

# Top 20 Albums of 2017 (Because 10 Wasn't Enough)

To say that 2017 was a wild year for music is a vast understatement. As a reaction to the current administration in the White House, various musicians took a political stance to oppose the views of a president with questionable values. Ranging from singer-songwriters like Wilco's Jeff Tweedy to major bands like the Foo Fighters, there were numerous acts that wrote songs about the current political and social landscape.

The music world was also shaken by the passing of legends Tom Petty, The Tragically Hip's Gordon Downie, Chris Cornell, Fats Domino, Chuck Berry and Gregg Allman. This year has shown that music can still be a reflection of the times, despite how scary these times may be.

In Providence, the local music scene has seen people from various ethnic backgrounds and different orientations starting bands. Whether it's hip-hop, punk, metal, folk or anything in between, it's adding a glorious dose of diversity to a community that prides itself on being so. The music scene has also been resilient despite the closing of a few venues: RIP Lupo's Heartbreak Hotel, Aurora and Firehouse 13. There are a lot of questions being asked about the sustainability of the city's music, art and culture, and we're still waiting on the answers. With all of this being said, here are my Top 20 Albums of 2017 (Because 10 Wasn't Enough).

## 20. SydeSho - *SydeSho the Maestro* (self-released)



SydeSho the Maestro by SydeSho

Providence native Oliver Arias, also known as SydeSho, is a blast from the past in terms of hip-hop. He can breakdance like a maniac and he can spit rhymes with the best of them. His debut album *SydeSho the Maestro* that came out in March had him teaming up with producers Cognate and F.L.E.E. the Maestro. It's a stellar album that celebrates hip-hop's roots with a respectably modern spin. Tracks like "Get Up" with vocalist Becky Bass, "Excuse Me" and "Better Than Yourz" featuring fellow emcee Big

Scythe prove that mumble rap is whack and the real style is coming back.

[soundcloud.com/sydesho/excuse-me-prod-flee-the-maestro](https://soundcloud.com/sydesho/excuse-me-prod-flee-the-maestro)

**19. Weaves - *Wide Open*** (Kanine/Buzz/Memphis Industries)

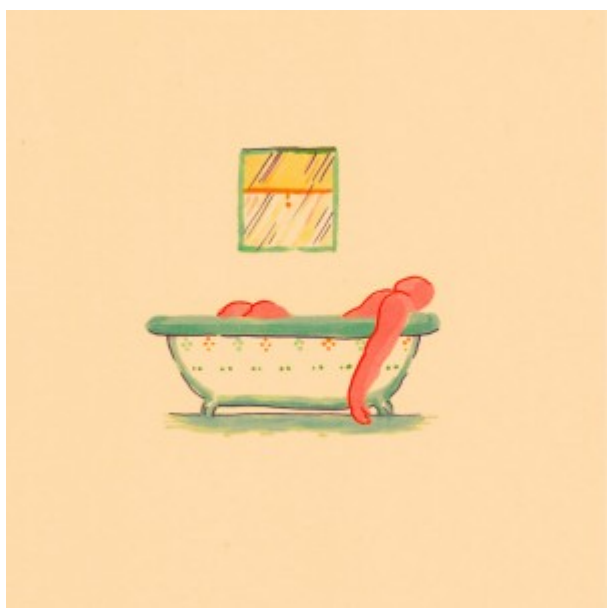


*Wide Open* by Weaves

There's something awesome about rhythmically tight and quirky alternative rock. It possesses an honesty that other genres can't hold a candle to. Weaves from Toronto hit this on the head with their sophomore album *Wide Open* released in October. Jasmyn Burke has a uniquely soulful voice that has stunning range: "#53," "Walkaway" and "Law and Panda" are prime songs off this record that are abundant with melody and energy.

[weaves.bandcamp.com/track/law-and-panda](https://weaves.bandcamp.com/track/law-and-panda)

