

Bandcampin': Good stuff for your ears

BY BEN SALMON

For The Bulletin

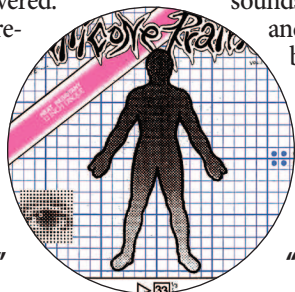
Bandcamp is an online music platform used largely by independent artists and record labels to stream songs and sell merchandise. It's also a vibrant virtual community teeming with interesting sounds just waiting to be discovered.

Each week, I'll highlight three releases available on the site that are well worth your time and attention. If you find something you dig, please consider supporting the artist with a purchase.

SILICONE PRAIRIE

"My Life on the Silicone Prairie"

If you're going to worship something, there are worse things to worship than DEVO, the Akron, Ohio-based art-punk band that somehow turned its combo of synth-rock and oddball visual aesthetic



into mainstream success in the 1980s. These days, there are DEVO devotees scattered across the world, including fellow Midwesterners Silicone Prairie, who hail from Kansas City. On the project's debut full-length, main man Ian Teeple pumps out 13 tracks of jittery rock 'n' roll that half the time

sounds like it's playing at 1.5x speed, and the other half sounds like it's been left in the back seat of a 1978 Chevy Impala to melt under the summer sun. This is weird, cool stuff for minds warped by distinctly American ennui.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"The Sound the Hare Heard"

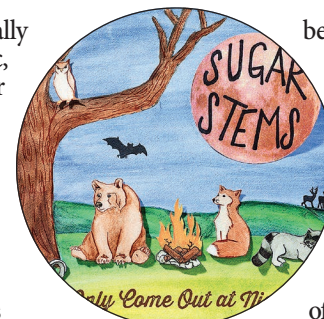
The Kill Rock Stars record label is known for its fiercely independent, often Northwest-flavored punk and indie rock. But in 2006, the Portland-based tastemaker released this crucial compilation

of 21 tracks that could generally be categorized in the acoustic, folk and/or singer-songwriter vein. "The Sound the Hare Heard" is a generous collection chock full of beautiful tunes, starting with an uncharacteristically mellow lullaby from Chicago power-pop enigma Devin Davis. From there, highlights come one after another, courtesy big names like Laura Veirs, Sufjan Stevens and Colin Meloy, as well as lesser-known artists. The tie that binds them isn't just Kill Rock Stars' blessing, but a consistently inventive approach to stripped-down music that breathes life into the style.

SUGAR STEMS

"Only Come Out At Night"

You've probably heard this one before, but seriously: The Sugar Stems may be the



best rock band you've never heard. They're based in Milwaukee, fronted by a power-pop powerhouse named Betsy Heibler and haven't released any music or played any shows for years. But that doesn't change the fact that back in the summer of 2014, the Sugar Stems released one of the best power-pop albums in

recent memory, called "Only Come Out At Night." At 12 tracks and just under 40 minutes long, it's a model of hooky songwriting and tight performance, not to mention shrewd sequencing, since the songs seem to get better as you go along. Here's hoping they're not done for good, and are somewhere working on the follow-up!

■ Ben Salmon is a Bend-based music journalist and host of *Left Of The Dial*, which airs 8-10 p.m. Thursdays on KPOV, 88.9 FM and streams at kpov.org. You can find him on Bandcamp and Twitter at [@bcsalmon](https://twitter.com/bcsalmon).



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