



Agent Fox Mulder - Top 20 Albums of 00's Decade

Written by Agent Fox Mulder – July 2011

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As I started listen to the music around 10 years ago, I was studying in secondary school at that time. I was changing from Pop-Rock teen hits music to classic rock band like Queen, Pink Floyd & The Beatles. That is ten years until now.

So I grew up with 70's music while the world was moving to 00's. The decade that everybody said that there will be lots of good things happen. Now 00's is over, with the answer I got that the world consecutively moves to civilisation age. But if's in good or bad way is very personal thing. When human population increases, complexity in social and cultures increases. It's harder to tell that whatever something is good or bad. As each other is always has his/her owns personal reason. So you may waste your time on trying to understand these reasons.

How the world changes, I couldn't say much. But for Thai life & culture, 00's is the decade that technologies, fashion, communication and social networking completely eradicate art. Thai life & culture that I thought that it is extensive and colourful. But the last ten years tells me that it was confined. This is something that we can't avoid if the life & cultures are still driving by technologies, fashion, communication and social networking like this. The world will be full of the people who wishes the same lifestyle. Use the same mobile phone brand. (Even it's function not just only as mobile phone anymore.) Consume the same media. At last we will not be different from machine, wake up and live with the same lifestyle and trend that intended by something that I call it "Industry & Business".

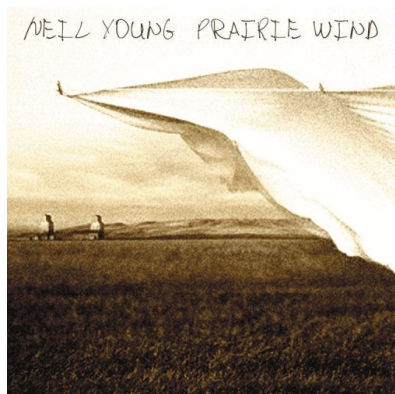
Fortunately, I still have music. Even most of them are trendy and fasion. But some of them are still pure art. It's undeniable that 00's is one of the great decade in music history. My list was created by compiling both my own personal favourite and critical reception. (But with higher weighted on my personal favourites.) They were also ranked in particular order. And the list includes both studio and live album that record in 00's.

This article dedicated to music and art which always inspire me in everyway.
Thanks to Mom, Dad, Oilyee' & friends for your loves, support and understanding on my love of music.
P' Sith, Meng (Lilium) and everyone at Thaiprog.net, the best music community in Thailand.
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Written by Agent Fox Mulder –Originally written in April 2011, Revised for publishing in July 2011

All of this article are my original writing except some of Kate Bush and White Stripes images caption quoted from wikipedia
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20. Neil Young - Prairie Wind ~ 2005

Even it is not received great rating compared to Chrome Dreams II. But this is my favorite Neil Young's release of the decade. With mixture of Folk, Country and Gospel. Also very Nashville-ish. This album reminds me of strange moment of my life working in Saraburi.

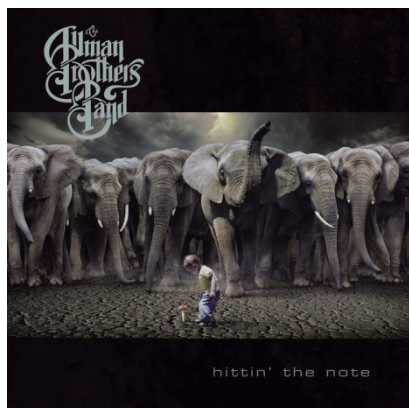
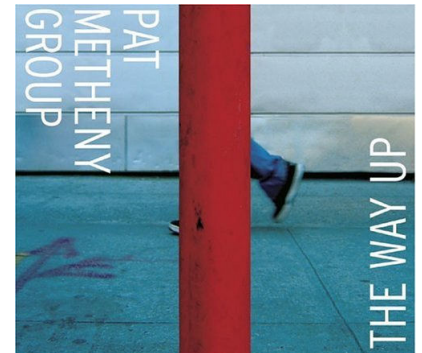
Hi-light = "Falling Off the Face of the Earth", "It's a Dream" & "When God Made Me"
Also worth to check out "Chrome Dream II" (2007). The third track "Ordinary Man", another great epic piece with 18 minutes long. And "Neil Young : Heart of Gold" DVD (2006), documentary and concert film by Jonathan Demme.

