

TD's Top Ten for 2022

Among my favorite memories of the year are local live music performances from the likes of Rosanne Cash & Jon Leventhal, Boz Scaggs, Amy Helm, Alasdair Fraser & Natalie Haas, Tuba Skinny and the amazing Ranky Tanky. Although I still haven't made it back to a physical record store, I've been trying to order recorded music directly from the artists themselves wherever possible. Noteworthy among this year's releases were the Tedeschi Trucks Band's four-part masterpiece *I Am The Moon* and Molly Tuttle's *Crooked Tree*, debuting her fabulous new band Golden Highway. But they are likely to get a lot of attention during the awards season. What follows is my winnowed down list of other favorites from the year from artists you may not have heard of but are worth your attention. Arranged in alpha order.

Berikely and Zama *Elaela* <https://berikelyandzama.com>

From Madagascar by way of France, a set of joyful, syncopated, bouncing tunes that feature the *kabossy*, the emblematic guitar of the Island and are irresistibly danceable. They sing about adventure, nostalgia, love and humanity. Universal appeal.

Fearless Flyers *The Fearless Flyers III* <https://vulf.bandcamp.com/album/the-fearless-flyers-iii>

Relentless, irresistible high energy instrumental funk grooves. If you can sit still while listening to this one, it's time to get your meds upgraded. Meant to be enjoyed at maximum possible volume.

Kevin and the Blues Groovers *Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed Blues*
www.basinstreetrecords.com

Only 23, Kevin Gullage is an old soul with deep NOLA roots, and his smokin' hot band will set your headphones on fire with a mix of originals and classics. No sittin' still while listening to this one! In a similar groove, check out Portland OR's "Soul Brother Number One" **Ural Thomas & The Pain** *Dancing Dimensions*. <https://uralthomasandthepain.bandcamp.com/album/dancing-dimensions>

Ericka Lewis *A Walk Around the Sun* <https://erikalewismusic.com>

From Asheville, NC, melodic Americana/country/folk from a singer songwriter probably best known for her vocals with NOLA traditionalists Tuba Skinny. She survived a significant health scare in 2020 to produce this excellent solo effort with 11 original songs. Also highly recommended: the debut from talented young singer/songwriter/guitarist **Jack Schneider** entitled *Best Be On My Way*. <https://jackschneider.bandcamp.com/album/best-be-on-my-way>

Larry McCray *Blues Without You* www.larrymccraylive.com

The first new album in 7 years from a well-traveled and legendary Blues Guitar master originally from Magnolia, Arkansas. He pulls a piercingly pure tone from his vintage Gibson Flying V. Jon Bonamassa and Josh Smith did him a solid by co-producing and releasing this gem on *Keeping the Blues Alive Records*. Also worthy of your attention: **Bernard Allison** *Highs and Lows* www.bernardallison.com How can you not love an album that includes a shout out in its liner notes to “Ms. Bessie Fleming at Malobe Hair Salon for keeping my dreads looking good.”

Jocelyn Pettit *Wind Rose* www.jocelynpettit.com

From the West Coast of British Columbia, this is but one of two 2022 releases from this gifted Celtic-style fiddler, stepdancer, vocalist and composer with strong Scottish connections. The title is a fitting metaphor for something or someone helping us to guide us along the way. Balm for the soul. From another shoreline (Orkney) be sure to also check out **Island Girls** *Beach Daze*, featuring the sprightly songwriting and instrumental artistry of Karen Tweed and Margaret Robertson. www.karentweed.com

Mirla Riomar *Afrobrasileira* <https://mirlariomar.bandcamp.com/album/afrobrasileira>

From Salvador de Bahia by way of Barcelona comes this fiery, passionate fusion of the rhythmic roots of the African and Indigenous favelas of Bahia with touches of jazz and soul. If you’re used to thinking of Brazilian music as bossa nova or samba, prepare to open your ears and eyes.

Jimetta Rose and the Voices of Creation *How Good It Is*

<https://jimettaroseandthevoicesofcreation.bandcamp.com/album/how-good-it-is>

From Los Angeles, deep soul from a community-based choir that blends elements of gospel, jazz and soul. Transfixing, Exhilarating, Comforting, Inspiring, Healing, Transformative. Don’t miss this one! Mantras for living in these times.

Unspoken Tradition *Imaginary Lines* www.unspokentradition.com

High energy, engaging contemporary bluegrass/newgrass from North Carolina. Great harmonies and outstanding musicianship and all original material. A burst of sunshine for a Winter’s Day. Also highly recommended: **Grain Thief** *Something Sour, Something Sweet*. <https://grainthief.com>

The Youngers *Nashville Again.* www.theyoungers.com

From SE Pennsylvania, Telecaster twangin' Roadhouse rockin' good old uptempo country rock. An entertaining mix of vocals and instrumentals, with stellar pickin' throughout. Highly enjoyable. Great driving music.

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Well that's ten (plus) but we have a tradition of offering a few more tasty items at no extra cost, just like they do down in New Orleans. Just to prove that we scan the globe to compile this list, here are three somewhat quirky but totally enjoyable mostly-instrumental efforts you're bound to enjoy:

From Hungary:

Babra & Magitza *Razem* <https://babramegitza.bandcamp.com/album/razem>

South Slavic and Polish acoustic rave up!

From Switzerland by way of Nashville:

Hermanos Gutierrez *El Bueno Y El Malo* www.hermanosgutierrez.ch

"where the haze of the desert meets the blue of a Kodachrome ocean."

From London:

Los Bitchos *Let the Festivities Begin!* www.cityslang.com

"instrumental psychedelic sunshine cumbia"

Plus one last special offering:

Small Island Big Song www.smallislandbigsong.com

A beautifully packaged collection of songs and performances from indigenous artists from islands all over the Earth that are threatened by global climate change, including an inspirational interpretive booklet.

Keep on rockin' in the Free World!

Tom David

If you're curious, an archive of earlier Top Ten lists can be found under the Music Tab at www.tdavid.net