

Subject: My Secret Playlist: by Calexico
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MY SECRET PLAYLIST

We invite our favourite bands and musicians to give us the rundown on their eight favourite songs right now. These are their words on the music that inspires them. In addition to this bi-weekly email publication, we upload new and exclusive Playlists to the website regularly, including recent ones by Tilly & The Wall, Death Cab for Cutie and Alex Lloyd.



Joey Burns from Calexico

The music of Calexico has a subtle warmth to it. It's intimate and loose, and it conjures up a thousand sandswept memories. Or something like that. They've always displayed their influences boldly on their well-worn jean patches, which is what makes frontman Joey Burns' Secret Playlist such a diverse yet strangely familiar collection of songs.

The Acorn / Crooked Legs

Hailing from our northern border, The Acorn have the talent of building melodies that are simple enough to dive into and stay deep in your consciousness long after the music dies. They are from Ottawa, the land of long summer days, and we met at Winnipeg for a rainy day festival. Caked in mud and shielded by thin tarps from the storm, we found this unexpected group's catchy grooves and songs warming and nurturing. It's good medicine for campgrounds.

Gillian Welch / Barroom Girls


Simple waltzes can always be the best songs to wind down the day with. Gillian's vocals and David Rawling's turpentine toned guitar make good with any day that's bent or bad. They not only pen some beautiful stories and songs, but their tone, the frequencies of their voices and instruments, coupled with the laid back delivery, just makes the world feel right. Last Thanksgiving my girlfriend, our dog and I drove out to the west coast, and while waiting in the car for those two, I must have listened to this song thirteen times in a row, just to realign and let the waves wash over.

Lhasa / Con Toda Palabra


I always go back to this song, and Lhasa de Sela's music, for grounding or when I just need some soothing sounds and vocals. Her music flows like a good book. Her words are some of the most inspirational I've come across. She's released two albums — La Llorona and The Living Road — which this song is taken from. I suggest buying both and play them on shuffle.

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Quick Picks


The Acorn /
Crooked Legs

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Gillian Welch /
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Lhasa /
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Eric Dolphy /
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Can /
Vitamin C

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A Hawk and A Hacksaw /
God Bless The Ottoman Empire

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Amparanoia /
Iluminando

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The Calexico Story

Katerine / Louxor J'adore

There is a mini-French festival in Tucson called Some French Friends which works like a foreign exchange program. Last year, eight Tucson bands toured France on the We Got Cactus Tour. So in return, a few months back, we returned volley with French Cowboy, Dominique A, Francoiz Breut, and recent rising star, Philip Katerine. We played together this week and I was blown away. He is one of the most intelligent, funny, and interesting artists I have seen in some time. 'A very curious character', my friends say. 'Everything he does, whether with music or film, is very good'.

Eric Dolphy / Gazzeloni

This is one of my favorite Blue Note records, which showcases the wonderful talents and visions of free jazz multi-instrumentalist, Eric Dolphy. The wide range of musical sounds, textures, and expressions in this modest ensemble makes this one of my all-time albums I turn to for reminders of spontaneity and fluidity. Dissonance becomes common ground here, which feels as refreshing as a cool spring splash after listening to more mundane western harmonies and rhythms. I love the line up and instruments: vibraphone, upright bass, trumpet, bass clarinet, flute and alto saxophone.

Can / Vitamin C

I hear this band making its influence on current bands and albums more and more these days. And why the hell not? Can were loose, wired, studio wizards that recreated recording techniques. This song is propelling and creates a mysterious setting between the shuffling drum beats, urgent vocals, strange electro bird sound and this beautiful, plaintive organ melody. Odd pairings and inventive song cycles makes this band the source for good reinvention. I love how it flows into the next song, Soup (10:32). Good food, indeed.

A Hawk and A Hacksaw / God Bless The Ottoman Empire

I love this band and their ability to take the eastern melody and mix it into a North Atlantic crossroads. We recently met in Canada for the Calgary Folk Festival where we shared the stage together with both our bands, plus Bill Callahan and Andrew Bird. Their music is built around strange minor melodies, subtle shifts in textures, and dark themes of shadowy characters, all woven together in a wonderful sonic stew. One of my favorite moments this summer on tour. I keep turning on A Hawk and A Hacksaw albums to bring me back to that place of dreamland and drone.

Amparanoia / Illuminando

This song is from the critically acclaimed album Enchilao that eventually saw Amparo Sanchez and her band take home BBC World Music Awards. This song infuses tres guitar from Cuba, trumpets, and very creative production styles with electronic drum beats that fizzle and swish in a post-modernist abstract collage. This minimal and almost remixed version of the song balances the hearty vocals of Amparo with a cubist accompaniment. There's lots of dub delay and



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The new Calexico album, *Carried By Dust*, is, at least partially, the story of a writer in Los Angeles around the time of the writers' strike we had a while back in late 2007, Calexico's Joey Burns explains. 'Our hopper heads out east on a whim and a dry Santa Ana tail wind. Stopping at the Yucca Valley swap meet he buys an old road map with a route already marked with red pen. It leads him to a cabin and from the cabin to a chain of other small town thrift stores, picking up old copies of National Geographic magazines along the way. Stories about snow drops in Moscow, leaning houses in Valparaiso, abandoned neighborhoods in New Orleans, and a manmade lake full of cell phone trees creep their way into his notes. He finds further inspiration at old roadside diners, bending an ear to each waitress and the local news over badly brewed coffee. The break proves to be enlightening. He falls in love with the newly found space and being carried along spontaneity's spark'.

call and response vocals, which makes this a fun song to spin at 3am. I also strongly suggest drinking a nice bottle of vino tinto from Ribera del Duero when listening to this album.



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Last Week



Cold War Kids Matt Maust gave us a full spectrum of sounds, from Cat Power to Richard Swift.

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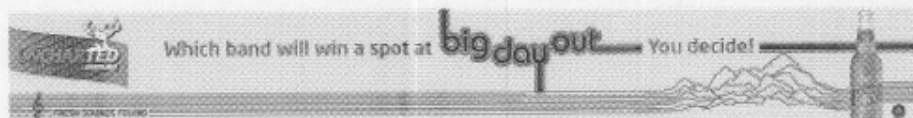


Later this week



Donna Summer 70s disco queen Donna Summer is the hottest thing since Afghan Fur Trims and Cheesecloth Fabrics.

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