

Brainwashed - 2012 Readers Poll - The Results

Written by Staff

Sunday, 06 January 2013 00:00 - Last Updated Friday, 03 January 2014 18:49

This is the **15th Annual Brainwashed Readers Poll**: the longest running poll from a digital publication that allows the readers to both nominate and vote for the best and worst of the year. The writers don't all necessarily agree with the placement and rankings, but we have our last word in the comments we have provided.

Thanks to everyone who participated in both rounds and we wish you the best for 2013.

Album of the Year

1.



Swans, "The Seer" (Young God)

This was definitely in my own personal top three for 2012 and I'm pleased to see that I am not alone. This is a towering work of sheer power, every aspect of Gira's previous work being assimilated, regurgitated and reborn in a glorious way. – John Kealy

I listened to this entire album even when I didn't have the time to. Seriously, I'm going back and tracking it and I don't know how I pulled 120 minutes out of thin air to enjoy this from start to finish as often as I did. Nothing represented the year more for me than this album. My favorite by far of Michael Gira's work and a culmination of past ideas that outshines all of them in ambition and execution. – Adam Devlin

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There were a ton of very good albums released this year, but very few great ones. This was one of the great ones; more a crushing statement of intent than a mere collection of new songs. -Anthony D'Amico

Definitely one of my absolute favorites this year. While *My Father* was a great album, it still felt a bit too in-line with his Angels of Light work. This carried the same power and intensity that all of the classic Swans albums did, while still feeling like a new direction in Gira's long and storied career. - Creag Dunton

I didn't start digging into *The Seer* until I saw Swans on the supporting tour, but once I invested the time required to digest its 2 hours, oh man—it's obvious

The Seer

is leagues ahead of pretty much anything else I heard this year. This is absolutely essential listening, on par with

Children of God

,
White Light from the Mouth of Infinity

, and

Soundtracks for the Blind

... if not an arm's length ahead of them all. – Stephen Bush

2.



Scott Walker, "Bish Bosch" (4AD)

While it was less of a leap forward from *The Drift* than expected, *Bish Bosch* was still one of the best things I have had the joy to listen to. Difficult and convoluted, it is a treat for anyone who cares about actually sitting down and devoting their attention to a work of art. This is far beyond a simple album, it is a masterwork in song craft. – John Kealy

I have absolutely no stomach at all for Walker's recent work. The farting noises and lines like "I've severed my reeking gonads" make me feel far more like I am listening to a psychotic breakdown or an exorcism than an actual album. I suppose that is actually an amazing achievement, but it is also kind of unlistenable. - Anthony D'Amico

This only just came out and I think I've had the chance to hear it twice through without interruptions or distractions. I like it and I'm glad to hear more humor in Walker's music

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("Epizootics!" is a lot of fun), but there's no way I can rate this thing without listening to it a lot more than I have. - Lucas Schleicher

I wish Scott Walker could have released this in January of 2013 so I could have more time to digest it. What few songs I've put to memory are absurdly powerful statements, and the album as a whole suggests some profound significance that is waiting to be unveiled like an answer to a divine question. – Adam Devlin

3.



X-TG, "Desertshore/The Final Report" (Industrial)

I am still digesting these two albums and while *Desertshore* has grown on me more and more since my first tentative listens,

The Final Report

is the real point of interest here. It is a wonderful album that truly deserved its own fanfare, rather than being tagged on with the heavily hyped Nico cover album. A bittersweet end to something that was only beginning. – John Kealy

The *Desertshore* covers album was enjoyable in parts, but I'm a sucker for Nico's original and, like almost any covers LP, this honestly doesn't touch the original. Carter Tutti Void's

Transverse

was the superior TG-related offshoot. – Stephen Bush

4.



Andy Stott, "Luxury Problems" (Modern Love)

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I only liked about half of this album, but that half is awesome. - Anthony D'Amico

Didn't grow on me as much as I'd hoped. "Hatch The Plan" was great but "Numb" was the worst way to start the album and I was too impatient to let most of it sink in. – Adam Devlin

Close to the most over-rated album of the year. There's an EP's worth of ideas here I guess. - Lucas Schleicher

Alison Skidmore's vocals are a perfect addition to Stott's core sound, but *Luxury Problems* has the sound of a transitional release with growing pains. Still, there are at least three killer tracks on here ("Numb," "Hatch the Plan," "Luxury Problems") and Stott's best work is most likely yet to come. – Stephen Bush

5. Raime, "Quarter Turns over a Living Line" (Blackest Ever Black)

Exactly as sparse and unfriendly as they needed to be. Raime made a monster of an album that thrives on every single precise note they play. – Adam Devlin

This exceeded my expectations in every way. Easily the best thing that they've ever done.. - Anthony D'Amico

6.



Om, "Advaitic Songs" (Drag City)

Along with Swans and Scott Walker, 2012 was the year of *Advaitic Songs*. It felt like Om were always working up to a moment of white light epiphany and Al Cisneros's vision came through fully here. Seeing them perform these songs live was a revelation, a deeply moving experience that will never leave me. – John Kealy

I've enjoyed every new Om release on its own terms, and *Advaitic Songs* is no different. *A dvaitic Songs* expanded the band's core aesthetic a step further, blending traditional Arabic music and instrumentation into Om's sound like never before. – Stephen Bush

I completely expected this to get savaged in the poll this year. I'm pleasantly surprised that it didn't, but it isn't Om's finest hour. -Anthony D'Amico

7.



Earth, "Angels of Darkness, Demons of Light II" (Southern Lord)

This sequel to their 2011 album of almost the same name was a let down for me. Granted, I was not a huge fan of the first installment but here Dylan Carlson sounds like he is treading water. This is a shame because his solo projects from this year show that he is not ready to go out to pasture yet. – John Kealy

I haven't listened to this since spring 2012, but remember liking it fine. Perhaps not Earth's most memorable work, given that it's more improvised and less meticulously composed, but a solid listen nonetheless. Shame that Horseback's tremendous *Half Blood* didn't make the poll; those guys did metal + drone/ambient + roots music better than anyone this year—Earth included. – Stephen Bush

8. Six Organs of Admittance, "Ascent" (Drag City)

I'm a massive fan of Chasny's acoustic work, so this was a bit of a grower for me personally. Now the whole thing is a killer listen front-to-back, and Chasny's electric playing is straight fire. Can't recommend this highly enough. – Stephen Bush

9. Demdike Stare, "Elemental" (Modern Love)

Not as impressive as *Tryptych* (or as totally overwhelming) was but there's still a pool of beautiful sounds to dive into and explore. Their previous work was more subdued while this release is menacing, and oddly catchy. – Adam Devlin

Hardly a leap forward from their previous work, but hey, if it ain't broke... – Stephen Bush

10.

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1. [The Minimal Wave Tapes Volume Two](#) by [Various Artists](#) (original, 540mhz, 1800rhz) (into the



2. [CAN the lost tapes](#) by [CAN](#) (original, 540mhz, 1800rhz) (into the



3. [william basinski the disintegration loops](#) by [William Basinski](#) (original, 540mhz, 1800rhz) (into the

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PAULINE OLIVEROS
REVERBERATIONS: TAPE & ELECTRIC MUSIC
1963-1970



PHOTOGRAPH BY: [REDACTED]



Swans: *Live Through This* - Strangers



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