**18. Pile - *A Hairshirt of Purpose*** (Exploding In Sound)

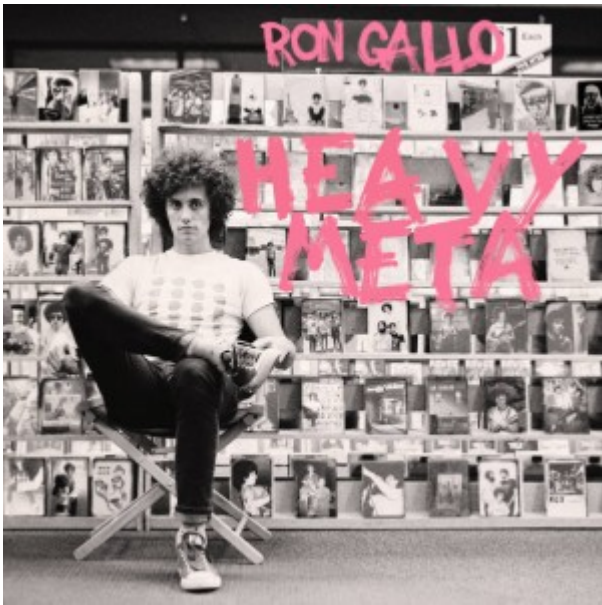


## A Hairshirt of Purpose by Pile

Indie rock act Pile has such a distinct take on music that it's hard to pin them down to classification. They can sound like a post-punk act at one point, then they'll go full-on noise, and finish a track off by venturing towards math rock. Their versatility is what makes this act from Boston so great and their sixth album *A Hairshirt of Purpose* that hit record store shelves in March could be their most brilliant release yet. It's unapologetically intense while providing an electrifyingly awesome listening experience. Turn it up loud and listen to songs like "Hissing for Peace," "Texas" and "Leaning on a Wheel" to get amped.

[pile.bandcamp.com/track/hissing-for-peace](http://pile.bandcamp.com/track/hissing-for-peace)

## 17. Ron Gallo - *Heavy Meta* (New West/American Diamond)

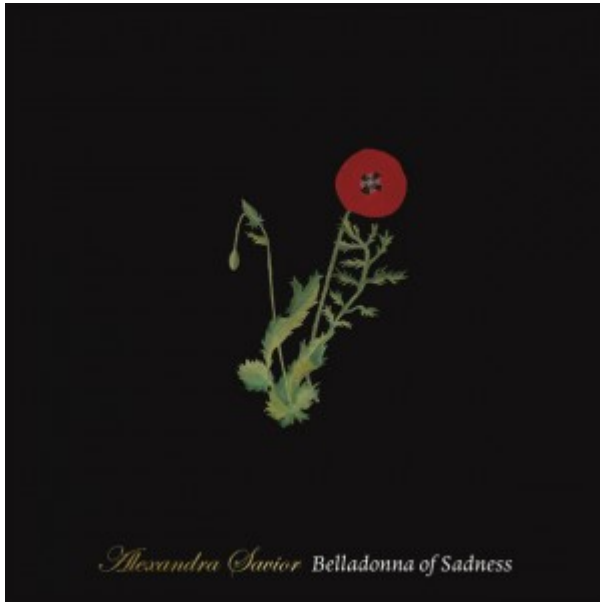


Heavy Meta by Ron Gallo

Moving to a new city can change an artist. They'll adapt to new kinds of music and then they'll put their own spin on it. Philadelphia native Ron Gallo went through that transition after the Americana band he was in, Toy Soldiers, broke up and he moved to Nashville. He got into the garage rock scene there and released a badass debut album with *Heavy Meta* in February. Wakefield, RI, native Dylan Sevey plays drums in his band. "Young Lady, You're Scaring Me," "Kill the Medicine Man" and "Please Yourself" are definitive scorchers.

[rongallo.bandcamp.com/track/kill-the-medicine-man-3](http://rongallo.bandcamp.com/track/kill-the-medicine-man-3)

## 16. Alexandra Savior - *Belladonna of Sadness* (Columbia)



Belladonna of Sadness by Alexandra Savior

A breath of fresh air came from Portland, OR, artist Alexandra Savior when she put out her debut album, *Belladonna of Sadness*, in April. Subtle jazz elegance adorns the album from start to finish while walking the line between dream pop and psychedelic. She's only 22 and the future looks very bright for her if she keeps it up. Coolness flows from each song on the record and the senses will be hooked. Try out "Mirage," "Shades" and "Frankie" and you won't be able to stop listening.

[open.spotify.com/track/62IQSAGpdUI2NK1UcRCCgQ](https://open.spotify.com/track/62IQSAGpdUI2NK1UcRCCgQ)

**15. Ho99o9 - *United States of Horror*** (999 Deathkult)



United States of Horror by Ho99o9

Usually a fusion of hip-hop and punk can be quite lame, but in 2017 anything was possible and the Los Angeles-via-Newark, NJ, duo of TheOGM and Eddy proved that. Ho99o9 (pronounced as "horror") released one of the most important albums of the year with *United States of Horror* in May. The album

confronts oppression, police brutality and racism head-on. It's a powerful record that musically hits like a stack of dynamite blasting through a brick wall. "Street Power," "Sub-Zero" and the title track are incredible.

