

# New Spins

Fresh takes on old faves make for sweet music. **By Rachel Shatto**



Girl in a Coma

It's always great to find a new song that speaks to you, but there's nothing quite like singing along with a favorite tune. This month is all about revisiting old favorites—with a fresh twist.

**Adventures in Coverland, Girl in a Coma (Blackheart Records):** I was late to the game with Girl in a Coma, an all-female, mostly queer band, but it was well worth the wait. Their latest release, *Adventures in Coverland*, is a compilation of covers from a diverse number of source materials, from The Beatles, to Patsy Cline to Selena. While cover albums rarely do justice to the original tracks, *Adventures* gleefully bucks this trend with an album packed from start to finish with catchy, oh-so-memorable tunes that effortlessly blend the familiarity of favorite hits with a new, uniquely melodic GIAC twist. Highlights include covers of David Bowie's *Labyrinth* hit "As the World Falls Down" and The Beatles'

"While My Guitar Gently Weeps," plus the rockabilly swinging "Yo Oigo," a brand new track. And always front and center is vocalist Nina Diaz's breathy, smoky, sometimes ethereal voice, which conjures Siouxsie Sioux with a hint of Patsy Cline. Don't wait to check out Girl in a Coma like I did, because *Coverland* is an auditory adventure well worth taking. ([girlinacoma.com](http://girlinacoma.com))

**Greatest Hits...So Far!!!, Pink (Sony Music):** It's nearly impossible to feel unhappy listening to Pink, the pop star who has made musical gold out of anthems for outsiders, tomboys and queers. She has spent the last decade creating booty-shaking singles that exemplify "club hit" but still manage to espouse subversive feminist messages—wrapped in deceptively mainstream pop packages. In addition to classics like the prissy-girl send-up "Stupid Girls" and her call to dance floor action in "Get This Party Started," the album

features her latest single, "Raise Your Glass," a fist-shaking celebration of embracing your misfit status. For anyone who lived through the '00s this album is a welcome, nostalgic tour of nights out at the club with girlfriends who, if they were anything like mine, knew every word to "Trouble." *Greatest Hits* is a well-deserved celebration of a brilliant career... so far. ([pinkspage.com](http://pinkspage.com))

**Amanda Palmer Performs The Popular Hits Of Radiohead On Her Magical Ukulele, Amanda Palmer (8ft records):** The always delightfully weird and musically audacious Amanda Palmer continues to surprise and delight with her latest offering, a seven-track set of her acoustic reinterpretations of six Radiohead songs—on the ukulele. The album was born of a vision Palmer had of playing "Creep" on the ukulele while standing on the bar in a Middle Eastern club. After which, on a whim, she bought the instrument and discovered a

new, unexpected passion for it. The result is an intimate, alternately sweet and abrasive, album that's as unique and endearing as its maker. The standout track, "High and Dry," pairs Palmer's ukulele stylings with piano backing. The sparseness of instrumentation lends each song a sense of immediacy and proximity—it's the closest thing to a one-on-one jam session with Palmer. Available digitally and on a limited edition vinyl release only, this album is a treat for Palmer fans and experimental music alike. ([amandapalmer.net](http://amandapalmer.net)) ■



Amanda Palmer

## True Colors *The For Colored Girls* soundtrack is raw, real and redemptive.

We have to admit, we were worried when we heard the film adaptation for the Tony-nominated play *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf* was in the hands of Tyler Perry, a filmmaker more known for stereotyping his female characters than for his exploration of female identity. What was his plan for this beloved feminist 1970s play? Even poet and *Colored Girls* playwright Ntozake Shange expressed concern about Perry's "characterizations of women as plastic."

Turns out, much to the relief of fans of the source material, Perry, for the most part, pulled it off. He gave audiences a dark film with tough storylines, brilliantly performed by a bevy of talented actors. Perry's work can be melodramatic to a fault, and it seems that where

he toned it down in the film he channeled that sense of drama into the soundtrack. And we're glad he did. It's a solid compilation of female artists including Macy Gray (who plays a back-alley abortionist in the film), Gladys Knight, Estelle, Sharon Jones and the Dap Kings and others.

Many of the songs on the soundtrack tell stories of struggle and help to support the personal conflicts of the film, which include rape, abandonment, love and infidelity. The darker tracks are balanced well with jazzy cuts like "All Day Long (Blue Skies)" by Estelle and the upbeat "Without a Fight" by up-and-coming lesbian fave, Janelle Monae.

The soundtrack pays tribute to the original play's lyrical form, including a track of the cast performing poetry fragments. Included in the mix

are Whoopi Goldberg, Janet Jackson and Loretta Divine.

A standout track on the album is Nina Simone's "Four Women" which explores stereotypes of African American women. The song was misunderstood by some who, when it was released in 1966, thought it racist and was initially banned. Now, this powerful blues piece has been recreated and features both Nina Simone and her daughter.

If the film is about struggle, the soundtrack is about transcendence. [**Jillian Eugenios**]



# Q+A

## Kate Cooper

As one-half of the Australian duo An Horse, Kate Cooper is in a particularly sweet position. Having made a successful EP, *Not Really Scared*, and an LP, *Rearrange Beds*, having gone on tour with indie icons Tegan and Sara, and now, with a new album produced by the heralded Howard Redekopp in the works, An Horse is poised to take its career to the next level. If the always humble Cooper, can get over the fact that people actually do love her music, that is. More interested in reading in bed than in partying after shows, Cooper is not what you'd expect from a successful young musician on the rise—and she likes it that way.

### How did you get started playing music?

My dad had a vinyl collection that I learned a lot about music from. He took me to the Rolling Stones when I was 16 and after that I talked my dad into getting me an electric guitar. I'm pretty sure I was 19 before I could play anything remotely interesting.



### What inspires you?

I draw inspiration from everyone and everything around me. Most normal people have a diary and get it out that way. I have to write about it and sing it and project it to the world, when I should probably just keep a diary and it'd be better for everyone. I think I write to keep my demons at bay.

### Rearrange Beds seems to have an undercurrent of romantic yearning. Was that intentional?

I guess historically people sing about relationships. I think maybe we write about love because we can't speak about it clearly, so we sing about it. I write about what's going on around me, and those things are mostly relationships. I think people often assume what my songs are about. I've always sort of resisted putting my lyrics up because I want people to figure it out for themselves, and often it will be different to them than it is to me. And I like that.

### Do you feel that your sexuality plays any sort of role in who you are as an artist and a public figure?

I just am who I am. I know that sometimes it plays more into people's personas, but it never has for me. I was really lucky in my upbringing in that it was completely acceptable to be a huge homosexual. I feel really blessed because there are definitely people who have had a much harder deal with it. It seems better though in general for kids these days, which is great. It seems like a more welcoming environment than it did before. But, then again, you see the story about the girl getting in trouble for wanting to bring her girlfriend to the prom and realize that there's still a long way to go. ([anhorse.com](http://anhorse.com))

[**Janelle Sorenson**]