19. Pat Metheny Group - The Way Up ~ 2005

Whatever they call it "Progressive Jazz" or "Contemporary Jazz", it is my favorite Jazz record of the decade. Well produced, well composed & well recorded. Rich of melody and harmony. Antonio Sanchez played great drumming.

Hi-light = "Part One"

Also worth to check out "Speaking of Now" (2002) and Live DVD of Speaking of Now and The Way Up.



18. Allman Brothers Band - Hittin' The Note ~ 2003

Forget Duane Allman & Dickey Betts. The new duo guitarists will take you to another step. You will realize how much these two guys are great. With Warren Haynes on dirty hot lead tones from Les Paul and ES-355 and Derek Trucks on clean & clear slide tone on SG. Greg's voice is still rockin. The best Allman's album since "Brothers & Sisters".

Hi-light = "High Cost of Low Living" & "Instrumental Illness"

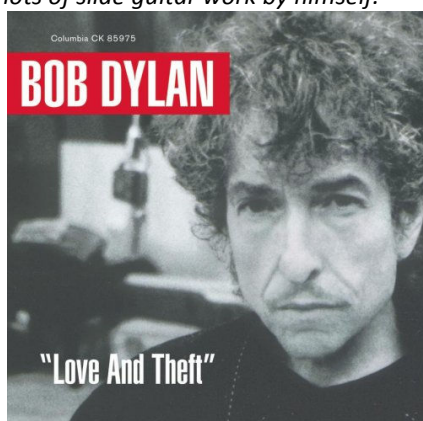
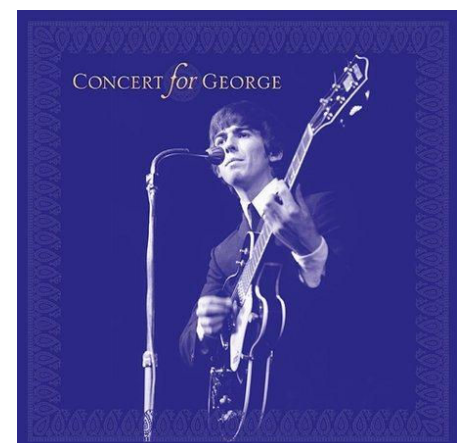
Also worth to check out "Live at the Beacon Theater" DVD (2002) and live album "One Way Out" (2004)

17. Various Artists - Concert for George ~ 2003

Live tribute soundtrack album, recorded on Nov 29, 2002 at Royal Albert Hall. A year after George Harrison's death. Combine George's Beatles material and songs from his classic 1970 album "All Things Must Pass". The performing band led by Eric Clapton as musical director with special guests including Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers, Jools Holland, Billy Preston, Ringo Starr and Paul McCartney. Make it historical night. And for Clapton fans, solo in "Isn't It A Pity" and "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" are always exciting. Clapton's Cornell 80 Amp delivers sweet and warm tone.

Hi-light = "Isn't It A Pity", "Something", "My Sweet Lord", "Handle with Care" & "While My Guitar Gently Weeps"

Also worth to check out "Brainwashed" (2002), last George Harrison studio album. With lots of slide guitar work by himself.



16. Bob Dylan - Love and Theft ~ 2001

Dylan critic's favorite of 00's. The great comeback album of him where he went back to the roots of rock. Combine everything from Traditional Folk, Rockabilly, Blues, Swing, Jazz to Rock & Roll. Sounds very much like 50's Chess record and rich of Americana feel. One of the most relaxing records he ever released.

