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HALO
ANNIVERSARY

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THE THIRD

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The Roots

Undun

Exclusive Coverage
The English Beat,
Ziggy Marley and
Unearth **PLUS**
Exclusive Interview with
Brian "Head"
Welch

Looking for Perfection
Aston Martin One-77

**THREE YEAR
ANNIVERSARY
ISSUE!**



January 2012

Chevelle

Mats Off to the Bull



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Photo by Andrew Gates

Going Green

Has Never Looked So Good!!!

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TOP TEN GIRLS

The Reader's Choice

TOP TEN GIRLS OF 2011

Another year rolls by and next thing you know it's time to pick the 10 hottest RUKUS girls of the year. Well, the votes are in and you made the call, hope you chose wisely. Out of 33 amazing beauties we know it had to be a tough decision, but you did it and now we bring to you the "Top Ten Girls of 2011." Enjoy!



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Lindsey Gayle
Cover Model, September

Photograph by Andrew Gates
Make-up and Hair by Aprille Ricafranca
Swimsuit by Musotica
www.Musotica.com

TOP TEN GIRLS

LESLEY GIBSON • JANUARY





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Carolina Sanchez
Featured Model, July

Photography by Andrew Gates
Make-up and Hair by Kristee Liu

TOP TEN GIRLS

THE RUKUS MAGAZINE





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Jennifer Nguyen
Cover Model, December

PIT PASS

Get In The Driver's Seat

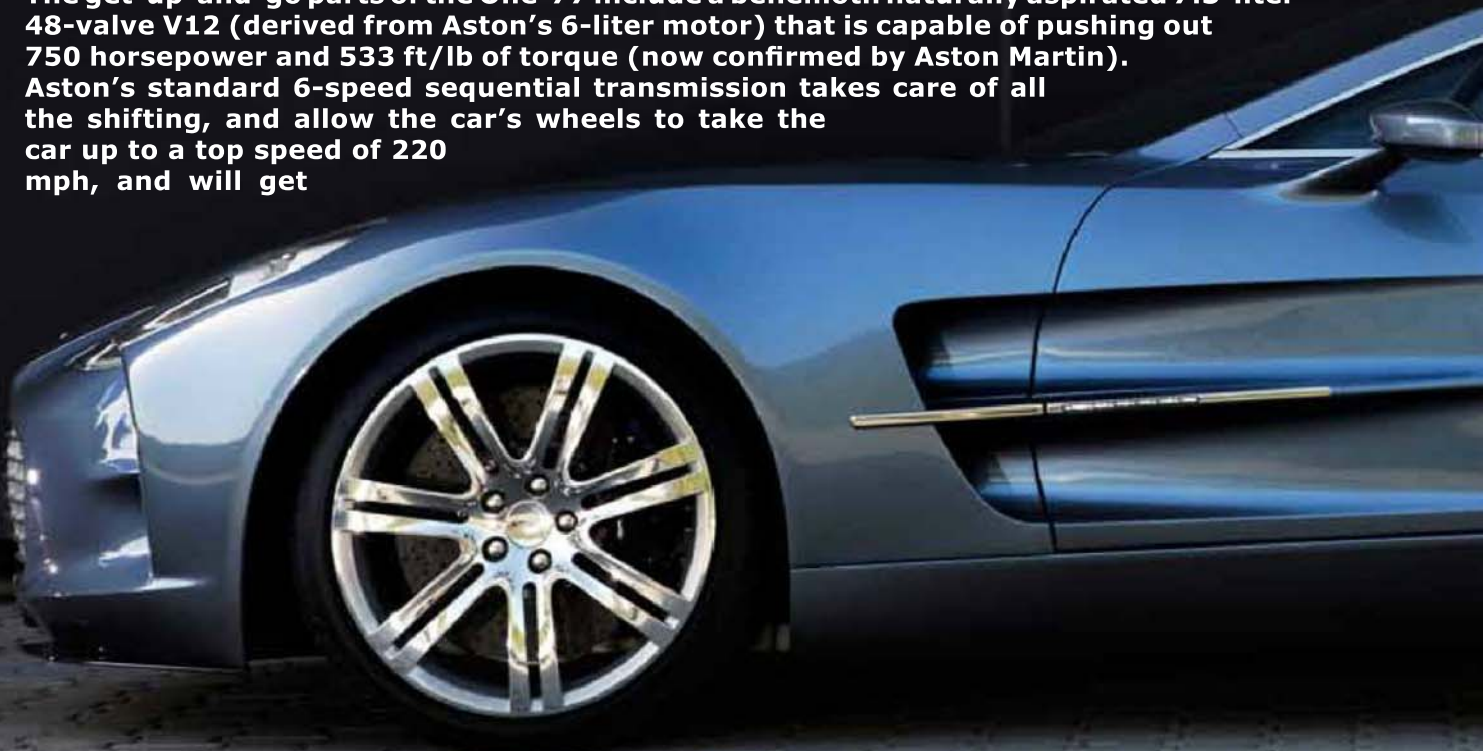
Aston's Excellence

By Nicolas Bates

Aston Martin is undeniably one of the world's top producers of luxury supercars, but it cannot be argued that a good majority of their cars can be classified more as luxury than "super." Until recently that is. The 2012 Aston Martin One-77 is still a car with downright luxury (don't get me wrong), but with the raw power to back up a "supercar" title. This super rare creation of Aston Martin's will have an extremely limited number at seventy-seven, and reportedly only 10 were left as of April 2011. Now that's what I'd call a collectors car...

The One-77 has a stunning exterior, partially due to its stance—only 6 inches short of an H2 Hummer. Its long, sleek body is reminiscent of other present Aston Martins, but through design, they have made it very clear that this particular model is far more special. Then again, any car with a body shaped out of one block of aluminum is pretty damn "special." With a length of 181", there are longer cars out there, but with its wheels pushed out to the front and rear as far as possible, the car looks to have an extremely long wheelbase. As noted above, it is particularly wide. The rear looks immensely intimidating and sleek, with its wrap-around tail lights and rear diffuser. The front end will retain the well known and appreciated front grill. Because, let's face it: An Aston Martin isn't an Aston Martin without its oval grill. For the chassis, a carbon fiber monocoque design was used, and keeps weight to roughly 3,500 lb. for the car.

The get-up-and-go parts of the One-77 include a behemoth naturally aspirated 7.3-liter 48-valve V12 (derived from Aston's 6-liter motor) that is capable of pushing out 750 horsepower and 533 ft/lb of torque (now confirmed by Aston Martin). Aston's standard 6-speed sequential transmission takes care of all the shifting, and allow the car's wheels to take the car up to a top speed of 220 mph, and will get



