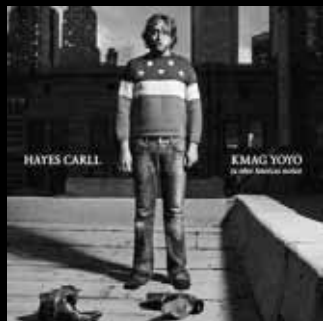




## KMAG YOYO

Hayes Carll

For a songwriter, a tune like "My Girlfriend Left Me for Jesus" is a tough one to follow. But *KMAG YOYO* — a military acronym for "Kiss my ass guys, you're on your own" — celebrates Hayes Carll's ability to pay homage to traditional country while bringing his own contemporary swagger up a notch. Carll manages to be a gritty, hard-drinking Texas songwriter without

being a cliché. I'm not sure how he does it, but it's his songs that beg to be listened to, a shot of bourbon in one hand while holding yourself back from clapping, that I like best. They make for good late-night deadline writing tunes. Not that anyone at *EW* ever writes with whiskey close at hand. Add into that the anti-war political commentary of the title track and add in the quirky duet "Someone Like Me," and *KMAG YOYO* is a good road-trip album too. The more wistful "The Letter" and the gospel influenced "Hide Me" are lovely too. End of year bonus: Need one more reason to buy *KMAG YOYO*? It's got a song about Christmas on it.

— Camilla Mortensen



## The Martyr

Immortal Technique

Immortal Technique's senior album is everything you'd expect from the world's at-large artist-activist. *The Martyr* is brazen, confrontational and unconcerned about those it may offend. Fans expecting an encore from *The 3rd World* will be satiated. Hip-hop heads looking to see Technique flex his battle-rap prowess, as he did on *Revolutionary Volume 1* and

*Revolutionary Volume 2*, will not get their cookie — but hey, that's not what Tech is trying to do anymore. *The Martyr* is a political statement, soaked in the contemporary slipstream of Occupy movements, corporate bailouts and impenitent reality.

If you're pressed for time and don't know what to buy your teenager whose taste in "hip hop" music seems to be the gourmet equivalent of roadkill, *The Martyr* is the album you want to stuff stockings with. Immortal Technique is that didactic breed of artist who takes listeners by force, instills passion and refuses to be ignored.

Even better, you can order hard copies of *The Martyr* for free, paying only the cost of shipping and handling. — Dante Zuñiga-West



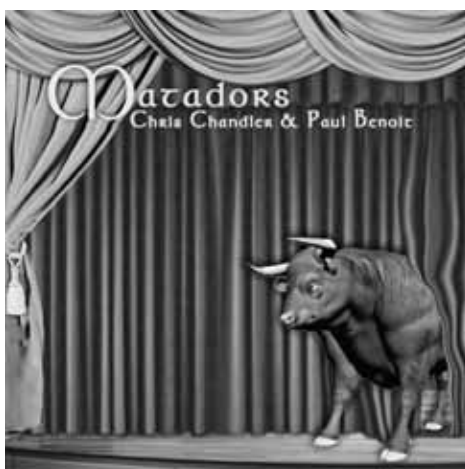
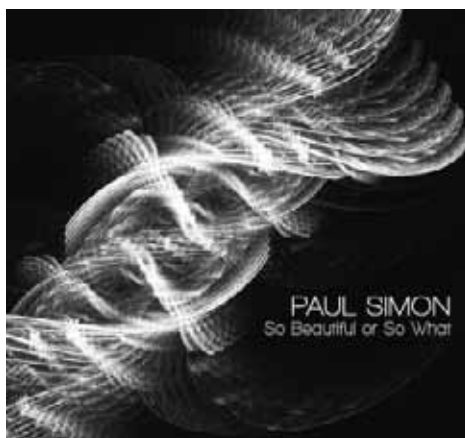
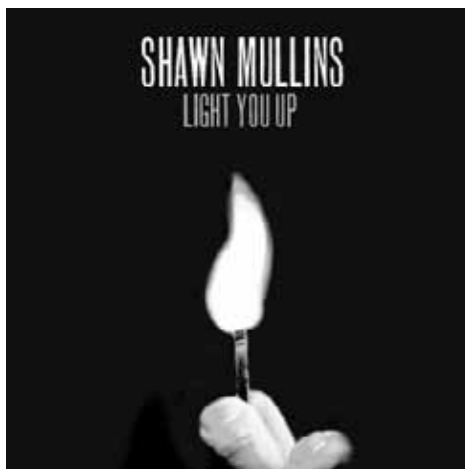
## Radioactive

Yelawolf

Alabama-born rapper Yelawolf's much anticipated Shady Records debut, *Radioactive*, has received everything from critical raves to howling put-downs, but worst of all are the disappointed sighs issued by fans expecting a copycat sequel to his massively successful underground mix tape, *Trunk Music*. Sure, *Radioactive* doesn't contain

anything as creepy-crawly compelling as "Pop the Trunk" (what album does?), but listeners willing to huff a lungful and give Yela's latest a few go-rounds might be surprised. There are layers and layers below the menacing surface here — endless reverberations and haunting echoes from the sawed-off syllabic spray of his trademark delivery.

