

Music

Reviews
Albums to note



1
Smothered
Oberhofer

LA-based Brad Oberhofer's first album in nearly six years is full of wistful 1950s-style harmonies. He coos about professional struggles and romantic woes in this masterclass in dream pop. On standout track, "Sunshiine", The Strokes' guitarist Nick Valensi and singer-songwriter Shamir lend a surf-rock feel to proceedings. — GCH
'Smothered' is out now.



2
Candy Racer
Kyary Pamyu Pamyu

On the 10th anniversary of her debut album, Japanese pop icon Kyary Pamyu Pamyu has released her fifth full-length effort, which shows she still deserves the title of "Harajuku Pop Princess". The album shifts from bubblegum pop to electronica with songs such as "Kamaitachi" and the title track. But there are examples of the singer going beyond her usual

style too: "Natsuiro Flower" has a captivating, more mature sound. — NO
'Candy Racer' is out now.

3
Nonante-Cinq
Angèle

On her second album, Belgian singer-songwriter Angèle's sound takes on a more refined direction, featuring upbeat dance tracks and sophisticated slower pieces. Lead song "Bruxelles je t'aime" is a feelgood hymn to her city that might just take over dancefloors across Belgium. Tracks "Démons" and "Solo" are also highlights. — NO
'Nonante-Cinq' is out on 10 December.

4
Um Gosto de Sol
Céu

Céu's plucky take on Brazilian pop is a fixture on the country's music scene. But her latest record breaks new ground. *Um Gosto de Sol* is the singer's first covers album, fusing the work of big Tropicália and samba names with songs by Fiona Apple and Sade. First single "Chega Mais", an acoustic version of Rita Lee's 1970s hit, softens the original's peppy disco into a slow burner. — CAG
'Um Gosto de Sol' is out now.

5
Phantom Island
Smile

Björn Yttling has written for the likes of Lykke Li and Primal Scream (and played in Peter Björn and John), while bandmate Joakim Åhlund has worked with Giorgio Moroder and Charli xcx. The duo's first collaborative LP as Smile spans dance music and synth-heavy pop. "Call My Name" and "Eon" are delights. — GCH
'Phantom Island' is out now.

TV

Reviews
Home entertainment



1
The Summit of the Gods
Netflix

Were George Mallory and Andrew Irvine the first men to scale Mount Everest in 1924, decades before Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay's attempt in 1953? This is the question that drives *The Summit of the Gods*, an anime feature by French director Patrick Imbert, based on Jiro Taniguchi and Baku Yumemakura's manga. Seventy years after the mountaineers were last seen some 200 metres away from the summit, a camera in the hands of outcast climber Habu Jōji might hold the answer to whether they made it to the top. Japanese reporter Fukamachi Makoto is determined to get to the bottom of the mystery in this elegant ode to alpinism. — GCH
'The Summit of the Gods' is on Netflix now.



2
Nona et ses Filles
Arte

Film-maker Valérie Donzelli brings her poetic lens to television for the first time with *Nona et ses Filles*, a mini-series scripted with Clémence Madeleine-Perdrillat. Miou-Miou plays Nona, a woman who has had an eventful life as an activist on the frontline of the 1968 student protests and as a single mother to triplets. Now

that she is 70, she is looking forward to living a quiet life – until she finds out she is once again pregnant. This is a funny and yet moving take on how we earn the freedom to choose for ourselves. — GCH
'Nona et ses Filles' is on Arte now.



3
Simple as Water
HBO

Filmed over the course of five years, this new documentary from Academy Award-winning director and film-maker Megan Mylan focuses on Syrian refugees around the world. Here, Mylan hones in on telling the story of a few families spread across multiple countries, separated from their loved ones. The intimacy and tenderness that emerges as they attempt to contact each other is an affecting way to remember the human emotions behind numbers and headlines. — SBR
'Simple as Water' is on HBO now.

4
Light the Night
Netflix

Taiwanese TV production has seen a huge boost in recent years, as streaming services double down on growth in Asia and seek to make Mandarin-language series while not being able to operate in mainland China. *Light the Night*, a suspenseful new drama set in 1980s Taipei, explores the link between a brutal murder and the growing friction among several women and their boss at a bar in the city's red-light district. Be prepared to reconsider your assumptions on what working in such an establishment is like. — SBR
'Light the Night' is on Netflix now.