SPECS

2012 Aston Martin One-77

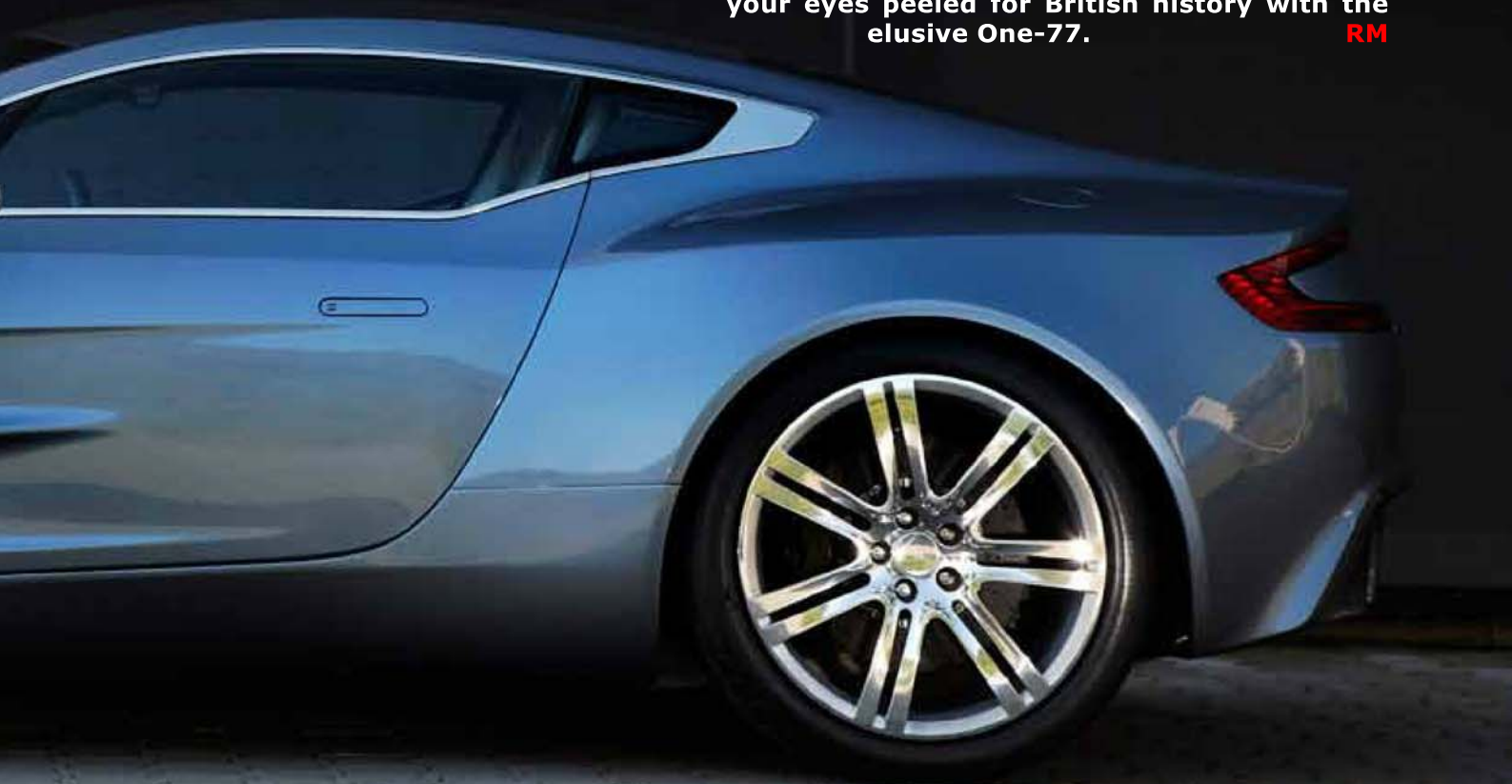
Price:	\$1,400,000+
Engine:	7.3-Liter V12
Torque:	533 ft/lb
Horsepower:	750 hp
0-60 MPH:	3.7 secs.
Top Speed:	220 mph
EST. MPG:	10/city 16/hwy
Available:	Contact Aston Martin



the car from a standstill to 60 mph in 3.7 seconds. With such a possibility of massive forward inertia, the One-77 has been outfitted with ventilated carbon ceramic discs with six-piston calipers in the front, and four-piston in the rear.

The suspension on the One-77 is quite advanced, and features Dynamic Suspension Spool Valve (DSSV) technology, where the system "is a pure 4-way damper featuring independent high and low speed valves for control of both bump and rebound, and includes linear indexed adjusters, matched from damper to damper to optimize the symmetry rating across each axle." This allows the suspension set up to be changed, without actually having to remove and change physical parts. Sounds expensive, does it not? You'd be correct in assuming so.

The One-77, at only seventy-seven production vehicles being made, will be one of the most rare Aston Martins to be produced. No doubt they will be hard to come across, even if you do have the \$1.4 million to purchase one (I suppose that DSSV suspension really was expensive). And even the folks with the dough may be holding out, as you cannot test-drive one straight from Aston Martin. Given the number of vehicles left in April (10), apparently to many, that was not an issue at all. Keep your eyes peeled for British history with the elusive One-77. **RM**



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TOP TEN GIRLS

The Reader's Choice





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Tiffany Toth
Featured Model, February

TOP TEN GIRLS

THEir FASHION & BEAUTY





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Melissa Riso
Featured Model, July

ALL ACCESS

The Latest Albums Reviewed

A Tip of the Hat

Photo courtesy MSO PR
Written by Katie J. Norris

Chevelle has been playing and creating albums since their inception in 1999. They've had a pretty steady rise to notoriety over the years and they have landed several hits on the top of charts. There's been some drama within the band as far as members leaving or being fired, depending on who tells the story, and they have faced the brunt of some misconceptions early on, with an earlier album release projecting them to the Christian market. Oops. They all have their respective views, but they've always aimed to be open minded in their lives and with their music messages.

Hats Off to the Bull is their sixth studio album. The first thing to note is the production on this one. Joe Barresi, who produced for Queens of the Stone Age and Tool, did an incredible job here. There are some very clever accentuations of sound effects and crafty sparkles of dynamics that spice it up and help the listener take note of the subtleties. This kind of technical creativity shows the range of a good producer past mere high-quality mixing and mastering.

The album opens with "Face to the Floor," a great opening choice. It sets the pace for the album, and has landed hit-status on the rock radio charts. Second up is "Same Old Trip." It has a catchy melody, but you don't realize you've been singing along until the last chorus. "Ruse," vocally starts off a little too similar to the previous song, but the lyrics are attention grabbing, and the melody in the chorus brightens the song with the use of some major chords thrown into the structure. "The Meddler" is not my favorite song, as it rings melancholy without pulling in too much emotional energy, but the guitar effects are rich and show off Chevelle's Cure influences. The instrumental breakdown into the bridge of this song feels a little more organic and it ends on a high note. Notably, I must say Pete Loeffler really does excel on vocals here. "Piñata" is rhythmically a very fun song, and near the end it breaks down into a fist-pumping anthem, making it catchy enough to be a hit. The next song, "Envy," is the surprise track on this album. It is haunting with its swells and Pete's harmonies resonating in the stratosphere. The lyrics are poetically emotional and Pete gives a passionate performance. Even when their signature rock-sound jars into the mix three-fourths through the song, it retains that slightly airy atmospheric feel. It is quickly becoming a favorite.



"Hats Off to the Bull," the title track, is packed with heavy rock chords, powerful guitar riffs, an angry chorus, and a ripping guitar solo. It's not spectacularly unique, but its hard rock, Chevelle style. The next few songs, "Arise," "Revenge," and "Clones," are all decent songs; however, they blend into the album a little too casually and attract the feel that they are paraphrased duplications of the earlier half of the album. The tunes begin to bleed into each other for the second half of the album, with the exception of "Prima Donna," which seems to be their signature acoustic track on this album. Chevelle tends to always include some kind of simpler song on their albums to strike up the diversity, and this one is quite interesting with a melody that takes us into the world of the gypsies. The acoustic guitar and vocals are accompanied by enhancements of slow strings and a shaker for percussion reserved solely for the choruses. It is one of their better-done songs. "Indifference" and "Glimpse of the Con" are the following slower songs to wrap up the record. They have a singer/songwriter-rock vibe that eases the listener down to a close.

In this album, there are some noticeable points of head bobbing and some interesting musical and lyrical ideas throughout. And while the whole thing is entirely listenable, there is nothing that breaks the mold or shocks the soul. But nobody does Chevelle better than them, and it's that constant drive of solid songs, album after album, that keep us coming back for more. A well made album start to finish, with a bonus live performance track of "Still Running," *Hats Off to the Bull* holds Chevelle's strong force in the rock world, steadily pleasing fans with another release.

Artist: Chevelle
Album: Hats Off to the Bull
Website: <http://ChevelleInc.com>

★★★★★
Label: Epic
Release Date: December 6, 2011

Longevity Pays

Photo by Ben Watts
Written by Jeremy Weeden

The Roots, one of hip-hop's most beloved acts, have been hard at work on their craft for 25 years now. Formed in 1987, by Amir "Questlove" Thompson and Tariq "Black Thought" Trotter, the Roots are one of the hardest working groups in the music business and their longevity is a testament to that. One of the few instrumental ensembles in hip-hop, the Roots have had varying levels of commercial success over the years and have seen members come and go, but their music has always been critically acclaimed and hailed for its soul and realness. The Roots are best known for their 1995 and 1999 albums, *Illadelph Halflife* and *Things Fall Apart*—the former being their first album to have a Top 40 hit with "What They Do," and the latter being the first album to garner the group a Grammy for the song "You Got Me," featuring soul songstress Erykah Badu.

