

TD's Top Ten for 2011

Two of my favorite releases of the year come from New Orleans. You simply can't miss **Trombone Shorty's** *For True* (www.tromboneshorty.com) and I dare you to try and sit still while listening to **Galactic's** smokin' live album *The Other Side of Midnight* (www.galacticfunk.com). But both these exceptional discs are likely to receive too much mainstream publicity to make my official list, which celebrates my slightly more obscure faves of the year in alpha order.

Aurelio Laru Beya (*Sub Pop/Next Ambience*) www.subpop.com

The late great Andy Palacio really brought Garifuna music to the world's attention, and Aurelio Martinez very effectively picks up his mantle. You'll hear African, Caribbean, and Latin influences in these songs that are steeped in the culture, pain and transcendent joy of his people. It was recorded in a small fishing village in Honduras. A true delight!

Blame Sally *Speeding Ticket and a Valentine* (Ninth Street Opus) www.blamesally.com

You'll be captivated by the strong songcraft, stunning harmonies and lively spirit of these local Bay Area favorites. If you've enjoyed the Wailin' Jennys, give these gals a listen. For a Texas twist, check out the **Sweetback Sisters' Looking for a Fight** (www.signaturesounds.com)

The Bo-Keys *Got to Get Back!* (Electraphonic) www.electraphonicrecording.com

Vintage sounding, stirring Memphis soul from some veteran musicians who have played many a session there over the years. A mix of instrumentals and guest shots from the likes of amazing vocalists like William Bell and Otis Clay. This is the real thing. Tight!

Charles Bradley *No Time for Dreaming* (Dunham/Daptone) www.dunhamrecords.com

Smolderin' old school deep soul, ably backed by the Menahan Street Band. When he sings "I believe in your love" you just know that... somehow.. it's going to be all right. This is not to be missed... one of the truly essential releases of the year. Turn it up and get down!

Brigitte DeMeyer *Rose of Jericho* (www.brigitteDEMeyer.com)

I stumbled onto this self-released gem at the venerable Melody Record Shop in D.C. A gifted singer/songwriter in the vein of Kim Richey or Patty Griffin, with a voice reminiscent of Susan Tedeschi. For an independent release, it's beautifully produced with top Nashville cats backing.

Ruthie Foster *Live at Antone's* (Blue Corn Music) www.ruthiefoster.com)

She's an excellent songwriter and a sensational performer, and finally one of her records really does her credit. It builds just as a live performance should, and you'll be on your feet begging for more. Also check out the solo release from her lead guitarist **Hadden Sayers** *Hard Dollar* www.haddensayers.com (also on Blue Corn Music) Texas Twangapalooza!

Houston Jones *Queen of Yesterday* (Summerhill Records) www.HoustonJones.com

I hadn't heard of these Bay Area favorites until seeing them recently at the Freight & Salvage in Berkeley. Truly memorable songs that stick in your mind for days after you've heard them. Great driving music for those of you who spend as much time in the car as I do. Yes!!

Le Tout-Puissant Orchestre Poly-Rythmo *Cotonou Club* (Strut) www.strut-records.com

I dare you to try and sit still when this high energy dance music from Benin jumps out of the speakers. They've been recording since the 70's but hadn't performed outside of Africa before 2009. Now they're yours to enjoy as well. You gotta love this stuff!

Matt Schofield *Anything But True* (Nugene Records) www.nugenerecords.com

A new young International Grandmaster of the Stratocaster has emerged in the UK. What is it with these English boys and their guitars? I guess the somber weather gives them lots of time for woodshedding. It's certainly paid off in this case. Some truly awesome, breathtaking playing, recorded in NOLA. To be enjoyed at maximum possible volume!

Town Mountain *Steady Operator* (Pinecastle Records) www.townmountain.net

My favorite contemporary bluegrass album of the year from a very talented group of hipsters from the Asheville, NC region. Tasty musicianship, some wonderful instrumentals, and just the right amount of authentic hillbilly soul.

Lagniappe: Three additional terrific releases from young guitar avatars you should check out...

Ben Hall! (Tompkins Square) www.tompkinssquare.com Astonishingly fluid Travis-style picking.

Bombino *Agadez* www.cumbancha.com Hypnotic Tuareg desert blues from Niger.

Kenny Vaughan (Sugar Hill Records) Virtuoso Tennessee pickin' from Marty Stuart's band.