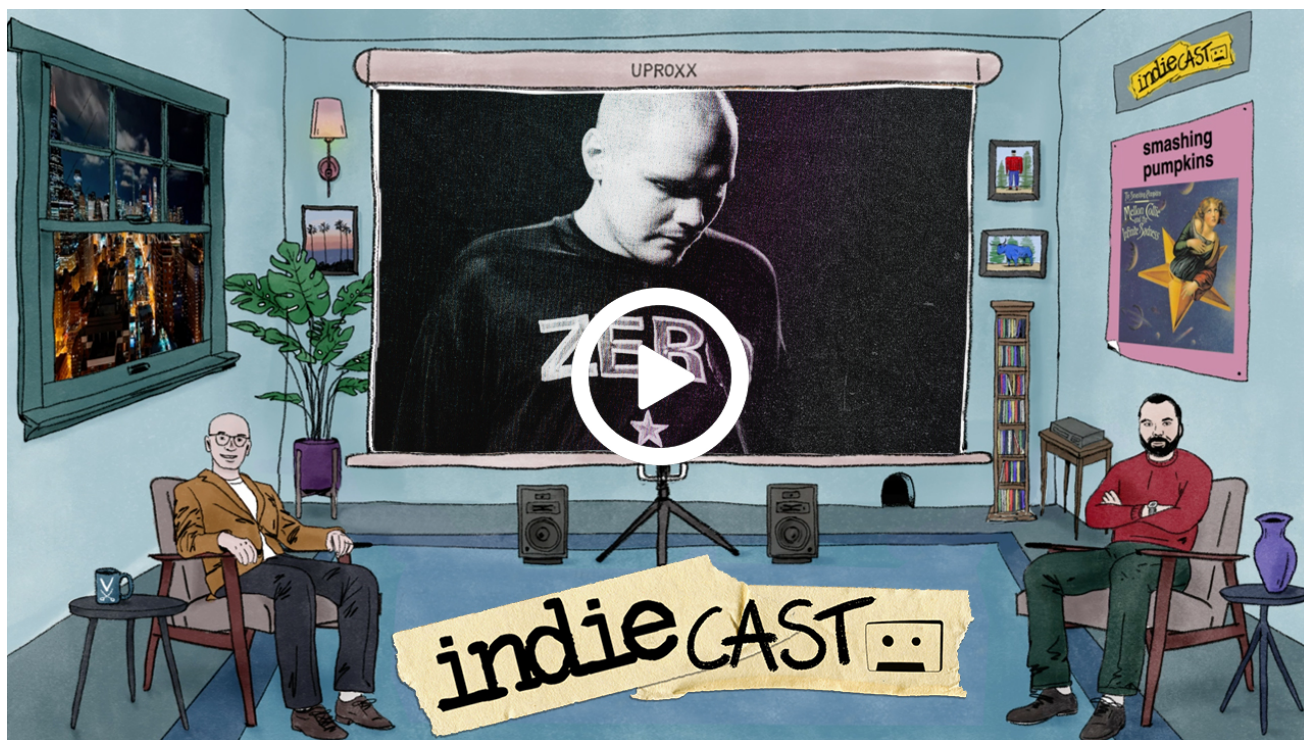




We are still in the early stages of coming out of a deeply strange and tragic period in modern world history. As we look ahead to the rest of 2021, there is hope that some sense of normalcy is about to settle in. In terms of music, new concert tours and festivals are being announced every single day. And that will potentially make the albums we're listening to feel a little more permanent. A common complaint you heard during the pandemic is that it made all forms of culture feel a little transitory. Films, TV shows, books, albums — they all seem to arrive one day and be gone the next. Given everything we've all had to deal with, it's understandable that you might not remember music that was released last week, much less albums that came out earlier in 2021. Hopefully this list of my favorite albums from the first half of the year will refresh your memory. Believe it or not, a lot of really good records have dropped so far in 2021. [Here](#) are 20 of them.

-- Steven Hyden, Uproxx Cultural Critic and author of *[This Isn't Happening: Radiohead's "Kid A" and the Beginning of the 21st Century](#)*



In case you missed it...

The new *Indiecast* visualizer answered a listener question about whether it's too late to listen to Smashing Pumpkins' mega opus *Mellon Collie And The Infinite Sadness*. Check it out [right here](#) or above.