The Roots have been around through numerous different eras of hip-hop, from Wu-Tang Clan to Biggie to Kanye West to Drake. The four-time Grammy winners have seen and survived it all and are one of hip-hop's most respected acts.

Undun, proves the Roots are indeed the hardest working band in the business. *Undun* is not a typical hip-hop album, or even a typical Roots album for that matter. *Undun* is a concept album about a 25-year-old man named Redford Stevens. The album is about Stevens' life and the paths that he takes. The album's cover seems to also play in to this story, as it captures a child in mid-air, performing a flip above a dirty, broken mattress. There are endless possibilities to the way the photo could play out: the kid could land on his head on the mattress, he could hurt himself on a coil, or he could perform a landing worthy of an Olympic gymnast. This could be a metaphor for the uncertainty in life and the consequences one faces for their decisions.



Upon listening to the first track on *Undun*, we learn that our protagonist has died a tragic death. The album, similar to the film *Memento*, then follows a reverse narrative that allows the listener to find out what led to Redford Stevens' death. The storyline is not completely clear to the point where one could take the songs and write a line-by-line exact story, but is easy enough to follow and discover what happens to Redford Stevens.

The album, as with most Roots albums, is produced by Questlove and his Roots brethren. The album has a typical Roots sound: neo-soul mixed with hip-hop beats. The album has features from Big K.R.I.T., Phonte, Dice Raw, Bilal, Greg Purn and a few other Roots associates. The last few tracks on the album are orchestral instrumentals that portray the ultimate demise of Redford Stevens.

Undun is a must have for any fan of the Roots. This album can be listened to conceptually or as individual tracks and the same satisfaction is provided. The Roots may have evolved from an underground hip-hop group to the house band on *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon*, but *Undun* shows hip-hop will always be the life force of the band.

Artist: The Roots
Album: Undun
Website: <http://TheRoots.com>

★★★★★
Label: Def Jam
Release Date: December 6, 2011

ALL ACCESS SPOTLIGHT

Facebook.com/Korn



Korn, *The Path Of Totality*

In recent years, dustup has infected more and more speaker systems, and it has become the latest musical trend. Britney Spears and Kid Cudi were just the beginning of dubstep's takeover. Next up, is Korn's *The Path of Totality*. This tenth studio album is cross-mix of different dustup producers and nu-metal pioneers. It's loud, it's ambient, and it sounds like what a robot thinks of when it wants to shred.

Since their beginning, Korn have constantly tried different experimental approaches to metal. *The Path of Totality* sounds like nothing you've heard before while still sounding like Korn. There aren't many classic jams like "Freak on a Leash" on the new album, but tracks such as "Narcissistic Cannibal" and "Let's Go" are perfect for that metalhead who wouldn't mind grinding at a nightclub downtown.

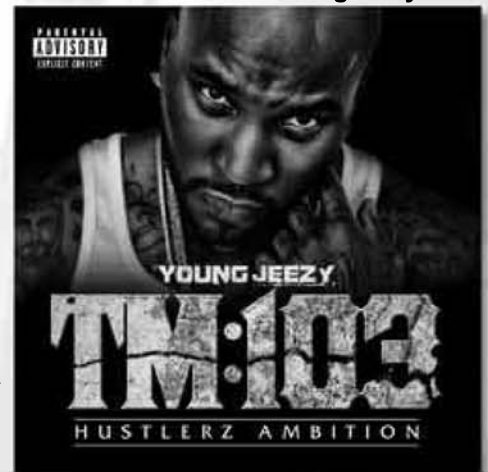
Korn are metal innovators and *The Path of Totality* doesn't give up that spirit. Soon dustup will become something of the past, but 'til then, it hasn't sounded this badass.

Written by Silas Valentino & Jeremy Weeden
Edited by Nicolas Bates

Young Jeezy, *TM:103 Hustlerz Ambition*

Southern hip-hop veteran Young Jeezy returns to the scene with his long-awaited fourth studio album, *Thug Motivation 103: Hustlerz Ambition*. It has been three long years since Young Jeezy has given the masses an album and the wait was well worth it. Jeezy wraps up his *Thug Motivation* series with perhaps his most complete effort yet. *Thug Motivation 103: Hustlerz Ambition* finds Jeezy staying true to what he knows while also venturing out from his comfort zone on a few songs. The album opens appropriately with a bass and drum-heavy, slow-riding, southern beat produced by Lil Jody with Jeezy rapping, "You know the world is waiting, waiting on 103/ We need some motivation/ So won't you come motivate me." The album goes from there into a few of the street anthems Young Jeezy has become known for: "OJ," "Nothing," and "Supafreak," but he also shows a different side like the Jill Scott-assisted "Trapped." This song speaks on the ills of the streets and the cyclical nature of them that leads to people ending up trapped in a negative situation. "Trapped" is one of the songs on the album that shows the clear maturation of Young Jeezy as an artist. *Thug Motivation 103* is a good all-around album, and with features from some of rap's biggest names, including Jay-Z and Andre 3000, Young Jeezy shows he still has what it takes to motivate hip-hop fans.

Facebook.com/YoungJeezy



Facebook.com/T-Pain



T-Pain, *rEVOLVER*

Hip-hop godfather Jay-Z said that auto-tuning was dead—T-Pain thinks otherwise. Soft-voiced MC, T-Pain, has been featured by everyone from Kanye West to The Lonely Island and he has now released his fourth solo album, *Revolver*. Running off the idea that he is continuing to evolve (read between the album title's r's) T-Pain is setting out to prove that his sweet, robotic harmonies are not just a new millennial musical cliché.

T-Pain was the rapper that other rappers brought in when they needed a chorus hook or a recording of a long, extended "yeah," but *Revolver* has T-Pain taking complete control. He sings some sad songs like "Drowning Again," and he sings some booty-droppers like "Band Bang Pow Pow," all while maintaining his signature auto-tuning. *Revolver* is for any listener who enjoyed Kanye West's *808 and Heartbreak* or loved the "I'm on a Boat" digital short. Similar to Justin Bieber and Call of Duty, T-Pain will forever be a captured memento in time for the early 2000's.



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THE TOP 5 ALBUMS
OF THE 2011 YEAR

AS CHOSEN BY THE
RUKUS WRITERS

JEREMY WEEDEN



5. City & Colour—*Little Hell*

The third solo album by Dallas Green is easily one of his and the year's best. The album is traditional in that the folky roots displayed by Green on past City & Colour albums are readily apparent, but he also strays from that to a more bluesy sound that adds life and bounce to the album. *Little Hell* is a must have album if you want to own 2011's best.



4. The Game—*The Red Album*

The low-key, west coast MC dropped perhaps his best album ever this past year. It was somewhat overlooked due to dropping around the same time as Jay Z and Kanye's *Watch The Throne*, but the Game's sharp flows and lyrics over traditional hip-hop beats is equally pleasing and better for repeated playbacks.



3. The Black Keys—*El Camino*

The bluesy rockers return with their catchy brand of rock music. Surely by now you have heard "Lonely Boy," with its infectious dance tune. And the rest of the album is full of up-tempo, riff-driven music sure to keep you rocking through 2012.



2. Drake—*Take Care*

The sophomore album from hip-hop superstar Drake places him squarely on top of the hip-hop game. With hard lyrics mixed with smooth r&b, *Take Care* was easily one of the year's best albums. Besides, how many albums boast features from Rick Ross and Stevie Wonder?



1. Adele—*21*

The British soulstress hit the music world by storm with her sophomore album. Between the heart stomping tracks like "Rolling in the Deep" and heartbreaking pleas of "Someone Like You," Adele proves that heartfelt soul music still has a place in the world today.

SILAS VALENTINO



5. M83—*Hurry Up, We're Dreaming*

If the Wikipedia pages for "Where The Wild Things Are" and The Smashing Pumpkins album *Mellon Collie and The Infinite Sadness* were to somehow collide, this would be the sound it would make at collision. A conceptual album, both grand and epic, but simultaneously soft and innocent like a child's imagination, this is worth a listen.



4. Frank Ocean—*Nostalgia, Ultra*

The only member of Odd Future with legitimate swag, Frank Ocean's debut album is full of serene, peaceful slow-jams. Perfect for a lazy Sunday, a twenty-past-four affair or Kenny G's replacement for the ultimate make-out jams.



