



The Anti-Hit List for April 21

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JOHN SAKAMOTO



10. CHRISTOPHER WALLA, "Shattered Dreams"

Sounding like he's working with little more than a lyric sheet and a fond memory, the Death Cab For Cutie guitarist/producer draws a crooked line from this 20-year-old single by one-hit-wonder Johnny Hates Jazz to the rich, melancholy pop of DCFC. Part of a sterling covers album to benefit programs for Portland's transitional youth, it also features The Decemberists doing Fleetwood Mac and The Dandy Warhols overhauling The Cult. (From *Bridging the Distance*, info only: arenarockrecordingco.com)

9. NIGHTFOXX, "Shattered Dreams 2007"

A.k.a. Clark Datchler, the writer/frontman of the aforementioned Johnny Hates Jazz, who resurfaces with a slow, wistful, world-weary update of his lone success. Maybe he should open for the next Death Cab tour. (From *Tomorrow*, myspace.com/officialnightfoxx)

8. LUDACRIS w. MARY J. BLIGE VS. CHRISTINA AGUILERA, "Bottled Love"

Apart from the striking aural compatibility between the former's "Runaway Love" duet and the latter's vintage "Genie in a Bottle," X-tina's teenage come-on is thrown in a completely different light by being paired with a painful, unblinking tale of sexual abuse. If you didn't find it creepy before ... (mashuptown.com, April 13th posting)

7. DOLORES O'RIORDAN, "In the Garden"

Considerably more diverting than the new single "Ordinary Day," this haunting track from the Cranberries singer starts out a little like Kate Bush's "Cloudbusting" before bursting into a startlingly forceful refrain. The transition from tranquil domesticity ("I see you playing in the garden") to something darker takes place within the space of a single couplet: "You're like your father, I see right through you/Just like your father, I thought I knew you." (From *Are You Listening?*, out May 15, myspace.com/doloresoriordan)

6. SOKO, "I'll Kill Her"

This is the kind of jilted adolescent revenge fantasy that's so obsessively detailed ("I would have met your mum/She would've said, 'Please can you make some beautiful babies'"), it transforms something that could've been funny into something frighteningly heartfelt, as this track makes explicit. Even the French accent that renders the chorus as "I'll keel her" merely adds to the intensity. Thanks to Said the Gramophone, which got there first. (myspace.com/thesokos)

5. RICKY SKAGGS AND BRUCE HORNSBY, "Super Freak"

A pair of simpatico instrumental masters get an assist from hard-country stalwart John Anderson on this nutty bluegrass remake of the Rick James funk anthem. Yes, it's pure novelty and thus has a shelf life of about a week, but that shouldn't detract one bit from the giddy pleasure of encountering such gleefully executed irreverence. (From *Ricky Skaggs & Bruce Hornsby*, jefitoblog.com/blog/?p=1166)

4. EIYN SOF, "Honeycombs"

This is the latest incarnation of Toronto's Ivy Pallas who, under her real name, Melissa Boraski, spent part of her teen years in the evangelical church before a "self-propelled emancipation," and her new moniker presumably refers to Kabbalism's "highest divine level." Yet the aspect of her life most relevant to the ethereal songs she's releasing now might well be this one: "I'm a mom, and this is music that I make while my baby is napping." (From *Level 2*, myspace.com/eiynsof)

3. RYAN SHAW, "Do the 45"

An opening slot for Joss Stone isn't the worst way for his future constituency to discover this Wilson Pickett/Otis Redding throwback, but like Sharon Jones (and unlike Stone's new album), this twentysomething Georgia native is unencumbered by mannerism. Case in point: this blistering cover of an old Chicago soul hit betrays both its contemporaneity with Junior Walker's "Shotgun" and a blithe refusal to acknowledge that it's anything but modern. (From *This Is Ryan Shaw*, myspace.com/thisisryanshaw)

2. S--TDISCO, "OK" (Video)

Part of the "New Rave" scene – whose prime exponent is the soon-to-cross-over Klaxons – these Glaswegians made an earlier splash with "Blood Disco," a title that does a decent job of encapsulating their sensibility. Here they take an ebullient punk-dance hybrid and push it over the top with a video in which the band members appear as characters in one of those kids' pop-up books. The visual punchline is as memorable as the music. (From *Kingdom of Fear*, shitdisco.co.uk)

1. OH SUSANNA, "Pretty Face"

Like the rest of her fourth full-length, this moving lead-off track serves the larger function of bringing the stylistic wanderings of her previous releases sharply into focus. Suddenly, the stark acoustic blues of her debut EP, the dreamy pop, and the band-driven rock that followed all seem to have been heading toward this point: a lightly burnished naturalness that perfectly reflects the material rather than underplaying it or tugging too hard at its corners. Part of that can be chalked up to the co-production by Blue Rodeo's Basil Donovan. A bigger part is Suzie Ungerleider's willingness to have taken the winding journey to get from there to here. (From *Short Stories*, out May 1, info only: outside-music.ca)

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