

2005 TOP 10 CDs

OK, let's try it again! Back in 1998, Tucker and I started a correspondence at this time of year in which we expressed what 10 CDs held sway over our heads in that year. They didn't have to be released in that year, it was just a diary of what influenced us the most in that year. It turned into an email thing where Steve Carl and others chimed in.

Last year I managed to coerce Steve Hayden into a response, and I can count on Kelly on waxing poetic on the pleasures of reproduction and clogging one's veins with beef and cheese (with an occasional bluefish), but we need more input!!!! What rang your chimes this past year? That's the rules: it didn't have to be a new release in 2005, it just had to influence your head this year. What's the overlooked and forgotten treasures that you (in your elevated level of taste) want to pass along to the less-aware peons? Bow howdy, gimme summa dat! Our own original music (if you're still trying) comes from what we feed our brains; gimme some suggestions for input, please!

There's so much trash out there and radio sucks, where you gonna learn about what's hip and quality if your friends don't tell you? OK, so these days you subscribe to satellite radio and join the junk mail lists of the Howard Stern mob demographically, now to be at the mercy of anonymous podcasters with agendas of their own, drowning in a sea of options of unknown acts you've never heard of. Rotsa Ruck.

So think it over, look at your CD rack and jot down what you dug this year. I use these lists to discover new stuff to listen to and keep growing, so keep it going!

Here's my **Top 10 Most Influential CDs of 2005**, in rough order of importance:

1.) John Coltrane: Live At the Half Note

These tapes lingered in a closet for decades, part of Coltrane's private stash of live gigs. I defy you to multitask *anything* while the first cut of this plays out. This set finds the legendary quartet just weeks away from implosion into multi-rhythm section fortissimo explorations of form/reality/total freakout, with

Coltrane testifying, speaking in tongues while the rhythm section kicks his ass and screams, “Yeah”, feet still planted on Earth while they reach up to full size trying to keep their main man grounded, and giving it up and succumbing to the bliss of the moment. Lorraine doesn't let me play this at dinner, either.

2.) Miles Davis: The Cellar Door Sessions - 1970

As Keith Jarrett approaches the accolades of his 60th birthday, there does exist those of us who are willing to dismiss him as a moaning, self-obsessed twerp with great digital dexterity and a holier-than-thou attitude that supports a modest talent. If only if it wasn't for this...

It's true that KJ played electric organ and piano only under Miles's insistence. He speaks disparagingly about this stuff and remains a proud prima dona when it comes to playing only the (sniff) finest acoustic pianos. But he, and everyone else in this band, are bringing in brainwaves from Venus and making them whole on this set. This is the shit. This is the real thing. And Keith is transcendent throughout. If only he were open enough to not be so hide bound if this is what he would play like! Or if he had someone as strong as a Miles Davis to reign in his excesses.

This is the sound of Miles reaching high tide with experimenting, soon to move onto Afro-centric one-chord grooves and trance textures, flaming out for five years, and then re-emerging as an elder statesman for his last decade. But this...this is the high-water mark for exploration and making what his albums were called, “Directions in Music by Miles Davis”, a band made legendary by the lack of recorded evidence for 30 years (other than Live Evil, a false representation of the core band with McLaughlin on every cut and much editing) and here given over 4 hours to wail on tunes that lapsed from familiar to telepathic over their life with these players. If you can't get into this, please join Wynton over there with Those Who Shouldn't Listen to Miles After 1964. It's like diddy wah diddy, if you gotta explain it...

3.) Wayne Shorter Quartet: Beyond the Sound Barrier

Wayne continues the exploration. To me, the only jazz group that really matters these days.

4.) Thelonious Monk: Thelonious Monk Quartet with John Coltrane At Carnegie Hall

Found in the bowels of the Smithsonian, these tapes emerged and were resuscitated by Coltrane's son Ravi. Monk, playing the best I've ever heard

him, rising to the challenge and recognition of a legendary venue after months in Village cellars, pushing Trane and being pushed back. Glorious stuff, and a miracle that it exists for our ears at all.

5.) Bob Dylan: No Direction Home: The Soundtrack (The Bootleg Series, Vol. 7)

Last year, Vol. 6 of this was on my list and I spent some time justifying its inclusion. This year, Martin Scorsese made this documentary that included a lot of unreleased versions of the years when Dylan was interesting, and it's like seeing an old friend you haven't seen in 20 years or so, sort of familiar but with features different from what memory holds as the truth. There's great stuff on this double disc, but it really blurs together with the DVD of the documentary to form a composite whole that should justify why this man matters (at a time when he's usually embarrassing to see on the tube, whether in concert or pushing Victoria's Secret like an aching lecher). The notes by Al Kooper and others are great as well.