3. Girls—*Father, Son, Holy Ghost*

With every great love, comes the possibility of even greater heartbreak. Girl's songwriter/singer Christopher Owens has been around the heartbreak block many times. But instead of loathing away in his boxers eating Häagen Daz like the rest of us, he writes fantastic music. Girls' second album is a genre mixing, musical break-up paradise.



2. Youth Lagoon—*The Year of Hibernation*

A closed bedroom door doesn't only signify privacy. While alone in your room, a closed door represents the bridge that connects the real world to your world. Youth Lagoon makes near-perfect bedroom music. Light keyboard synths, 808 machines and reverb are all it takes to transform your bedroom into colorful sanctuary. All what's missing are the headphones.



1. Real Estate—*Days*

You can hate the sand in your shoes and swimming next to Jaws, but regardless, the beach is a haven. Real Estate love their New Jersey shore, the actual coastline, as well as everything else the beach has to offer. Their sophomore release, *Days*, is a calm, soothing bliss that flows back and forth to the current's rhythm. Surf rock's been dead for years, but it's never sounded better with *Days*.

KATIE J. NORRIS



5. Duran Duran—*All You Need Is Now*

The legendary group of prolific wonders creates a rich album with all kinds of depth and a great quality of songwriting and performances. They have evolved with the times, bringing us a compilation of songs embodying all the experience of their very successful years. This is an album that is applauded by fans and welcomes new ones eager for meaningful tunes.



4. Far East Movement—*Free Wired*

After a lifetime of pursuing music, F.E.M. have finally made it big! They have several hits on this album that rocked the nation and has put them on the map in a very influential way. This is a defining album of 2011 that put a big mark on pop culture. The entire album is solid and one of the few albums still worth the purchase of an entire CD.



3. Lupe Fiasco—*Lasers*

The tracks on this album are catchy and contain clever lyrics. "The Show Goes On" was on the top of the Billboard charts and rightfully earned heavy rotation on airplay. The album as a whole is full of thoughtful ideas and the songs are ones you can really dance to. Production quality is great and Lupe's singing is fantastic. Added in is the diversity of some very fitting guest artist spots.



2. Lady Gaga—*Born This Way*

The lady of fashion, a popular symbol of criticism and acclaim, winds and twines songs into this album unapologetically across the board. She incorporates different languages, different styles, and catchy tunes all within a driving electronic beat. She has become an inspiration to her fans and a symbol of freedom. The album includes a myriad of hits that dominated the charts, including the sweet spot song that took new listeners by surprise, "You & I."



1. Five Finger Death Punch—*American Capitalist*

This band is quickly growing and all their intense hard work is truly paying off. Their sound is unique and their songs are fantastic from the production to the writing to the playing to the vocals; and this album is their best yet. Wild and crazy with a sense of maturity and angry, metal thrashing without being bitter and preachy are rare qualities of hard rock bands these days. FFDP have created a kickass album through and through.

MICHELLE OBERG



5. Awolnation—*Megalithic Symphony*

Another newcomer on the scene is Awolnation and "fronteverything," Aaron Bruno, who pens all the songs of the debut album, *Megalithic Symphony*, himself—a feat artists usually don't have the time or tenacity to do solo. When "Sail" hit the charts there was no looking back. The sounds Bruno creates are fresh and inspiring to the world of instrumentals. Originally, upon hearing "Sail" before looking into this mystery artist, I thought he was a rapper/producer making fresh beats. Kudos to Bruno's talents and Austin Powers-esq mystique.



4. Eddie Vedder—*Ukulele Songs*

Pearl Jam may be my favorite artist of all time, but when Eddie Vedder released his solo album, *Ukulele Songs*, to mixed reviews, I was the first to back up his efforts. While the press claims Eddie's solo efforts had its limitations, and mocked Pearl Jam's frontman as trying to be bigger than his beginnings, it's easy to argue since Vedder is as big as he is going to get, and he knows it. The ballads on the album are soothing and encompass his spirituality and personality better than any man (pun intended). "Longing to Belong" is endearing and captures his iconic vocals that fans will always pay the big bucks to hear.



3. Dead Sara—*Self Titled*

Newcomer Dead Sara released their self-titled debut album, *Dead Sara*, to a receptive audience. After first hearing their hit single "Weatherman" a few months back, it comes as no surprise they're receiving radio airplay faster than O.J. in a police chase. Currently, they are hosting 98.7FM's Close to Home as the artist in residence. With their AC/DC meets Rage Against the Machine style, you should expect to see and hear a lot more from them in the near future.



2. Adele—*21*

The voice of the year goes to Adele for 21. Not just for her untouched, raw, effortless talent in vocal stylings, but also for successfully following up a no.1 album in 18 countries to 19 countries. With the crowd favorite, "Rollin' in the Deep," the fire in my heart burns for "Set Fire to the Rain" for its strong relationship-infused lyrics that everyone can relate to.



1. Foo Fighters—*Wasting Light*

One of the greatest rock bands of our time, the Foo Fighters, have more hits in their catalog than any other current artist. It comes as no surprise that their 7th studio album, *Wasting Light*, has 6 Grammy nom's including "Album of the Year," and a record filled with number one hits. "I Should Have Known" is the highlight, inspired by Kurt Cobain, and encompassing the sound of the band's growth through the last 18 years. Yes...18 YEARS!

TOP TEN GIRLS
The Reader's Choice





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Kari Nautique
Featured Model, December

TOP TEN GIRLS
The Reader's Choice





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Casey Durkin
Cover Model: March

LIVE & LOUD

The Live Show Reviews

The English Beat

Photos by Nicolas Bates
Written by Nicolas Bates

When you are informed you will be attending a show in which the headlining band was active from '78 to '83, you may have some reservations. For me, images of walkers and oxygen tanks on stage were conjured up, and I just couldn't shake them.

I walked into the House of Blues Anaheim to find a surprisingly large crowd—large enough to fill the entire lower half and at least one quarter of the upstairs portion of the venue. The demographic was both men and women in their late '40s to early '50s. But, these folks were ready to party. Perhaps, like it was 1983...

After waiting a solid 45 minutes after their scheduled set time, a bright and cheery Dave Wakeling (lead vocals/guitar) appeared on stage with his signature teardrop Vox guitar and they smashed right in to it.

Dave Wakeling is the only remaining member of The English Beat, but all performing musicians were young (in fact, some of the musicians playing with Wakeling quite possibly hadn't even been born during the Beat's heyday), sharp and on top of it.

Hit "I'll Take You There" had ladies screaming throughout the House of Blues and it seemed nothing could stop the crowd from dancing. Sax player Matt Morrish really stole the show with his playing during this song (and it wouldn't be the last time). Song "Save It For Later" let bassist Wayne Lothian really shine, especially during the bridge of the song, where his bassline is the focal point.

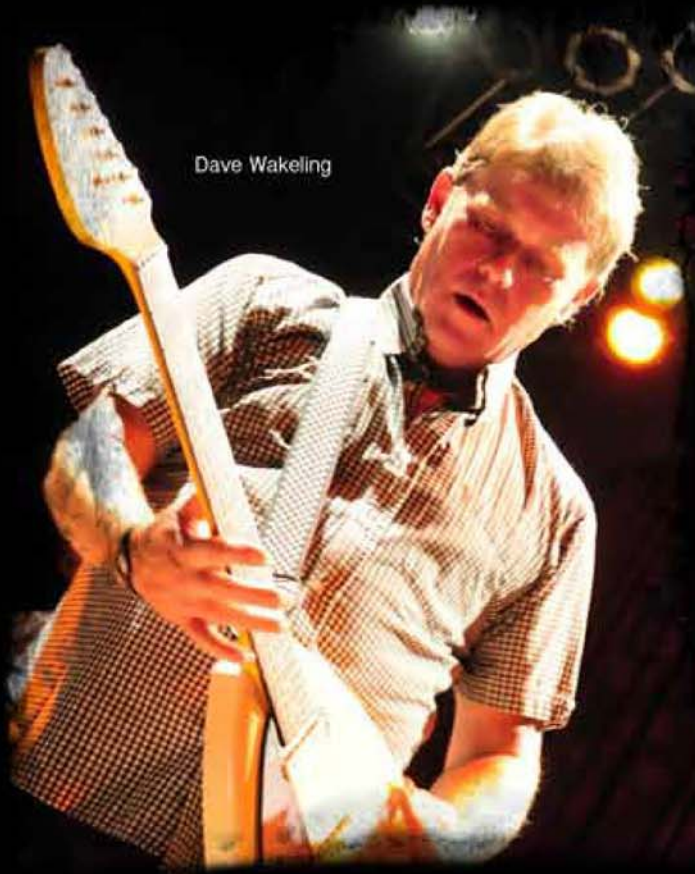
Dave Wakeling and the band had vivacious tenacity, and the energy just did not let up. The image of walkers and oxygen tanks quickly dispersed from any part of my brain.