[soundcloud.com/ho99o9/street-power](https://soundcloud.com/ho99o9/street-power)

**14. Toad and the Stooligans - *Very Handsome*** (self-released)



Very Handsome by Toad and the Stooligans

The year 2017 saw Providence hip-hop band Toad and the Stooligans become one of the top up-and-coming acts in the local music scene with the release of their debut album *Very Handsome* in September. It blends syncopated harmonies and jazzy rhythms while riding a groove that takes over the senses. You can either rock your body to it or relax while taking it all in. Tracks like "All Things Considered," "Part Time Lovers" with Bianca Sings and "Statements" really shine.

[open.spotify.com/track/4xEVtF5U8AoMfju5EfDC7o](https://open.spotify.com/track/4xEVtF5U8AoMfju5EfDC7o)

**13. Land of Talk - *Life After Youth*** (Saddle Creek)



Life After Youth by Land Of Talk

Toronto musician Elizabeth Powell went through a reinvigoration before she released Land of Talk's third album *Life After Youth* in May. She went on a hiatus that lasted four years and then she came back to put out a wonderful record. There was no rust and Powell's songwriting is pristine. This album will put you under a spell. "Yes You Were," "This Time" and "Inner Lover" are jaw-dropping songs that each has its own special quality.

[landoftalk.bandcamp.com/track/this-time](http://landoftalk.bandcamp.com/track/this-time)

## 12. And So I Watch You from Afar - *The Endless Shimmering* (Sargent House)



*The Endless Shimmering* by And So I Watch You from Afar

When an act returns to their roots, it can be a beautiful thing. And So I Watch You from Afar went back to what made them fantastic in the first place when they unveiled their fifth album, *The Endless*

*Shimmering*, in October. The experimental instrument prog rock act from Belfast, UK, got rid of the chanting that was present in their two previous albums and they stuck to unbridled shredding. The production of the record is excellent as well. “Mulally,” “Three Triangles” and “Dying Giants” melt brains and rev things up.

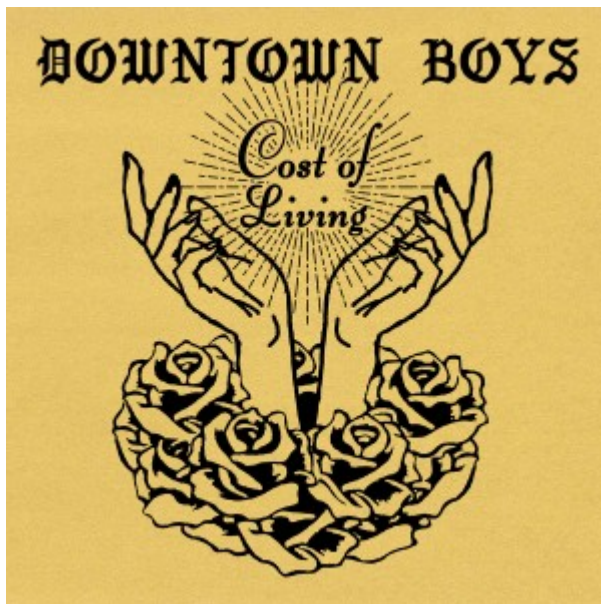
[asiwyfa.bandcamp.com/track/mullally](http://asiwyfa.bandcamp.com/track/mullally)

### **11. At the Drive-In - *At the Drive-In - in-ter a-li-a* (Rise)**

After 17 years since a band’s previous release, there’s a hard choice what the comeback can be: It can be disaster or it can hark back to the band’s glory days. The latter happened when post-hardcore legends At the Drive-In soothed the masses with their fourth album, *in-ter a-li-a*, back in May. Cedric Bixler-Zavala’s voice still has impeccable range and Omar Rodriguez-Lopez consistently proves why he’s one of the best guitarists alive. Plug in to “No Wolf Like the Present,” “Governed by Contagions” and “Holtzclaw,” and prepare to unleash some rage.

[open.spotify.com/track/3GdvFtZvR2m9fVldPcbYEX](https://open.spotify.com/track/3GdvFtZvR2m9fVldPcbYEX)

### **10. Downtown Boys - *Cost of Living* (Sub Pop)**



Cost of Living by Downtown Boys

With all of the social and political turmoil that went on in 2017, it’s only fitting that Providence punks Downtown Boys put out their biggest release yet with *Cost of Living* in August. The band’s third album has a Clash-like essence that screams for revolution. It also musically punches bigotry, racism and ignorance in the face until all the teeth are on the ground. Victoria Ruiz is a fearless frontwoman and Joey La Neve DeFrancesco shreds on guitar. “A Wall,” “Somos Chulas (No Somos Pendejas)” and “It Can’t Wait” will energize you while also making you think about society as a whole.