Profile
Patricia Sequeira

Portuguese band Doce are an important part of the country's pop history. One of the first girl groups in Europe, the four-member outfit helped to break taboos in the country's ultra-traditional society of the 1980s.

Having already directed a film about the quartet, *Bem Bom*, a big hit at the box office, Patricia Sequeira has expanded that glittery universe into a seven-episode series on Portugal's national broadcaster RTP. "After 48 years of dictatorship, when patriotic songs reigned, the country wasn't ready for the impact of Doce," says Sequeira. "They shined on colour TV in a country still in black and white."

Doce's amazing outfits were radical at the time. "The Doce phenomenon helped to break the idea of female submission," says Sequeira. "It was all about transgressing the patriarchal norm in society. Musically they revealed an artistry never before

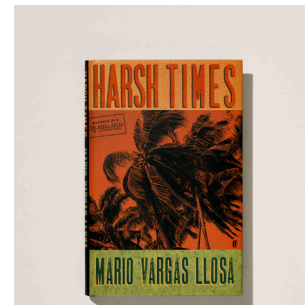
explored; not only because of the lyrics, which alluded to female pleasure, but because of their looks, choreographies and melodies."

For research, Sequeira spoke at length to the group's members as well as the band's creator, Tozé Brito. "The interesting thing about making fiction based on reality is that we already know the characters a bit," she says. A starry group of actresses have taken up the roles: Ana Marta Ferreira is the sensitive Laura Diogo; Bárbara Branco the smart Fátima Padinha; Carolina Carvalho the irreverent Lena Coelho; and Lia Carvalho the maternal Teresa Miguel.

Judging by the ratings, Doce are again capturing the nation's attention and global viewers won't be disappointed either. After all, European audiences already had a taste of Doce when the group entered the 1982 Eurovision Song Contest. — FP
'Doce' is on RTP Play now.

Books

Reviews
Reading digest



1
Harsh Times
Mario Vargas Llosa

Nobel prize-winner Vargas Llosa's new novel traces the story of the CIA-backed coup in Guatemala that toppled Jacobo Árbenz's left-wing government in 1954. Conspiracies and conflict take centre stage but there's also a focus on the human element. As characters get caught in webs of their own weaving, Vargas Llosa explores how the lies we tell, however small, have larger consequences. — CAG
'Harsh Times' is out now.

2
O Caledonia
Elspeth Barker

First published in 1991, Barker's dark and funny novel tells the story of Janet, a wild young woman with only a pet jackdaw as a friend. The setting is an austere gothic castle in a harsh landscape, the prose rich and poetic. A classic coming-of-age tale and love letter to literature and nature, *O Caledonia*, now reissued, is as sharp today as it was 30 years ago. — CA
'O Caledonia' is out now.

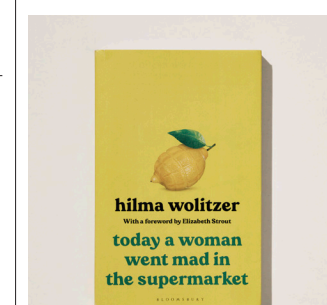
3
Matrix
Lauren Groff

Cast out from the 12th-century French royal court, Marie de France – youngest of a "famous

family of viragoes" – is sent to *Angleterre* to become prioress of an impoverished abbey. Over time she transforms this "dark and strange and piteous place" into a sanctuary for those who live there, creating a proto-utopian society of strong, independent women. A work of impressive literary imagination inspired by historical fact, this story celebrates a heroine ahead of her time. — LSC
'Matrix' is out now.

4
Free: Coming of Age at the End of History
Lea Ypi

Author and professor Ypi's frank and absorbing memoir charts growing up in a time of great political upheaval and historical change. Drawing on her own personal experience in Albania before and after the fall of communism in 1990, Ypi questions the meaning of oppression, freedom, ideals and reality for both a family and a nation. It's a masterful blend of the personal and political. — CA
'Free' is out now.



5
Today a Woman Went Mad in the Supermarket
Hilma Wolitzer

Published with a foreword by American novelist Elizabeth Strout, Wolitzer's 15th book brings together a poignant new tale, written during the pandemic, with timeless pieces first published in the 1960s and 1970s. It is

PHOTOGRAPHER: Rodrigo Cardoso. IMAGE: Marnie Moutier