

# LIST OFF!

When they aren't sorting through every single love letter, cheerful suggestion, hate flame and marriage proposal that comes into the AP Skyscraper, the AP editors are making extensive lists separating what rocked hard from what *hardly* rocked. This is what 2008 sounded like through their ears and what they are hoping to see in 2009.

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## IN '09, EDITOR IN CHIEF JASON PETTIGREW IS TOTALLY STOKED FOR...



**LIVE AT THE BBC**, a series of previously unreleased radio sessions recorded by my favorite band in life, **THE SCREAMING BLUE MESSIAHS**. You could cut the tension at their shows with a Husqvarna chainsaw. I've never seen a band throw it down like that since they broke up, and if you ask Channels' J. Robbins or Fugazi's Guy Picciotto, they will tell you the same thing.

## BEST VOCALISTS of 2008

### JOHN GOURLEY of PORTUGAL. THE MAN

It would take a supercomputer the size of Iowa to differentiate one screamo or pop-punk vocalist from the next, but it takes less than a second of John Gourley's fragile, high-pitched, near falsetto to instantly recognize Portugal. The Man. Although the Alaskan is only in his early 20s, his voice resonates with a soulfulness that flutters between the androgyny of Robert Plant and the retro smoothness of a Motown crooner. It's Gourley's layers of delicate vocals that lend P.T.M. songs their unique, nuvo-vintage sound. [TJK]

**GO DOWNLOAD:** "Created" from *Censored Colors*

## RUNNERS-UP

### DAN YEMIN of PAINT IT BLACK

Few figures in hardcore are as influential as Lifetime/Kid Dynamite guitarist Dan Yemin. But with Paint It Black, his gruff, powerful bark embodies the anger, intelligence and bite of an entire scene.

**GO DOWNLOAD:** "Past Tense, Future Perfect" from *New Lexicon*

### JULIE CHRISTMAS of MADE OUT OF BABIES

There aren't that many female voices in post-metal, but Julie Christmas' alternately melodic and abrasive vocals transcend both genre and gender categories.

**GO DOWNLOAD:** "Stranger" from *The Ruiner*

## THE ODDS OF THE FOLLOWING BANDS REUNITING IN 2009

Editors by day, professional bookies by night, we handicap the odds of seeing your favorite rockers onstage again.



### MIDTOWN

**ODDS: 2:1**

**WHERE IT SHOULD HAPPEN:** **The Bamboozle**

When did Midtown become this mythic being among the scene? It's not like they were obscure (dudes were on two major labels in their career), nor were they short-lived (we're guessing they played easily more than 1,000 shows in their six-year existence). Still, even though the world doesn't really need them to get back together, they probably will, just to relive the "glory days" (read: Gabe Saporta will be banned from wearing neon onstage) one more time.



### BLINK-182

**ODDS: 5:1**

**WHERE IT SHOULD HAPPEN:** **Warped Tour**

These odds were significantly steeper before bassist/vocalist Mark Hoppus took to his blog mid-November and casually dropped the bombshell that

he, drummer Travis Barker and estranged guitarist/vocalist Tom DeLonge were in the process of "reconnecting as friends" after being less-than-cordial for the past four years. Kevin Lyman, open up your wallet already!

### JAWBREAKER

**ODDS: 15:1**

**WHERE IT SHOULD HAPPEN:** **Our basement**

This one's tricky, as drummer Adam Pfalher has been hinting toward some sort of reunion via MySpace bulletins for a while. But at the same time, frontman Blake Schwarzenbach just debuted

his new band, the Thorns Of Life, through a series of Brooklyn house shows, and they sound pretty much like Jawbreaker. Would a rehab be disingenuous?

### THE SMITHS

**ODDS: 25:1**

**WHERE IT SHOULD HAPPEN:** **Coachella**

Morrissey and Johnny Marr can shoot down the reunion rumors all they want, but this one seems inevitable (just maybe not this year). The real question is, once the Smiths reunite, what's left for pale-skinned, well-coiffed, 30-something former college radio music directors to wish for? [SH]



# 10 ESSENTIAL

## ALBUMS OF 2008

Another year goes into the record books, and another record goes into our iTunes library: 2008 had dozens of killer albums that our editors played into the ground. But when it really came down to it, the following 10 discs are the ones that dominated our playlists—and our lives—this year. —*Scott Heisel*

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### FLOGGING MOLLY

#### Float

Lucky clovers, they've done it again! With *Float*, celt-punks Flogging Molly have distilled the ruckus and revelry of St. Patrick's day into 11 rollicking-good tracks. Okay, so it sounds an awful lot like their 2000 debut, *Swagger*—and 2002's *Drunken Lullabies*, too. Not to mention 2004's *Within A Mile Of Home* and 2006's *Whiskey On A Sunday*. But to be fair, those are all damn good discs, too. If it ain't broke... (SIDEONEDUMMY; sideonedummy.com) [JG]