[downtownboys.bandcamp.com/track/somos-chulas-no-somos-pendejas](http://downtownboys.bandcamp.com/track/somos-chulas-no-somos-pendejas)

### **9. Broken Social Scene - *Hug of Thunder* (Arts & Crafts)**



Hug of Thunder by Broken Social Scene

Kevin Drew and his wide ranging collective known as Broken Social Scene put out their best album in years back in July. *Hug of Thunder* is a stunning album with so many gems that it should be re-formed as a crown. There's a distinct amount of force that's bound to capture your attention - and, if that doesn't do it, then the orchestral songwriting should do the trick. Tracks "Halfway Home," "Vanity Pail Kids" and "Gonna Get Better" are too amazing to be ignored.

[open.spotify.com/track/4nUT86Gudk78XZLjcScZ3M](https://open.spotify.com/track/4nUT86Gudk78XZLjcScZ3M)

#### **8. Dutch Uncles - *Big Balloon* (Memphis Industries)**

Dutch Uncles are a very cool alt-pop act from a small town in England called Marple, and not a lot of folks know about them in the United States. It's puzzling because their fifth album, *Big Balloon*, that came out in February is so brilliant that they should have a bigger fan base. Their sound is ideal for anyone who digs new wave, post-punk and math rock. These cats have prog tendencies as well. Listen to "Combo Box," "Oh Yeah" and "Hiccup" and you'll know what I mean.

[dutchuncles.bandcamp.com/track/oh-yeah](https://dutchuncles.bandcamp.com/track/oh-yeah)

#### **7. Roz and the Rice Cakes - *Devotion* (Team Love)**

Indie pop act Roz and the Rice Cakes put out the best album to come out of Providence this year. The trio of Roz Raskin, Casey Belisle and Justin Foster has grown so much musically and their versatility knows no bounds. Their third album, *Devotion*, was released in October to feverish anticipation. It lives up to the hype through sheer originality and artistic progression. "Revolving," "Open Eyes" and "Do You" are rhythmic jams that latch on to the ears.

[rozandthericecakes-tl.bandcamp.com/track/revolving](https://rozandthericecakes-tl.bandcamp.com/track/revolving)

#### **6. Wu-Tang Clan - *The Saga Continues* (Entertainment One)**

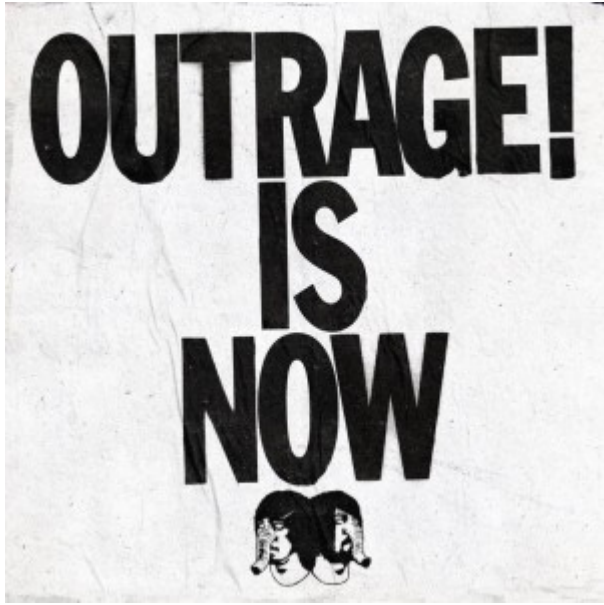
One of the best hip-hop acts - ever - returned to form this year. The Wu-Tang Clan put out their seventh album, *The Saga Continues*, in October and it's astounding. Mathematics and RZA co-produced the



record while the crew of Method Man, GZA, Raekwon, Ghostface Killah, Inspectah Deck, Masta Killa and Cappadonna put down some of their best rhymes in years. There's also an assortment of special guests including Redman, Sean Price and Killah Priest among others. "Lesson Learn'd," "If Time Is Money" and "Pearl Harbor" are fine examples of fantastic hip-hop.

[open.spotify.com/track/2wdjA0qJ1zbVN9JriPh2hc](https://open.spotify.com/track/2wdjA0qJ1zbVN9JriPh2hc)

#### 5. **Death from Above - *Outrage! Is Now*** (Last Gang)



Outrage! Is Now by Death From Above

If 2017 put any band through the ringer, it had to be Death from Above from Toronto. Sebastian Grainger and Jesse F. Keeler got rid of the "1979" part of the band's name and they also got grouped in with the alt-right against their will because Proud Boys founder Gavin McInnes is a fan, and Keeler ended up making a public apology for him. They also put out their third album titled *Outrage! Is Now* in September, and it's the tightest album of the year. Each song is compact, fast and intense. Dive into "Freeze Me," "Never Swim Alone" and "NVR 4EVR" and get your mind blown.