6.) The Supremes: Diana Ross & The Supremes: The Ultimate Collection

OK, this one was influential only because of my working situation, which included a stint with former Supreme Mary Wilson for several cross-country gigs. But damn, this stuff was fun to play in a band, and I wish more would happen. This is the best rhythm section stuff (and playing accurate transcriptions by Al Slutsky was key!) Motown came up with. Makes sense, Gordy was slamming Ross and gave her the best musicians he had. Listen to the way the guitars interact, those guys knew their shit.

7.) Neil Young: Neil Young, After the Gold Rush, Tonight's the Night, Sleeps With Angels, Arc

What??? OK, I read "Shakey" this year, Neil's biography, and got curious about the many albums he made after "Zumu" (the last one I ever heard), found that they're available on the web for pennies, found them in libraries, etc. This isn't about music here, it's business. I list these albums because they represent the most interesting things I uncovered in my exploration. They represent the fact that a very weird, eccentric, overtly crazy drug abuser of some notoriety can have a career that veers from shit-kicking country to feedback noise and keep it alive with some sly moves. But at the core, there's honesty in these grooves. Neil's 1st album, produced by Jack Neitzsche, is still an amazing piece of magic. After the Gold Rush is a relic for me, a period in my life. The others

are the best things from his long career, Arc being the weirdest thing I've heard in years, makes you feel like you've succumbed to drugs without the bad side effects. There's probably other moments in this pile of stuff, but trust me, a lot of it is horrible beyond words. And then one day I like it. Neil is one of a kind.

8.) Saint Louis SO, Leonard Slatkin: Barber: Concertos for Violin, Cello, Piano
Damn, this is gorgeous.

9.) Thelonious Moog: Yes, We Didn't

Damn, this is...wrong? 2 analog synth geeks go berserk on familiar Monk tunes. When I'm in the mood for it, this album is giddy and truly funny. When I'm not, its pretentiousness is maddening. But recasted tributes to Monk seem to never end, and for me show me how great Monk's writing really was to hold up under so many bizarre and diverse styles that come out.

10.) Various Artists: Fusion for Miles—A Guitar Tribute—A Bitchin' Brew

What do 1980-90 guitar heroes do for gigs in the '00's? They put out stuff like this, unabashed fusion sendups of Miles's electric period. Smokes.

Honorable mention CDs:

John Scofield: Works For Me

From some years back, this one recently was a soundtrack for me on a trip to Asheville, North Carolina. One of Sco's best

Al Green: Everything's OK

Al Green keeps up his renaissance with Willie Mitchell at the controls. Great new R&B stuff

Clara Rockmore: The Art of the Theremin

A classic album, produced by Bob Moog. The greatest thereminist plays her repertoire.

Various Artists: Gravikords, Whirlies, & Pyrophones & Orbitones, Spoon Harps, & Bellowphones

An overview of odd, handmade instruments and the off-center music made with them. Released by the defunct Ellipses Arts, these two CD-books are worth tracking down.

Brian Wilson: What I Really Want For Christmas

Yeah, a Christmas album. It's good. What can I say?

Don't Miss DVDs:

Gentle Giant: Giant On the Box

I always loved these guys. Thanks once again to the efficient Germans to record a whole set and broadcast it, and then store it away so it can be brought out 35 years later. I didn't think any film existed capturing this amazing multi-instrumental band (over 30 instruments between them) with keyboardist Kerry Minnear dazzling me into a life of synthesizers, but here it is, complete with several other concert bits and even a VH1 interview with lead vocalist Derek Schulman. There was never a band that sounded anything like this, and finally you can see how they did it in a pre-sampler world!

Miles Davis: A Different Kind of Blue

This is really a video counterpart to the Cellar Door sessions. It's that band, with Chick Corea on 2nd keys and Dave Holland still on bass, playing at the Isle of Wight festival the summer of '70 and being interviewed today.

Bob Dylan: No Direction Home (see above)

Martin Scorsese's documentary with extras.

This year, a LOT of old music finding its way into release. Believe me, I'm trying, my students recommend new stuff, I look at the charts, read reviews, trying to find new music of great interest. Guess what? I've heard it all before. Isn't there ANYbody out there interested in going for the edge? Pushing the envelope? Shit...hopefully, next year's list will have some new music instead of recycled old dominating like it has.

Once more, some feedback! Let's hear it! Use that "reply to all" option!

Steph Lovinger:

As a non musician but avid consumer I was startled to see how much of what I listened to last year was from my youth. I guess moving into a 55 and older community this year has me reliving my 'glory days'.

