

8 ARTISTS WE'RE LISTENING TO RIGHT NOW



REGINA
SPEKTOR

- **HAILS FROM:** New York
- **SOUNDS LIKE:** Tori Amos
- **REASON TO CARE:** Since her breakthrough album *Begin to Hope* in 2006, Spektor has often been compared to Tori Amos, but she is so much more interesting than that. Yes, she has her share of pounding piano ballads, but they're infused with her quirky sense of humour – a turn of phrase that belies the tune, causing the listener to chuckle. She plays with her voice, making random noises like a toddler, giving the impression that she's experimenting with everything she does. Her new album, *Far*, is right on the mark for us Spektor fans. The track "Folding Chair" became a bit of a summer anthem to liven up a Saturday barbecue.
- reginaspektor.com



VIJAY
KISHORE



- **HAILS FROM:** Birmingham
- **SOUNDS LIKE:** Thom Yorke circa *The Bends*
- **REASON TO CARE:** Some have criticized Kishore for sounding too much like Radiohead, but in his defence, he doesn't actually mimic the group, he just wears his influences on his sleeve. And he does have a number of songs that couldn't sound more different than Radiohead. He released the single "Voice Thief" in June, which he followed up with his debut album *13 Rounds*. His music is melodic and inviting – songs you can mellow to without the depressive weight that comes with the work of most singer-songwriters.
- vijaykishore.co.uk



PASSION PIT

- **HAIL FROM:** Cambridge, Massachusetts
- **SOUND LIKE:** The Postal Service remixed
- **REASON TO CARE:** Passion Pit released their first EP early last year and we *still* have it in high rotation on our playlist. *Chunk of Change* was a masterpiece of home recording and gained a lot of industry attention. "I've Got Your Number" and "Sleepyhead" hooked us from the start and demanded immediate re-listening, whereas the track "Live to Tell the Tale" crept up slowly to assert its greatness. At the end of 2008, Passion Pit made the BBC's list for Sound of 2009. They released their first album, *Manners*, in May and it didn't disappoint. It's already clear that the band is evolving and refining their sound. Some songs may sound a little too much like The Postal Service, but all in all this is a solid record.
- myspace.com/passionpitjams



CAMERA OBSCURA

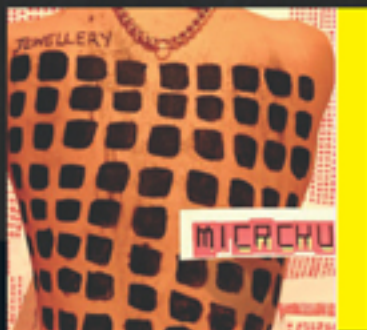
- **HAIL FROM:** Glasgow
- **SOUND LIKE:** Belle and Sebastian go dancehall
- **REASON TO CARE:** This great Scottish band released their fourth studio album just in time to take the strain off our well-worn copies of their previous records. Okay, fine, we listen to MP3s and they sound the same today as they did the day we loaded them, but you get the point. *My Maudlin Career* delivers everything you would expect from a Camera Obscura album, and that's a good thing. The music walks the line between mellow and upbeat, while Tracyanne Campbell's vocals are as light and atmospheric as ever, seeming to exist on some serene plane.
- camera-obscura.net



MOS DEF



- **HAILS FROM:** Brooklyn
- **SOUNDS LIKE:** A Tribe Called Quest-influenced
- **REASON TO CARE:** With the release of his fifth studio album, *The Ecstatic*, Def reasserts himself as one of the most exciting and distinctive voices in hip hop today. Not happy to simply lay rhymes over beats, Def is melody-focused and full of energy. "Casa Bey," the third single from the album, employs electric organs and a horn section to create a throwback sound of 1970s action theme music. And we're certain "Quiet Dog" is destined to become a club classic, uniting dance floors with its clapping beat.
- myspace.com/mosdef



MICACHU

- **HAILS FROM:** London
- **SOUNDS LIKE:** Club kids doing Captain Beefheart
- **REASON TO CARE:** Micachu (born Mica Levi) has one of the most original sounds we've heard in quite some time. Employing customized and homemade instruments, her songs are raucous, shambolic delights that make you want to move. Micachu released her first album, *Jewellery*, to rave reviews in March of this year. Check out the tracks "Lips" and "Just in Case."
- micachu.com



THE JUAN MACLEAN

- **HAIL FROM:** Providence, Rhode Island
- **SOUND LIKE:** Disco meets Ladytron
- **REASON TO CARE:** The Juan MacLean is the current project of former Six Finger Satellite guitarist John MacLean. Their critically acclaimed first album, *Less Than Human*, was followed up this year with *The Future Will Come*. This new album marked a closer collaboration between John and LCD Soundsystem's Nancy Whang. The two put together some seriously catchy dance beats, most notably "Happy House," which draws you in with a three-minute intro that slowly builds its layers until Whang finally hits the mic to deliver the song's infectious hook.
- thejuanmaclean.com



FANFARLO



- **HAIL FROM:** London
- **SOUND LIKE:** Beirut with pep
- **REASON TO CARE:** Fanfarlo come from the part of the indie-pop scene keen on using glockenspiels, mandolins and trumpets to create their sound. The band was formed in 2006 by Swede Simon Balthazar. They released three singles in the two years leading up to their debut album, *Reservoir*, which came out this past spring. "The Walls Are Coming Down" and "Luna" just beg for repeat listens on a road trip. ☺
- fanfarlo.com