

Give new music releases for holiday gifts

The holidays are a great time of year. Besides the fact that you get all this time off from school to relax, sleep in and do absolutely nothing, you also get presents that you hope will provide amusement for the rest of the break.

Here are 10 albums that were released this year that you probably don't have, but should, in no particular order.

• Team Dresch, *Personal Best*. The definitive punk record of this year, if not the decade. Four, angry lesbians from various bands around the Northwest, who got together to make one monster of an album filled with passion, catchy-hooks and great musicianship.

• Royal Trux, *Thank You*. Former-Pussy Galore guitarist Neil Hagerty and Jennifer Herrema have teamed up to create some blues from hell. Herrema's raspy voice combined with Hagerty's excellent guitar work and singing combine to make some stellar tunes.

• Bettie Serveert, *Lamprey*. Yes, they write catchy songs with great female vocals, and they are from the Netherlands.

• Archers of Loaf, *Vee Vee*. This band is four guys from Chapel Hill, N.C., who play catchy songs and push the bounds of guitar rock. They have some strange and tripped-out guitar sounds reminiscent of Sonic Youth, but somehow the material is very melodic and accessible. After you hear songs like "Harnessed in Slums" or "Underdogs of Nipomo," you will have them in your head for the rest of your life.

• Luna, *Penthouse*. This is the second album from the former Galaxie 500 members. This band creates very mellow and moody music. Some of the material sounds a bit like the early Stone Roses, perhaps because the singers' voices are similar. This is music for those long winter evenings when you are relaxing in your armchair and watching the snow fall outside the window.

• Hazel, *Are You Going to Eat That*. Hazel is one of Portland's best bands, and if you're not familiar with them, this is a good way to catch up. Hazel plays really good



LES ZACZEK/Emerald

All this music could be yours if you ask your relatives and friends for the right presents, so don't wait too long and give them time to shop.

pop-punk, much better than the recently commercialized MTV bands in the same genre. The interplay of female and male vocals creates great harmonies. The guitars, bass, and drums crank out the catchy riffs that stick in your mind like honey. The quality of the songwriting and recording surpasses Hazel's first excellent album, *Toreador of Love* and shows the band developing and expanding their sound.

• Liz Phair, *Juvenilia*. If you found the second Phair album, *Whip-Smart*, a bit of a disappointment, don't feel alone. This album features "Jealousy" from *Whip-Smart* plus seven other unreleased songs. The cover of "Turning Japanese," makes the whole album worth it. Check out the hilarious lyrics of "California," or the gentle guitar strumming and Phair's calm voice telling the story of a relationship in "Easy."

• Guided by Voices, *Alien Lanes*. These guys have been around for a long time — this is their sixth full-length album — but unfortunately haven't gotten the due recognition. They play really good

pop songs that sound like a '90s take on the Beatles and the Kinks. The recording is not the best, but you will find yourself singing these songs for the rest of your life.

• Ani DiFranco, *Not a Pretty Girl*. I hope you went to see her perform at the EMU at the beginning of November; it was a great show. This is her newest and perhaps best work presently. It's hard to categorize DiFranco's music — too aggressive and too driving to be folk, but it doesn't have enough electric guitars to call it punk. DiFranco is an amazing acoustic guitar player and writes extremely honest and personal songs.

• Goodness, *Goodness*. Goodness is the new band made up of former Hammerbox singer and local Carrie Akre. This album not only measures up to Hammerbox but surpasses it with a variety of songs, their quality and passion emanated by the band. The mix allows Akre's great voice to come through more than on the Hammerbox material and is truly an amazing debut.

By Les Zaczek

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