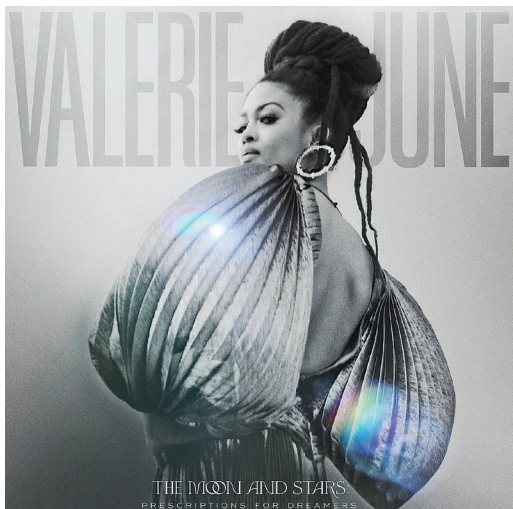


Bandcampin': Good stuff for your ears

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.



VALERIE JUNE

"The Moon and Stars: Prescriptions for Dreamers"

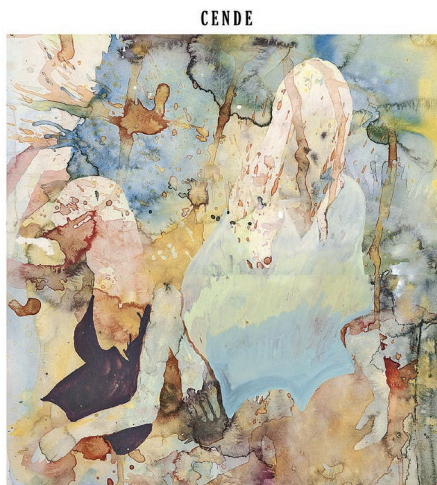
Valerie June's first two albums — 2013's "Pushin' Against A Stone" and 2017's "The Order of Time" — made big splashes in the world of roots music, and they established the Tennessee singer-songwriter as a rising star. For her third album, June brought in a producer befitting a star: Jack Splash, who has worked with Alicia Keys, John Legend and Kendrick Lamar. Together, they created "The Moon and Stars: Prescriptions for Dreamers," a collection of heartfelt, handcrafted songs soaked in June's distinctly Southern blend of folk, country, blues, soul and pop and then sprinkled with a lumi-

nous atmosphere that gives the album an elegant and mystical feel. It's a third straight stunner from June, who may not yet be a household name, but is undoubtedly one of the brightest stars in the roots-music universe these days.

CENDE

"#1 HIT SINGLE"

Cende was a New York rock band (now defunct, sadly) and "#1 Hit Single" is their only full-length album, released in 2017 on one of my favorite record labels, Double Double Whammy. I hadn't even heard of the band, much less the record, until recently. Now, I'm obsessed. One of the most interesting things about Cende's jangling, punky pop music is how Cameron Wisch's bright, buoyant melodies seem to



#1 HIT SINGLE

fade away and then resurface, slightly evolved, across different tracks. Anyway, the songwriting here reminds me very much of The New Pornographers' Carl Newman, more specifically his old band Zumpano. They also kind of sound like The Shins with a bit more oomph. I don't know how I missed this album when it was released, but I'm making up for it now by playing it nonstop for the past two weeks. Try it for yourself!

NUX VOMICA

"Nux Vomica"

Nux Vomica started in Baltimore back in the early 2000s and eventually moved to Portland, where they instantly became one of the best heavy bands in a town full of great heavy bands. The best evidence of this is Nux



Vomica's self-titled album, which came out in 2014 on metal mega-label Relapse Records and later landed on a ton of lists of that year's best records. Spend some time with it and you'll hear why. Where a lot of bands say they incorporate sludge and doom and black metal and punk into their sound, these dudes actually did it, they did it with an effortlessness that you don't hear very often and they did it in a way that was still, somehow, catchy and compelling, even when their songs stretched out beyond 10 minutes long. A recent revisit was a good reminder that "Nux Vomica" is a modern extreme metal classic.

■ 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 kprov.org. You can find him on Bandcamp and Twitter at [@bcsalmon](https://twitter.com/bcsalmon).

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