The English Beat played all of their hits (and then some), like "Tenderness," "I Confess," "Tears of a Clown," and, of course, "Mirror in the Bathroom." To my amazement, the crowd never tired, and danced their way to the end of an almost 2-hour long set. Perhaps the youngens of today can learn a thing or two about having fun from their parent's generation!

For a band that was popular over 25 years ago, The English Beat brought a fun and lively set to the stage of House of Blues in Anaheim, all to the enjoyment of an almost-packed house. The show surely sparked fond memories of the '80s in many concert-goers, and by the looks on faces after the last song, it didn't seem a single person left disappointed with what they had just experienced.

Venue: House of Blues
Website: <http://TheBeatOfficial.com>

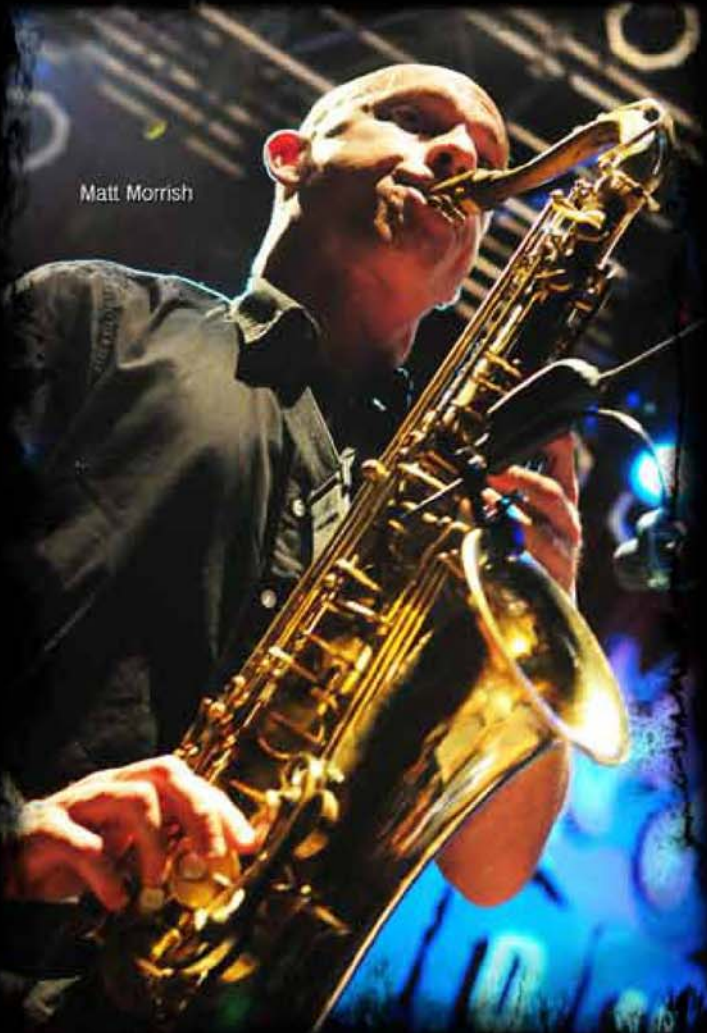
Date: December 2, 2011
City: Anaheim, CA



Dave Wakeling



Antonee First Class



Matt Morrish



Rick Torres

LIVE & LOUD

LIVE SHOW REVIEWS CONT. 2

Ziggy Marley

Photo by Nicolas Bates

Written by Michelle Oberg

Reggae didn't die with the godfather of the genre's music in 1981. It is Bob Marley's legacy that keeps the Marley name pinnacle to reggae music, as well as the Rastafarian movement, which still lives on. The love of rocksteady brought Los Angeles's melting pot of dread adorners to Club Nokia to see the spawn of the legend, Ziggy Marley, bringing back into society the love of music, peace and family.

Though Ziggy's career has almost as many accolades as his father, and is one the most notable members of the Marley brood, he does pay homage to the man, the myth and the legend, with tributes to Bob's songs during his shows.

The venue is flowing with patrons of all ages, races, shapes and sizes as the 9-piece band enters the stage. "I need a revolution," stated Marley, and with that, the group began their first song into the eve, "Personal Revolution," to a receptive crowd. With the California medical marijuana card-carrying patrons in view, the place lit up faster than a building next to an arsonist with a can of gas and a handful of matches.

Based on experience in the concert-going scene, it's not very often you see dancing, let alone dancing from people with rhythm. When Marley began "Freedom Road," the skies opened up and love shined down. Another first was being at a show of this magnitude and not once being pushed, bumped into, or verbally accosted by fellow show-goers. And if a bump did happen, a full-blown apology for any discomfort (yes, I said discomfort) was given to the bumpee. Is there a way to recruit this bunch for all future shows?

"Welcome to the World," which was released on his latest album, *Wild and Free*, embodies Marley's love of music, his music, and brings it forth through his vocal delivery and smile that rarely leaves his face during performing. The piano in this song is fantastic—think Stevie Wonder meets Billy Joel, in the most unlikely of places.

The guitar solo for "Beach in Hawaii" is very mariachi-esque, which is surprising for the song's title theme. As the song began, a guy from Hawaii introduced himself to the frontman and informed him that he had traveled to Los Angeles just for his show. This did not seem as if it was a planned event from the band. During the set, as a patron, you literally begin to feel the music coursing through your veins since the lyrics are simple, yet complex in their meaning, and the instrumentals reach inside you to pull out any form of artistic appreciation you have in any form. Whether dancing along, singing along or just tapping your foot, Marley's music is an unstoppable force of feel-good entertainment.

As ziggy played guitar and sang, and his entourage of multifaceted collaborators played alongside, we realized, this may be one of the greatest shows we have seen this year. This peaceful show of merriment and music left Bob in our hearts and Ziggy in our minds. If you haven't seen him and his band of brothers and sisters live, check out his website at www.ziggymarley.com for more info and tour dates. Two thumbs way up.

Venue: Club Nokia

Website: <http://ZiggyMarley.com>

Date: December 17, 2011

City: Los Angeles, CA



Ziggy Marley

LIVE & LOUD

LIVE SHOW REVIEWS CONT'D

U n e a r t h

Photos by Nicolas Bates

Written by Michelle Oberg

It's 9 o'clock on a Wednesday and the regular crowd...wait that's not right... T'was the nightmare around Christmas and the heavy metal tour brought their angry little elves to Pomona for a screaming mosh fest at The Glass House, featuring Skeletonwitch, Molotov Solution, Salimus and headliners Chimaira and Uneath.

For the completely unaware, roadies have a requirement to be musicians; shocker, right? The roadie for Uneath's drummer entertained the audience while they waited to see the headliner with more than just beating a snare and bass drum, but playing out and amping up the crowd with little ditties in their entirety, receiving gratitude for his efforts from an all-eyes-and-ears crowd.

Instrumentals blasted over the PA system as the band entered into a red carpet-esque spotlight stage. Only four words came out of Trevor Phipps mouth before the pit instantly opened it wings: "Let's fucking do something!" With that, the tone was set for the night. Their first song, "Watch It Burn," off their new album *Darkness in the Light*, had people thrashing themselves around so hard there was more falling down than Lindsay Lohan after an open bar. Uneath's energy was through the roof with hardcore head banging, and heavy beats that made your heart pound twice as fast. Phipps' cut off tee, embossed with the Berma 13 clothing company logo, and previously wet hair upon entering the stage had him looking like he was entering the ring at Wrestlemania.

