

# OUR FESTIVE

## 1. SLASH Slash

The Guns N' Roses guitar hero (right) unleashes his scorching second solo coming with the help of guest frontmen including Lemmy, Ozzy Osbourne, Fergie, M Shadows, Myles Kennedy and Alice Cooper. Who needs Axl Rose?

**2. DIRTY SWEET** American Spiritual San Diego rabble rousers Dirty Sweet live up to their name with a lowdown and dirty set of sweet, scuzzy rock and roll, somewhere on the colour palette between Black Rebel Motorcycle Club and White Stripes.

**3. OFFICER KICKS** Citywide Curfew A band with the in your face attitude and attack of Guns 'n' Roses, but the Britpop sensibilities of Oasis. No wonder Noel Gallagher loves 'em so much, he loaned his studio for recording sessions.

**4. BUCKCHERRY** All Night Long Last year's rock album of the year winners return with another barnstorming set that nods to their heroes AC/DC, Velvet Revolver and Led Zeppelin. Josh Todd's LA rabble rousers are not ashamed to rock and roll.

**5. THE CRAVE** Breaking The Silence Shades of Green Day as Brighton

## ROCK

band The Crave put their own pop-rock stamp on proceedings, making their downloadable debut album one of the very best of a good year.

## 6. BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN The Promise

The songs that should have been the bridge between Born To Run and Darkness On The Edge Of Town finally see the light of day, and it's a joyous E Street rock and roll celebration.

## 7. BLACK COUNTRY COMMUNION Black Country

The supergroup comprises ex-Deep Purple bassist frontman Glenn Hughes, Led Zeppelin reunion drummer Jason Bonham, blues guitar hero Joe Bonamassa and Dream Theatre keyboardman Derek Sherinian.

## 8. THE GASLIGHT ANTHEM

American Slang Bruce Springsteen's favourite band return with rock and roll Americana, gospel and a dash of country to boot. But just as you think you have them bagged, along comes a reminder of their post-punk roots.

## 9. HUNGRY & THE HUNTED

Magic Bullets The guitarist-singer of blues band Midnight Special channels his anger and frustration into incendiary hard rock power trio Hungry And The Hunted, and the results are sensational.

## 10. AIRBOURNE No Guts, No Glory

The crunchy guitar riffs, punchy basslines and tight drums are immediately recognisable. It's AC/DC. Only it isn't. Aussie rockers Airbourne sound so much like Angus Young & Co that you have to check the sleeve notes.

PAUL COLE

## SONGWRITERS

### 1. DUKE SPECIAL The Silent World Of Hector Mann

Remarkable album inspired by Paul Auster's novel The Book Of Illusions. The Duke (right) delivers 12 songs – one for each of Mann's movies – with co-writers Neil Hannon, Ed Harcourt, Ben Castle, Paul Pilot, Thomas Truax, and Rea Curran.

**2. MARTYN JOSEPH** Under Lemonade Skies Singer songwriter Martyn Joseph's latest set is still rooted in folk but is instantly accessible, with songs such as So Many Lies, On My Way and Lonely Like America, that are among his best. There's a cover version of Bruce Springsteen's One Step Up, too.

### 3. HARPER SIMON Harper Simon

Paul Simon's son serves up a delightful debut including co-writes with his dad, appearances by Sean Lennon (son of John), Inara George (daughter of Lowell) and a stellar session band, many of whom have worked with the old man.

### 4. RAY LAMONTAGNE God Willin' & The Creek Won't Rise

The homespun vocals are as evocative as ever, but this time Ray Lamontagne's brought his band with him. The fuller sound sounds set to fill larger venues next time around.

### 5. CLAIRE TCHAIKOWSKI Those Thousand Seas

Swiss songbird, actress and horse whisperer Claire finally delivers the debut album that those in the know have been waiting for – a sublime set of electropop in which her beguiling vocal is allowed to breathe.

**6. TOM McRAE** The Alphabet Of Hurricanes Recorded at home with banjo, ukelele, drums, violin, an old piano and "other junk from eBay", McRae's fifth album is an unsettling listen as he cites songs in skewed settings ranging from music hall to Americana.



### 7. SARAH McLACHLAN Laws Of Illusion

It's seven years since sweet-voiced Sarah McLachlan last released a studio set of new material. But she still has that breathy catch in her mezzo-soprano vocal, the same one that seduced us with the likes of Angel, Adia and Building A Mystery.

