

Jani Ojala

The Top 100 Albums of the 2010s

"Quest for AOTD"

My favorite albums released between 2010 and 2019

THE TOP 100 ALBUMS OF THE 2010s

Quest for AOTD

Jani Ojala

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Kustantaja: BoD – Books on Demand, Helsinki, Suomi

Valmistaja: BoD – Books on Demand, Norderstedt, Saksa

ISBN: 978-952-80-3598-5

CONTENTS

Opening Words	p. 9
TOP HUNDRED	p. 15
#100. Michael Arthur Holloway – <i>Guilt Noir</i>	p. 16
#99. Anna von Hausswolff – <i>Dead Magic</i>	p. 18
#98. Ka – <i>Honor Killed the Samurai</i>	p. 21
#97. Hammock – <i>Mysterium</i>	p. 23
#96. Beach House – <i>Bloom</i>	p. 25
#95. Adrian Younge & Ali Shaheed Muhammad – <i>The Midnight Hour</i>	p. 28
#94. Tim Hecker – <i>Konoyo</i>	p. 32
#93. Interpol – <i>El Pintor</i>	p. 35
#92. Dave Holland – <i>Prism</i>	p. 37
#91. King Gizzard & the Lizard Wizard – <i>I'm in Your Mind Fuzz</i>	p. 39
#90. Thy Art Is Murder – <i>Dear Desolation</i>	p. 41
#89. Ólafur Arnalds – <i>re:member</i>	p. 44
#88. Red Pill – <i>Look What This World Did to Us</i>	p. 46
#87. A\$AP Rocky – <i>LiveLoveA\$AP</i>	p. 48
#86. Mikko Joensuu – <i>Amen 2</i>	p. 50
#85. Skyzoo – <i>Music for My Friends</i>	p. 53
#84. Kanye West – <i>Yeezus</i>	p. 55
#83. Lubomyr Melnyk – <i>Corollaries</i>	p. 57
#82. Enslaved – <i>Axioma Ethica Odini</i>	p. 59
#81. Freddie Gibbs & Madlib – <i>Bandana</i>	p. 61
#80. Kairon; IRSE! – <i>Ujubasajuba</i>	p. 64
#79. Iiro Rantala – <i>My Finnish Calendar</i>	p. 66
#78. Holy Monitor – <i>Holy Monitor</i>	p. 69
#77. Ludovico Einaudi – <i>Seven Days Walking: Day One</i>	p. 72
#76. The Necks – <i>Unfold</i>	p. 75
#75. Theophany – <i>Time's End: Majora's Mask Remixed</i>	p. 78

#74. Car Seat Headrest – <i>Twin Fantasy</i> [2018]	p. 80
#73. Oranssi Pazuzu – <i>Värähtelijä</i>	p. 83
#72. Gunn-Truscinski Duo – <i>Ocean Parkway</i>	p. 86
#71. Alex G – <i>Rules</i>	p. 88
#70. King Gizzard & the Lizard Wizard – <i>Nonagon Infinity</i>	p. 91
#69. Mount Eerie – <i>A Crow Looked at Me</i>	p. 93
#68. Leonard Cohen – <i>You Want It Darker</i>	p. 95
#67. Dead When I Found Her – <i>All the Way Down</i>	p. 98
#66. Ramin Djawadi – <i>Game of Thrones: Season 8</i>	p. 101
#65. Mglá – <i>Exercises in Futility</i>	p. 104
#64. Stam1na – <i>Elokuutio</i>	p. 107
#63. Nick Cave & the Bad Seeds – <i>Ghosteen</i>	p. 109
#62. Cigarettes After Sex – <i>Cigarettes After Sex</i>	p. 112
#61. Janelle Monáe – <i>The ArchAndroid</i>	p. 114
#60. The Tallest Man on Earth – <i>I Love You, It's a Fever Dream.</i>	p. 116
#59. Anderson .Paak – <i>Malibu</i>	p. 118
#58. Parquet Courts – <i>Wide Awaaaaake!</i>	p. 121
#57. Magnus Öström – <i>Searching for Jupiter</i>	p. 124
#56. Death Grips – <i>The Money Store</i>	p. 126
#55. Neil Halstead – <i>Palindrome Hunches</i>	p. 129
#54. Radiohead – <i>A Moon Shaped Pool</i>	p. 131
#53. Mild High Club – <i>Skiptracing</i>	p. 134
#52. Saib. – <i>Around the World</i>	p. 136
#51. Freddie Gibbs & Madlib – <i>Piñata</i>	p. 139
TOP FIFTY	p. 143
#50. Elzhi & Will Sessions – <i>Elmatic</i>	p. 144
#49. Kids See Ghosts – <i>Kids See Ghosts</i>	p. 150
#48. Moonsorrow – <i>Varjoina Kuljemme Kuolleiden Maassa</i>	p. 154
#47. Ty Segall – <i>Manipulator</i>	p. 159
#46. Altar of Plagues – <i>Teethed Glory and Injury</i>	p. 163