Always a crowd favorite is the lack of gibber-gabber from the frontman between songs (just play the hits). Transitioning from their opening number to "The Great Dividers" was effortless, even when Phipps took a moment during the instrumental intro to whisper to a roadie about acoustics without missing a cue. Buzz McGrath and Ken Susi's dueling guitars and melodies were fast, catchy and well above-par, sending piercing chills of metallic excellence through your body.

Even with the lack of a packed venue, Uneath brought the fury of playing in front of fifty thousand people, making sure the fans were having a great time, asking, "How you doing, Pomona?" and stating "We love Glass House!" prompting the non-alcohol induced spectators to answer the calling with screams of gratitude at their presence. The best of the eve was "Eyes of Black," again, off the new album. The instrumentals were ground breaking, literally, as the floor shook more violently than the Northridge quake of '94. Susi's guitar solo and machine gun breakdown created that beautiful crying sound as he scaled his way up and down the fretboard. If only baby's wails could replicate that sound, it would make sitting next to one on a plane sound more like a lullaby.

After hearing the heavy drum beats in "This Lying World," where you see new drummer Nick Pierce's feet moving four times faster than his arms, you know you've seen it all. Phipps pulled crowd surfers onto the stage and used air horns to amp up their stage presence but there is not much else that could make this show any more intense. Perhaps McGrath climbing the drum riser was a worthy contender, but that's a staple to most shows, although it never gets tiring to watch.

As visions of hardcore head-banging dance through our heads and young 20-somethings run amok far from their beds, Uneath led their minions through a buzz worthy fright, the hard part of the eve was saying goodnight.

Venue: Glasshouse

Website: <http://Uneath.tv>

Date: December 7, 2011

City: Pomona, CA

A photograph of Ken Susi, a guitarist, captured in a dynamic pose. He is wearing a dark t-shirt with a graphic design and is playing a black electric guitar. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights on his face and the guitar's body.

Ken Susi

A photograph of John Maggard, a guitarist, wearing a blue t-shirt and a blue beanie. He is playing a light-colored electric guitar and has a microphone in his mouth. The background is dark with some stage equipment visible.

John Maggard

A photograph of Buzz McGrath, a guitarist, with long hair, wearing a dark t-shirt. He is playing a light-colored electric guitar and looking upwards. The background shows a stage structure with wooden beams.

Buzz McGrath

A photograph of Trevor Phipps, a guitarist, wearing a dark t-shirt with a graphic design. He is playing a light-colored electric guitar and looking upwards. The background is dark with some stage equipment visible.

Trevor Phipps

Exclusive Interview:

Brian "Head" Welch

by Paul Lyons



Guitarist/singer/songwriter Brian Welch has been through it all. Known as "Head" to his friends and fans, he rose to fame and fortune as one of the founding members of Korn, living out everyone's rockstar dream. Yet the price of success took its toll, and Head struggled with bad relationships and heavy drug addiction. A journey of his own choosing, he went down the darkest of roads. Coming up for air, Head decided in 2005 to leave Korn and become a born-again Christian...letting his faith be his guide.

He's since published three books about his life and faith. Yet, if you think this has stopped Head from playing heavy rock and roll...you'd be sadly mistaken. As evident by his 2008 album *Save Me From Myself*, as well as his new single "Paralyzed," Head still rocks as hard as he ever did.

I recently caught up with Head, who's been busy recording a yet-to-be titled EP to be released in March.

RUKUS MAGAZINE: You were in Korn for over ten years, yet in 2005 you left the band due to your new-found devotion to Christianity, as well as for the sake of your daughter. Looking back now, do you have any regrets at all?

BRIAN "HEAD" WELCH: I think it was all meant to be, you know? I mean, I think that I handled some stuff wrong, cause I was coming off the drugs, and I was really excited about my change, and I was stoked that I wasn't going to die of the drugs, cause I was scared that I was gonna die from drugs for like, a year. So I was acting kind of a fool, cause I was so happy and then my mind was like...wasted from the drugs. So, I would've took back some of the stuff I said, and did, but it's all good now. So I don't really don't dwell on it.

RM: Do you feel had you stayed in Korn, you may not have survived?

HEAD: No, I would've made it, because, you know what, I stopped the drugs and everything, but I just didn't want to stay there anymore, you know? I just didn't want to be in that band. You know what, I was there in the most awesome years of Korn. So it was like, I lived it. I already lived it. So I'm thankful for the good years that we had when things were goin' good, and the songs were just at their peak, you know? So I was just thankful for that. But I was like...I was ready to go.

RM: What is your relationship like these days with the members of Korn? There was at one point an issue with royalties, yet you took the high road with that by dropping the lawsuits and being friends with them again.

HEAD: Yeah, totally, I mean, I think I got treated unfair in certain ways, but like...why go to court and drag something out for five years of your life when you only have a certain amount of years? So why do that? There's a few times when I wanted to, just because I thought I was treated unfair and I thought I was, but at the same time I made decisions, and I was ignorant with the business back then so I didn't pursue the stuff and just like I said before, it all worked out good. I didn't want any bitterness for them against me, and me against them, you know?

RM: You're on friendly terms with the members of Korn to this day?

HEAD: Yeah, I'm going to see the singer in a couple of weeks, for Christmas. And I saw him a couple of months ago. But that's the first time I saw him in, like, six years, so I mean, we haven't been real close but, we always got good things to say about each other and everything. It's just like, we needed to separate for a while. But now, you know, it's good to be friends and everything.

RM: Have they heard the music you've been making the last couple of years?

HEAD: Yeah, I think so, but I've only heard one comment, and that's on the new song "Paralyzed" I put out a month ago. Cause I'm talkin' to him again, Jonathan (Davis) texted me, and said he loved the song.

RM: Do you find yourself listening to the music Korn's made since you left?

HEAD: Yeah, I checked it out. Actually, we played in Bakersfield, California; we were on tour. Korn lives there now. They got the old Buck Owens studio there, that they rent out and everything full time, and I went over there and he played the whole album of *The Path of Totality*, the new one that is coming out. He played the whole album for the whole tour. We went over there and hung out for a couple of hours. It was pretty cool.

RM: What is it strange for you, that first gig you did as a solo artist supporting your own music?

HEAD: It was definitely weird. There's been times where I just wanted to go do something else besides music, you know, but I feel there's something in me just telling me "keep going," you know. There's somewhere. We're heading somewhere. I don't know what it's gonna look like when I get there, but I'm heading somewhere, and keeps getting better. When time passes, you know, it just keeps getting better. I'm in a great place right now; it's awesome.

RM: So far you've made *Save Me From Myself*, as well as a new single called "Paralyzed." How would you describe the music you're making now, compared to the music you made with Korn? Does it all cover the same territory?

HEAD: It's definitely in the same territory, but there's a purpose behind everything on it. I went through so much where I feel like...I'm not the best singer, but I got a lot to say. I'm learning how to sing better and better, but I didn't want to just play guitar in a band anymore, cause I got too much to say. I just didn't want to get behind someone else, you know, for the remaining years that I'm gonna be in the business, you know. I felt like I want to communicate something, and I'm still figuring that out because lyrics are hard. I'm working on them like crazy and they're difficult; they drive me insane.

RM: Is "Paralyzed" a feeling you once felt, or is that a feeling that you sometimes feel to this day?

HEAD: To this day... Man, I'm a man that struggles with depression and anger sometimes, you know? I'd say over half of my time, I'm pretty good. I'm like, I got peace, and I'm happy. But there's like 30 percent or something, that where I just get clouds of depression and stuff and stuck in life, you know? And when the clouds come, it's really dark, you know? I just feel really, really bad sometimes, and I explode with anger and stuff. I definitely go through it now, man. Just because I got my faith and everything does not mean I got it all worked out. I'm still a struggling human.

RM: Do you miss the rock star life you had with Korn, or the heavy drug use, and just the wild days you once had?

HEAD: You know what? There's part of us, all of us, that likes to be bad, you know? And sometimes I have thoughts about that. "Remember this?" or whatever and, of course, for a second, it's like, "Oh, that was fun." But I know that it was wrong, and it messed a lot of stuff up for me and others that knew me. So the thought just leaves real quickly.