Hi-light = "Tweedle Dee & Tweedle Dum", "High Water (For Charley Patton)" & "Mississippi"

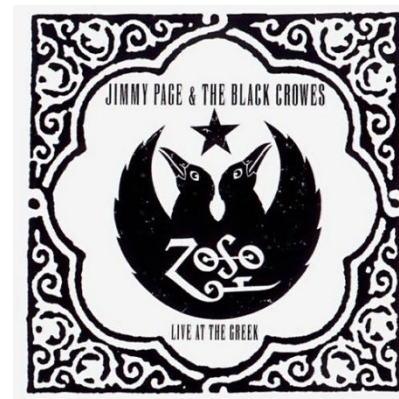
Also worth to check out "The Bootleg Series Vol. 8 – Tell Tale Signs", compilation album compile outtakes, unreleased tracks and live tracks from 00's period.

15. Jimmy Page & The Black Crowes - Live at The Greek ~ 2000

Forgotten live album. Although Page wouldn't release reunion Led Zeppelin live album/DVD. This album can take place at some point. The Black Crowes played Zeppelin, Page played Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac, B.B. King & Willie Dixon. Chris Robinson may not Robert Plant but his voice is really awesome with these blues tunes. Great live mixing especially guitar sounds. Their performance is superb and hot!!!

Hi-light = "Ten Years Gone", "The Lemon Song", "What Is And What Should Never Be" & "Oh Well"

Also worth to check out "Them Crooked Vultures" self-titled debut album (2009) of rock supergroup with John Paul Jones.



14. Paul McCartney - Chaos and Creation in the Back Yard ~ 2005

Sophisticated yet beautiful instrumental and arrangement. The sound is rich with harmony. Lots of great songs. Nigel Godrich on producer who produced Radiohead's OK Computer. Make this album the smoothest and gentlest McCartney record he ever released.

Hi-light = "How Kind Of You", "At The Mercy", "English Tea" & "Anyway"

Also worth to check out "Driving Rain" (2001), McCartney's pop-rock album which contains lot of great moments.

13. The White Stripes - White Blood Cells ~ 2001

The White Stripes's finest album. Very dynamic and so powerful. Instead of putting their blues influence, they displayed raw, basic, and primitive rock and roll sound. This record is breakthrough.

Hi-light = "Dead Leaves and the Dirty Ground", "Fell in Love with a Girl", "The Union Forever" & "I Think I Smell a Rat"

Also worth to check out their first two albums "The White Stripes" (1997), "De Stijl" (2000) and Live DVD "Under Blackpool Lights" (2004)



12. Opeth - Watershed ~ 2008

What do you expect from progressive death metal band? Death vocal with heavy metal rhythmic, lots of movement. Opeth has much more. Beautiful harmony, sweet orchestration, light & shade & symphonic instrumental. Per Wiberg's keyboard works is the key. Mellotron sound on Burden & Hessian Peel will melt you. And you might forget Dream Theater. If you love Mike Pinder's mellotron sound, don't miss this one.

Hi-light = "Coil", "Burden", "Porcelain Heart" & "Hessian Peel"

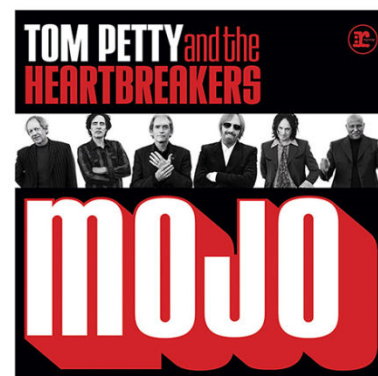
Also worth to check out "Blackwater Park" (2001), "Damnation" (2003) & "Ghost Reveries" (2005)

11. Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers - Mojo ~ 2010

8 years since their latest studio album, "The Last DJ". They came back with Blues theme with live feel. They recorded "Mojo" live all together in the same room and no headphone on their heads. Therefore, the result is fresh blues studio album. The performance is something you must experience. Especially the lead guitar, bluesy feels with very open, vintage, natural and uncompressed tone. Mike Campbell is god.

Hi-light = "First Flash of Freedom", "I Should Have Known It", & "Running Man's Bible"

Also worth to check out digital download live album "Mojo Tour 2010", compile their live performance from Mojo tour.





