

ALBUM OF THE YEAR : 2025



as written by: j.money, 2026 for frogforestrecords.net

“Someone here tonight
won't hear that trumpet.
what a privilege,
what a joy.”

-ELUCID “Doves” - Armand Hammer, Benjamin Booker, Kenny Segal

>>music has become void.

>semi-efficient experiments with listening schedules and emotional readiness aside - last year was pretty rough. not only in the challenges presented in the final AOTY list and during its writing, but in the hidden challenges: the urge to “keep up” and strike a record with your emotional perception hammer while it’s still “hot”. snowballed with the ever expanding landscape of music being released every single day, not only within your given niche but the wider spectrum of music as a whole - calling to you with their intrinsic artistic weight. i can’t be everywhere listening to everything all at once and that fact...makes me sick; ill. it must be lived with - no amount of brute force can release me from this time prison in a way that feels true or worthwhile: we simply ride in the backseat of our mom’s Volvo station wagon for a fraction of a cosmic millisecond and whatever happens to pass by the window is the world as we know it. to reach beyond the glass and attempt to peel back the layers of a strangers moving wallpaper is something that i don’t think i want to be asked to do anymore. this is not a passive sanctioning off of our selves or some kind of degradation of those souls pushing forward, releasing energy and *inspirado* into the music world of this timeline - it’s simply a time-honored tradition of an old man clocking out at the Modernity Factory (29). there are glimmers of new music to keep up with, absolutely; and artists and groups i’ve followed for lifetimes that are still kicking and shining will not go unnoticed - but the idea that I or anyone else is going to keep up with a wide range of genres (or even just one or two, tbh) and their releases over the course of a calendar year is just no longer feasible or really even all that interesting to me: music has become void.

the systems that were slowly put in place during my high-school time to keep music off of my hard drive and onto the cloud-based streaming apps for the sake of “convenience” & “discovery” have quietly worked to devalue music in the eyes of the modern listener while opening up a portal to actual hell where thousands of grifters are able to scam and network their way to massive payouts for very little talent or effort of craft. the Tomorrowland promises of “access to ALL the music in the world!” and “now ANYONE can make & release music!” wading into the deep treacle sickness of capitalism and compounded generational trauma. this never ending competition for pennies-per-stream has infected even the the most revered of catalogs &

artists with many either falling into these devaluing cycles of releasing more and more music without considering any of it's actual quality or rolling over in their graves while being EDM remixed to hell and back via a record label executives last remaining brain cell. streaming services and distributors teaming up to castrate any starving artist with the dangling money carrot held over the pit of "just post consistently".

then you see how we talk about music online - so much black & white verbiage about something being either life affirming from actual God or not good in any way and was actually never good and everyone who said they liked it before was lying. such little room for subjectivity or texture - arguments waged by AI bots in comment sections about which artist had more streaming numbers than another artist or which one displayed the correct amount of political nuance when describing their own inner life - like at some point we were supposed to transition from fans who liked the music because it made our brain and hearts cum via vibrations into parasocial *investors* who only want to listen to something if it means that when we talk about how we really liked that later on in our short and stupid life, we'll be heralded by our peers as "correct" - the euphoric comfort of approval.

and i've always done my best to give all music a fair shake - from the biggest pop anthems to the glitchiest noise scum from the bottom of bandcamp - it all has value to me. i can't help it - my life has been equally impacted by the intimate acoustic concert of a hometown artist that i've followed for years (Morgan Sorne) as it was by my dad taking me to see Spider-Man 3 in a packed movie theater on a Saturday night. all art is important even the 100 million dollar corporate mandated two hour rendered light and sound hallucination about a children's toy brought to "*life*" by Toby Maguire in a cross-promotional product advertised to children in 2007. i think that at one time in my life, this fact gave me light and joy and allowed me to experience all art in a way that was somehow accurate to the actual weight of its creation - but now I just feel a great sense of dread. all the art getting uploaded and created every single day by all of the souls on earth and only a microscopic percentage of it ever gets the chance to be taken seriously by anyone outside of the creators. and the percent that gets the chance to be

perceived in any way is staring down the barrel of an algorithm & it's drones who are equally hungry for something to pile onto for clout and violently traumatized into skepticism on whether or not any of the art they see online is even made by a human being and worth interacting with at all. this game, i no longer wish to play.

the constant back and forth between all the elements of *the discourse* have exhausted me to no end and i have only participated as a mostly outside observer. watching Taylor get dragged all year for her horrible lyrics and shitty attitude felt "good" in the moment because all rich people should eat shit, get killed and have all of their blu-rays liquidated to my personal storage unit (in that order) - but as much as it feels like you're bouncing around in an ocean of people and their perceptions, all of that talk stays inside of the vacuum. most people live their lives, don't see your posts on twitter and don't think that deeply about the pop music that they listen to or the flight records of the person who paid the producers and songwriters to make them for her. and while this mindless consumerism is a problem in itself, it can be argued that understanding how shallow and hostile something is doesn't change the value that specific art has on the person who interacted with it. it's easy to dunk on pop music and how absurdly vapid it all is, but the big picture didn't really click until i was working overnight at the psych hospital and the autistic 18yo girl who has been molested by her father and uncle and grandfather since she was five years old and does not know how to read or write asked to listen to her "favorite music" on the hospital iPad and was crying and singing and dancing along to all the new Taylor Swift songs in her room. healing.

>>music has become void; but we must carry on.

>below I will informally list all of my artists with listened to/not listened to records for 2025 that I was keeping track of and my unofficial "single of the year 2025" watchlist. also listed will be a "last years model" section - originally intended to be full essays about a pair of records from the year(s) previous that I thought needed to be spoken on: i will now leave that speaking up to the records themselves and your perception of them.

