

# 1 I Have A Doctor On Board

ADDIE BRIK

Hailing from Savannah Georgia, writer, singer and producer Addie Brik started writing poetry in her teens which led her to the prestigious Naropa Institute where she was mentored by Allen Ginsberg and famed CBS journalist, John Steinbeck Jr. A diverse set of influences include Bach, Joni Mitchell, Serge Gainsbourg, Missy Elliott and Dostoyevsky whilst collaborations include work with Wendy and Lisa and The Sugarhill Gang.

Currently residing in Scotland, Brik is heavily influenced by the surrounding natural landscape; it has played a key role in shaping *I Have A Doctor On Board*. Recorded in Glasgow and written in a small room overlooking the Firth of Clyde at home in Troon, the album is based around a series of interviews with an inventor and a lifeboat captain in Scotland and features themes of freedom, curiosity and community. Intricate songs that started out as rough sketches reflect upon the

march of technology and whether the end result will be evolution or extinction. These observational lyrics set a scene of melancholy balanced out by hope.

The album veers from the starkness of *Nothing Too Much* to the opulently lush and melodic *Here Comes The Lover*. Harmonically, the sound often sits somewhere between mid-1980s and mid-1990s tropes, melding a range of influences amongst old and new in much the same way that Laura Marling channels Joni Mitchell. The mysteriously titled *Cape Flyaway* beguiles, recalling fairytales and creating a meandering, mystical journey whilst the coastal theme is again at the fore on *Coffin Ships*, which is almost a modern-day sea shanty. At times unsettling in its fragility, the album succeeds through a veneer of stylistic artifice coupled with the raw emotion. It is hard to ignore the Kate Bush comparisons, but the album stands as an intriguing work in its own right.



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# 2 Hunter

ANNA CALVI

Anna Calvi wouldn't strike you as an artist weighed down by conformity, but her latest album tackles just that. Sonically, Calvi has made rebellious, boundary-pushing pop on her own, but alongside collaborators like David Byrne, *Hunter* sees the singer-guitarist push other boundaries: the cultural binaries that cage us in.

As the second-wave feminist mantra goes, the personal is political. And on this, Calvi's third record, she is at her most honest yet. We hear of real experiences living in and transcending a culture that confines us to narrowed versions of our most authentic selves. On *Hunter* it feels like Calvi's political message is just as important as the way in which it is delivered by the music.

On *Don't Beat The Girl Out Of My Boy* she croons above pounding toms and searing guitar riffs about the pressures our culture's framework of masculinity puts on young boys. It's a powerful moment that culminates

in a hair-raising scream from the singer. Elsewhere, it's equally raw and punk rock, helped along by production from Nick Launay (Nick Cave, Grinderman). For instance, *Alpha* is a self-assured account of sexual awakening that's steeped in disco clicks and purring guitar.

But beyond the frustrations, which are laid out so viscerally, there is also a sense of hope. Calvi hints at a utopia of true acceptance and inner peace. Here lie the album's quieter moments. On *Swimming Pool* and *Eden* a Kate Bush-like vibrato is mixed with cinematic gusts of strings. It's soothing, smoothing down the rougher, edges that dominated the sound earlier in the album.

At their core, these 10 songs are a complex and intimate account of sexual politics in 2018. And the frankness and direct nature of *Hunter* has produced Calvi's most exhilarating work to date. This is a record that refuses to be boxed in, and it's all the better for it.



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# 3 Mulberry Violence

TREVOR POWERS

Formerly known as Youth Lagoon, after some serious soul-searching Trevor Powers dropped the moniker and has proudly come into his own on this lo-fi, multilayered jittering masterpiece of rich layers and fascinating soundscapes. From the emotive opener *XTC Idol*, every second of this record shows Powers' mind-boggling attention to detail. Lead single *Playwright* is nothing short of a therapeutic, molten liquid-covered audible massage, with every ridiculous sound placed clinically, showing Powers' great mastery with the art of musical space.

The frankly remarkable *Plaster Saint* is a gloriously painful piano-laden journey. Tinted with almost indiscernible lyrics, the sheer beauty of the instrumentation comes into focus, battling melodies and rhythms out against industrial bleeps and clicks. It sounds like it wouldn't work, but the result is nothing short of idyllic. The screaming distorted sounds bellow as they pan, in a

fiercely rousing cacophony. It is a record that demands extensive re-listening and hits you to your core a little deeper each time. *Film It All* feels every bit as retro as bouncy *808s & Heartbreak*-era Kanye as it does Cinematic Orchestra, whilst *Squelch* is a soundtrack to an unhinged mind, one both troubled and introspective.

Obvious comparisons to James Blake can be made, but Powers' music feels somehow more complex on songs such as *Ache*, which splices playful bass and drum programming alongside emotional chords and electric guitar hidden in the mix. It's an entirely complex, enjoyable entity full of twists and turns, with perfectly balanced experimental design and intense musicality, nuanced and bombarding, unravelling deeply like a magic eye picture. This is an album that demands your deep focus and attention, but the image it creates is truly rewarding when your vision adjusts accordingly.



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