10. Kate Bush - Aerial ~ 2005

Kate Bush's comeback album of 00's, which is her first double album. First half is "A Sea of Honey", the section with individual songs. Second half is "A Sky of Honey", the conceptual section. The theme is amazing, surreal, strange, abstract, beautiful and unique. Clearly defines her style. Although it's a bit hard to appreciate. Her vocal performance and composition stills great. And beautiful artworks too.

Hi-light = The whole "A Sky of Honey" section

Nothing more to check out as this is only one of her release in the decade.



Kate Bush's look in 00's after a twelve year absence from the music industry during which Bush devoted her time to family and the rearing of her son, Bertie.



Clapton and Winwood share stage together at Madison Square Garden in February 2008. They were doing the blistering version of Otis Rush's classic "Double Trouble".

The 2008 Madison Square Garden shows were the first full Winwood-Clapton concerts in almost 40 years.

9. Eric Clapton and Steve Winwood - Live from Madison Square Garden ~ 2009

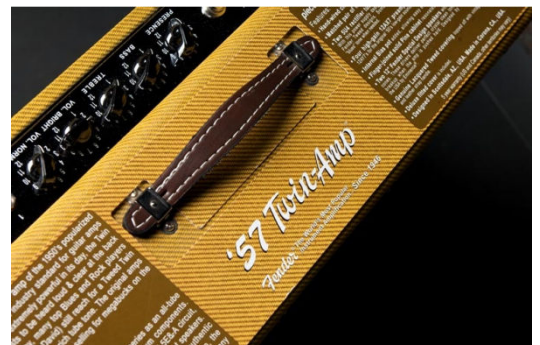
Clapton reunion with Winwood. Not just only Blind Faith material, but also Traffic, Hendrix, Ray Charles, Clapton and standard blues stuff. Clapton is on his top form even he was 63 at the time. Winwood's Hammond B3 is the one and only. The mix also one of the sweetest live mix I ever experience. Very warm, great bass, lots of mid and not too much treblely. Sound better than Cream reunion live at the Royal Albert Hall. This is my favourite clapton release of the decade.

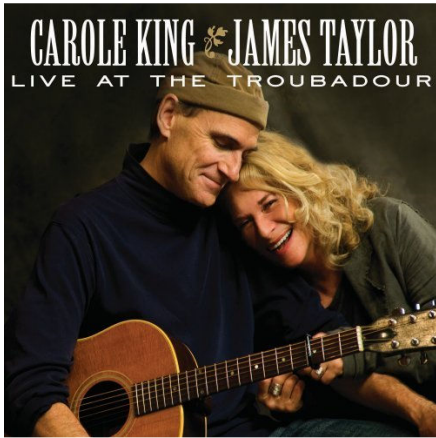
Hi-light = Hendrix's "Them Changes", "Voodoo Chile", Clapton's "Forever Man", Ray Charles's "Georgia on My Mind", Traffic's "Glad", "Pearly Queen" & "Double Trouble"

Also worth to check out Cream's "Live at Royal Albert Hall" album/DVD (2005) and Clapton's "Butterflies & Zebras... Fairy Tales" (2009) unofficial compilation album compiles live Derek & The Dominos stuff on Clapton's 2006-2009 Tour.



(Left) Fender Stratocaster Custom Shop LTD Eric Clapton Model with special color finishes, EC Grey and Daphne Blue. (Shown in EC Grey) Clapton's main axe during late 00's. (Right) Fender '57 Tweed Twin Reissue Amp, his main amp for gigs and recording sessions since mid 90's.





8. Carole King & James Taylor - Live at the Troubadours ~ 2010

Live album from two of the greatest 70's singer/songwriter artists. Recorded at legendary place, Troubadour club in California. Where early 70's famous american artist performed there. The atmosphere of this live album is unbelievable. Sound like they played in front of you at your home. The setlist is awesome, with more soulful and colorful version of the songs from their early 70's masterpiece albums, "Tapestry" and "Sweet Baby James". A must listen for 70's fans. King's set is my favourite.

Hi-light = "So Far Away", "It's Too Late", "Smackwater Jack" & "Will You Love Me Tomorrow"

Also worth to check out two of their masterpiece albums from the 70's. King's "Tapestry" (1971) and Taylor's "Sweet Baby James" (1970).



