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Lydia – Devil

[TRACEY DAWKINS](#) [APRIL 2, 2013](#)



LYDIA – *Devil*

1. The Exit
2. Runaway
3. Knee Deep
4. Devil
5. Back to Bed
6. Holidays
7. Hurry Back Tonight
8. Now I Know...
9. Take Your Time
10. From a Tire Swing

tracks, *Holiday* and *From A Tire Swing* (listen to this one, it's totally amazing!) *Devil* also features slightly racy (and fresh) tracks such as, *Runaway*, *Knee Deep* and the titletrack – they're great mood-lifters, as they inject pure happiness as well as a little attitude. The next time you have a really tough day, just take time out and listen to the entire production – because *Devil* is, no doubt, one of those albums that will make you forget the daily woes and bring your stress level down from 100 to zero. *Devil* is a win/win situation, as there are quite a few can't-really-fault summer songs. You really have nothing to lose – it's definitely worth a listen.

The latest offerings by Arizonian indie band LYDIA, is just like the look of the album cover: sweet, soft, crisp and light-hearted – not so sure about the weird headgear though!. Their fifth album *Devil*, which was released last month on Spotify, features ten easy listening and very pleasurable tracks – perfect timing for the spring and upcoming summer days. *Devil* is a really special album as it marks the band's new beginnings.

LYDIA recently switched producers, ending their long-term relationship with Matt Malpass and striking up a new one with Colby Wedgeworth. A few music critics are (let's say) a little sceptical of the change of management, but after listening to *Devil*, it feels like a very wise move. So for those who are familiar with (or dedicated fans of) the band's borderline aggressive and dark productions, don't be put off or feel disappointed by their latest self-released album. LYDIA hasn't totally changed their musical direction – their signature style is still pretty much the same. I'll say it's a little more airy and fresher.

Devil kicks off with the sunny-rising and endearing, *The Exit*. With this track, you could easily get lost in the dreamy and groovy guitar tones along with Leighton's oh-so- inviting and ultra light vocals. The same could be said for the

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The Suicide of Western Culture – Hope Only Brings Pain

TRACEY DAWKINS MARCH 26, 2013



Their 2010 debut album was named the best Spanish electronic album by the music critics and loyal fans. They toured around the world, performing at SXSW, Canadian Music Week, FYF Festival and Eurosonic as well as supporting artists including Animal Collective, Orbital and Cut Copy. This is just the beginning of a fruitful journey for two talented guys from Barcelona.

Known for making the most of the keyboards and the lo-fi drum machines, **THE SUICIDE OOF WESTERN CULTURE** aka TSOWC is now ready to fuel their success by releasing their second eagerly-awaited album next month. *Hope Only Brings Pain*

is (what I could only describe as) a bitter-sweet

production where each of the ten tracks captures the moods and tells a powerful and, at times, a spine-chilling story.

Hope Only Brings Pain starts off with very light-hearted and mood-lifting tracks including, Remember The Good Times, Hey Guys! I Know The Names of the Culprits and Love Your Friends, Hate Politicians. As this electronic/alternative album progresses, the production of the tracks turn very heavily, dark, daunting and extremely depressing – but in a funny sort of way, it offers a glimmer of light and hope. These arrangements are evident in tracks, Oranienburger, *Hope Only Brings Pain* and Spanish Republican Soldiers in French Retirement Homes .Take time out and really listen to the forceful drive of the dense beat working against the lightness of the lo-fi melody. It's simply Ingenious.

Having said that, after listening to the album, personally I'm not sure if this is my cup of tea....then I listened to it again and I can't take away the fact that these guys know how to tell a powerful story through their instruments. It just goes to show that you don't need words to put your point across.

THE SUICIDE OOF WESTERN CULTURE

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Chords of Truth – Reflections of Reality Remixed

TRACEY DAWKINS MARCH 26, 2013



Hey guys, have you ever heard of folktronica? Well apparently, it's a mix of folk and electronic music. When I saw the word folktronica, I wasn't convinced that the two genres would complement each other – to be honest, I never heard of the word (and I consider myself to have a diverse musical knowledge!)

I have a horrible feeling that this concoction of genres is not going to sit well with most people.

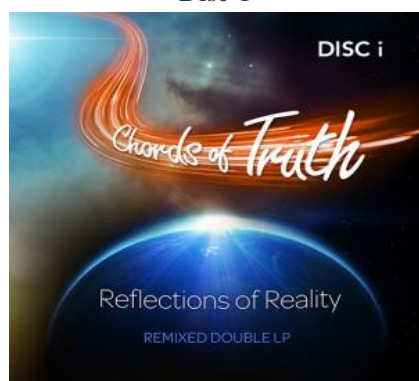
Well Jason Garriotte, the mastermind behind **CHORDS OF TRUTH**, is planning to set the world on fire with this genre. Mixing folk and electronic music wasn't initially in this American singer/songwriter's plan. In 2011, Garriotte released

his debut album, *Reflections Of Reality*, which is a straight-up folk production. Unexpectedly, it became very popular in the electronic music world for its 'mind-expanding lyrics'. So Garriotte took advantage of this opportunity, worked with various producers and – *Reflections of Reality Remixed* was born.