#45. Nils Frahm – <i>Felt</i>	p. 167
#44. Milo – <i>So the Flies Don't Come</i>	p. 171
#43. Bell Witch – <i>Mirror Reaper</i>	p. 175
#42. Tame Impala – <i>Currents</i>	p. 177
#41. Jason Isbell – <i>Southeastern</i>	p. 182
#40. Against All Logic – <i>2012-2017</i>	p. 187
#39. White Lung – <i>Deep Fantasy</i>	p. 190
#38. Harakiri for the Sky – <i>Arson</i>	p. 193
#37. The Ruins of Beverast – <i>Exuvia</i>	p. 196
#36. Fleet Foxes – <i>Crack-Up</i>	p. 198
#35. Mount Eerie – <i>Now Only</i>	p. 201
#34. Frank Ocean – <i>Blonde</i>	p. 203
#33. Big K.R.I.T. – <i>K.R.I.T. Wuz Here</i>	p. 210
#32. Jóhann Jóhannsson – <i>The Theory of Everything</i>	p. 217
#31. The Caretaker – <i>An Empty Bliss Beyond This World</i>	p. 223
#30. Spectral Lore & Mare Cognitum – <i>Sol</i>	p. 227
#29. William Tyler – <i>Modern Country</i>	p. 230
#28. Nick Cave & the Bad Seeds – <i>Push the Sky Away</i>	p. 235
#27. Casualties of Cool – <i>Casualties of Cool</i>	p. 240
#26. Seattle Symphony / Ludovic Morlot – <i>Become Ocean</i>	p. 245
#25. Arcade Fire – <i>The Suburbs</i>	p. 247
#24. Kendrick Lamar – <i>good kid, m.A.A.d city</i>	p. 254
#23. Gidge – <i>Autumn Bells</i>	p. 266
#22. Dead When I Found Her – <i>Eyes on Backwards</i>	p. 272
#21. The Necks – <i>Mindset</i>	p. 279
TOP TWENTY	p. 283
#20. Adrian Younge – <i>Something About April</i>	p. 284
#19. Danny Brown – <i>Atrocity Exhibition</i>	p. 291
#18. Woods of Desolation – <i>Torn Beyond Reason</i>	p. 297
#17. The Roots – <i>undun</i>	p. 301

#16. Beach House – <i>Teen Dream</i>	p. 307
#15. Yosvany Terry – <i>Today's Opinion</i>	p. 315
#14. The Radio Dept. – <i>Clinging to a Scheme</i>	p. 320
#13. Vektor – <i>Terminal Redux</i>	p. 326
#12. Scott DuBois – <i>Autumn Wind</i>	p. 333
#11. Tim Hecker – <i>Anoyo</i>	p. 337

TOP TEN	p. 343
#10	p. 344
#9	p. 356
#8	p. 367
#7	p. 375
#6	p. 379

TOP FIVE	p. 389
#5	p. 390
#4	p. 414

TOP THREE	p. 423
#3	p. 424
#2	p. 434
#1	p. 442

OPENING WORDS

These opening words, as well as all the album-reviews, were written in the last four months of 2019.

It was the most significant decade of my life. I became an author, writing my first novel at age sixteen (2013), formed (2016) and ran a Facebook music-group for three years, went through puberty, collected over 350 (and counting) CDs, gained (2010), lost (2011), gained again (2014) and lost again (2018) weight in noticeable amounts, made all my best friendships (2010-2013), lost my virginity (2012), learned about love and family and myself, survived severe depression after years (2014-2017) of struggling. Smoked for the first time (2010), drank for the first time (2010), had my first kiss (2011).

The older I get the more poetic the ring is in the words that fate chose for my first words in this decade "*voi vittu*" ("*Oh fuck*"). Throughout the years and the changes, the losses and wins, the opportunities and misfortunes... to start it all with "oh fuck" originally felt regretful. Not because I was 13 and my parents didn't like me cursing. Just, wished I'd planned the words better.

