

ILLAMAN & Pitch 92

Sometimes Relax

Potent Funk DL

London based label Potent Funk welcomes local producer Pitch 92 into their ranks with this collaborative set alongside fellow Londoner ILLAMAN. A far cry from ILLAMAN's anarchic work with the punk-grime outfit PENGSHUI, *Sometimes Relax* presents a more vulnerable lyricist, whose personal journey over the last few years fuels a more heartwarming fire. ILLAMAN might venture across all manner of genres, but this latest offering is a strictly hip-hop affair, thanks to Pitch's production, which absorbs just enough of the listener's interest without drawing focus away from the vocal impact. The resulting album raises the bar for two artists already held in high regard.

Fatboi Sharif & Roper Williams

Planet Unfaithful

POW DL

A welcome return from New Jersey duo Fatboi Sharif & Roper Williams, as they lay waste to the potential doom associated with follow-up projects. Not that we should have had any reason to doubt that they could regain the same level of leftfield brilliance that captured our attention with their 2021 album *Gandhi Loves Children*. As individuals, they sit atop catalogues of arresting releases, so their combined might places them among the most interesting MC-producer duos of the current era. *Planet Unfaithful* feels both decisive and impulsive, with any prior expectations validated while also prompting the feeling that you never know what's coming next. Elucid and Bruiser Wolf provide some finishing touches to an EP that lingers after the last notes fade.

AJ Suede & Televangel

Parthian Shots

Fake Four Inc DL/LP

Released by the Connecticut label Fake Four Inc, AJ Suede and Televangel's second collaboration *Parthian Shots* reveals that their rightly lauded debut album *Metatron's Cube* was no fluke. From the strength of its meandering key-driven first single "All That Jazz", to the woozy Rich Jones assisted closer "Goodbye", *Parthian Shots* never falters.

Suede's flow might come across as laidback but his striking lyricism warrants further scrutiny. The same goes for Televangel's production, which maintains an atmosphere without ever becoming overpowering. It's got some strong guest spots, too, from the likes of Mr MFN eXquire, Milc and Bruiser Wolf, all of them worthy additions to the mix. Historically, a Parthian shot is an ancient Iranian cavalry hit and run tactic. I'm hoping the duo naming their album *Parthian Shots* isn't meant to indicate their partnership is over.

TMFSE x Shape

Naked Lunch

WATKK DL/MC

The title is more than an obvious nod to William S Burroughs's *Naked Lunch*. Written and recorded inside the confines of a rehab facility, *Naked Lunch* is an unflinching ode to addiction, detailing the pain and torment spreading from its epicentre. TMFSE is the perfect narrator, candidly recounting his painful history without any hint of self-pity. Shape's production proves to be the ideal counterpart, with eerie samples and heavy drums adding to the album's distorted grimace. An important release and yet another win for everyone at We Are The Karma Kids (WATKK).

Jazz & Improv by Bill Meyer

Lina Allemano Four

Pipe Dream

LUMO CD/DL

Canadian trumpeter Lina Allemano typically splits her time between Toronto and Berlin, and between the two cities she leads five bands. The Four, who've existed with varying line-ups for 20 years, is the most enduring – *Pipe Dream* is their eighth album. Allemano wrote its music during the initial 2020 lockdown, so while the dire times influenced what she titled the compositions, enforced inactivity contributed to their detail and complexity. It's a testament to the saxophonist Brodie West, drummer Nick Fraser and bassist Andrew Downing's grasp of her intentions that these multi-sectioned chamber pieces flow so naturally.

Seth Andrew Davis/Alex Cunningham/Damon Smith/Weasel Walter

Branches Choke

Storm Cellar/Mother Brain CD/DL

This session took place on electronics composer and improviser Seth Andrew Davis's home turf of Kansas City, Missouri, which just goes to show that elbows out free improvisation can happen anywhere that musicians with the will and the acumen can find a place to play. Bassist Damon Smith and drummer Weasel Walter bring depth and commitment – both have strong opinions about what makes free music worth hearing, and their hyper-detailed, mercurial playing lives up to their own standards here. Cunningham's abrasive violin and Davis's effects-warped electric guitar step up to the challenge, which makes for gripping, uneasy listening. The album is aptly named; you could easily get stuck in the places where their prickly jabs and coarse, jagged lines converge and snarl.

Michael Doneda/Alexander Frangenheim/Roger Turner

Nail In Ulrichsberg

Concepts Of Doing CD/DL

Soprano saxophonist Michel Doneda is French, bassist Alexander Frangenheim is German, and drummer Roger Turner is English, but they speak a common tongue throughout this perpetually on-point exchange. No one leads, they act as one, and the moments transitioning in and out of silence are particularly charged. They trade darting gestures, distressed timbres and abrupt shifts in direction while unearthing scraps of allusive lyricism within woolly thickets of concentrated interaction.

Nava Dunkelman & gabby fluke-mogul

Likht

Relative Pitch CD/DL

Titled after the Yiddish word for light, this duo strive openly for incandescence. Brooklyn based percussionist Nava Dunkelman and violinist gabby fluke-mogul situate free improvisation within a web of other practices, musical and otherwise. Performance videos reveal the duo's dance-informed command of visual presence, and one can hear Chinese ceremonial music in Dunkelman's charged