Released on March 17, the double album features 26 tracks with different mixes that you can never imagine...not in a million years! I have to say that after listening to the album, I was bitterly disappointed...bitterly disappointed that I was **WRONG!** Some of the tracks can easily fill the dance floors at any clubs. Take time out and listen to: Tune Your Mind (Momentum Folkhouse Remix) and The Power To Be Alive (LORDBRET Progressive Remix). Garriotte's classic folk vocals works really well with the whole electronic dance productions. He also tried his luck with dubstep with the track, Pop or Soda (Venumb Dubstep Remix) – again I was a bit cynical – but after listening to the track, well I have a sneaky feeling that it will go down very well in the dubstep world. Note to true dubsteppers: before you leave this page, have a listen!

Reflections Of Reality Remixed is an impressive collection of diverse remixes. After writing this review, I have to say that I'm now a fan of folktronica!

Disc 1



Disc 2



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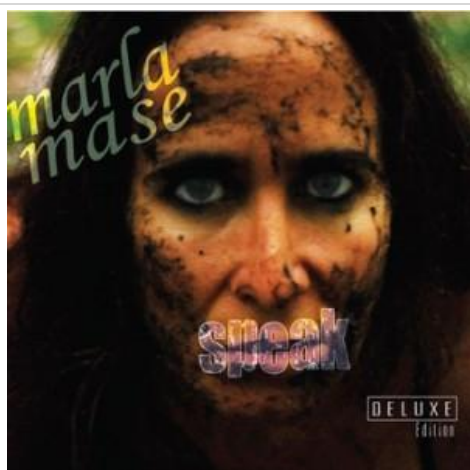
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Marla Mase – Speak

TRACEY DAWKINS MARCH 20, 2013



MARLA MASE – *Speak*

1. Scream (reprise)
2. Piece of Peace
3. Open Up My Heart
4. Lioness
5. New Cell Phone
6. Queen of Imperfection
7. She Hooked Him Up
8. Divine Restlessness
9. AnnaRexia
10. Kill Love
11. Blog
12. Dance the Tango
13. Smithereens
14. Scream
15. Squirm

MARLA MASE is, by far, not your typical musical artist. While the music charts are populated with songs (mainly) about so-called romance, sex and material things, the singer/songwriter/producer wants her music to have MEANING – and she definitely achieved that by tackling the more serious issues of today – issues we should really sit up and take notice of more often.

MARLA MASE's raw and frank performance earned her a 'Messenger of Peace' award by Friends of the UN. She performed at UN's Global Peace Day in China last September. Her promotion of real-life issues paid off, as she was named one of the top ten acts by Indie Band Blog in 2012. There's no respite period for **MARLA MASE** in 2013 as she's currently developing her (unconventional) multi-media concert entitled *Speak*.

If you get the chance listen to her music, you'll come to realise that she's a true pioneer.

The New Yorker has released a Deluxe edition of her album *Speak* last month, which features ten tracks from her 2010 album, plus six new tracks including the thought-provoking AnnaRexia, which is a driving force behind StayImperfect project or Love Your Butt campaign. **MARLA MASE** created this campaign to 'empower women not only to accept themselves but to love their bodies'. Accompanied with a laid-back traditional reggae beat, AnnaRexia is one of those songs that you can easily get lost in the catchy melody. So if

you're intrigued enough to listen to the song, pay careful attention to the wise message that is offered by this multi-talented artist.

Reggae is just one of the many genres, featured in the album: there's an infusion of rock, punk, soul, funk and electronica, accompanied with spoken words and poems – and the track Blog display almost of these elements. With a mellow mix of soft rock, soul and a hit of funk, **MARLA MASE** speaks about 'post-modern inception of self through space, time and the internet.' It may sound way out there, but it's quite a likable song.

Overall this sixteen-track album is bursting with creativity which is backed up with strong, non-sense messages. If this is up your street, have a listen. If not, have a listen anyway. It will make a refreshing change from the sugar-coated pop music of today.