### FUTURE OF THE LEFT

#### Curses

Future Of The Left were born from the ashes of noisy British acts such as McLusky and Jarcrew, but their penchant for guitar molestation, grimy basslines and noose-tight drumming distinctly takes its cues from the early-'90s American underground (Fugazi, Shellac, the Jesus Lizard). Add singer/guitarist/heckler destroyer Andy Falkous' deliciously dark ruminations, season with the occasional synth line and *voilà!* The soundtrack to your next bone dislocation. (TOO PURE/BEGGARS BANQUET; beggarsgroupusa.com) [JP]



### THE GASLIGHT ANTHEM

#### The '59 Sound

The most hyped band in punk rock since Against Me!, the Gaslight Anthem took the hardest left turn they could think of with their hotly anticipated sophomore album, unplugging the distortion pedals and spending much more time focusing on the craft of traditional (and dare we say, Springsteen-esque) songwriting. Packed with memorable melodies and sublime storytelling, *The '59 Sound* is the kind of album you and your dad can agree on—and that's not a bad thing. (SIDEONEDUMMY; sideonedummy.com) [SH]



### JACK'S MANNEQUIN

#### The Glass Passenger

Ever since Andrew McMahon graced the cover of AP 234, our Most Anticipated Albums Of 2008 issue, I had been stoked to hear *The Glass Passenger*. It's been a long time coming (*Everything In Transit* was released three long years ago), but in the interim, McMahon managed to kick cancer and keep an amazing attitude about life. The disc is chock full of uplifting, layered and super-catchy tunes; when I sing along, it makes me feel equipped to handle anything, anywhere, anytime. (SIRE) [RL]



### KAY KAY AND HIS WEATHERED UNDERGROUND

#### Self-Titled

This project from Gatsbys American Dream alumni Kirk Huffman and Kyle O'Quin jams every instrument you've ever heard of into an unclassifiable, intelligent mini-symphony that maneuvers between musical time periods as quickly as it steps in and out of genres. The end result is an epically eclectic album that sounds more like what the Beatles would be playing today if they were still around than what the actual Beatles would probably play. (BOMBS OVER BELLEVUE/SUBURBAN HOME; suburbanhomerecords.com) [TJK]



### THE MATCHES

#### A Band In Hope

If I could change only one thing about 2008, it would be the three-and-a-half stars that accompanied my review of *A Band In Hope*. It definitely deserves more. How do I know? The disc came out in March, and it has never left rotation in my iTunes. This is a band who live for their craft, and they truly put together an engaging, diverse and entertaining disc with a little something for everyone. It shouldn't be missed. (EPITAPH; epitaph.com) [RL]



### NORMA JEAN

#### The Anti Mother

The easy way out would be to say Norma Jean went from sounding like Botch to sounding like Thrice. While there's nothing inherently wrong with sounding like either of those bands, the comparison doesn't do *The Anti Mother* enough justice. In addition to ducking in and out of brutality and beauty, the album benefits from some killer collaborations with Saosin's Cove Reber, Deftones' Chino Moreno and Helmet's Page Hamilton. This is the most ambitious and addictive album of Norma Jean's career. (SOLID STATE; solidstaterecords.com) [TJK]



### POLAR BEAR CLUB

#### Sometimes Things Just Disappear

You know when you're driving somewhere with the stereo loud, and then you get to your destination, but the music you're blaring is so good that you wait a few extra seconds before turning the engine off so as to squeeze a few more bars into your brain? Multiply that feeling by 50 and you'll get how I feel about this album. It's a miracle I'm not permanently living in my car, given how long this absolutely spectacular post-hardcore masterpiece has been lodged in its stereo. (RED LEADER; redleaderrecords.com) [SH]



### PORTUGAL. THE MAN

#### Censored Colors

As wild and unpredictable as any grizzly bear you might find wandering the backcountry of their native Wasilla, Alaska, indie darlings Portugal. The Man caged an ambient aural menagerie on *Censored Colors*, their third album in as many years. Violin, trombone, trumpet and frontman John Baldwin Gourley's unmistakable vocals combine to make "the land of the midnight sun's" most illuminated export. Shine on. (APPROACHING AIRBALLOONS/EQUAL VISION; equalvision.com) [JG]



### THESE NEW PURITANS

#### Beat Pyramid

In England, there's a scene of iridescent bands whose members aren't old enough to drink in bars. These New Puritans are the best of the bunch; their debut disc, *Beat Pyramid*, forges an alloy of sharp guitars, alluring samples, lyrical non sequiturs and regimented beats that recall elements of Britain's rich post-punk history and early industrial rock, all delivered with a moody tension that conveys undiscovered nuance with each new listen. No swooped hair, lip rings or tats: just pure sonic adventure. (DOMINO; dominorecordco.us) [JP]

# What's YOUR perfect 10?

Write us at [editorial@altpress.com](mailto:editorial@altpress.com) with your suggestions for upcoming "10 Essential" columns. CDs, musical genres, rock life, whatever—if you choose a topic, we can find 10 things everyone needs to know about it.