(Left) King & Taylor in the early seventies.
(Right) Their recent promo picture in the late 00's

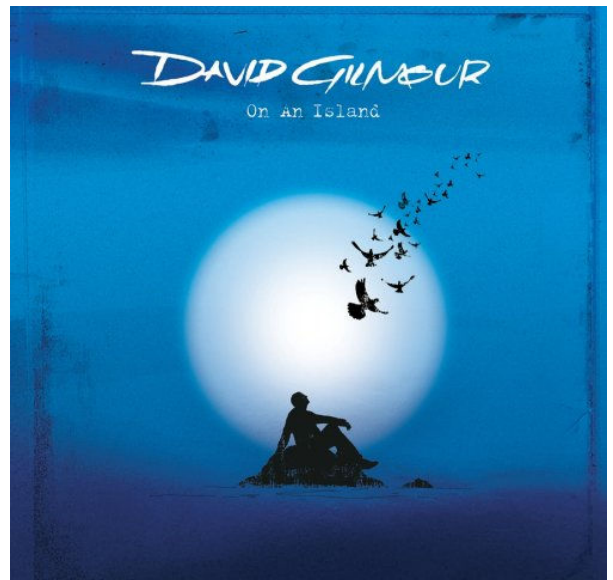


7. David Gilmour - On An Island ~ 2006

30 years after Dark Side of the Moon and Wish You Were Here, he's still master of time and space. Recorded at Astoria and Abbey Road. This album is very emotional, smooth and gentle. Every guitar he picked and every note he played sounds like heaven. With legendary hamonies from David Crosby and Graham Nash, a bit of vocal and Hammond B3 from Richard Wright and Orchestrations by Zbigniew Preisner. Black Strat, P-90 Gibson Les Paul, Gretsch Duo Jet, Hiwatt Amp, Fender Tweed Amp, Pete Cornish's distortion and BK Butler's Tube Driver. Anything sound better than this??

Hi-light = "On An Island", "The Blue", "This Heaven", "Then I Close My Eyes" & "Smile"

Also worth to check out Gilmour's semi-acoustic show "In Concert" Live DVD (2002), which stay on the top of my favourite live DVD of all time. "Remember That Night" (2007) and "Live in Gdansk" (2008) also great too. "Olympia" (2010) Bryan Ferry's album collaborates with lot of musician including David Gilmour also interesting.



(Right) Fender Custom Shop David Gilmour Stratocaster model, released in 2008. Recreation of David's long time beloved guitar "Black Strat"



(Left) Gilmour at Astoria with David Crosby & Graham Nash, On An Island recording session. Crosby & Nash contributed vocal harmonies on title track. They also support Gilmour live performance on selected venues in 2006 tours.



6. Blackfield - II ~ 2007

Collaboration between Porcupine Tree's Steven Wilson and Israeli artist Aviv Geffen. Sound a bit brighter than Porcupine Tree yet still dark, depressive and full of sorrow. Synth-string incredibly sounds beautiful & melancholy which is the most attractive thing on this album. Listen it and it will bring you to another world. If you are in the building, the wall/doors/windows will disappear. The place becomes misty till you cannot clearly see anything. The town becomes abandoned. If you are driving, the road will turn into endless road. If you are travelling, you get lost. If you are heartbreak, you may commit suicide.

Hi-light = "1,000 People", "Miss U", "Once", "Where Is My Love?" & "End of the World"

Also worth to check out their first album "Blackfield" (2004) and Live DVD "Live in NYC" (2007). And if you never try Porcupine Tree, "In Absentia" (2002), "Deadwing" (2005) and Fear of a Blank Planet (2007) are must-listen.



Porcupine Tree's Steven Wilson and Israeli rock singer Aviv Geffen collaboration, "Blackfield".



Idie Folk band from Seattle, Washington, Fleet Foxes. With their CSN&Y looks. Their debut album made a huge success in 2008.