Here goes: (no order at all)

1. Tracks. Springsteen's 4 CDs of songs that didn't make the albums reminds me of how great his music used to be.
2. Jackson Browne's new acoustic CD. Never use a band when a single guitar or piano will do.
3. Black Eyed Peas. The only current group on this list. They gave a free concert at the college where I work right before the last election. After the noon show they gathered all the fans on buses and drove them to early voting (Florida). They were exciting and I love their politics. We tried, John. . . .
4. Philadelphia Folk Festival's 40 year anniversary CDs. haven't been there in years but always yearn for the northeast the last weekend in August. Play it a lot.
5. Melissa Etheridge's greatest hits.
6. Tom Rush's greatest hits. That guy has aged well.
7. Anything by Sam Cooke.
8. Beatles. We were playing more modern radio at work for the college kids until my district manager walked in when the radio had on a song about "shake your ass" Have been restricted to oldies radio ever since. I'm always amazed at how all the kids know all the words.
9. Early blues stuff of Bonnie Raitt. This completes the big 3 we always went to see at the Main Point- Springsteen, Browne and Raitt. Several times a year each and never a bad show.
10. Wonderful World by Louie Armstrong. Try listening to that without a smile.

God, I'm getting old. But it's been a fun trip.

Steph

Bonnie Wright:

Hartl, you're too cool.....

So, since June I've put together about 15 songs all by myself, from full orchestra to 5 part harmonies to country fiddles and pedal steel twangs, and so have to confess I just love my own stuff. I especially like my latest song about getting fat, called LARGE, which sounds like an off Broadway musical number. Now everyone runs from me fearing I will ask, "Do you want to hear my new song?!"

I rarely buy CD's or listen to the music on the radio--I mostly listen to talk shows and the news. What can I say.

But here goes my list of ten (free association--it's a very Freudian thing):

1. The Vesicare commercial--the medicine for bladder problems. Look at the little pipes playing jazz, and the pipe sounding music. Well rounded little project. I just love them.
2. University of Pennsylvania on hold music is actually pretty good. Try calling to make an appointment sometime.
3. Thomas Newman's stuff--great use of cool sounds. Like the soundtrack from American Beauty. Awesome sound engineering, now that I am attempting to learn that. I love the very subtle stuff way in the background that I wouldn't have noticed before June.
4. Soundtrack from Master and Commander, especially the waltz for acoustic bass and violin. You know, the one they played at the end of the movie. I also have this thing for drums, for some reason.
5. Soundtrack from Waking Ned Devine. This is especially appealing around March 17th, when I yearn for corned beef and cabbage.
6. I will always love the theme song from Naked Gun--that big band feel! Fortunately, there are lots of opportunities to hear this one with reruns.
7. Yes I love Kelly Clarkson. Damn she's good. Really makes me miss hearing Kathy Wilson.....

8. Yes I love Celine Dionne singing anything.
9. Josh Groban singing Oh Holy Night. Silky smooth.
10. And forever, Sinatra, and those fabulous arrangements.
11. Oh--I forgot to mention the lady behind me in Church Christmas Eve. Beautiful voice--her name is Mary Ellen Desmond and she sings jazz at the Four Seasons. Apparently she also sings country. What remarkable control and projection--always something greater to which to aspire.....

Bonnie Louise Wright MD

Steve Carl:

Okay, Dog, you asked for it.

My favorites this year include (in no particular order):

Bill Frisell "east/west"

The most interesting jazz guitarist alive (in my opinion) with two trios - one LA and one in NY. (Actually, the only difference is in the bass chair). From "Goodnight Irene" to "The Days of Wine and Roses" to "I Heard it Through the Grapevine" to psychedelic sounds, this guy covers it all. With Kenny Wolleson on drums and Victor Krauss (West) and Tony Scherr (East) on bass.

John Scofield Trio Live "EnRoute"

Usually, Scofield's playing makes me cringe, but he's in rare form on this cd, and Steve Swallow and Bill Stewart are also playing at the top of their form.

The Beatles "1"

I was 9 years old when I saw them on Ed Sullivan, and discovered that

music was really cool. This is a compilation of their #1 hits.

Jason Vieaux "Images of Metheny"

I find Pat Metheny to be a very boring guitarist, for the most part, though he has his moments. I admit, however, that he's written some beautiful music. Jason Vieaux is a classical guitarist working out of Cleveland that I've seen several times. The last time I saw him in at Moravian College, he had the most beautiful tone I've ever heard. I heard him play his transcription of "Letter From Home" 4 years ago in Cleveland, and was amazed at how well it fit the classical guitar. I'll listen to this cd many more times than I'll listen to anything from Metheny, that's for sure.

U2 "The Best of 1980 - 1990"

When I first saw these guys on the Tom Snyder show ca. 1980, playing "I Will Follow", I fell in love with, what was then, a very different kind of power trio. The formula may have been copied by others since then, but none have the talent that these guys have (in my opinion).

Esa-Pekka Salonen and the LA Philharmonic "Bach Transcriptions"

It's Bach. It's great. Enough said.

The Hilliard Ensemble Christoph Poppen "Morimur" J.S. Bach

What secrets lie hidden in the Chaconne? Who cares, it's one of the greatest pieces of music composed by any composer of any era. Period. Oh, and all of the performances on this cd are awesome (it's ECM, what do you expect).

King Crimson "B'Boom Official Bootleg Live in Argentina 1994"

Yeah, I love this stuff. Some amazing music. But you already knew that.