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Monks of Mellonwah – The Sky And The Dark Night

TRACEY DAWKINS MARCH 19, 2013



MONKS OF MELLONWAH – *The Sky And The Dark Night*

1. Part 1 – Break-Out
2. Part 2 – Control
3. Part 3 – Condition
4. Full Trilogy Mix

It's very rare that a new act cause quite a stir within the first few years – but Vikram Kaushik (vocals), Joe de la Hoyde (backing vocals/guitar), John de la Hoyde (bass) and Josh Baissari (drums) – aka **MONKS OF MELLONWAH** – have managed to do just that – with flying colours! The four piece indie rock act from Sydney burst onto music scene in 2011 with their first EP, *Stars Are Out*, which received significant airplay in their native company Australia. Their second EP, *Neurogenesis*, along with *Neverending Spirit* followed in 2012 – and this is where the undisputable success began to evolve...

As well as receiving significant airplay in their homeland AND across the world, *Neurogenesis* caught the attention of respected musical figures such as MTV, Big Takeover magazine, Kings of A&R and Tone Deaf, whereas *Neverending Spirit* was featured on MTV's The Real World. The group released a music video to *Neverending Spirit* which has received heavy coverage on MTV networks.

2012 has proven to be a good year for the Monks, as they went on to win the AIM awards for Best Indie Rock Act as well as scooping the LA Award for Best International Act. Their second EP has kept the four Monks on their toes, as they toured around Australia and the U.S. throughout the summer of 2012. Things got even better for the quartets when they struck a deal with A&R Worldwide (the home of heavyweights ADELE, COLDPLAY and MUSE.)

Now **MONKS OF MELLONWAH** is hoping to fuel their success in 2013 with their latest EP, *The Sky and the Dark Night*, due for release on April 1st. The EP arguably marks the band's transition in music: Unlike their previous releases (which can be classified as racy, full on rock) *The Sky And The Dark Night*, shows a softer side of the Aussie rockers. Track *Part 2 – Control*, is definitely a hot one as singer Kaushik's smooth vocals effortlessly cruises through a more mellow, laid rack (and arguably a slightly dark) production, which bodies really well for an international hit. The last single, (*Part 3 – Condition*) begins with the band's signature sound, but it takes an unexpected turn into a eurodance track – which is a pleasantly surprising addition to the EP.

MONKS OF MELLONWAH cites great rock acts like PINK FLOYD, LED ZEPPLIN and MUSE as their biggest influence. If you get the chance to listen to any of their songs (and this should be on top of your to do list) you can hear some elements of each influences – plus their stamp on modern progression and experimentation rock. These guys on the verge of releasing their debut album real soon...so it's well worth checking it out...

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Conquering Animal Sound – On Floating Bodies

TRACEY DAWKINS MARCH 15, 2013



CONQUERING ANIMAL SOUND – On Floating Bodies

1. Ultimate Heat Death Of The Universe
2. The Future Does Not Require
3. Warn Me
4. No Dream
5. I'll Be Your Mirror
6. Gloss
7. A Noise Remains
8. Ipse
9. Mimese
10. Treehouse
11. Inner / Outer / Other

Glaswegians Anneke Kampman (vocals/loops) and James Scott (guitar/loops) started experimenting with different kinds of music since 2009. Their love for trialling different beats evolved into the group, **CONQUERING ANIMAL SOUND** (also known as CAS).

As well as committing to **CONQUERING ANIMAL SOUND**, the duo have their own musical projects: Scott is involved in another equally successful project called **THE JAPANESE WAR EFFECT**, and released an album, *It's All Downhere From Hill*, in September 2012. Kampman is recording under the name of **ANAKANAK**.

Heavily influenced by their outside projects, **CONQUERING ANIMAL SOUND** took the plunge of releasing their much-talked about debut album, *Kammerspiel*, in 2011 with Gizze Records. Since releasing the 11 track album, **CONQUERING ANIMAL SOUND** has been on the road – pretty much throughout 2011- with three UK tours, two European tours as well as performing at countless of festivals. *Kammerspiel* earned them a nomination for the SWAY awards in 2012.

For a debut album, *Kammerspiel* caused quite a stir in the music industry – and this caught the attention of Chemikal Underground Records who (in no time) snapped them up to record their second album, *On Floating Bodies*, which on the

verge of release (18 March 2013.)

Generally, their signature sound has been described as 'essentially pop' by any music critics. The fact that they use a mixture of broken beats and a collection of samples makes it very complicated to categorise. So can it be put in the alternative/experimental music pigeon hole? Probably. However there are few elements in some of their songs that can be easily compared to BJÖRK. The 'Bjork-ness' is very present in the song *I'll Be Your Mirror*.

The highlight of the album has got to be *Ultimate Death of the Universe*. Far from being an 'essentially pop' song, it features powerful and broken beats which is rather reminiscent of a 1980's computer game. Kampman ditches her usual light and airy vocals and goes all forceful and high-pitched. It all sounds very strange – but at the same time, it feels so good!

On Floating Bodies won't be everyone's cup of tea – if you get the chance to listen to the album, there's no denying that these guys are extremely creative and are in a league of their own.