[open.spotify.com/track/18Dt1iRkaYFU9NaTlNeM0h](https://open.spotify.com/track/18Dt1iRkaYFU9NaTlNeM0h)

#### 4. **Ty Segall** (Drag City)



Ty Segall's self titled album cover

After eight albums, Los Angeles garage rock phenom Ty Segall finally put out his ninth under his own name in January, with Steve Albini producing. Segall goes back to the T. Rex-esque brand of rock 'n' roll for which that he's loved. He also doesn't let up when it comes to the volume, either. If you ever find yourself in need of a musical weapon to combat a neighbor's bad taste in music, this album is it. Songs like "Break a Guitar," "Warm Hands (Freedom Returned)" and "Thank You Mr. K" are highly recommended to be listened to as loud as possible.

[www.youtube.com/embed/V6dk31yRA8I](http://www.youtube.com/embed/V6dk31yRA8I)

### **3. Japandroids - *Near to the Wild Heart of Life* (Anti-/Arts & Crafts)**



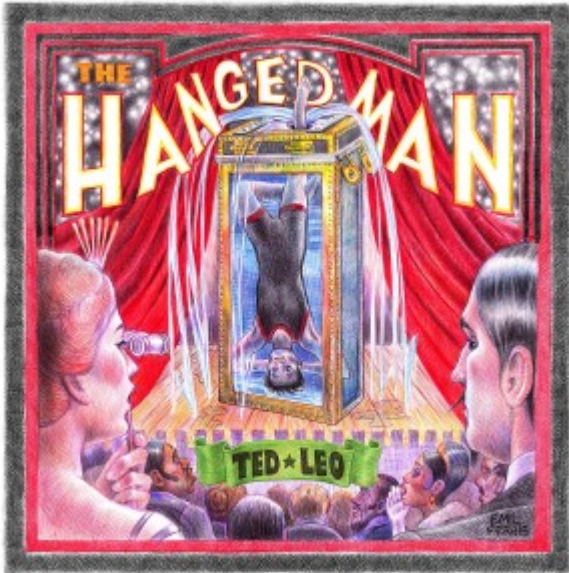
Japandroids

Japandroids have to be one of the hardest working bands today. Guitarist and vocalist Brian King and drummer David Prowse tour relentlessly, and their Vancouver-bred rock sound is so damn good. They

released their third album, *Near to the Wild Heart of Life*, in January, and it shows maturity and growth in their music. Like their other albums, there's a hard-hitting, honest aesthetic that's unrivaled. "North East South West" is an ode to their continual touring, "Arc of Bar" is a rejoicing jam and "In a Body Like a Grave" is a triumphant anthem.

[japandroids.bandcamp.com/track/north-east-south-west](http://japandroids.bandcamp.com/track/north-east-south-west)

## 2. Ted Leo - *The Hanged Man* (SuperEgo)



The Hanged Man by Ted Leo

Technically, this can be considered to be a local release due to Ted Leo's residence in South County, Rhode Island, but, regardless, his first solo album that came out in September is magnificent. There are classic pop leanings that compliment his class mod punk style. It seems as if Leo is trying to embrace the aging singer-songwriter role while also maintaining his punk roots. The artistic conflict breeds genuinely poignant music that has Leo pouring his heart out. "You're Like Me," "Can't Go Back" and "Lonsdale Avenue" will excite the nerves for different reasons.

[open.spotify.com/track/6V8xjM2ijzJMc7aMJx0DMK](https://open.spotify.com/track/6V8xjM2ijzJMc7aMJx0DMK)

## 1. St. Vincent - *Masseduction* (Loma Vista)



Masseduction by St. Vincent

Annie Clark has become a symbol for individualism through art, and her fifth album, *Masseduction*, that hit the charts in October is the pinnacle of it. Her project explores various dimensions to achieve a sound of its own. There are groovy electronic beats, sick guitar riffs and intelligent lyrics that make this latest addition to St. Vincent's catalog her best yet. The album also examines our society's obsession with sex, drugs and power, and how it affects humanity. Get down with "Pills," "Fear the Future" and "Savior," and realize that this is the best album that came out in 2017.

[open.spotify.com/track/6jcKQzA6fxIrof4AlrojG1](https://open.spotify.com/track/6jcKQzA6fxIrof4AlrojG1)