John McLaughlin "Thieves and Poets"

John McLaughlin is the greatest jazz guitarist of his generation, and certainly one of the greatest ever. In the evolution of the instrument,

there's Django, Charlie Christian, Wes Montgomery, then John McLaughlin. Of course there were others before Django (Eddie Lang), and plenty in between Christian and Montgomery, and Jimi Hendrix's presence was important, but these are the guys who changed history. I always loved Johnny's acoustic playing best, and this fits that category.

Miroslav Vitous "Universal Syncopations"

While searching the bins at Borders for something worth spending a coupon on, I found this 2003 offering. The band is Jan Garbarek, Chick Corea, John McLaughlin and Jack DeJohnette. These guys play well together. I guess they've known each other for a while. ;-)

Other faves for the year:

Miles Davis "Kind of Blue"

Ever since I first heard this in 1973, I've loved it. It was my intro to Miles.

The Police "Every Breath You Take - The Classics"

Their greatest hits.

Ahn Trio "Groovebox"

I saw this ensemble at Montgomery County Community College. Besides being very cute, they're great players. You don't get to hear "Riders on the Storm" on piano, cello and violin too often these days.

The Zombies "As & Bs 1964 - 1969"

Some of this stuff hasn't stood the test of time, but "She's Not There", "Tell Her No" and "Time of the Season" still got it, as far as I'm concerned.

As far as videos,

"Rock School" (not "School of Rock") is a documentary about an over the

top guitar teacher in Philadelphia whose students were invited to play at a Zappa festival in Germany. Some of his students are amazingly good. Others are just as amazingly bad. Worth the effort to watch.

Non-musical movies I'd recommend:

"Capote" - amazing performance by Philip Seymour Hoffman. I remember seeing Truman Capote on TV, and he got it down.

"Good Night and Good Luck" - about Edward R Murrow's crusade to tell the truth about McCarthy.

"March of the Penguins" - I'm amazed this was actually shown in theaters. Very well done and entertaining documentary.

"Grizzly Man" - documentary about a moron's journey to the bowels of a bear. The bear shits in the woods, and now we know who he shits.

"Kung Foo Hustle" - this one made me laugh out loud. I never would have rented it, but some guy on NPR mentioned in his best of the year. I concur.

Jack Loughhead:

OK, let's see. I can't remember what I had for breakfast, but then the music that influenced me this year should by definition have made a greater impact, right? Well, where's the pile of CDs that seem to be getting the most play? Oh yea, and by the way, could it be the XM I got for XMas will be creating a warp on my car listening habits? - it's nice to be able to see who and what you're listening to displayed, but I wonder how long before the novelty wears off. At any rate, in no particular order of preference:

1. "Project Z" - for all you Herring fans, a disc that mixes up a pile of different genres to good effect. Little Derek Trucks thrown in to spice it up.

2. "Unspeakable" - Bill Frisell. I don't know what it is, but I just love what he does. Maybe this came out last year (i.e., the year before last year), but it still got a lot of listens from me. Also check out THIS this year's live Frisell album, "East/West".
3. "This Way Up" - Pat Metheny. Antonio Sanchez rips me up. Saw Pat, along with Christian McBride, Antonio, and the not-related David Sanchez in Reading. What a great show!
4. "Mo Bop II" - Kazumi Watanabe. I think its Richard Bona on bass. Some serious high energy.
5. "Chavez Ravine" - Ry Cooder. Ry's back at it again, doing another round up of forgotten talent a la BVSC, this time in LA though. I hear there is a DVD, but I haven't seen that yet.
6. "Aerial" - Kate Bush. Finally, one that's not from a guitarist! Been a long time, but this double disc set has some incredibly beautiful stuff in it. Great job of making the mundane magical. I remember when the Mad Dog added "Babushka" to the end of a tape (I think it was a German language version of Gabriel's second album) - blew me away then, and she still is 30 years down the line!
7. "Multiplicity" - Dave Weckl. Great drummer, great band.
8. "Document" - Karizma. Not a new album, but for some reason I listened to it a lot this year. One of my all-time favorite live albums. Michael Landau gets a world of sound out of his guitar and effects. This disc goes way beyond the more "smooth" stuff on the studio recordings. Also listened a lot to Landau's "Live 2000" double disc (well, the title is something like that.)
9. Allison Krauss and Union Station - here, my Alzheimer's is starting to act up. I can't remember the title, nor what I did with the CD. I do remember that

Allison looks real good on the cover though - some things still leave a lasting impression!

10. Hate to be a copycat, but the Monk and Trane live at Carnegie has to go on my list too. An amazing performance, and what a great recording!

Well, time to order a few of these jems that y'all have recommended. Happy New Year!

-Jackson

Chico Huff:

Here goes, folks. Not much in the way of explaining each pick cause I don't write so good.

This is tough because every time I pick something to put on the list I think of 5 more I dig just as much.

