

Best of 2007

So here it is: the magazine music reviewers have argued, fallen-out and made up again to bring you this, our list of the albums that floated our musical boat in 2007

The Shins - *Wincing The Night Away*

"This is a modern-day, indie Pet Sounds - an accessible pop record, washed in unconventional musical techniques. Rarely is a traditional instrument used without the addition of synths, distortions and lo-fi effects. This fact alone doesn't make the album stand out, but it is The Shins constraint of their experimentation, somehow forcing their music to fit into the acceptable pop template whilst being something else entirely, that makes for a unique aural experience."

- Chris Marks

The Heavy - *Vengeance and Furious Fire*

"Great *Vengeance and Furious Fire* is an ambitious slice of modern soul brimming with ideas and emotion. The Heavy specialise in making everything wrong sound right, in a seductive melee of sound that will have you gasping for more." - David Wavies



The Heavy

The Mules - *Save Your Face*

Re-released this year, this is the first record to make it into our 'best of' list two years running. "The Mules debut *Save Your Face* is a ramshackle aural journey that delivers the unexpected and definitely has plenty of the 'What the fuck was that' factor - nothing is sacred as the band playfully tease punk, skiffle, country, blues and folk." - Chris Marks

Prefuse 73 - *Preparations*

"Playing a variety of instruments and re-sampling himself, Prefuse effectively created a one-man orchestra to play with. This additional layer has added a depth and warmth that previous releases have lacked. *Preparations* flows beautifully and is compelling from start to finish and although the elements are slightly different this is classic Prefuse fare - which is always a good thing."

- James Thornhill

Radiohead - *In Rainbows*

"Nobody could have avoided the swirling hype storm kicked up by the new Radiohead record. One thing that Radiohead know how to do is kick up a fuss, not since the Stone Roses *Second Coming* or Oasis's *Be Here Now* has there been such a media furore for a new release.

Despite *In Rainbows* sounding like a Radiohead record, Oxford's finest have again managed to bring a fresh sound to their repertoire - this is Radiohead getting their groove on. Radiohead transcend style, genre and fashion; existing in a world where they can only really be compared to themselves." - Chris Marks

Electrelane - *No Shouts, No Calls*

"Electrelane's noted eclecticism is perhaps not so evident here as on *The Power Out*, but *No Shouts, No Calls* is a much more approachable, consistent and focused album than *Axes*. A fine record." - Tom Blackburn

El-P - *I'll Sleep When You're Dead*

"It's not a barrel of laughs, but *I'll Sleep When You're Dead* handles urban paranoia and personal demons with subtlety - rather than overwhelming the listener with an uncompromising Bomb Squad racket, this time around, there is greater breathing space and a sense of seething, barely-suppressed rage set to blow at any point. Anyone familiar with *Fantastic Damage* will know this album has been a long time coming, but *I'll Sleep When You're Dead* is well worth its lengthy genesis and is an outstanding addition to 2007's strong canon of new hip-hop releases."

- Tom Blackburn

Battles - *Mirrored*

"It's unclassifiable, and it's absolutely nuts. *Mirrored* really is the saviour for everyone who is sick of indie-loving zombies out there. You may not 'get it' straight away, but when you do, it's like the best in-joke you've ever heard"

- Rob Stares

Rose Kemp - *A hand full of hurricanes*

"*A Hand Full of Hurricanes* is an exceptionally promising and complex debut release that is one step away from greatness. Rose Kemp is one of rock's brightest new stars and in a year or two the whole world should be sharing my sentiments."

- Chris Marks

Dälek - *Abandoned Language*

"The beauty of *Abandoned Language* is that although hip-hop heads into the likes of *Cannibal Ox* and *El-P* will be in familiar territory, it's still an accessible, if challenging, listen for casual fans. Good stuff indeed." - Tom Blackburn

Bloc Party - *A weekend in the city*

"Many will take it at just its face value as a commercial 'indie' heavyweight, but a look under the facade and it's an articulate portrayal of modern Britain that is almost depressingly real."

- Rob Stares

Piskie Sits - *The Secret Sickness*

"A welcome dash of lyrical absurdity completes the Piskie Sits debut long-player which despite its rough, lo-fi edges is one of the most complete sounding guitar records in a while and it's beautiful to boot." - James Thornhill

Biffy Clyro - *Puzzle*

"*Puzzle* was the album that showed the mainstream that the Biffy are a band that have to be heard. Love it or hate it, 'Folding Stars' was a highlight, with a frank, emotional tribute to Simon Neil's deceased mother. And for those who want to rock, 'Living Is a Problem Because Everyone Dies' will make you dance like an idiot. I know I have." - Graham Phillips

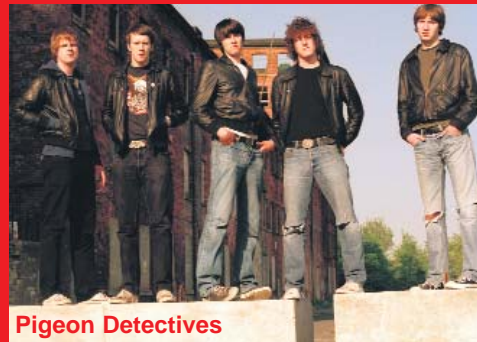
Les Savy Fav - *Let's Stay Friends*

"After their exquisite last offering *Inches* many thought that was it. However, Tim Harrington is a man who will not stand still. *Let's Stay Friends* is ambitious, well formed and shows the range and ability of a band who will be at the forefront of music for a long, long time." - Graham Phillips

