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A reader recently wrote into my semi-regular “Ask A Music Critic” column to ask, “Is music criticism getting worse?” Generally, I say “no.” But lest I sound too positive and not “critical” enough, I do have one big pet peeve with modern music writing. When I started my career in 2000, many young critics aspired to write with the loopy, hopped-up, conversational, and Beats-obsessed rhythms of Lester Bangs. The result was a lot of embarrassing, overstuffed prose — the literary equivalent of an endless, self-satisfied drum solo — but at least there was a premium put on a sense of humor. Today, that humor has mostly gone missing. Many music critics now aspire to write like college professors, infusing their record reviews with academic jargon that’s so incongruous with the subject matter that it becomes unintentionally hilarious. “[Goop On Ya Grinch](#)” should have been regarded as a wake-up call — the *Walk Hard* of the music criticism industry! — but the satire seems to have gone over many people’s heads, since so much music writing now still reads like it. [Read more here.](#)

-- 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...

Metallica shut down gatekeepers and embrace *Stranger Things* fans just now learning about them.

The Strokes covered Clairo at a festival after she canceled her set last minute.

The Killers debuted an anthemic new song at their Mad Cool festival set.

Our latest Indie Mixtape 20 Q&A is with **S.G. Goodman**, who subverts expectations on her country folk album *Teeth Marks*.

OPENING TRACKS



ALVAYS

You know who needs to put out a new album? This Canadian indie-pop wonder, who haven't released anything since 2017's *Antisocialites*. Thankfully, they just announced their third record, *Blue Rev*, which comes out October 7. For now, they've released a single, "Pharmacist," which resides in Always' lovely dream pop

wheelhouse.

LISTEN



TY SEGALL

This prolific garage-rocker is easy to take for granted. With the exception of Robert Pollard, nobody in indie rock puts out more music. At some point, it becomes impossible to keep up with the output, though Segall's batting average for putting out quality material remains admirable. His next album, *Hello Hi*, drops July 22.

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VIAGRA BOYS

The idea of Swedish post-punk always intrigues us here at Indie Mixtape HQ. What do the Swedes have to be angsty about? Is there not enough candy fish to go around? We're curious to learn more by listening to the latest release from Viagra Boys, *Cave World*.

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DEEP CUTS



THE SADIES

One of Canada's best kept secrets, this quartet has a deep catalog of wonderful albums that blend rock, folk, bluegrass and surf music for an infectious and soulful stew. Sadly, the band's co-founder and guitarist, Dallas Good, passed away in February. The posthumous album, *Colder Streams*, comes out July 22.

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LAURA VEIRS

This veteran singer-songwriter can typically be counted on to deliver the goods when it comes to insightful, penetrating tunes, so we expect that the upcoming *Found Light* — due out via Veirs' own label on Friday — will be another winner in her discography. The single, "Winter Windows," portends good things.

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VINYL OF THE WEEK

METALLICA - 'MASTER OF PUPPETS'



Metallica's 1986 release *Master Of Puppets* is getting some attention after being used in Netflix's *Stranger Things*. Pick up the 6x certified Platinum album on vinyl, which became the first metal album to be added to the National Recording Registry of the Library of Congress, an honor granted to works deemed “culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant”.

PICK IT UP

THROWBACK

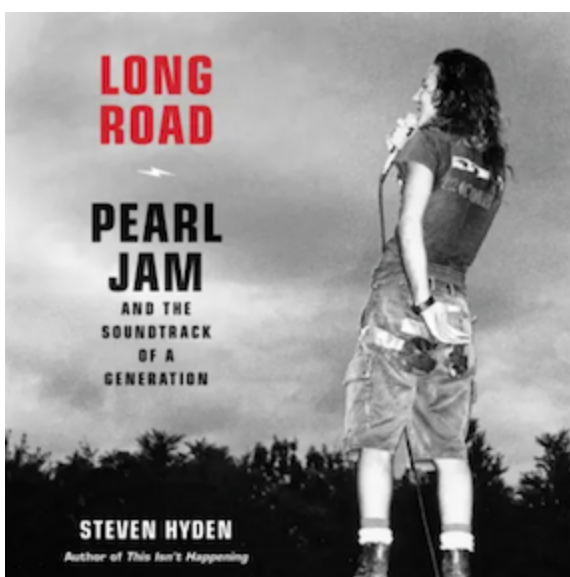
'AFTER THE END' by MERCHANDISE



For a while in the mid-2010s, it looked like Merchandise might be the next big thing. *Certainly After The End* has a lush, slick sound suitable for would-be world conquerors. While the album never quite caught on, it remains a moody rock fave here at Indie Mixtape HQ.

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LINER NOTES



Preview Steven Hyden's new book

Steven Hyden's forthcoming book, *Long Road: Pearl Jam and The Soundtrack Of A Generation*, is now available for pre-order. Check out this offer to read the first chapter now.

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