RM: You've written three books. Have they been helpful for you in a cathartic way? Have they been more beneficial, or more painful?

HEAD: It was painful when I was doing it, cause I was like "my mom's gonna read this book" and I just basically confessed that I, you know, I had sex with my wife when I was mad at her, she didn't know it and when I was finished, I beat her with a skateboard. You know I was like, "my mom's gonna read this, my daughter's gonna read this!" It was painful to write it, but at the end, it helped me because I confessed it, got it out in the open, and could be done with it. You know what I mean?

RM: You mention in your book that you had two very destructive relationships in the past. What's your relationship status these days? Are you single?

HEAD: Yeah, I'm single. I went on some dates but I just...I'm really happy single and I'm so busy with my daughter and music and travelling all the time so...I'm good just how I am.

RM: Your three books have chronicled your storied past, in relation to your spiritual journey. What do you think will be the next evolution of your journey that you have yet to write about?

HEAD: I went through a lot of stuff to where, basically, I came down to very little in my life, as far as things. I lost my Beamer, I lost my house in 2009 and I was like, what's goin' on, because royalties dried up. There was royalties that I didn't even know I was due, and I wasn't getting them, ya know? So I went through a dry period. I wouldn't mind writing something about coming down to nothing, and building back up. So when I get to that place where I'm really built back up, I'd like to write about my story of getting just brought to nothing and just climbing back up that ladder.

RM: Do you have any more engagements coming up in terms of giving speeches, or are you just focused on recording right now?

HEAD: Yeah, I've got a couple. I'm going this weekend to the south side of Seattle to speak at a place, and then I'm going somewhere in Atlanta around the 10th. One thing exciting we got is a show with Alice Cooper and Cheap Trick at Alice Cooper's Christmas Pudding fundraiser he does every year. So we're gonna play, like, 20 minutes there. It's gonna be cool to meet him, and do that whole thing.

RM: That's fantastic, and big plans for 2012?

HEAD: Yes! We're going to Europe; we're going to South America. The record's coming out. It's just...it's exciting. I can't wait.

RM

TOP TEN GIRLS
The Reader's Choice





3

Hiromi Oshima
Cover Model, February

TOP TEN GIRLS
The Reader's Choice





2

Jessica Burciaga
Cover Model, July

Photography by Andrew Gates
Make-up and Hair by Lindsay Gabrielle

TOP TEN GIRLS

**Congratulations Natasha Yi,
voted The RUKUS Girl of 2011.**



1

Natasha Yi
Cover Model, June

TOP TEN GIRLS

100 Models • 100 Photos





1

Natasha Yi
Cover Model, June

Photography by Andrew Gates
Make-up and Hair by Lindsay Gabrielle

GAME ON

The Latest Games Reviewed

Rock the Casbah

Written by Jesse Seilhan

2011 may go down as the year of the “3,” with the third entry of many popular franchises closing its story with a potentially perfected version of what made the prior titles work well enough to deserve a finale. After *Uncharted 2* won nearly 100 Game of the Year awards, to say *Drake's Deception* is highly anticipated is to say that water is wet. Give Naughty Dog credit, as they unpacked the motion-capture suits, expert level design and unmatched writing and delivered another globe-trotting adventure that pits hero Nathan Drake against various ne'er-do-wells in a race to find some ultimate treasure. As fans saw in years past, not only is the action and story handled quite well, but the pacing and payoff leave little to be desired.

Uncharted is the Indiana Jones for the videogame generation, and that isn't just a tip to how the game looks. The writing, action, characters, and overall vibe is up to par with those cinematic epics of years past. The game features many memorable sequences, with the opening of the game following a younger Nathan Drake, showing his origin as a scamp and introducing the Sully sidekick character as a father figure. From there, the game twists and turns before eventually sinking into the game's greatest set-piece, the Atlantis of the Sands: an area so huge that it takes a 300-mile desert to house it. The opening scenes and final moments make this game worth playing, even if some of the filler in between could have been left on the cutting room floor. The writing keeps me coming back to this franchise and even if Naughty Dog drops this franchise completely (which I doubt), any of their future products will probably be crafted with the same love and expertise that this saga has contained.

For how awesome this game can be, when it's a videogame and clearly defines itself by strict videogame tropes, it falters. Finding irrelevant treasures scattered around every level does nothing to bring me more into this world, and instead begs the question “Why are these priceless artifacts randomly strewn across the universe?” If they opened new weapons, levels, or added canon, they might be acceptable and, granted, the two prior titles had this aspect, but it is more out of place in this romp than the others. The myriad of puzzles are challenging, but unfortunately not by design. The mechanic of opening a journal to look at clues for a puzzle is confusing and says a lot about how that scenario is constructed. On the flip side, when the cut-scenes kick on, their seamless and polished nature keep players engaged in the narrative, even if they sometimes reach *Metal Gear Solid* length. The hand-to-hand and gunplay feel good, but only after a post-release update tightened up the shooting. Even with the miniscule flaws, the biggest knock to *Uncharted 3* is that it isn't *Uncharted 2*, something that all great artists have to face after delivering a genre-defining experience, no matter what the medium. This game may not have the “wow” factor that its predecessor had, but it's just as polished, just as smart, and provides fans with something that feel both comfortable and challenging, a difficult thing to balance in today's gaming industry. Just like the other Drake outings, this is a must-have for PS3 owners.

Game Title: Uncharted 3

Producer: SCEA

Platform: PlayStation 3

Website: <http://NaughtyDog.com>

★★★★★

Ratings: Teen

Genre: Action Adventure

Release Date: November 01, 2011



UNCHARTED 3
DRAKE'S DECEPTION

GAME ON
The Game Reviews CONT'D

SAINTS ROW
— THE THIRD —

Third Street!

Written by Heather Spears

Saints Row is back and more extreme than ever with its latest installment. This game has all the weapons, ladies and offensive language anyone could ask for and will definitely catch most gamers' minds for hours. Players take part in playing through a shocking story mode, chip away at the massive activities and just running around the new city of Steelport doing anything and everything that comes to mind. There is nothing not to love about a game as over-the-top as this one.

At the start of the game your gang, the Third Street Saints, have a fan base built after years of serious gang banging. Your gang plans on making a movie focused on themselves and the gang. In order to prepare one of the actors, Joshua Birk, for his part in the film, you and your fellow gang member rob a bank dressed as one of your fellow gangsters, Johnny Gat. The robbery goes south and you find yourself in jail. You think you can pay your way out of the situation but crime lord Phillippe Loren has other ideas for you and your gang. You find out the bank you robbed belonged to him and now he thinks it's time for you to pay for what you have done. While on board Phillippe's airplane you make for an escape. Once this all goes down, you find yourself in the middle of the new and unfamiliar territory of Steelport.

The story in *Saints Row: The Third* is very exciting. It is outrageous and everything your characters do will be a surprise. There is no doubt that this game will keep you interested with outrageous cut scenes. The only thing that keeps me from making this game 5 out of 5 stars is how I can't stop comparing it to *Saints Row 2*. I loved every single part of *Saints Row: The Third* and you will too... especially if you haven't played previous installments to the series. *Saints Row: The Third* doesn't give me the same feeling of hatred for the opposing gangs the player is set to destroy. There are vital things missing in the game that made *Saints Row* what it is today. However, if you are not a hardcore fan of the series then you will greatly enjoy all the vulgar humor added to the game.

Overall I feel that *Saints Row: The Third* was one of the best games I laid hands on this year. The Co-op in this game blew my mind and I enjoyed the story to the fullest extent. As a huge fan of the *Saints Row* series, some parts did leave me a tiny bit disappointed but I would still tell anyone (even hardcore fans) to purchase this game. *Saints Row: The Third* is hours of fun that you will enjoy in all circumstances.

Game Title: Saints Row: The Third
Producer: THQ
Platform: Xbox 360, PS3, Windows PC
Website: <http://SaintsRow.com>

★★★★★
Ratings: Mature
Genre: Action-Adventure
Release Date: November 15, 2011

GAME ON
The Game Reviews CONT'D



A Decade of Action

Written by Ronnie Schroeder

When it comes to video games, classics do indeed go out of style. I no longer enjoy the sluggish controls and largely pixelated worlds of some games I once called favorites. Still, *Halo's* first entry holds up surprisingly well by today's standards, even before the face-lift it received here.

