



Aguirre Records (Pieter Eykens) Although I'm surrounded by records, tapes and CDs, going to live concerts is still my preferred music listening experience. The concert which struck me the most this year was by French group La Baracande – they play songs from the repertoire of French traditional singer Virginie Granouillet. Her songs were preserved during the 1950s and 60s and are now brought back to life by La Baracande, a band with members from Toad, France and Tanz Mein Herz. Hurdy-gurdy, bagpipe, violin and guitar form the instrumental foundations, stretching into long droning pieces. With the dramatic voice of Basile Brémaud falling in and out, the combination makes for a highly emotional performance.

This year I got deep into free jazz, mainly through the constant stream of releases put out by Italy's Holidays Records. Their releases of Konstrukt, Hüseyin Ertunç and Hartmut Geerken got me digging further into jazz territories. This new attraction to jazz and improvised music has led to Aguirre rereleasing Infinite Sound's Contemporary African-Amerikan Music LP sometime next year.

Someone should stop me, but I'm starting a third record label next year, the reggae reissue label Roots Vibration. Reggae has been a fascination for the last three or four years, and it's been an enjoyment to see some longrunning local sound systems keeping the roots reggae from the 1970s and 80s alive. Chalice Soundsystem and Jahmbassador Hifi play some of the purest and rarest roots tunes around on their homebuilt sound systems, which gives the music an extra quality. Next to a load of effects Chalice even use vintage tube amplifiers to alter their sound.

Also enjoyed: LAFMS festival, France, Enhet För Fri Musik, Yoshi Wada & Tashi Wada.

Fat Out/Samarbeta/The Burrow Islington Mill (Emma Thompson) Despite the dire events and losses of 2016, it has had some really special moments, both personally, for Fat Out and our Burrow. A personal highlight was encountering the other side, becoming the touring musician instead of the promoter for the first time in my ten years of runnings shows. Touring the UK with Water was a fucking riot. Playing our improvised ritualism, getting more and more forceful with every show, while tearing up a new city every night was insanity.

I made Security after visiting hours. I'd go to the hospital till 10pm, and go from there to studio. To make the record under those circumstances, and for that to be the thing that allowed me to show him me on the cover of The Wire before he left this Earth, and for him to say, "You're going to be alright son," no-one can take that away from me.

All I want to do is try and present black music, street music, in a way that proves: I am what I say I am, I'm proud of being clever, and at the same time being real and from the world. For The Wire to be like, we get it, that was a super interesting forward motion.

Katie Gately I've never properly listened to Prince because I'm a coward who's terrified of dancing. While his recent death didn't trigger a record listening binge, it did wake me up in a profound way. When the cause of death was revealed, I barrelled straight into an unassigned 'research project' on opiate addiction involving documentaries, lectures, NA meetings and a blur of Dr Drew podcasts. My armchair research quickly revealed that opiates prey upon survivors of trauma and abuse more than anyone else. Recognising the self-involved nonsense of my own life, I felt a natural ping to get up and out and well perhaps... serve others? A background check later, I found myself mentoring kids in East Los Angeles who are recovering from unimaginable forms of abuse. I had (and still have) absolutely zero qualifications to do this. Undeniably a hack, I'm a hack with empathy and decent listening ears. So far, this has been enough to guide me. I oddly owe this strange trip to an artist I've never listened to but I like to believe he spoke to me in another way. Thanks Prince, for being a human, struggling like the rest of us, but doing so much while here.

Vivien Goldman The best of years, the worst of years for I & I. Long cherished dreams of mine did manifest. With my compadre, August Darnell of Kid Creole fame, I wrote the book of the musical Cherchez La Femme – a madcap romp through the band's creation myth, it has a hopeful subtext of people managing to create a newfangled family, despite annoying differences. Our run at New York's La MaMa Theatre has led to new possibilities for the show (feel free to contact me with ideas!) That same week Idman)

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