Zach Bryan opens his new album with a poem. “I’ve learned that every waking moment is enough,” he says, “and excess never leads to better things. It only piles and piles upon things that are already abundantly in front of you.” His delivery on the track, titled “Fear And Friday’s (Poem),” is down-home and conversational. As he strums his guitar, it sounds as though he is sitting in a bedroom somewhere and speaking into a tape recorder. It’s an arena-filling superstar caught in an intimate moment, only it’s presented via the least intimate vehicle — a probable smash hit LP — imaginable. By placing “Fear And Friday’s (Poem)” at the start of Zach Bryan, the self-titled followup to his blockbuster 2022 major-label debut American Heartbreak, Bryan might appear to be making a statement about his own success. But he’s also revealing his emo side. Allow me to explain in this review of Zach Bryan.

-- Steven Hyden, Uproxx Cultural Critic and author of five books, most recently Long Road: Pearl Jam And The Soundtrack Of A Generation

In case you missed it...

The latest episode of Indicast has Steven Hyden and Ian Cohen reviewing new albums by Zach Bryan and Jeff Rosenstock.
Listen here.

The death of **Smash Mouth** singer **Steve Harwell** sparked heartbroken reactions and fond remembrances online.

**Jimmy Buffett**'s alleged cause of death has been revealed.

A dog snuck into a **Metallica** concert all by herself and the band absolutely loved it.

Our latest **Indie Mixtape 20 Q&A** is with **Speedy Ortiz**, who seeks good fortune on their latest album, *Rabbit Rabbit*.

**OPENING TRACKS**

**ONEOHTRIX POINT NEVER**

Daniel Lopatin at this point is possibly better known as a producer than as an artist in his own right, after his high profile work with artists like The Weeknd and Soccer Mommy. But Oneohtrix Point Never very much remains a going concern, as evidenced by the forthcoming *Again*. 
This indie-rock institution recently announced a new album. It's called Cousin, and I wondered: Is this a reference to The Bear? After all, the hit FX show is known for multiple Wilco needle drops. Did Jeff Tweedy return the favor? The verdict is "probably not," but it's fun to speculate about regardless.

**WILCO**

**COURTNEY BARNETT**

This Australian singer-songwriter is known for penning witty and insightful lyrics set to slacker-oriented indie rock. For the upcoming End Of The Day, however, she is dramatically shifting gears — it's an instrumental effort that unfolds at a stately pace, more akin to ambient than rock. Should be interesting.
**JONATHAN WILSON**

This eccentric L.A. studio wunderkind is probably best known for his work on albums by Father John Misty and Margo Price. But on his own he makes wondrous headphones music that recalls the pop-rock glories of SoCal’s past. I expect great things from *Eat The Worm*, due in September.

**NATION OF LANGUAGE**

Synth-pop has long been a foundational subgenre of indie rock. It’s a well-worn sound, but Nation Of Language still manages to make it sound fresh, in part because their chilly music has an anthemic quality enhanced by all the vintage keyboards. Their latest album, *Strange Disciple*, drops September 15.

**VINYL OF THE WEEK**

'*COMPLETE STUDIO ALBUMS & RARITIES'*

by STEVIE NICKS – 16 LP
Are you a big fan of Stevie Nicks? Now, her entire collection solo studio albums has been compiled in a new, career-spanning boxed set. The massive box set features eight albums, rarities, remasters, and more. There’s less than 100 left, so pick this up while you still can!

PICK IT UP

THROWBACK

'MUSWELL HILLBILLIES' by THE KINKS

While this all-time great British rock band is associated with rock operas and proto-punk, they also influenced many generations of Americana acts with their 1971 album *Muswell Hillbillies*. You can
hear traces of everyone from Wilco to Waxahatchee in the soulfully ragged grooves and rich, story-based lyrics.

**Liner Notes**

*Hyden’s favorite music of August 2023*

Catch up with Steven Hyden’s favorite music of August 2023 with this round-up column.

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