Bartok "Concerto for Orchestra" (particularly the second movement "Giuoco Delle Coppie")
this piece has a passage around 2:56 that just slays me for some reason.

Daniel Mille "Entre Chien Et Loup" Never has accordion sounded so beautiful. Amazing composer.

Dòchas "An Darna Umhail" Trad group from Scotland. Sweet music. Killer bodhran player as well.

Derek Trucks various live shows from archive.org. Serious amount of soul.

Gorillaz "Demon Days" one of the best bands to come out this year though saying they're a band may be stretching a bit. Mostly samples but done with tons of creativity. This disc led me to the self titled

Gorillaz disc which I like better. Also led me to Dan the Automator who produced some of the gorillaz stuff.

Edger Meyer, Bela Fleck and Mike Marshall "Uncommon Ritual"
Man....Edger Meyer..holy crap can he play

The Shins "Chutes Too Narrow" Great band I discovered in the soundtrack of Garden State.

Milton Nascimento "Mistérios" from the disc "Clube Da Esquina 2 " The whole disc is great but this song is beautiful, especially the vocal thing at the end.

Miles Davis "The Cellar Door Sessions" Hard to believe Jarrett hates playing electric piano when hearing this. Tears it up!

Gonzalo Rubalcaba "Supernova" My favorite Rubalcaba disc.

Any way, there's tons more. I love music.

Peace and Happy New Year,

Chico

Paul Jost:

what a great idea dave!...

it's hard to pick just 10...along with a lot of new things, i've found myself re-discovering a lot this year too...here's a sampling anyway...can't wait to check out all the great stuff everybody's contributing...

jim ridl continues to be an endless wealth of inspiration...here's 3 cd's i've spent a lot of time with this year...

1. "door in a field", "five minutes to madness and joy", "your cheatin'

heart and other works"

2. sonny rollins, "the bridge"

3. miles, "kind of blue"

4. brazilian vocalist, rosa passos

5. scofield and lovano, (anything with them together or individually...lovano kills me)

6. al anderson "after hours" (thanks cheex...and hey cheex, this is off the path a little, but would you remember ever seeing an old ernie kovacks show where he used bartok's "concerto for piano and orchestra", showing a studio street scene...no dialog?...it remains a positive yet odd and hauntingly fuzzy memory...love to find those shows again)

7. i second chico, daniel mille "entre chien et loup", (and thanks to heath allen for this discovery!)

8. shirley horn "here's to life"...the quintessential romantic album...shirley and mandel at their finest...

9. all of randy newman...any movie, any song...a great american treasure...if you ever get the chance to catch him live with a full orchestra, do it!!...

10. i agree with, any movie with a thomas newman score...a distinctive voice...he's become one of the standards...actually, "just pick a newman" ;-)

happy new year everyone!

-paul

Ricky Zayas:

The Fat Man's Favorites

. Well, you asked for it. It's time for my top 10 of 2005. Unfortunately, I don't know how to write a short email, so skim it, read it, erase it...or pass it on to 10 friends, within the next 10 minutes, or something horrible will happen

to you, your family, your pets and a Taxi driver in New York City, by the name of Gupta Sanji Rajneesh.

I've got to thank the old Mad Dog, Dave Hartl and George Tucker (God rest his demented soul) for starting this tradition. Well, in a year which has been a major turning point in my life, as a musician (Translation: Too old to be hired by certain entertainment directors in A.C. I decided that teaching Mathematics is a far more compassionate business.) some of what I have been listening to is colored by a sense of rebellion against and disgust for the local entertainment establishment. Yes, folks I'm an angry little fat man. These are not all 2005 releases but they are some of the CD's which have kept me out of jail and/or the nuthouse.

Anyway here's the stuff with the "nice" notes.

1. Julio Barreto Cuban Quartet

<<http://www.bestbuy.com/site/olspage.jsp?id=228199&skuld=4821009&type=product>> "Iyabo"

Julio Barreto *Drums, percussion, vocals*

Carlos Puig *Trumpet, keyboard, vocals*

Manuel Orza *Bass, vocals*

Dany Martinez *Guitar, vocals*

Ravi Coltrane, Special Guest *Tenor & soprano saxophones*

Although Barreto and his boys are Cuban, (except for Ravi Coltrane) this is NOT a Cuban or Latin Jazz CD, despite the record company's attempt at marketing it as such. With the exception of "Cantar Bueno", a street rumba, reminiscent of Los Papines and Iyabo, whose intro is part of the initiation ceremony into the Yoruba religion, this is a fusion record. If you are expecting

to here bass and piano tumbao or cascara or songo from the drums, you will only get a little of that on “Latineo”, sans piano tumbao. As a matter of fact, Dany Martinez does the majority of the comping on this record. When Carlos Puig isn’t playing trumpet (a little too much vibrato at times, for my taste...O.K., we get that your Cuban) he’s playing synths...and damn well. He is also quite exploratory and angular on most of the tracks. The Interplay between bassist Orza and drummer Barreto is so unique. The kick drum and bass lock is frightening. I’ll be trying to transcribe what they are doing for awhile. Ravi Coltrane keeps developing. It’s never a bad idea to work with Cuban musicians. Like his former employer, Gonzalo Rubalcalba, Julio Barreto refuses to be pigeonholed.

