition to Midón's vocal and guitar, questions modern notions of love: "You know you've got to pay, pay and pay" is one observation, but so is "It's a game you've got to play, play and play." With a melody as rich as one that Paul McCartney or Brian Wilson might reel off, "When We Remember" puts a banjo in Midón's capable hands and offers a twist on nostalgia: "Crave the innocence of younger days/ But then on second thought I don't/ Always thinking that I'll mend my ways/ Then on the other hand I won't," he sings. And there's plenty more where those came from. *Jeff Tamarkin*

EELS

EELS TIME! E WORKS



With **EELS'** 15th studio album, *EELS TIME!*, **Mark Oliver Everett**, best known as E, continues to follow his muse wherever

it may lead him, as he has for 30 years. *EELS TIME!* is one of the quieter EELS albums, at least compared to the many decidedly not-so-quiet records EELS have released since their 1996 debut, *Beautiful Freak*. (E issued his first set, *A Man Called E*, in 1992.) It's been almost 20 years since EELS dropped 2005's *Blinking Lights and Other Revelations*, debatably their critical high point to date. (The other contender is 2000's *Electro-*

Shock Blues.) Like *Blinking Lights*, *EELS TIME!* features longtime jack of all trades **The Chet** as well as even-longer-time bassist **Koolhaas G Murder**. E has also invited a few new members into the EELS family this time around, most notably **Tyson Ritter**—founding member of The All-American Rejects and E's past collaborator on the film *Prisoner's Daughter*—who co-wrote half the songs on the LP, including lead single, "GOLDY." E sets the tone for the record at the outset with opener "Time"—a quiet acoustic tune centering on a topic he has long contemplated, as documented in *Parallel Worlds, Parallel Lives*. (The 2007 BBC film captures Everett's genealogical pilgrimage through the history of his father's 1957 proposal

EarCrystals

BY RICHARD GEHR

The search for other-world audio gems

Sō it goes. Among prize-winning composer and singer **Caroline Shaw**'s many collaborations, her music with the **Sō Percussion** quartet deftly tickles the sweet spot between experimentalism and accessibility. Their new *Rectangles and Circumstance* (Nonesuch) mixes deft arrangements of classic stanzas by Emily Brontë, Emily Dickinson, Gertrude Stein and William Blake with original lyrics. "What's the solitary game you play?" ponders Shaw in the title track. "What's your slot machine ballet?" Sō Percussion has a big, rhythmic warehouse at its disposal, including vibes and glockenspiel that serve as chiming accompaniment to a wistful Scottish drinking tune, "The Parting Glass."

Wrinkles in time. Already missing the Sphere? Then take a gander at the visual component of Mexico City-based electronic musician **Aaron With's** *A Bridged Compendium of Many Folds* (Lexical) on Vimeo. With's constantly changing hour-long collection of colorfully complex 3D animations accompanies recited texts—reminiscent of Laurie Anderson and John Cage—that describe attempts to immanentize infinite, ever-changing novelty. Cryptic, comic and sometimes punningly profound, these accounts are delivered in a playfully distorted voice suggesting AI as well as *aleee!*

Family affairs. If compositions titled after his current wife and his son are any indication, then the great tenor saxophonist **David Murray**, 69, is in a pretty sweet space these days. Leading an impeccably attuned quartet that hit a Swiss studio immediately following a tour, Murray blows as powerfully and lucidly as ever on *Francesca* (Intakt), his 100-and-somethingth release. Sentimental? Perhaps. But you won't find a teaspoon of schmaltz over the course of an album that toys with balladry while also offering plenty of space for heady interventions by piano goddess **Marta Sanchez**. Bassist **Luke Stewart** buoys Murray's vaunted sax muscularity, which is punctuated by bass clarinet vehicles such as "Richard's Tune" by Don Pullen, an homage to another paterfamilias—A.A.C.M. founder **Muhai Richard Abrams**.

Workingman's shred. Celebrating the labor movement, signaling danger or both, *May Day* (Sinking City) also happens to be the title of **Basher's** second album of jubilant and danceable modernistic jazz incarnating the apparently indomitable spirit of New Orleans. Led by saxophonist **Byron Asher**, Basher's high-concept, mirror-structured unit features two tenors (the great **Aurora Nealand** joins him) and brash double drumming, with synthesist **Daniel Meinecke** serving as interstellar fulcrum. Consisting of a half-dozen compositions and a couple of free improvis suggesting an epic suite, *May Day* will have you dancing in your head, evoking the ground-breaking blips and blurts of Weather Report.