Wanna know why those were the words I instinctively uttered in that moment? Because I'd just looked at the clock, and it was two minutes past midnight. I had plans in my mind, to do *or say* something extravagant, something super meaningful that night when the 2000's turned into the 2010's. I hadn't gotten around to finishing those plans before the moment arrived.

I don't know how much of that fact served a poetic purpose in the coming ten years. That stagnation. But *eh*.

But just... I didn't know how these ten years would turn out. Of

course. I got no idea where I'll be in 2030 *now*, so it makes sense. But I knew I was gonna get a lot **older** in these ten years, in calendar-years, at the very least. As the ten years passed, the words "oh fuck" turned out to be *just* the words to say at the dawn of such an unpredictable, satisfying but also painful decade.

I remember every situation, setting and scenery I was in when a year has turned during this decade. The in-the-moment-ness of accidentally cursing at the fact a new decade had begun, cannot and should not get understated as the launching pad for that process of enjoying a NYE. It has turned into my favorite day of the year. Themes of *ending the old and beginning the new* hit me at every contemplative moment in any given December. It's an amazing opportunity for reflection, a good time to look back on things you have accomplished, as well as things you want to do better, and wish would *turn out better*, come new year. I'm a believer in that the energies, the mindsets and things you do on the last night of the year, is what defines the next year of your life in some ways, at least symbolic ones. There's big and small magics going around on a NYE. And this is the third New Decade's Eve I'll experience in my life. It's my favorite holiday of the year, a time of reflecting on the past and what went right or wrong - as I mentioned earlier - but above all, a time for looking forward, finding that security that life has certain beginnings and endings, even if your life doesn't start anew because of just one magical tic of the clock. This infatuation with New Year's Eve has even gone as far as to inspire my entire view of life. What is life, but a story?

A time of new beginnings, and looking back, I've been giving it conscious effort to have 2019 culminate things in my life, as if it was a big NYE in and of itself. Turns out, many of the culminations I didn't even have to carry out myself:

- I published *Helicopters*, the final part on the *Oulunsalo Fiction*-book trilogy. This one has been building up since 2014. The first

chapter of *Ice Road* was written in July of that year, along with sketching out the beginning of a story. Hurries regarding other books went aside finally in December, when one snowy, hazy morning I made the outlining of the main events of the whole book, leaving room for possible sequels. *Ice Road* was released in June 2016, *Talisman* in September 2017, and *Helicopters* April 2019. In October I released the collector's edition compiling the entirety of *Oulunsalo Fiction*, and in November released *The Oulunsalo Gallery*, a book detailing the creative process that happened over the course of five years.

- I got two jobs. This one has been building up since 2016, when I started culinary school. There were difficulties along the way. I hardly knew jack-shit about food when I went to school in the summer of that year, but 2,5 years, and seven apprenticeships later, I got the diploma. 100 Euro-scholarship as well (2018). Later, in Autumn 2019, I moved to Syöte which is a big skiing resort in Lapland, to work there as a chef.
- I moved out of my parents' house. This one's been building up since 2017, when I started actively wanting it... but being in school, I had to wait it out. Moving out to my first apartment alone was a big step in and of itself, but as I started working at Syöte, I of course had to move there as well...
- My brother got married. This was none of my doing, but it's been technically building up since 2012, when those two lovebirds got engaged.
- I got 4,000 ratings on RateYourMusic. Yeah, I know, not as big as the other ones, but I had to mention it, since the site is where I primarily post my lists. Back in 2016, when I was really dipping my feet into water with all these diverse genres and such, I came across a user on RYM. He's a friend of mine there, and a Norwegian native. He had 4,000 ratings. Now I dunno what it was, but looking at this number just instantly gave me an instinctive idea, that *this is a guy who knows about music*. It

looked like an *accomplished number* in a sense. In the years following 2016, as my number of records I'd heard and rated, rapidly grew and I surpassed all my online-friends, the only time I really felt like the mission was complete, was reaching four thousand. And this January, I did it. I mean listening to music is just for fun, right? For me it's fun to set extravagant goals and then meet them.

- I quit smoking. This time for good. I'd been doing it longer than my mother did when she was younger, which had to me been the absolute limit of how far down that road I'll ever go. This one had technically been building up since 2016, when I had a 6-month break from the shit but unfortunately ended up relapsing. On the last day of September this year, I finally put an end to it. I will never take one hit off of one cigarette again.
- I started working on a new book that's to be called *Broken Shadows* (named after the archival Ornette Coleman album). A crossover project that sees characters from six of my earlier books, making appearances, as well as my first real step into the Fantasy and Dystopia-genres.