5. Fleet Foxes - Fleet Foxes ~ 2008

The debut album of folk band, suddenly become classic after it was released in 2008. Some call their music as "Baroque pop". The main element is Folk with combination of Pop, Classic Rock, Choir-like harmony vocal, CSN/Beach Boys-like harmony vocal and a bit of Classical feel. But also has their very own unique sound. Robin Pecknold's voice sounds like David Crosby. Love a comment on Fleet Foxes youtube video that "I'm glad I have ears". Artworks look beautiful too.

Hi-light = Too hard to choose

Also worth to check out their second album "Helplessness Blues" (2011).





4. The White Stripes - Elephant ~ 2003

Album by 70's punk-rock band who discovered in the early 00's??? Their sound is something like Zeppelin with a bit of punk/garage rock added, very unique and antique. They use eight-track tape machine and pre-1960s recording gear without computer editing. Jack sings like Robert Plant. With JB Hutto Montgomery Airline, various Gretsch model through Big Muff and Fender Twin Reverb. Meg is the sexiest female drummer of all time. This album is truly perfection, minimalist and masterpiece. And make me wanna fix my broken Digitech Whammy pedal. Jack White is genius!!

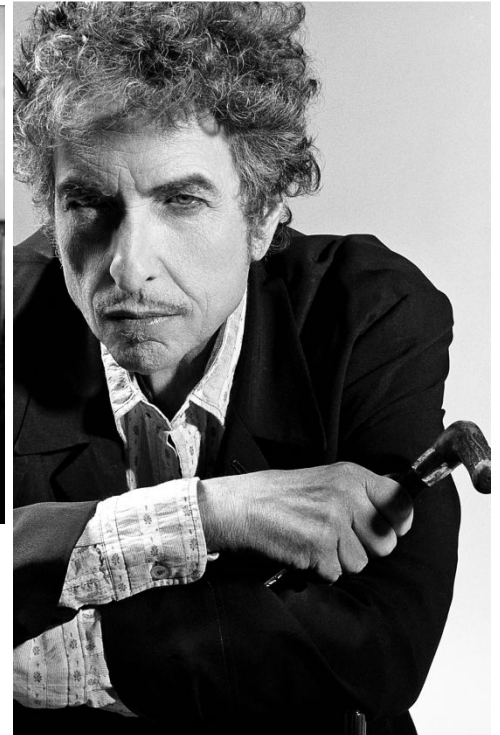
Hi-light = "Ball and Biscuit", "In the Cold, Cold Night", "Black Math" & "I Just Don't Know What to Do with Myself"

Also worth to check out "Icky Thump" (2007) their last studio album. "Under Great White Northern Lights / Under Nova Scotian Lights" (2010), the documentary film and live DVD filmed and recorded in the band's summer 2007 tour across Canada.



(Above) Meg & White's emotional scene from Under Great White Northern Lights documentary film in 2010. They sadly disband in 2011. The disband announcement specifically denied any artistic differences or health issues, but cited "a myriad of reasons ... mostly to preserve what is beautiful and special about the band".

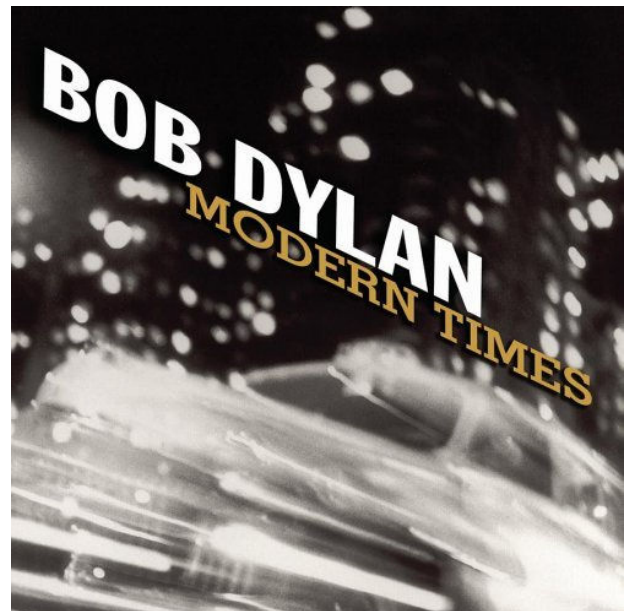
(Right) Dylan turned 70 in 2011. He continuously delivers masterpiece albums since 60's era until today. Especially the 00's era known as one of the best decade in his music carrer.

