

DIRTY PROJECTORS
B I T T E O R C A

<DOMINO>

With stutter-stepping jazzy vocal and guitar cadences over moments of face-searing rockouts, Dirty Projectors's latest full-length effort, *Bitte Orca*, ticks like a broken clock. "Useful Chamber" epitomizes the mad genius of bandleader, guitarist, and vocalist Dave Longstreth, as the song meanders from psychedelic hip-hop to avant-stoner rock. Captain Beefheart be damned, Longstreth keeps the experimental interesting while keeping the toes tapping. Where Longstreth takes you in a song is unpredictable—through forests of strings and valleys of distorted bass guitar, or, what is that? It might just be the sound of schoolgirls in a feather fight, or maybe it's Angel Deradorian, who drops the bass to blast out the groovy jam "Stillness Is the Move." Singing over layered backing vocals, Deradorian is the Mariah Carey of the indie world; her voice could break glass or melt butter. She, like Longstreth, practices *melisma*, the act of extending a sung syllable over several notes. This technique doesn't often find its way into rock—it usually finds a home in Middle Eastern pop songs, African-American gospel, and opera—yet it earnestly defines the quartet as



selective omissions. Dispensing with the guitar solos that push psych-rock into musical masturbation, Black Math Horseman focuses on creating sonic landscapes that move with the ominous and foreboding beauty of a glacier. Gone are the guitar harmonies and acoustic interludes that have crept into much of the heavy rock circuit; in its place come mood and movement, as the band's delectably gloomy slow-core seeps like oil into the ocean.

M O D E R A T
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<BPITCH CONTROL>

Hybrids can be monsters, but collaborations can be masterful. Such is the case for Moderat, the collaboration between electro-heavyweights Modeselektor and Apparat. Released seven years after Moderat's first EP, the group's self-titled album is essentially a dance club, each track a different room of some industrial East German warehouse: the trance room ("Seamonkey"); a chill-out Euro lounge ("Out of Sight"); electro-rock back alley ("Porc#1," an intersecting point possibly forged from Modeselektor's 2008 tour with Radiohead). Moderat tips a glow stick at smarty-tronic dance scenesters Aphex Twin and Leftfield, but never flows too far into the glitchy Tourettes-core stop and start of IDM. The sauntering swing of "A New Error" provides the perfect bass-heavy invocation for a head nod or a floor stomp. Recorded at Berlin's Hansa Studios (where David Bowie recorded *Heroes*), *Moderat* is the marriage of two musical worlds fused together along with the precision of digital and the warmth of analog.



truly unique in the indie-rock scene. For some it may be too much, but for a new take on what prescribes indie-ness, innovation, risk-taking, and accessibility, Dirty Projectors definitely cover all the bases.

BLACK MATH HORSEMAN
W Y L L T

<TEE PEE RECORDS>

Apocalyptic visions have never sounded as alluring as on Black Math Horseman's debut album, *Wyllt*. With serpentine slide guitar crawling behind the heavy melodies, *Wyllt* is a slow burn of rock that swells into a heavy bombast. Imagine Godspeed You! Black Emperor with delicate, droning female vocals. Yet Black Math Horseman differentiates themselves from the relatively recent swell of stoner rockers by making



PJ HARVEY + JOHN PARISH
A WOMAN A MAN WALKED BY

<ISLAND RECORDS>

Polly Jean Harvey has carved out a lot of dark spaces on her albums. From the evocative and harsh Riot Grrl-ish lashings of her early-to-mid '90s works *Dry* and *To Bring You My Love*, Harvey has stomped headfirst into the cock-heavy world of rock 'n' roll. On *A Woman A Man Walked By*, she teams up with producer and innovative guitarist John Parish, a frequent collaborator. Where the album really succeeds is on "The Soldier," a delicate whisper of a song built around simple guitar strums and lonesome piano tinkling. Parish's guitar work is as distinctive as Harvey's voice; at times it's reverbed out and beautiful, while at other moments it's coarse and weathered. "Sixteen, Fifteen, Fourteen" showcases Parish's eclectic approach to the acoustic guitar, wherein notes that would normally sound off-key or odd fit right into his barroom-meets-back-porch-style playing.

The languish of Harvey's vocals on "Chair" coupled with Parish's dissonant electric-guitar assaults makes for an interesting rocker. *A Woman A Man Walked By* sheds a little light on Harvey's enshrouded realms, making for a more relaxed and fun listen that doesn't lose its edge to levity.