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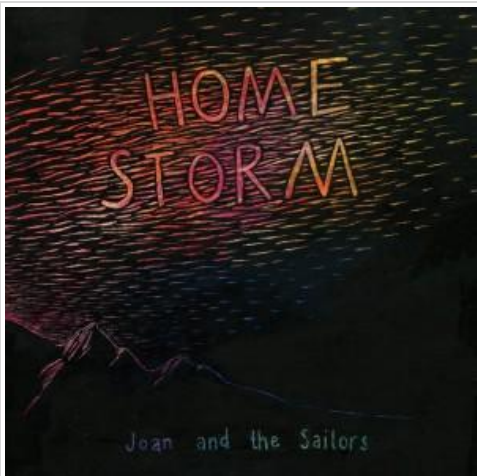
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Joan and the Sailors – Home Storm

TRACEY DAWKINS MARCH 5, 2013



JOAN AN THE SAILORS – *Home Storm*

- 01. Tic Tac
- 02. En Guantes Blancos
- 03. Light Over Innsmouth
- 04. Puzzle Of Feelings
- 05. Power That Bee
- 06. La Réalité
- 07. Train Song
- 08. Home Storm
- 09. Blue Moon
- 10. Double Rainbow (Bonus)

When Joan Seilor and her six sailors started out a few years back, they had their identity all worked out: they wanted their music to be associated with the natural things in life: land, water, sailing and... er...mermaids. Ok you wouldn't automatically associate mermaids with Mother Nature, but this seven-piece group also like to think that their music shifts between reality to fantasy.

The Swiss psychedelic art pop act released their debut and (critically acclaimed) album *Mermaid* in November 2011. The album displays their unbelievable talent of infusing post rock, folk rock, indie rock and trip hop – which, surprisingly, sounds pleasantly fresh. Now that they have their signature sound firmly established in their native country (and across Europe), **JOAN AN THE SAILORS** are ready to release their second album *Home Storm*, due on 8 March. As the group work tirelessly writing and producing all the songs, they are hoping that *Home Storm* will continue their undeniable success.

Unlike *Mermaids*, *Home Storm* takes you into a more dense and dark place. Like the previous album, *Home Storm* has an element of 'lightness'. So, it is very safe to say that the delicate (and sometimes borderline aggressive) guitar work

(along with a heavy and dark tone) is very much their signature sound in this nine-track album – especially in the opener *Tic-Tac* and the song *Home Storm*. Although each and every one of the earthy member played a part in the carefully crafted productions, leader of the band Joan Seilor, is the star of the show: her crisp and light vocals bodies well with the whole dark production. Although the album is mainly English, Seilor sings in French (*La Realite*) and in Spanish (*En Guantes Blancos*), which is a great addition.

To sum up *Home Storm* in three words, it has to be: cold, dark, beautiful.

JOAN AN THE SAILORS

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Yast – Yast

TRACEY DAWKINS MARCH 3, 2013



YAST – Yast

01. YAST
02. Rock 'N' Roll Dreams
03. Stupid
04. Robin
05. Believes
06. Heart Of Steel
07. I Wanna Be Young
08. Always On My Mind
09. Strangelife
10. Sick
11. The Person I Once Was
12. Joy

If you want a little sugar to mellow out the heavy rock and roll, it's definitely well worth giving Swedish sweet rockers-(or Lo-fi romantics) – YAST a moment of your time....

In 2007, they started out as a three piece act from Sandviken. To get their creative juices going, Carl Jensen, Tobias Widman and Marcus Norberg moved to lush environs of Malmö the following year and gained two more members in the process – Markus Johansson and Niklas Wennerstrand from the post-rock act ARIEL.

Now a five-piece band, YAST is on the verge of unleashing their self-titled debut album, due on the 26 April (released by Double Sun/Adrian Recordings). The 12-track album features last year's *Stupid, Believes* and their newest single, *I Wanna Be Young*, which is due for release on 12 March.

Their very distinctive trademarks are, no doubt, the dreamy and melodic guitars coupled with the high but ultra light vocals. These two combinations have a strong presence in the singles, *Wanna be Young* and *Strangelife*. Let me give you an idea or the feel of the tracks: imagine that you are chilling out on the beach on a glorious sunny day. If you do get the chance to listen to the tracks, here's some valuable advice: *I Wanna be Young* and *Strangelife* are best appreciated with no

interruptions -so switch off the phone!

The album also possess a slightly racier and perhaps more playful tracks, like *Stupid* and *Believes* – but somehow the Lo-fi connoisseurs manage to put a stamp on the old trademark of the melodic guitars and therefore these two tracks can be easily compared to the great indie rock acts like THE SMITHS or even THE CURE back in the eighties.

All in all, the entire album is very soothing on the ears and as the sunny days are fast approaching, it's definitely worth adding the album to the collection.

—
YAST



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