

[Keep on Movin': Flavors of the Fall: And not one of them is cinnamon](#)

The Bends - *Dots*

Dots is the dapper debut album from The Bends, a side project from RI rocker Andy Davis. Released under Davis' own label, Submodern, the record is a collection of impassioned, organic songs that seem a bit more off-the-cuff than those of his main gig, Pixels.

The album doesn't take itself too seriously, with the right combination of grit and modesty. The styles effectively run the gamut, from "Midnight Marge," a loose noir-ish song in the vein of the Pixies, to upbeat rocker "Lonely (What Can I Do?)." "Bogus Lives" is a kind of choral, dark piano ballad.

Another cool thing is that *Dots* was recorded on all analog gear, meaning the old timey way with tape and whatnot. I can't claim to hear any difference, and I don't have it in me to be the guy with the \$800 speakers, but I can respect the organic way.

It's neat when a side project becomes as good as the main project, and *Dots* gets high marks from me. Be sure to check out other Submodern Records releases in the future.

Dots can be purchased at: submodern.bandcamp.com/album/dots; Check out other Submodern releases here: submodern.bandcamp.com

Minky Starshine — *Dirty Electric*

Minky Starshine is a band helmed by local musician Rob Anastasi. This decidedly power pop effort has some serious star power behind it, at least by music nerd standards: *Dirty Electric* was produced, engineered and mixed by Ken Stringfellow of the Posies and the reformed Big Star, and features Posies drummer Mike Musburger. Stringfellow, who played on a huge number of albums over the years, also handles some bass, guitar, keys and drums.

The opener, "Art School," starts off with a shimmering piano chord that sets the tone for the whole album. *Dirty Electric*, like Minky Starshine's five-album back catalog, doesn't shy away from pop hooks and unabashedly catchy melodies, to a level beyond bands like the Posies. Anastasi's songwriting says "screw you" to the people who don't like to mix mild distortion and shimmering harmonies.

The best tunes take the rock energy and meld it effortlessly with bursts of pop, like "Go" and "Camp Heaven," not unlike prime Fountains of Wayne. It makes you think that maybe Paul was the best Beatle after all, and maybe John was just a brooding douche.

At times, though, some of the more heavily produced songs, like "Do you Really Need Me" or "Queen of the Highway," veer toward bubble gum, Rob Thomas solo material territory. Which is no problem, if you're into that sort of thing.

Dirty Electric can be purchased at: minkystarshine.bandcamp.com/album/dirty-electric

DIIV | Deafhaven

DIIV is a Brooklyn rock band that plays gothy rock that sounds like an amped-up Echo and the Bunnymen. It's a similar deal as bands like Wild Nothing's and Beach Fossils' centered trancelike, repetitive guitar riffs.

Deafhaven is an ambitious metal band that provides a haven for people who want to eventually go deaf. They are getting some attention for their latest, *Ordinary Corrupt Human Love*.

DIIV and Deafhaven are at FMH on Fri, Nov 2, Doors 7pm.

The War and Treaty

The War and Treaty are a married couple/soul celebration hitting the Narrows this weekend. The meta tag from their website reads, "Just two lovebirds singing without reverb," and you can't put it better than that, with their tight harmonies and love that comes through in the music. Their album, *Healing Tide*, from this summer is like a "best of" OG American music genres, including soul, gospel, R&B and folk.

The War and Treaty are at Narrows Center for the Arts on Sat, Nov 3.

Michael Nau

Michael Nau plays poetic, throwback indie that made a strong first impression on me at last year's United Folk Festival in Westerly. He's released an impressive amount of excellent material in the last two years, including this year's *Michael Nau & The Mighty Thread* album.

Michael Nau heads to the Columbus Theatre on Sun, Nov 4.

Thor Jensen — Live at the Savoy Series

The "Live at Savoy" series at the Savoy bookshop and café in Westerly is a novel idea in which the concerts are recorded on audio and video, and every attendee gets a free download of the live album. Their next show will be a solo performance from Thor Jensen, a multi-talented guitarist who at times fronts a jazz trio and a blues band. I'm a bit familiar with his work with Quiet Life, a band he used to be in that does some solid, catchy indie music.

Recent Live at Savoy performances included Will Evans of Barefoot Truth and Glenn Kendzia of Wild Sun.

Thor Jensen performs at The Savoy on Sun, Nov 18.

See also:

Colorway @ Stomping Ground (Putnam, Conn) on Fri, Nov 9

Lake Street Dive @ Vets Auditorium on Sun, Nov 11

Todd Snider @ Narrows on Thu, Nov 15

The Smithereens and Marshall Crenshaw @ Greenwich Odeum on Sat, Nov 17

Robyn Hitchcock @ Columbus Theatre on Sat, Nov 17

Sarah Borges & The Broken Singles @ Narrows on Sat, Nov 24

A final note: Last week, Pitchfork posted a [now infamous review](#) of Led Zep sound-alikes Greta Van Fleet's debut album, rating it an abysmal 1.6. "What they lack in self-awareness they more than make up for in rigid self-consciousness, failing to make any fun or campy choices to lift these songs out of a morass of the worst impulses of Rush and Cream," writes Jeremy Larson.

I'm not always a huge fan of Pitchfork, as they are definitely on the pretentious end of the music criticism spectrum; how much calculation determines their decimal place ratings? But you have to respect the balls it takes to write that, in an age of "celebrate everything" where the utter trashing of a record is a lost art form. The band's fans are crying fake news, but I find it depressing that it's now taboo for major outlets to obliterate something if they see fit. Props.

Music news and gripes about my opinions can be sent to jbissaro@gmail.com