### 8. AL STEWART Uncorked

A live album finds Stewart unplugged and playing gigs with virtuoso Dave Nachmanoff in intimate folk club surrounds. The set list spans his career from 1967 debut Bedsitter Images to 1996 album track The Coldest Winter In Memory.

### 9. MAIA SHARP Echo

She's written for Carole King, Bonnie Raitt, Dixie Chicks, Art Garfunkel and many more. Here, backed by a stellar session band, she stakes her own claim.

### 10. SARAH CLASS A New Dawn

After emerging as a classical star, then dabbling in jazz, the Isle of Wight singer now makes her mainstream folk-pop debut with a delightful album of mellow songs.

PAUL COLE



# FIFTY

## MUSIC of the year

BY PAUL COLE, BEV BEVAN,  
JACK DANIELS &  
CONRAD COX



**1. JAMIE LAWSON** *The Pull Of The Moon*  
Lawson (above) lives in a caravan overlooking the sea in Cornwall because he doesn't like the distractions of city life. Listen to his debut album and discover why Damien Rice is a fan. Sweetly sung songs served in a skewed vocal, bursting with indie credibility.

**2. RAY DAVIES** *See My Friends*  
The Kinkmaster revisits his greatest songs, leafing through his address book to bring in pals such as Bruce Springsteen, Metallica, Paloma Faith, Mumford & Sons, Bon Jovi and many more. Great songs, great performances all round.

**3. ALEX CORNISH** *Call Back*  
Songs of love and loss with classic pop cues. Don't Hold Me Back has been picked up by a US TV show, and I'm On The Right Side closed movie *Solstice*. Cornish's vocals combine Tom McRae's fragility and David Ford's soulful strength.

**4. TURIN BRAKES** *Outbursts*  
Olly Knights and Gale Paridjanian

### POP

turn the clock back to the beginning for a stripped back album that's strong on songwriting and light on instrumentation. Their best album since *Ether Song* – and that's high praise indeed.

**5. PERNICE BROTHERS** *Goodbye, Killer*  
Jangly pop meets indie rock in Joe Pernice's first full band album in four years. It's a summery delight – from feelgood pop to vaudeville, and from folk to rock and roll, there isn't a disappointing track.

**6. BRANDON FLOWERS** *Flamingo*  
Taking time off from his day job fronting The Killers, Flowers delivers hot pop songs that were originally planned for the band's next album before they decided to take a year off. Bloomin' brilliant.

**7. TRAVIE MCCOY** *Lazarus*  
Travie McCoy skives off from his Gym Class Heroes to deliver a sizzling solo album of pop, R&B

and hip-hop, plus a guest list that's bigger than a supermodel's OK wedding.

**8. DIANA VICKERS** *Songs From The Tainted Cherry Tree*  
The 18-year-old blonde with the Kate Bush complex, was beaten to the 2008 X Factor title by Alexandra Burke, but this credible blend of 80s electropop and radio rock was the best yet from a TV talent show.

**9. TAKE THAT** *Progress*  
Robbie's back, and accordingly gets the lion's share of the action on the famous five's album. What we didn't expect was the progress from boy band ballads to electropop experimentation.

**10. KYLIE MINOGUE** *Aphrodite Dance*, it's all I wanna do, says Kylie in a sex kitten whisper at the opening of the post-cancer comeback album. And that's exactly what the diminutive disco diva does with a set list that celebrates life with an injection of dancefloor energy.

PAUL COLE

### METAL

Morello teams up with hip-hop hero Boots Riley for a rock-rap set recalling RATM at their very best.

**4. GENTLEMEN OF DISTORTED SOUND** *Bone Idol*  
Frontman Gareth Nugent is a cousin of Detroit rock nutter Ted Nugent, and his band's debut is subtle as a sledgehammer – hard, fast and dangerously deranged.

**5. DISTURBED** *Asylum*  
For all their bass pedal pummelling, Disturbed are old school at heart, guitarist Dan Donegan more Slash than Synyster Gates.

CONRAD COX

**1. AVENGED SEVEN-FOLD** *Nightmare*  
Hot on the heels of their show-stealing Download spot, the Carolina metallers returned with added muscle – songs such as *Nightmare* and *Welcome To The Family* closely resembling festival pals Metallica.