>>music has become void. listen closely.

>**last years model:**

sumac - the healer

armand hammer - we buy diabetic test strips (2023)

>**LISTENED TO [2025]:**

PARIS, TEXAS

PLAYBOI CARTI

NIONTAY

EARLxSWEAT

>**NOT LISTENED TO [2025]:**

BENJAMIN BOOKER

PANDA BEAR

FKA TWIGS

BONNIE PRINCE BILLY

ELA MINUS

RICHARD DAWSON

RAP FERREIRA

IMPERIAL TRIUMPHANT

MIKE

PERFUME GENIUS

JOJO

CHURCH TONGUE

ULLA

BLACK MILK & FLY GOD

DJ BLACKPOWER

PIGS PIGS PIGS

PISSGRAVE

PINK SIIFUx2

DARKSIDE

JENNY HVAL

PELICAN

ALIEN WEAPONRY

IRON LUNG

SWANS

JASON ISBELL
HIROSHI YOSHIMURA
DEAFHEAVEN
DJ PYTHON
DJ KOZE
MELVINS
CLIPPING
INTENSIVE CARE & THE BODY
DOSEONE & STEEL TIPPED DOVE
CURCUI des YE
PLAYBOY CARTI
WHATEVER THE WEATHER
CURRENSY / HARRY FRAUD
THE BODY / INTENSIVE CARE
SABA & NO ID
PREMROCK
ZELOOPERZ
PREVIOUS INDUSTRIES
YOUTH CODE
WITCH
TROPICAL FUCK STORM
UNKOWN MORTAL ORCHESTRA
Mister Romantic & John C Riley
BRIAN ENO
ALAN SPARHAWK & TRAMPLED BY TURTLES
TURNSTILE
MIKE / TONY SELTZER
WITCHCRAFT
WILLIAM TYLER
SUMAC / MOOR MOTHER
JANE REMOVER
VENTURING
AYA
RAY VAUGHN
ANTHONY NAPLES
FLUME & JPEGMafia

NILS FRAHM
KALI ICHIS
THOM YORKE
ANDRE 3000
PYRAMIDS
FULL OF HELL
MODEL/ACTRIZ
DJ HARAM
PINK PANTHERESS
PILE
SOFIA KOURTESIS
REALYUNGPHIL
GARBAGE
BLACK MOTH SUPER RAINBOW
LIL WAYNE
BRIAN ENO / BEATTIE WOLF
TOMU DJ
RIFF RAFF 2
WAVVES
BRUISER WOLF
SCARS ON BROADWAY
BIG THIEF
SLICK RICK
GOYA
GUERRILLA TOSS
GUCCI MANE
BIG FREEDIA
KAROL G
MATMOS
MERZBOW
THEE OH SEES
EVIDENCE
MIZMOR
MAXO
LAZER DIM 700
CLIPSE

OPEN MIKE EAGLE

JUSTIN BIEBER?

Tyler the creator

Mariah carey

Kid cudi

Chevelle

Blood orange

Gibbs / alc

NEPTUNIAN MAXIMALISM

GHOSTFACE KILLAH

Craven/James

KAYTRANADA

JID

CHANCE

Panopticon

CITIES AVIV

STREET SECTS

GHAIS GUEVERA

SHRAPKNEL (2)

NINAJIRACHI

WRECK AND REFERENCE

BORIS

JOEY BADASS

END IT

SOULFLY

IGLOOGHOST

El Cousteau

Cardi B

HEALTH

Ho99o9

MADLIB/Rhapsody

Purity Ring

The Mountain Goats

Ty Dolla Sign

Mobb Deep

One of nine

Claude overtone
John 5
TiaCorrine
BLACK MILK/FAT RAY
THE ORB
BLUT AUS NORD
SQUAREPUSHER
SCORPION MILK
ANYSIA Kim/tony seltzer
FOUR TET/william Tyler
SHRAPKNEL (3)
DANNY BROWN
ELDER
Zelooperz
BRUISER/HARRY
u-ziq
MAKAYA MCRAVEN (4eps)
Dorian concept
PERTURBATOR
Jeezy/DJDrama
ACTRESS
TIM HECKER
M.Sage
AKAI SOLO
KALI UCHIS
03 GREEDO
AGRICULTURE
GEESE
Myka9/blu
Quelle Chris
RAP/segal
PULSE EMITTER
OPN
ROSALIA
CONJURER
Zach hill/lucas abela

Anysia/seltzer
hit boy/alc
kodak black
bell witch/aerial ruin
carrier
teyana taylor
tortoise
bicep
machine girl
geologist
aesop rock (2)
BIG L
navy blue
billy woods (2)
primitive man
m.sage
orville peck
claire rousay
saba (2)
de la soul
12k gotti
summer walker
wormrot
lazer dim 700 (x3)
rrocket
miffle
MAVI
the bug/ghost dubs
de la soul
wale
ragana/drowse
rodry ricch
geologist
shordie shordie
asap ferg
coco bryce

salimata
big krit
redveil
voices from the lake
21 savage
ulver
osamason (x2)
kodak black
witchcraft
crippling alcoholism

SINGLE OF THE YEAR WATCH [2025]:

Illegal - Pinkpantheress
2024 - playboi Carti
El camino - Paris, texas
Run it - clipping
LANDGRAB - mavi/earl
Copycats - Danny/underscores

WHAT YOU SAYING - LIL UZI VERT

>

frog forest records dot net

forever

>shine.
>shine.
>shine.
>shine.
>shine.
>error0444
>shine.
>shine.
>shine.
>shine.
>error0444
>error0444
>shine.