

SEAN SCULLY'S 'AOTY' BY WEDNESDAY

THE ANGER, SAVANES, AND SICK HUMOR OF A FRESH BREAKUP ALL EXIST IN BLEDS. WJ LENDREMAN AND KATLYN HARTZMAN FIND THEMSELVES IN AN UNCOMMON PREDICAMENT — IT'S COMPLICATED, EVER-GROWING, ALMOST COMICAL. THE ALBUM IS DIRECT IN ITS STORYTELLING, YET THE EMOTIONS BEHIND THE SONGS ARE INCONSISTENT AND COMPLICATED. IN SOMEWAYS THE PAIN MANIFESTS IN BURNING HOT ANGER LIKE ON "WASP," AND SOMETIMES IT'S APPROACHED WITH A SMIRK LIKE ON "PHISH NO MATTER HOW IT'S COMPLICATED, IT RESULTS IN AN ALBUM THAT IS COOLING WITH HUMANITY IN EVERY LYRIC, WHETHER HARTZMAN IS SCREAMING INTO YOUR EAR OR DELIVERING A GUT PUNCHING LAMENT. BLEDS HAS A CORE CHARM AND AUTHENTICITY THAT TIES EACH SONG TOGETHER.

Taylor's AOTY:
BLUSH RESPONSE
ACOPIA

The Melbourne-based trio, Acopia, create a soundscape of lush, ethereal synths, soft percussion, and compelling strings within their third album *Blush Response*. It balances a melancholic groove with moments of resilience from songs like "See You In Everyone," "Falling," and "Chase Me," which cast a mirror over their listeners to confront their realities. The collective songs explore themes of emotional distance, and the weight of unspoken feelings. *Blush Response's* dream-pop, trip-hop, timeless feel allows a perfect environment for late-night listening for introspection or a crave you can't shake to flourish within its tracks.

ROXIE'S AOTY: **BABY** BY DIJON

When Dijon released *Baby*, a friend told me the album prompted a feeling of yearning. The feeling that she wanted to have someone that thinks of me in that way. "Dijon's work is often symbolic of love, but *Baby* brings a whole new and more intimate perspective to his craft. While his last album, absolutely, explored the challenges of young, sometimes toxic love, *Baby* invites us into the controlled chaos of long-term relationships. Through velvety instrumentals and a raw vocal delivery, the music oozes humanity and warmth. With claps, group harmonies, and even his own child's voice, we hear love's softness, while also having complex electronic bends and swells that pervade each song, reflecting the layered nature of love itself.

Essex Honey Blood Orange
Grace's A.O.T.Y.

Top Track: **Somewhere in Between**

After six years, Dev Hynes returns to his music moniker, *Blood Orange*, for *Essex Honey*, an unraveling of grief for his mother who passed away in 2023. This record refines the impressionist palette present in Hynes's other projects as he digests complex reflections on a life worth more than the earth and sky to him. His distinct sonic atmosphere disguises some of the biggest stars in modern music, including Caroline Polachek, Mustafa, and Lorde. Hynes proves his ability to harness any instrument on his search for truth, using the natural sound of field recordings in the hauntingly cavernous, "The Last of England". In "Somewhere in Between" Hynes faces grief not as a wound time will heal, but as one that will change alongside him.

TOGETHER OUTRAGEOUSLY BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE AUDIENCE AND THE ARTIST IS SYMBOLIC AND REQUIRES MUTUAL TRUST. DURING A SHOW, ENERGY IN THEIR MUSIC TO LINGER IN THE AIR AND POSSESS THE CROWD. ARTISTS ACCOMPLISH THIS THROUGH HOW THEY CHOOSE TO INCORPORATE DESIGN ELEMENTS LIKE SET, DANCERS, AND LIGHTING INTO THEIR LIVE SHOWS. WHETHER IT'S THE TRANSCENDENT ROSALÍA LISTENING PARTY AT THE MUSEU NACIONAL D'ARTE DE CATALUNYA, BARCELONA, OR GEORGE'S STRIPPED-BACK FREE PERFORMANCE IN BANKER'S ANCHOR PUBLIC PLAZA, AN ARTIST'S JOB IS TO MAKE INTENTIONAL CHOICES ABOUT HOW THEIR MUSIC IS PRESENTED. HOWEVER, THESE ELEMENTS ARE USELESS WHEN PRESENTED TO AN AUDIENCE UNABLE TO IMMERSE THEMSELVES IN THE EXPERIENCE, A TOPIC COVERED IN TYLER THE CREATOR'S NEWEST ALBUM, *DON'T TAP THE GLASS*.

THIS YEAR, THAT CONNECTION WAS REBUILT. WE ARE RELEARNING TO PUT THE PHONE DOWN AND ENGAGE WITH ART IN A MEANINGFUL WAY. IN THIS FIRST EDITION, *TOGETHER OUTRAGEOUSLY* COVERS OUR FAVORITE INTIMATE MOMENTS AND ALBUMS OF 2023.

TOGETHER OUTRAGEOUSLY BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

2025 **We Got Your Back**

Artists & Audiences Rebuild Trust

UNTIL RECENTLY, THE DELICATE TRUST BETWEEN AUDIENCE AND ARTIST HAS BEEN SEVERED. FROM DISRESPECTFUL AUDIENCES WHO DEHUMANIZE THEIR FAVORITE ARTISTS, TO INCONSIDERATE MUSICIANS WHO EITHER CANCEL SHOWS OR DELIVER HALF-BAKED PERFORMANCES, IT SEEMED AS IF A CONCERT WAS NOTHING MORE THAN A TRANSACTIONS.

POST-COVID WE LOST THE ABILITY TO CONNECT AN ART FORM BUILT ON COMMUNITY, BECAME A SOLITARY ACT. AFTER TWO YEARS OF LYING THROUGH SCREENS, WE HAD TO RELEARN THE ABILITY TO COEXIST. BUT AS THE BLUE-LIGHT WALL OF PHONE SCREENS BECAME A NORM AT CONCERTS, WE STILL STRUGGLED TO BE TRULY TOGETHER.

AFTER A SURGE OF STADIUM TOURS, PEOPLE YEARN FOR INTERACTIVE, INTIMATE, AND ENERGIZING SHOWS. STADIUM TOURS PROVIDE ALL SPECTACLE, NO SUBSTANCE. THEY TAKE THE CONNECTION AND KINSHIP OF MUSIC AND TURN IT INTO A PRODUCT SOLD FOR HUNDREDS OF DOLLARS, COMPLETE WITH FREQUENT MEDICAL SCARES AND STIFF CROWDS.

2025 Music Highlights **E.O. from No.1**

THE YEAR OF INTIMATE EXPRESSION

2025 ALBUM OF THE YEAR BRACKET

BABY!
By **DIJON**

DON'T TAP THE GLASS

By **TYLER THE CREATOR**

EUSEXUA

By **FKA TIGWS**

FANCY THAT

By **PINK PANTHERESS**

LUX

By **ROSALÍA**

PAIN TO POWER

By **MARUJA**

BLEEDS

By **WEDNESDAY**

R IS FOR ROCKET

By **ROCKET**

SON OF SPERGY

By **DANIEL CAESAR**

ESSEX HONEY

By **BLOOD ORANGE**

GETTING KILLED

By **GEESE**

WELCOME TO MY BLUE SKY

By **MOMMA**

LUCRE

By **DEAN BLUNT & ELIAS RÖNNENFELT**

BLUSH RESPONSE

By **ACOPIA**

THE SPIRITUAL SOUND

By **AGRICULTURE**

PRIVATE MUSIC

By **DEFTONES**

WINNER!

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