The making of this list has been an active goal for the last 2 years, and I base these 100 picks off the **2,000+ albums** from 2010-2019 that I have heard.

Now this decade's just days away from ending. Welcome to my list of the greatest albums released in the last ten years.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Albums that almost made this list.

You *know* there's gonna be a bunch of these, with how extensive the research for this list was.

The Midnight Hour - *Luke Cage* (2016)

William Tyler - *Goes West* (2019)

Tycho - *Dive* (2015)

Gil Scott-Heron - *I'm New Here* (2010)

Sandwell District - *Sandwell District* (2011)

Jay-Z - *4:44* (2017)

Glue Trip - *Glue Trip* (2015)

Alex Sipiagin - *Destinations Unknown* (2011)

Andy Sheppard - *Romaria* (2018)

Tangerine Dream, Woody Jackson, The Alchemist, Oh No & DJ

Shadow - *The Music of Grand Theft Auto V: Volume 2 - The Score* (2013)

Forest Swords - *Engravings* (2013)

Lars Danielsson - *Liberetto II* (2014)

Flying Lotus - *Cosmogramma* (2010)

Slowdive - *Slowdive* (2017)

Teyana Taylor - *K.T.S.E.* (2018)

AtomA - *Skylight* (2012)

William Tyler - *Blue Ash Montgomery* (2014)

Wooden Shjips - *V.* (2018)

Jonny Greenwood - *Phantom Thread* (2018)

Madlib - *Madlib Medicine Show: No. 3 - Beat Konducta in Africa* (2010)

Insomnium - *Shadows of the Dying Sun* (2014)

Kiasmos - *Kiasmos* (2014)

Dead When I Found Her - *Rag Doll Blues* (2012)

Tiluland - *Axes of the Universe* (2010)

Jonny Greenwood - *The Master* (2012)

Wadada Leo Smith - *Ten Freedom Summers* (2012)

Glue Trip - *Glue Trip* (2015)
Pallbearer - *Foundations of Burden* (2014)
Vijay Iyer - *Far From Over* (2017)
Kendrick Lamar - *Section.80* (2011)
Steven Wilson - *Grace for Drowning* (2011)
Low - *Double Negative* (2018)
Janelle Monáe - *The Electric Lady* (2013)
Overkill - *Ironbound* (2010)
Milo - *Things That Happen at Day // Things That Happen at Night* (2013)
Nails - *Unsilent Death* (2010)
King Creosote & Jon Hopkins - *Diamond Mine* (2011)
Fire! Orchestra - *Enter* (2014)
Om - *Advaitic Songs* (2012)
DJ Rozwell - *None of This Is Real* (2014)
Anderson .Paak - *Ventura* (2019)
Deathspell Omega - *Paracletus* (2010)
Manu Delago - *Circadian* (2019)

AND WELCOME TO THE 2020s!

Top 100

#100.

Michael Arthur Holloway

Guilt Noir

(2016)

(Dark Jazz)

It is sheer coincidence that the most brutal-looking, (I'll say it) ugly cover-art out of the whole list is here first. The bulk of this cover-art is taken up by what I hope is not a dog or a similar animal's burnt bones, but a burnt doll. Random black markings around its' neck-area, a mouth that looks like the inside of a spoiled cantaloupe melon. Holes for eyes, and two perked-up ears, and some white lines that look as if the photoshop-process was unfinished. The background is just a wall of wooden planks, with a night-shaded sepia overlay.

It's the lowest-ranking entry on the list – not a small accomplishment in and of itself, given the extent of big names even on the "Honorable Mentions"-section – but also the one putting Michael Arthur Holloway/**Dead When I Found Her** in an *elite* grouping of **just three** artists that scored three entries on the list. I didn't want to be as selective as I had to be, when limiting down the albums I wanted to talk about, into just hundred. A lot of people I've seen, who make big lists like this, make it a necessity to have a "one album per artist" limit, and I just think that makes no sense.

The first and so far last Jazz venture by Holloway, this is really the first time the EBM-artist stretched his own artistic limits as far as this. And it was a successful venture. Granted, there's no denying the **Angelo**

Years of getting better at writing, discovering music, and trying to somehow merge those things into a form of authorship where my words could do a service to music I truly love...

Years of building up a little community around it, being at both ends of introducing somebody to a record they fucking love that changed their lives.

When you read my top 100 albums of the 2010s, just know.
It has all
been leading up
to this.



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