The [latest episode](#) of *Indiecast* dug into the unsung indie albums of 2021 so far.

Michelle Zauner's amazing debut memoir *Crying In H Mart* is being [adapted](#) into a movie. **Japanese Breakfast** will provide the soundtrack.

John Mayer's [new single](#) is *extremely* '80s.

The latest **Indie Mixtape 20** is with [Sour Widows](#), who need DistroKid to let them know how and when they'll be getting paid.

OPENING TRACKS



SLEATER-KINNEY

This pioneering punk band's "two person" era continues with a new album, *Path Of Wellness*, out Friday. As was the case with 2019's *The Center Won't Hold*, *Wellness* seems like a poppy reinvention of their pioneering punk-rock sound. We're certainly the curious to see how this era of the band unfolds.

LISTEN



KING GIZZARD & THE LIZARD WIZARD

This insanely prolific Australian band, surprising nobody, just announced that they will be putting out yet another studio record in 2021. The album, called *Butterfly 3000*, will be “melodic” and “psychedelic,” according to the band, who otherwise aren’t putting out any singles ahead of Friday’s release. Here’s a teaser trailer.

LISTEN

THE MOUNTAIN GOATS

Speaking of prolific indie-rock singer-songwriters, the Mountain Goats once again have a new album on the horizon. John Darnielle and company are gearing up to release *Dark In Here* on June 25, their fourth album in just about 15 months. Thankfully, Darnielle always delivers quality along with quantity.

LISTEN

DEEP CUTS



LIGHTNING BUG

One of our favorite albums lately at Indie Mixtape HQ is *A Color Of The Sky*, the gorgeous



THE GOON SAX

The Australian indie-pop act is literally part of that country’s lineage of melodic and clever

forthcoming album from Brooklyn band Lightning Bug due on June 25. We could liken it to Stereolab or the quieter passages of My Bloody Valentine records, but this music should be enjoyed on its own terms.

LISTEN

rock bands. Guitarist Louis Forster is the son of Robert Forster of The Go-Betweens, and apparently the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. We're pretty addicted to the recent single "In The Stone" from the forthcoming *Mirror II*.

LISTEN

VINYL OF THE WEEK

CROSBY, STILLS, NASH, AND YOUNG - THE 'DEJA VU' COLLECTION



Crosby, Stills, Nash, And Young's iconic album *Deja Vu* is turning 50 this year, and Rhino is celebrating with a new merch collection to pair with the new deluxe anniversary boxed set. Hit the link below to check out a selection of CSNY apparel, mugs, bandanas, and more.

EXPLORE

THROWBACK

'THE TRIALS OF VAN OCCUPANTHER' by MIDLAKE



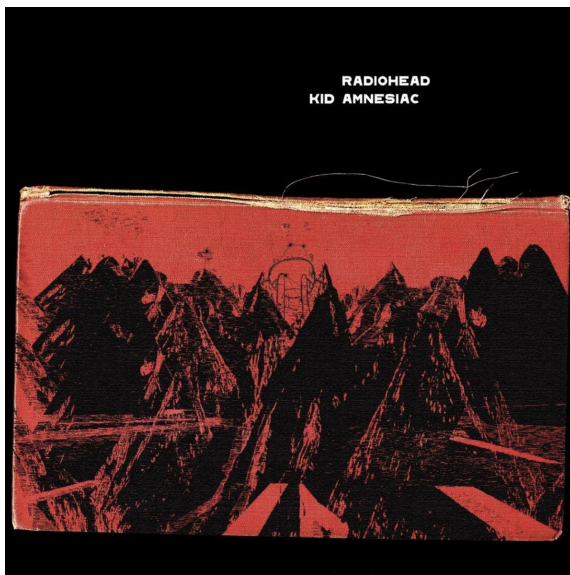
This indie classic is an excellent example of “spooky” folk rock with a witchy edge. Nodding to pre-Buckingham/Nicks Fleetwood Mac and Fairport Convention, Midlake’s second album still has the power to beguile, especially the song “Roscoe.”

LISTEN

LINER NOTES

Let's Combine 'Kid A' And 'Amnesiac' Into The Ultimate Radiohead Album

Here's a thought experiment that might seem like sacrilege: What if *Kid A* and *Amnesiac* were combined into one Radiohead album? Follow



Steven Hyden into the rabbit hole. (Image via r/Radiohead)

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