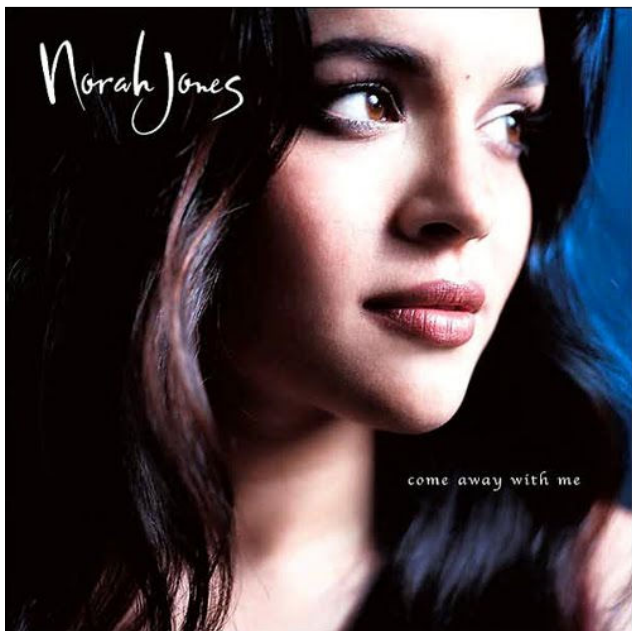


3. Bob Dylan - Modern Times ~ 2006

The best Dylan record since Blood on The Tracks in 1975. (Although some critics and fans mention "Love and Theft" but I prefer "Modern Times") Sound mellower and warmer compared to "Love and Theft" and "Together Through Life". The overall tone of this album sounds like you're in 50's Jazz/Blues club. Beautifully blends Jazz, Blues, Folk & Balladry into the musical form that you will never hear from "these days music". The performance and tone are fantastic. Most of the materials are adaptation from older composition. The finest version of Muddy Water's "Rollin' and Tumblin'" is here. Hi-light = Very hard to choose, every songs are great. But the outstanding are "Thunder on the Mountain", "Spirit on the Water", "Rollin' and Tumblin'", "Workingman's Blues #2" & "The Levee's Gonna Break". You see? This is very hard to choose.

Also worth to check out the last album of his 00's trilogy "Together Through Life" (2009) with Mike Campbell on guitars.





2. Norah Jones - Come Away with Me ~ 2002

Hi Norah. As I'm your boyfriend, it's not fair for other people to place you in the first. So the second should be OK. This is your debut album with make huge success both in terms of commercial and awards. Even some of hardcore Jazz fans may not happy with your success. Their reason is many softcore Jazz fans understand that this is "Vocal-Jazz" record, which actually it isn't. I don't see any point why they don't happy with your record with this reason. And they tried to compare you with the other "real" Vocal-Jazz girls. I don't care what is your music should be defined. Maybe it's blend of Vocal-Jazz, Country, Folk, Pop and a bit of Soul. You're something between Emmylou Harris, Billie Holiday and Ray Charles. And you are the sweetest and warmest voice girl I ever heard. Your voice makes me feels good any time I hear

yours. You also plays Wurlitzer piano, which make me think of legendary Ray Charles. And my dream is to have a girlfriend who can play Wurlitzer or Rhodes. OMG!!! I can't believe this, why you're so perfect to me.

You're sweetest and most lovely girl in music history.

Hi-light = "Seven Years", "Feelin' the Same Way", "Come Away with Me", "Turn Me On" & "One Flight Down"

When boy fell in love with girl. Everything is sweet. So it's worth to check out all of her album and live DVD.

But if you ask me to rank them, I rank them in this way. 1. Come Away with Me (2002) 2. The Fall (2009) 3. Not Too Late (2007)

4. Feels Like Home (2004) 5.Featuring (2010)



2004 "Feels Like Home" - Warm country & folk feels album. First three tracks are killer!!