Feist - *The Reminder*

"Whilst being as delicate as tissue paper one minute and a rock and roller the next, Feist shows that you still can put delicate, beautiful

feminine tracks alongside rough and ready tom boy tunes, and come out with an iPod Nano advert song somewhere in the middle." - Rob Stares



Pigeon Detectives

Maps - *We Can Create*

"After we heard his first demos early last year we hoped that James Chapman could fulfil their potential with his debut long-player - luckily he did, and then some. 'We Can Create' is shoegazing electronic rock brilliance and is utterly beguiling." - Chris Marks

Beirut - *The Flying Club Cup*

"They continue to make music full of culture and beauty, a fantastic follow-up to their debut." - Guy Halford

Kings Of Leon - *Because Of The Times*

"Even though they've produced an album this great, it's still staggering now as to how good this actually is. Its timeless. No-one ever thought they were capable of this, ever."

- Rob Stares

Unkle - *War Stories*

"It's a big step away from their stereotypical 'trip-hop' tag, but Lavelle has done it without making it sound contrived or just a trendy kneejerk. Brooding, dirty, introspective and organic, for the first time, UNKLE sound mortal." - Rob Stares

Arcade Fire - *Neon Bible*

"Their second album is quite simply amazing, can't really say much more that." - Guy Halford

MIA - *Kala*

"A great follow up to her first album, every track has something different to offer, a definite contender for album of the year." - Guy Halford

Asobi Seksu - *Citrus*

"The not-really Japanese, New York band's second album saw them dismiss the My Bloody Valentine comparisons and find their own sound. *Citrus* displays vast cathedrals of guitar sound, that will shake the mind, body and soul."

- Chris Marks

The National - *The Boxer*

"2007 was the year that The National went from being one of those 'best kept secrets' and became the latest crush for indie-leaning Hollywood celebs - but with a triumph like *The Boxer* who can blame them - The National deserve all the praise they get and then some!" - Michael Green

The Pigeon Detectives - *Wait for Me*

A rawkus debut from Leeds' finest indie newcomers.

"*Wait for Me* is one of those rare albums that can be listened to over and over again."

- Kim Clarke-Overy

Burial - *Untrue*

"*Untrue* is better than fans of the debut could have hoped for, maintaining that ethereal Burial vibe but doing it better. It is deeper, more focused and offers more complexity. Burial's cinematic Dubstep blows my mind."

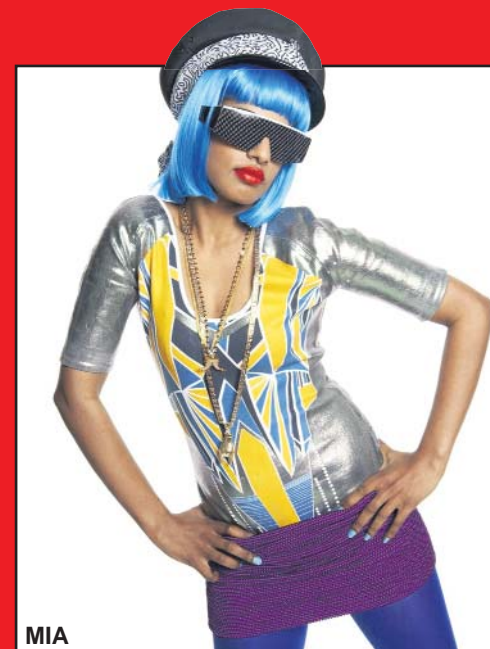
- Marcus Reilly

Holy Fuck - *Holy Fuck*

"Rock music played like modern electronic music, but with traditional instruments. With pile-driving beats and cascading repetitive rhythms Holy Fuck create an unholy aural ruckus which is as disturbing as it is mesmerising." - Neil Mann

Editors - *An End Has A Start*

"Editors melancholic post-punk for the masses gets a tough rap, but as *An End Has to Start* demonstrates their beautifully epic tunes are much more than radio-friendly unit shifters. This is a record that betters their blinding debut with gusto." - Michael Green



MIA

Tokyo Police Club - *A lesson in crime*

"Like bad sex this EP is over annoyingly quickly, but it is still enough to bring your ears to orgasm! Tokyo Police Club are the band the Strokes could be - I can't wait for a full-length session."

- Chris Marks

Simian Mobile Disco - *Attack Decay Sustain Release*

"Simian Mobile Disco side-step all of the trite categorisation that attempts to make dance music cool again (nu rave!) and simply delivers a bevvy of sexy dance tracks. This is pure quality."

- Marcus Reilly

Napoleon Illrd - *In debt to*

"*In Debt To* revives the quirky British pop tradition and is brimming with an abundance of ideas held together with brilliant song-writing and warm, lo-fi production. This is pop music as it should be - unique, engaging and utterly wonderful."

- Chris Marks.