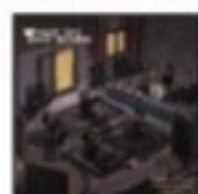
Visions of Jolana. Though 99% of all electric guitarists sound basically the same, **Rəhman Məmmədli** isn't one of them. "Qocali," the opening track of *Azerbaijani Gitara Vol. 2* (Bongo Joe), grinds and squeals like *literal acid* (rock) dripping from a caustic fretboard. Known at home as "the man with the singing fingers," Məmmədli performs heavily distorted folk and classical music on one of the "Jolana" electric guitars that seeped into the Caucasus from Czechoslovakia during the '60s. By altering his tunings, he manifests the microtonal magic that defines the Azerbaijani Gitara sound.

for the many-worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics—think “parallel universes.”) From that contemplative place, he moves into the dreamy “We Won’t See Her Like Again,” establishing a vibe that continues through the rest of the album, even at its hardest rocking moments, “GOLDY” and “IF I’M GONNA GO ANYWHERE.” *EELS TIME!* ultimately finds E doing what he does best, which includes figuring out ways to continue to grow and evolve as an artist. **Matt Hoffman**

Sunny Day Real Estate

Diary Live at London Bridge Studio

SELF-RELEASED



You can tell a lot about a veteran rock band by the oscillation of their tempos. When classic songs slow to a creep,

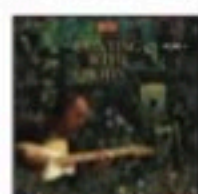
the players might just be bored—drained of energy or, worse, inspiration. So it’s revealing that, on *Sunny Day Real Estate’s Live at London Bridge Studio*—a front-to-back re-recording of their beloved 1994 debut, *Diary*—the arty “emo” giants push their signature song, “Seven,” until the wheels almost fall off. The track is noticeably faster, more frenetic, and exponentially more beautiful: The original’s cheap garage-band guitar effects are transformed into widescreen heaviness, and **Jeremy Enigk’s** once-choked rasp has been replaced with a lustrous full roar. The piece feels lived-in yet also revitalized—you can practically feel them jumping with enthusiasm during the quiet-loud transitions. And the whole album is full of similarly transcendent moments, as Sunny Day breathe vital new life into already-canonized songs: the incandescent glow of clean-picked electric guitars before the chorus of “The Blankets Were the Stairs,” the precision and clarity of Enigk’s once-buried vocals on “Grendel,” **William Goldsmith** gracefully embellishing his chilled-out-Bonham drum fills on “In Circles.” But the most inspiring moment comes last: The seven-minute “Novum Vetus,” the roots of which date back to 1997, is the first “new” Sunny Day song since 2014’s “Lipton Witch”—and it’s a churning, open-heart epic, a tangle of past and present that also teases a rich future, should they choose to seize it.

Ryan Reed

John Lurie

Painting With John

STRANGE AND BEAUTIFUL



Among **John Lurie’s** many credits: He co-founded and played guitar and saxophone with downtown NYC

faves the Lounge Lizards beginning in the late ‘70s; he wrote scores for more than 20 films, including *Get Shorty*, *Down By Law* and *Stranger Than Paradise*; he starred in the last two of those films; he conceived and



starred in a TV series called *Fishing With John*; he paints. It’s that latter vocation, on which he’s concentrated since contracting Lyme disease, that led to Lurie creating the HBO series *Painting With John* in 2021. It ran for nearly three seasons before the network pulled the plug, but Lurie had all of this music he’d created as a soundtrack to the show and, hey, why let it go to waste? So, here is *Painting With John*, ostensibly that soundtrack but also a stand-alone double-album collection of 56 decidedly eclectic pieces, ranging in length from under a minute to more than five, fitting into no particular stylistic slot and all the better for it. The music—from simple and spare to dense, surreal and psychedelic—wasn’t concocted to roll along in any sequence the way a normal album does, nor to tell a story, so the listener, in a sense, is agreeing by default to take it all in as is and allow it to have whatever impact it might have. That can be jarring at times—the minute-long “Unky G” is little more than a funky blues progression; “Banjo to the Fuzzy” isn’t fuzzy at all, but it is all banjo; “Habba Happatoo” is—hmm, what is it, exactly? And, really, why attempt description anyway? Much of *Painting With John* is best experienced rather than dissected—a painting that isn’t clear in its intent and open to interpretation. Absorb its embrace. **Jeff Tamarkin**

Boeckner

Boeckner! SUB POP



Dan Boeckner has built a career out of pogoing from one distinct musical project to another—from the buzzy indie-rock of