2. Nguyen Le “MAGHREB & FRIENDS”

Nguyen Le el. & ac. guitars, fretless bass, vietnamese zither, programming

Karim Ziad Drums, Percussion

Michel Alibo Electric Bass

Bojan Zulfikarpasic acoustic piano

B’net Houariyat: Zahra Ban,
Kadija Haliba, Malika Rhami,
Saïda Madrani, Halima Zaiter vocals & perc (taarijet, bendir, naakkous, tar)

Wofgang Puschnig alto sax
Paolo Fresu trumpet
Alain Debiossat soprano sax
Stefano Di Battista alto & soprano sax

Mokhtar Samba	drums
Cheb Mami	accordion-synth
Djemaï Abdenour	mandola, algerian banjo
Mejdoub Ftati	violin
Aziz Sahmaoui	vocals
Mohamed Menni	vocals, perc (taarijet, bendir, derbuka)
Mehdi Askeur	vocals
Huong Thanh	vietnamese vocals
Hao Nhien	vietnamese flute
Gaëlle Hervé	vocals
Marielle Hervé	vocals
Jean Jacques Avenel	kora
Aly Wagué	african Peul flute & vocals

Many thanks to Denis Brousse and Dean Carrigan for turning me on to this guy. Nguyen Le is a French guitarist of Vietnamese descent, who has managed to combine fusion jazz with the musical traditions of Southeast Asia and North Africa. The influence of Alan Holdsworth is unmistakable on Nguyen Le's guitar sound. This is where the similarity stops. In every other respect, Nguyen is his own man. The writing on this record is exquisite and the rhythm section, especially Michel Alibo on bass is just killin'.

3. Los Soneros Del Barrio "Siguiendo La Tradición"

Ricky Gonzalez Musical director, piano, bata drum, coros

Frankie Vazquez Lead vocals, coros
Ruben Rodriguez Bass
George Delgado Congas, bongos, bata drums
Pablo "Chino" Nuñez Timbales
"Little Johnny" Rivero Congas

Rene De Jesus Bongos

Richie Viruet Trumpet
Peter Nater Trumpet
Raul Agraz Trumpet

Jose Davila Trombone
Ozzie Melendez Trombone
Vincent Velez Baritone sax
Carl Corwin Baritone sax

Ray Viera Background vocals
Sonny Bravo Piano

Nelson Gonzalez Tres

This is old school, hardcore salsa featuring some of the New York salsa scene's finest musicians. Frankie Vazquez is surprisingly strong and inventive on this album. I was a little disappointed with the intonation of the horn section on a couple of cuts, but the arrangements are really strong, nonetheless. The way Ricky Gonzalez enters into his piano solo on the first cut, "Canuto", is worth the price of the disk. It has got to be one of the all time greatest entrances into a Latin piano solo. Outstanding rhythm section work is heard throughout the disk.

4. Fruko Y Sus Tesos Pa' Goza' Con Fruko

Mario Rincon "Pachanga" *programming and arrangements*

Rafael Mejia Perez *Programming*

Julio E. Estrada Rincón (Fruko). *Arrangements*

Jorge Parra Jr. *Keyboards*

Julio Estrada Jr. *Keyboards*

Dante Vargas *Trumpets*

Carlos Latoche *Trombones*

Julio Estrada Lopez *Maracas*

Diego Gale *Congas, timbal, bongo, guiro and campanas*

Daniel Silva *Voz y coros*

Luis Moyano *Voz y coros*

Morist Jimenez *Voz y coros*

Raquel Zozaya *lead vocal*

Alvaro Pava *Coros*

This is, without a doubt, the most influential salsa group to ever come out of Colombia. Each of the tracks are energetic beyond belief, but the version of the old Chano Pozo standard, "Ariñañara" is just too cool. Apparently the bass is programmed or if there was a live bass player, he/she was not mentioned on the album credits. It sure as hell sounds as though an Ampeg Baby Bass is being played throughout the disk. If it's programmed, the cat who sequenced the bass line is a sequencing god. Dante Vargas on *Trumpet and* Carlos Latoche on *Trombone layer one of the sweetest horn sections ever, with simply flawless execution.* The stars of this CD are the arrangements. If this CD swung any harder, it would defy the laws of Physics.

