

Kickmag's 2011 Picks



1. The Roots, undun: Redford Stephens' backwards journey into understanding how he became undun is another very musical and nuanced concept album from The Roots.



2. Meshell Ndegeocello, Weather: Meshell Ndegeocello's emotional opuses have expanded R&B's vocabulary and Weather is no exception. Comprised of seemingly light musical expressions the patterns are really potent pieces of vulnerability.



3. Van Hunt What Were You Hoping For Hunt's maverick subversion of soul surfaced in songs about gentrification and love among other things. The wait for this one was worth it.



4. Kendrick Lamar, Section

80: A combination of everyday life and a burgeoning political perspective that mentioned Ronald Reagan and Fred Hampton. One of the year's favorite underground rookies.



5. Shabazz Palaces Black Up Hip-Hop album of the year. (See review)



6. Jay-Z and Kanye West, Watch The Throne: An epic collaboration documenting the plight of hip-hop's elite as well as the streets. It is deceptively simple and far more confessional than most critics would admit.



7. Raphael Saadiq, Stone Rollin': Saadiq is critical of the Motown comparisons but it's inevitable because of the gleaming strings and the neat suits. But Rollin' also pulls from grittier '60's soul of the Stax and Atlantic variety. But he's

been doing it so long with his own individual stamp that it really needs to be called the Saadiq chapter.



8. Rahsaan Patterson, 

Bleutopia: Bleutopia is a ride through Rahsaan and Thank H.E.R. Now: Patterson's various Rapsody put out two expressions of R&B. The substantial albums this trip is like an ethereal year and still did work gospeldelia that dabbles in with her Kooley High family rock and has one lone on David Thompson. Both experiment with the projects are hefty tributes autotune. Patterson's to the boom-bap from one of artistry has been a the culture's new voices. consistent source of inimitable recordings that almost get ignored.



10. Lenny Kravitz, Black and White America: Kravitz's soulful rock gets a tasteful rejuvenation and delivers a much-needed statement about a post Barack Obama America.



11. Marsha Ambrosius, Late Night Early Mornings: Ambrosius deals with grown-up sensuality and the dynamics of

relationships. The album was mostly written by her but the cover of Portishead's "Sour Times" should have been a single.