Wolf Parade to the pulsing synth-pop of Operators and the electro-punk surge of Handsome Furs—so it’s easy to wonder what creative freedom he might gain from a traditional “solo album.” But *Boeckner!*, his first to bear such billing, doesn’t follow any

of the clichés you might expect—it isn’t stripped-down or more overtly introspective than usual, and it’s probably among his most band-like LPs. Anchored by the core crew of producer **Randall Dunn**, guitarist **Brad Laner** (Medicine) and drummer **Matt Chamberlain** (Pearl Jam, Fiona Apple), the songs are bound, even at their brightest and hookiest (and damn are they hooky!), by their dark imagery and bone-rattling force. A good example is “Dead Tourists,” which opens as an acoustic power-pop number and winds up somewhere fuzzier and more menacing. “The cattle have eyes fashioned of steel,” Boeckner sings—the kind of post-apocalyptic scene you’d expect him to be staring at on the album cover, where his paranoid-looking face is illuminated by an ominous red glow. Throughout *Boeckner!*, the guitars often thrash with violence (like the bent-note swarm on “Return to Life”), but they’re balanced out by the innate sweetness of his distinctive warble, which cuts through the clatter with the exactitude of an X-Acto knife. Everything—the blissful sense of melody, the epic storytelling, the sheer heavy hitting—all comes to a head on the closer: “All of my days,” Boeckner sings, “I have been chasing down this euphoria.” And he keeps passing it along. **Ryan Reed**

LATRALA

LATRALA OTHERLY LOVE



Drummer **Kenny Wollesen’s** résumé is long and varied, with credits ranging from Tom Waits to John Zorn,

Bill Frisell, Sean Lennon, Julian Lage and David Byrne. But he also leads *LATRALA*, a quintet with which he turns over his drumsticks to the supremely capable Nasheet Waits and takes instead to a number of other instruments, including electric vibraphone, marimba, tenor

saxophone, organ, bells, congas and more. Filling out the band are guitarist **Tony Scherr**, acoustic bassist **Christopher Thomas** and pianist/synths player **Michael Coleman**. A bevy of electronic sounds also find a happy home within the album’s 10 tracks. With all of the material written or co-written by Wollesen, the leader’s stamp is understandably dominant and disparity is its main hallmark, but each participant adds significant shape to the jams. “AGORA,” the lead track, rides along on a funk rhythm, at first leaning toward the Caribbean before, midway, the electronics grab the reins and have their way with the track. Other tunes take off from, and/or go off in, different directions entirely: “SERIOUS DRINKING” is fanciful and teasing, the vibes playful and spacey, toying with, but not quite giving in to the bleeps and squeaks. “EMPRESS” lopes along in an appropriately regal manner, Waits’ drums bold and tough, while “FIFTY-FIVE” wisely showcases Scherr, an adventurous player whose own vast list of credits has found him aiding everyone from Norah Jones to Snarky Puppy and Frisell. Then there’s “UPTOWN,” pulled out as a single, perhaps because it approaches the mainstream or because it’s just so darn pretty. **Jeff Tamarkin**

Eric Slick

New Age Rage

SLICK RECORDS/THIRTY TIGERS



The drummer-to-frontman pipeline is a rare one, and few have navigated that shift with more enthusiasm than

Eric Slick. The percussionist for beloved indie-rock weirdos Dr. Dog, Slick has been releasing creative, engaging singer-songwriter solo projects for years, all the while playing with Waxahatchee, Kevin Morby and more. But none of that could prepare you for *New Age Rage*—Slick’s wonderfully absurd pop creation. These 10-tracks are built out of sounds that recall peak ‘80s-era New Wave and synth-pop, but the electronic soundscapes can’t cover up the vulnerability of Slick’s songwriting. Call it the *Weird Science* of indie rock. That’s what makes *New Age Rage* such a fun find—Slick balances humor, kitsch and nostalgia with affecting lyrics about anxiety, loss and love. Plus, it’s freakishly catchy in a way that’d make most full-time-frontmen jealous. Slick wrote and recorded *New Age Rage* in his Nashville home studio with buddy (and Speedy Ortiz guitarist) **Andy Molholt**, calling on a whole slew of friends to send over parts. The album maintains a tight, focused sound throughout—both sonically and through Slick’s songwriting. On album centerpiece “Anxious to Please,” Slick admits, “I don’t wanna be liked anymore/ I just wanna be loved/ Is that so much to ask?” It’s a

ERIC MCKUS