5. Juan Luis Guerra y 440 "Fogarate"

The 440 band

Juan Luis Guerra	Lead Vocals, Guitar
Juan de la Cruz	Tambora, timbales, bongo
Pedro Peralta	Congas
Rafael German	Guira
Isidro Bobadilla	Percussion
Juan Colon	Saxophones
David Rodriguez	Trumpet

Special Guest Musicians of Note

Francisco Ulloa	Accordion
Diblo Dibala	Guitar
Mike Vinas	Bass
Ralph Irrizarry	Timbales
Robert Jeandor	Vocals

and a cast of thousands.....

This is, in my opinion, the masterpiece from the genius of Dominican music,

Juan Luis Guerra. Here he takes the much faster style of folkloric meringue tipico called “perico ripiao”, combines it with Soukouss music from Zaire, throws in real Bachata (not the cookie-cutter candy-ass rubbish which is polluting today’s airwaves) Salsa with an actual melody, a Rafael Hernandez tune, unforgettable melody lines, and some of the most brilliant Spanish lyrics ever written. Along with Ruben Blades, Juan Luis Guerra is one of the two most important lyricists in the history of modern Spanish Language Tropical music. It amazes me how he can write about Freudian psychoanalysis or how he hopes that it rains coffee, while criticizing the corrupt Dominican government, and sing these lyrics at breakneck tempos. Besides that he is joined by Soukouss guitarist **Diblo Dibala** from Zaire and the Dominican accordion wizard Francisco Ulloa, to create music that musicians will rewind over and over to “see how they did that” and so that dancers can burn a few thousand calories This CD is not available for some reason in the U.S., but you can find sealed copies on the web. If you never buy another Merengue CD, you must buy this one. Incidentally, if anybody knows Phil Polsinelli, bassist/composer/producer, who did time in Atlantic City, Juan Luis was his roommate at the Berklee College of Music.

6. The Half of It “DROP”

Dan Paul	Keyboards
Josh Orlando	Drums/ Percussion
Tony Peebles	Saxophones/ electronically treated saxophones
Dave Munch	Bass

This here is the Youth Movement in Jazz. being led by 4 young cats from Philadelphia (I do mean young...it's disgusting) who play with wisdom, well beyond their years. At times they are floating through time signatures which really tickle the Math major in me. At other times they sound like early Weather Report or the Eddie Harris/ Les McCann band, without compromising their original voice. These guys are young music gods. As good as this CD is, their live shows will blow your mind. The compositions serve as a springboard for some great improvising, as Jazz is wont to do. Here, thankfully, is music which is intelligent, emotional and a little crazy, and a little arrogant, which suits me just fine. Buy this record and go see them live. They play at Chris' Jazz Café quite a bit, and they burn.

7. Pepe Kalle & Nyboma "Moyibi"

Two of Zaire's most Popular singers Pepe Kalle and Nyboma teamed up in 1986, to try to bring a faster form of Soukous, which up to that point was not very popular in Zaire, as in other parts of Africa and the French speaking world. I couldn't find any info of the players, but the guitarist and the bassist shine. Fun record with some masterful counterpoint between the guitarist and bassist.

8. David Sancious and Tone "True Stories"

David Sancious	Keyboards, Guitar, Vocals
Ernest “Boom” Carter	Drums/Percussion
Gerald Carboy	Bass
Alex Ligertwood	Lead Vocals
Gail Boggs	Vocals
Brenda Madison	Vocals

David Sancious is always remembered as the guy who played keyboards with Bruce Springsteen, during the 70's. He then went on to work with Stanley Clark, Narada Michael Walden etc.

Before he went on the road with Sting or Peter Gabriel, Sancious recorded an album in 1978, which mixed a lot of Art and Classical Rock with some great mini-moog solos, in the fusion style. Alex Ligertwood, former singer with Brian Auger (he later went on to Santana) adds a certain strength and humanity to the music, all of which has spiritual subject matter. Keep in mind, that this is before the era of wonder synths. The most Sancious had going was a Poly-moog, in 1978.

Well he used the mini-moog, poly moog, Hammond organ and piano and he gets blood from a rock.

NOW FOR THE NOT SO “NICE” NOTES

9. A Life Once Lost “A Great Artist”

Robert Carpenter	guitar
Douglas Sabolick	guitar
Nick Frasca	Bass
Justin Graves	drummer

Robert Graves	vocals
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In my old age I have taken to listening to some Heavy Metal. Ever since my son was 16 he's forced me to listen to some of the most obnoxious, deafening and ugly music, that I've ever had to listen to. And of course there is always a vocalist who screams or grunts throughout the tunes, as though his genitals were being removed by a chainsaw. Well, it turns out that I happen to like the stuff, not only because of its arrogance and rebellion, but because they are the only new sounds that are being made in Rock and Roll. The cookie cutter music industry is only beginning to package this kind of new heavy music. So, thankfully, there are still some bands that have their middle fingers in the face of society in general and in the faces of record company executives in particular. One of those bands is Philadelphia based **A Life Once Lost** a band who consistently scares the audience with not only their persona, but by the fact that they are virtuosi on their instruments.