2007 "Not Too Late" – Tones get darker, deeper yet beautiful and emotional.



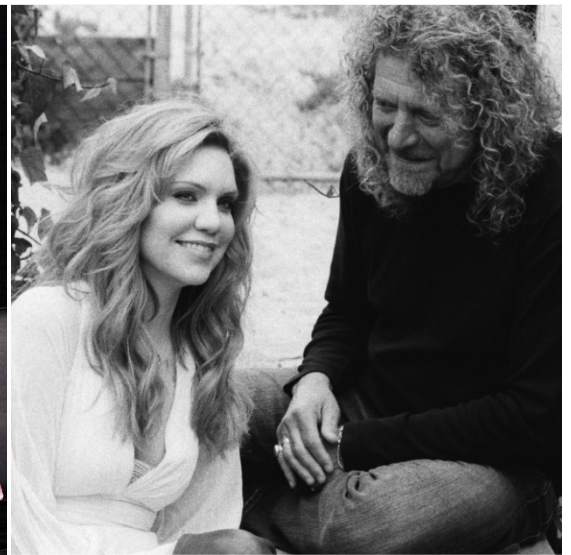
2009 "The Fall" – Comeback album after her break-up. With her new look and sound.



(Above) She is super cute and sexy while she's performing live!! Watching her played Wurlitzer piano is undeniable.



(Right) Her pretty face is the perfect mixture of east and west. Most people don't know that she is the daughter of Indian musician Ravi Shankar. Also the half-sister of Anoushka Shankar.



(Above Left and Right) Rock god and sweet bluegrass/country girl share the moment together. The chemistry is phenomenal. (Right) With T-Bone Burnett. *Raising Sand* won 5 Grammy Awards including Album of the Year in 2009 - 51st Grammy Awards.

1. Robert Plant & Alison Krauss - *Raising Sand* ~ 2007

The artist of this album should correctly rename to "T-Bone Burnett with Robert Plant & Alison Krauss". This record defines the sound of "dark and sexy americana". Collaboration between Rock god and Bluegrass girl with legendary T-Bone Burnett as the producer. T-Bone also chose all of the material in this record. All of them are old composition, none of them are original. The arrangement is fantastic with dark tone of americana instrumental. Combination of T-Bone's tremelo guitar, antique drums and percussion tone, pedal steel, banjo, double bass and Alison Krauss's fiddle. Not to mention Plant and Krauss vocal as T-Bone put them together and knowing that they could do something out of character and they could nail it. Krauss has sweet voice, while Plant has smoky voice.

And T-Bone helped to find melody that stand on it owns rather than just let them do pararell vocal harmonies. The result is the most breathtaking duo vocal performance in music history. Plant described working with Krauss on vocal as "fascinating learning curve". He mentions that he loves to do it again with Krauss. I also give a huge credit to T-Bone as he's the producer, material chooser, arranger, band leader and musician. The tone of this record is very "T-Bone-ish" with very dark intensity and treble-cut tone. Whether this record won 5 grammy awards or not. This record is absolutely extraordinary perfection. Therefore, it deserved the top album of 00's decade.

Hi-light = "Killing the Blues", "Sister Rosetta Goes Before Us", "Polly Come Home", "Through the Morning, Through the Night", "Please Read the Letter", "Trampled Rose" & "Stick With Me Baby"

If you never try Alison Krauss album before, the good one to start with is "Now That I've Found You: A Collection" (1995). A retrospective of her early career, with lots of beautiful song and amazing Krauss's vocal performance. Then you can drink coffee without sugar added. If you like the tone and feel of Raising Sand, Plant's followed-up "Band of Joy" (2010) is amazing with Raising Sand-liked and americana feel. Plant picked Patty Griffin to take place instead of Krauss. Buddy Miller also feature on this album. And for T-Bone fans, please check out "The Union" (2010). Collaboration between Elton John and Leon Russell with T-Bone on producer, they sound classic and fantastic.