Halo: CE provides a great amount of nostalgia. If you have ever played the original before, and chances are you have, you'll remember fondly the first time you set about this universe; the room you sat in, the friends you played with. Yes, that was all a decade ago. If that doesn't trip you out enough, the amount of entertainment this game still provides with little demand for improvements will. The demand for a visual overhaul to reintroduce this classic did exist and it has been implemented beautifully. Players are given the option to revert to the classic version's graphics on the fly and it becomes stunning at times to see how much they improved upon the classic's landscapes and skylines. Additionally, this makes the Covenant appear fiercer and the Flood more wicked than they once had. This revamp also breathes new life into the audio, making weapons sound more destructive and the score more triumphant. The other major additions here are terminals to seek out that will give you more information on the *Halo* universe and lore from our old friend 343 Guilty Spark, in addition to those punishingly hidden skulls that we have grown fond of.

Nothing else in the campaign has been altered. The combat has not been refined because there is no need for it. The range of weapons is excellent for approaching firefights in different manners, and the powerful and satisfying pistol makes its welcomed return. All will be needed to counter the agility of the Covenant and the overwhelming Flood that continue to fight with pure tenacity. The jumping might divide players as to whether they prefer the more gravity-defying jumping here, but it shouldn't be too off-putting to anybody. The vehicles still prove to be a blast as well. Whether you're manning the tanks brutal cannon, leaping off rocks in your Warthog, or swiftly maneuvering in the Banshees and Ghosts; you'll be in no rush to walk to resume walking.

There is, however, disappointment to be found in this package. We are not given all of the original multiplayer maps. Only six of these have been recreated, though just as well as the campaign's refinement. *Reach's* addictive system of leveling and customization has been injected here along with a new Firefight map and players are given an Anniversary Map Pack code to be used with their *Reach* disc. If you for some reason want to dismiss the campaign entirely and only wish to play these updated classic maps, users can download the pack via Xbox Live for \$15.

It's interesting to revisit this classic as it is both a look back to the birthing of such a terrific franchise, and a direct sequel to our previous adventures in *Reach*. If you have never played a *Halo* game before, this is as great of a start as any. *Halo: CE* stands the test of time as a solid-shooter that both the unacquainted and the purists will be proud of.

Game Title: Halo: Combat Evolved Anniversary

Producer: Microsoft

Platform: Xbox 360

Website: <http://Xbox.com/Halo>

★★★★★

Ratings: Mature

Genre: First-person Shooter

Release Date: November 15, 2011

THE TOP 5 GAMES
OF THE 2011 YEAR

AS CHOSEN BY THE
RUKUS WRITERS

JESSE SEILHAN

5. *L.A. Noire*



Groundbreaking in all the right ways, *L.A. Noire* changed the way people look at games and, sadly, how they get made. Office scandal aside, the pure diversity and technical achievements in this game made it a “must play”. In an era jam-packed with ADD tomfoolery, and I love me some tomfoolery, it was nice to grow up for a minute and do some real thinking.

4. *Bastion*



Now available for Google Chrome and Steam, this Xbox Live arcade title really captured fun better than anything else I experienced this year. The game took great risks with art style, heavy use of music, and the controversial narrator and pulled it off enough to my top five. The gameplay never got old and the layer of challenge and progression kept my retail games dusty while I jammed on this digital delight.

3. *Shadows of the Damned*



You might call this one a guilty pleasure, but I call it a wholly awesome mash-up of everything that is glorious about videogames. Funny, well-made, and full of homage, this title from Suda 51 and RE5’s Shinji Mikami combines some great third-person action with edgy writing and excellent humor. A lot of gamers probably skipped by this title because it has a ridiculous name and isn’t a sequel, but *Shadows* is filled with substance and lacks filler.

2. *Batman: Arkham City*



Arkham City had an obvious bar raised by its legacy and managed to surpass the original in almost all aspects. Much like *Uncharted 3*, the magic isn’t quite as magical the second time you see it, but there is little that can be done about that. Rocksteady put a ton of work into this game and it shows, from the gorgeous graphics and fluidity of combat to the depth of mechanics and overall atmosphere.

1. *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim*



My review pretty much said it all, but the fact that I’ve played over 90 hours as of this writing and see no end in sight makes this my obvious choice. I still do not have any legitimate complaints and have yet to see a reason that this may not become one of the best games ever made. The places I’ve gone and the people I’ve slain, er, seen will keep me happy until this time next year.

HEATHER SPEARS

5. *Mortal Kombat*



Mortal Kombat was one of those games that got over looked. It is not a shooter nor is the multiplayer something to brag about so it got pushed under the rug as most fighting games. However, *Mortal Kombat* was a breath of fresh air when I played through the story mode. I loved how the player took part in each of the characters lives in the story mode. I was connected to these fighters like never before.

4. *Gears of War 3*



It’s been a long time waiting but Epic Games finally graced players with the beauty of *Gears of War 3*. In most cases I enjoy to play games through single player but *Gears 3* has made my list for a whole different reason; multiplayer. I feel that *Gears of War 3* is one of the few games that allows me to go online to a random match and destroy everything in my path.

3. *Modern Warfare 3*



Another year means another *Call of Duty* game; this year being the most criticized to date. No matter what tired fans are saying about the game everyone has got to love this game. *Modern Warfare 3* has its ups and downs but in the end its *Modern Warfare*, if you've played it before you know what to expect... exciting story, wonderful special ops missions and a competitive yet addicting multiplayer mode.

2. *L.A. Noire*



L.A. Noire cracked my top five list because of its originality. From the gameplay to the graphics, *L.A. Noire* is a game all fans of gaming should try. One of my favorite things about this game is the large and accurate map. The map is an exact replica of the Los Angeles area. If you are familiar with the area you will come across classic landmarks that will leave you smiling.

1. *Saints Row: The Third*



Saints Row: The Third was my favorite game of this year's because it is unique and outrageous. What you do and see in this game are things you will never see in another game. Take part in an extreme storyline, or engage in the best co-op experience I have ever played in this game. *Saint Row: The Third* is a game where you will find yourself captivated for hours playing.

RONNIE SCHROEDER

5. *Portal 2*



A fleshing-out from Valve's critically-acclaimed prequel, THIS is a triumph. The first-person puzzler once again envelops the player in some quite cerebral comedy. The graphics have improved greatly as Aperture Science is no longer monochrome throughout its crumbling and thinking with portals is still mind-bending, even before you throw in the new mobility gels. The return of GLaDOS is exciting, yet almost overshadowed by Wheatly, who is impressively visually emotive for a spherical robot and simply hysterical.

4. *Amnesia: The Dark Descent*



Never have I experienced such unspeakable terror as this. Never have I thrown a pair of headphones off my head and pulled the chain on my lamp so quickly. An absolute immersion in fear found in PC exclusivity, another horror for some of us. *Amnesia* is slow and meticulous and arms you with only a lantern to creep about and be stalked. Losing your sanity is an actual game mechanic and that's just what you might be doing afterwards.

3. *L.A. Noire*



L.A. Noire had at times left me yearning for a little bit more in terms of gunplay or a sense of danger, but it begs to be dismissed for everything unique this title offers. The facial animations, interrogation sequences, and clue gathering really makes you feel like you are doing some strong detective work. The inclusion of Elizabeth Short's macabre tale was awesome to be a part of, as well as every other crime uncovered. So get to it, gumshoe.

2. *Dead Space 2*



Intensely violent with just its atmosphere alone, the *Dead Space* franchise is a master of presentation. Strobing lights, booming gunshots and the grotesquely reanimated dead are enough to get your heart racing in this high-tension affair. Having to actually dismember your foes rather than shoot them point-blank escalates the game into a shower of gore and blood that impresses my Japanese film collection. While mostly more of the same from its previous entry, we don't always reject a second helping.

1. *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim*



I may argue this as the best video game of all time. The world here is absolutely gorgeous and incredibly vast. Build your character as you want, treat others however you please, shape the world as you see fit; these promises have been granted in past Bethesda products, but none of this scale or caliber. Regarding my style of playing: Here's to another hundred hours of my time spent being the nicest mage you'll ever meet...despite his rampant theft.



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