**2. YEAR LONG DISASTER** *Black Magic: All Mysteries Revealed*  
Daniel Davies, son of Kinks legend Ray, and his band return with a hard rock riff set inspired by Mikhail Bulgakov's political satire *The Master & Margarita*.

**3. STREET SWEEPER** *SOCIAL CLUB*  
Ghetto Blaster  
Rage Against The Machine guitar hero Tom

### JAZZ & BLUES

**1. JOE BONAMASSA** *Black Rock*  
Guitar giant Bonamassa (below) showcases his skills on an eclectic set on which he pushes boundaries, marrying blues roots with Far Eastern instrumentation.

**2. CARO EMERALD** *Deleted Scenes From The Cutting Room Floor*  
Dutch songbird Caro Emerald takes swing and big band from the 1940s, adds hip-hop beats and comes up with a sexy, sassy soundtrack.

**3. RUMER** *Seasons Of My Soul*  
Songbird Rumer's songs reach out and embrace you, her warm vocal sited somewhere between Aimee Mann and Karen Carpenter.

**4. TOM PETTY & THE HEART-BREAKERS** *Mojo*  
He's played rock and roll, he's gone country, he's been a Travelling Wilbury, and now Petty rediscovers his mojo with the obligatory blues album.

**5. IMELDA MAY** *Mayhem*  
Robert Plant, Jeff Beck, Jools Holland and David Bowie are fans – and there's no 'may' in Imelda's rockabilly mayhem. It's guaranteed to blow your socks off, especially the whirlwind title track.

JACK DANIELS



**1. LITTLE RICHARD** *Volume 2*  
This is the music that inspired the likes of Elvis Presley, The Beatles, Rolling Stones, Michael Jackson and Prince. Classic tracks include *Keep a Knockin'*, *Good Golly Miss Molly*, *The Girl Can't Help It*, *Lucille* and *Send Me Some Lovin'*.

**2. STEVE WINWOOD** *Revolutions*  
This best of Steve Winwood CD includes *The Spencer Davis Group's Gimme Some Lovin'* and *I'm A Man*, *Traffic's No Name No Face No Number*, *Blind Faith's Can't Find My Way Home* and solo hits.

**3. CILLA BLACK** *Definitive Collection*  
This budget-priced boxset collection by the often underrated Cilla Black, contains 50 tracks on 2 CDs, including her 11 top ten hit singles.

### RETRO

**4. JERRY LEE LEWIS** *Rock 'n' Roll Roots*  
The one and only Jerry Lee Lewis turned 75 this year and shows no sign of slowing down. Pick of the recordings on this 50-track double-CD collection include *Great Balls Of Fire*, *High School Confidential* and *Lovin' Up A Storm*.

**5. ERIC CARMEN** *Change Of Heart*  
Eric Carmen  
Classically trained pianist Eric Carmen first found fame in the USA with power pop band The Raspberries. After that, a solo career brought him hits such as *All By Myself*, *Never Gonna Fall In Love Again* and *Change Of Heart*, all included here.

BEV BEVAN

### FOLK & ROOTS

engineered by Black Keys producer Tchad Blake.

**4. DARRELL SCOTT** *A Crooked Road*  
He's written for Dixie Chicks and Patty Lawless, but Scott's eighth solo album outshines them all, his songwriting given room to breathe by his ragged baritone vocal.

**5. RUARRI JOSEPH** *Shoulder To The Wheel*  
Troubadour Ruarri Joseph numbers Paolo Nutini and David Gray among his biggest fans. His latest songs may be rooted in unplugged folk but they weave their magic in any surrounds.

JACK DANIELS



**1. ROBERT PLANT** *Band Of Joy*  
Not as groundbreaking as *Raising Sand*, but essential nonetheless. Rumbling guitar blues, rootsy dobro, traditional folk, Beatley beats, lo-fi and slowcore from Plant (right) – they're all here. It IS a band of joy!

**2. DROPKICK MURPHYS** *Live On Lansdowne*  
A rabble-rousing, rambunctious, riotous racket. A boisterous blend of Irish tradition, punk punch and skittering ska, delivered with more calorie-burning energy than Ashley Cole's love life.

**3. SETH LAKEMAN** *Hearts & Minds*  
The singing fiddler who tore down the fences between folk and pop steps further into the indie-folk fold with a harder-edged sound