*Radioactive*'s opening quartet of tracks, which includes "Let's Roll" and "Hard White (Up in the Club)," does it's due diligence: It introduces Yela (introducing Yela) to the world, lays down the law and then makes way as the man tears it up — crazy fast, artfully chopped syllables, fierce white-trash anthems, wicked wordplay, that cold ear for hook, melody and fist-pumping chorus. Deeper into the album there are some unexpected, *whathethefuck* but admirably gutsy choices: On "The Hardest Love Song in the World," he mic checks with "I usually don't do this, but fuck it," after which he delves into the get-laid Motown funk of EW&F; it's a bold move (some say crass), and gambits like these succeed often enough. Yela makes no apologies, in person or in the press, about his desire to gain as broad an audience as possible, and more power to him; as Bob Dylan noted, once you get your foot in the door, they can't kick you out. Yela's foot is solidly in the door. If the sonic ambush of *Trunk Music* revealed a furious new talent hungering to be reckoned with, Yelawolf's big-label debut is a broad (a bit too broad sometimes) but assured step into the long-haul lane of artistic maturity, in all its risks, rewards and complexity. — Rick Levin



# music:

## year end radio wrap up

by eric alan

Radio traffics more in the world of single songs than albums. So which songs affected KLCC listeners the most, judging by the ringing of the studio phone? What did listeners tell me they most needed to have, as soon as they heard it?

Surprisingly, the phone-ringing song of the year was "Light You Up," the title track on **Shawn Mullins'** latest album. A great and creative song, yet I was amazed by its persistent resonance. Too bad nothing else on the album connected as well.

Lately, the instant phone-ringing song has been the incendiary political firebomb called "One Percent/ Ten Ton Shoes" by **Chris Chandler and Paul Benoit**, from their album *Matadors*. It's a scathing merger of spoken word and rocky edges, an uncompromised shredding of political and economic hypocrisy — the perfect Occupy soundtrack, and the most unforgettable protest song of the year. I suspect they'll bring it live to the main stage at the Oregon Country Fair when they perform there this summer.

I shared listeners' affinity for the aforementioned songs and albums, but the CD that most repeatedly found itself in my player at home was by Frankie Hernandez, who happens to play with Chandler and Benoit. Back in Oregon after a stint in Austin, Texas, Frankie appeared at Country Fair time with his homebrewed album *If You Seek*, and it became my soundtrack for months. Everything from soul to reggae, hip hop to tango blends into one cohesive mix, all with a conscious spirit as positive as Michael Franti's.

I also found myself completely immersed in *So Beautiful or So What* by **Paul Simon**. The man is 70 years old and making some of the finest music of his life. His lyricism maintains exceptional grace, his voice is as strong as ever, and it's time he received more recognition for his guitar playing, which is stellar without ever needing a single solo. Love, spirit and raw pain merge seamlessly, somehow turning overwhelming sadness into beauty.

Inspiration also reached me in a bluesy way through the **Tedeschi Trucks Band** and their masterwork *Revelator*. Susan Tedeschi has long had one of the best edgy blues voices around, and Derek Trucks is one of the finest blues guitarists. After they blended in marriage and music, another transcendent level of expression emerged. The album features terrific songwriting contributions from Gary Louris of the Jayhawks and others, and the results reveal endless depth. This is catharsis at its finest. It's also affirmation that merging marriage and creativity can enhance both.

The young voice of **Sarah Jarosz** is perfectly pure on *Follow You Down*. She may be barely old enough to buy a beer, but her musical maturity is in full flower. With half of Alison Krauss's band behind her, as well as Corvallis violinist Alex Hargreaves, among others, her second album stands alongside anything her mentors have created, and is destined to be a classic of Americana.

There are countless other albums deserving mention, and we'll celebrate more of them on the year-end edition of KLCC's *Living Large* on Friday, Dec. 30. This is a time of brilliant music; it's merely a difficult time for the deserving to be heard amidst the din. The most important thing we can do is listen.

*Eric Alan is host of Living Large, KLCC's new daytime program of music, arts and culture, running Monday-Friday, 12:15 p.m. – 3 p.m. KLCC is found at 89.7 FM in the Willamette Valley, and online at KLCC.org.*