As in most Modern Metal music, A Life Once Lost makes the drums the lead instrument. There are unique powerhouse grooves along with inter weaving dense harmonies, which would make Schoenberg or Zappa happy. Put this all together with machine gun execution and a singer who sound like he's being operated on, without anesthetic, and it's darn fine fun for the whole family.

10. Lamb of God "Ashes of the Wake:

Chris Adler, drums
Willie Adler, guitar
Randy Blythe, vocals
Mark Morton, guitar
John Campbell, bass

This band is originally from Virginia and released 3 CDs before "Ashes of the Wake" Once again there is the front man "singing' like Atilla the Hun with a hangover, but the rest of the band plays

with virtuosity and some times pretty damn fast too. Adler is a beautiful drummer. Again, this band can't be pigeonholed and has its' central digit firmly in the face of society.

Well, folks, that's it for me. Hopefully, we can do this at the beginning of 2007.

Happy New Year,

Rick Zayas

Jeff Scott:

I must say I am blown away by the depth and breadth of the music selections by Dave and his many friends. I can't give you my top ten CD's because I am forever trapped in a time warp that ended somewhere in the mid 70s, and as such, I still own and purchase only 45s and albums. But seeing as I have been a part of Hartl's life since high school I feel inclined to answer his call for the top 10 musical things I experienced in 2005. Please be warned in advance that these selections have nowhere near the detail of Dave or The Fat Man. I'd also like to offer kudos to Stephanie for Tom Rush and Louis Armstrong -- two of my faves -- and to Bonnie for opening with the dancing pipes in the Vesicare commercial. Love it! That said...

1) XM Radio. There is a reason to come home and turn the radio on again. I can't begin to tell you how much music I have listened to that would have normally escaped my ears. Just locking in on the 50s and 60s stations has brought me more B sides of records than I could ask for. But then there is Fine Tuning, The Loft, Reggae, Jazz, Folk and plenty of new stuff if you are into that sort of thing -- all at your fingertips -- and with no commercials. I'm signed up for five years so I get it for under \$8 a month. I have it in the car and through a Polk tuner in the house. Trust me folks -- forget about Stern and Sirius -- if you like music -- get XM.

2) Jackie Wilson. Everything he ever did. XM has reopened my ears to just how amazing his voice was -- and this without even seeing him slide across the stage. One of the great early losses of our time.

3) "The President's Son" by The Matt Angus Thing. The best and most biting song about our current president you will hear. Matt Angus is a solid songwriter who lives near me. He owns Black Potatoe Records and every year he has a concert at the Red Mill in Clinton, New Jersey, where he brings in independent bands with no corporate backing or bull. Sometimes guys like Levon Helm stop by to join the fun. Matt has quite a library of songs, and this is one of his best. And funniest.

4) The Essentials Harry Chapin. Okay, I did buy one CD. I used to go see Harry at the Temple Music Fair in Ambler all the time. Especially A Better Place to Be, The Sniper and Dance Band on the Titanic.

5) Hearts of Stone -- The Jewels.
Trickle Trickle -- The Videos
Morse Code of Love -- The Capris

Gloria -- The Cadillacs

Shout Shout, Knock Yourself Out -- Ernie Maresca

Just some of my very early rock 'n' roll faves that I've listened to a number of times this past year.

6) Closing Music for "This Week in Baseball." Okay, I'm a little partial, having written the last 302 episodes of this show, but the music -- with its classy strings -- endures. It was originally stock music called "Gathering Crowds" when TWIB first used it in June of 1977. In the three decades -- and more than 700 shows since -- we've received more than 50 requests to get copies of it for weddings and such. It is still stock music, but now it's called "The Theme to This Week in Baseball."

7) "To Beat the Devil" -- Kris Kristofferson. I was going to say here how Kris implodes in multi-rhythm section fortissimo explorations of form/reality and total freakout, but Dave already used that for Coltrane. Damn you Hartl! So suffice to say that Kris sings off key and that makes him one of the few I can sing along with. And I just love this story/song.

8) The Intro and the Outro -- Bonzo Dog Doo Dah Band. Hey, you got to listen to it at least once a year. I mean, c'mon, Roy Rogers on Trigger???!

9) The credit music on "Witness." I can't really tell you who wrote it but it is haunting and sad and uplifting all at the same time. Add to the fact that my little brother worked on this film then died of leukemia at age 25 before it came out. So the very last credit is "In Memory of Tom Scott." I don't think one piece of music has ever made me cry so much.

10) And finally, it used to drive Dave nuts when I would close my show on WCUR - West Chester University Radio -- with the same song every single night. "DON'T YOU KNOW HOW MANY SONGS THERE ARE OUT THERE??" he'd scream. Then he'd say, "Ah well, let's go for a ride." He's probably thinking the same thing right about now, so in honor of Dave and his incredible wisdom and his stable of musically inclined friends, I'd like to close here with "Samba Pa Ti" by Santana. For old time's sake.

Jeff