

[THE REVIVAL]

Classical Music

It may have taken 90-odd years, but classical music has finally gotten its cool back. A new wave of musicians are incorporating indie-rock and electronic elements into it and playing at hip venues like The Triple Door in Seattle and Revolution Café in San Francisco. Some Converse-wearing fans may mistake it for chamber pop, but that's not a bad thing. "It's not a great leap from Sigur Rós or the Flaming Lips to classical," says David Handler, co-owner of the experimental New York venue (Le) Poisson Rouge. "And the musicians hustle like rock bands to reach a broader audience." Here are some of the new talents who don't mind if you shout out requests. *Matt Hendrickson*



Hauschka in action.


JULIA KENT

NATIONALITY: Canadian **ESSENTIAL ALBUM:** *Delay*
 Kent, a former cellist for the Brooklyn band Rasputina, performs with the cabaret ensemble Antony and the Johnsons, but her minimalist solo compositions are not to be missed.


NICO MUHLY

NATIONALITY: American **ESSENTIAL ALBUM:** *Mothertongue*
 A protégé of Philip Glass, the Vermont-born composer deftly moves from English choral arrangements to violin concerti to art-installation-worthy avant-garde music videos on YouTube.


LARS HORNTVETH

NATIONALITY: Norwegian **ESSENTIAL ALBUM:** *Kaleidoscopic*
 Horntveth is best known as the bandleader of Jaga Jazzist, but his solo work—he plays piano, guitar, sax, and clarinet—is hip enough for Oslo's indie label Smalltown Supersound.


HAUSCHKA

NATIONALITY: German **ESSENTIAL ALBUM:** *Room to Expand*
 A rapper turned pianist, Hauschka (a.k.a. Volker Bertelmann) gets inside the instrument—literally—often placing leather or aluminum foil on the strings and hammers for a haunting effect.

PHOTOGRAPHS, FROM TOP: COURTESY OF FATCAT RECORDS; JORDAN STRAUSS/WIREIMAGE.

[THE REVIEWS]
7 LADY SOVEREIGN JIGSAW
 (MIDGET/WORLD'S FAIR)

Lady Sovereign's only British rival in lyrical witticisms is Lily Allen, but instead of cooing, Sov spews her rhymes over icy beats. On this, her second album, she brings some melodic charm to the mix, especially on the title track and "So Human," whose melody is lifted from the Cure's "Close to Me."

2 AMADOU & MARIAM WELCOME TO MALI
 (BECAUSE MUSIC/NONESUCH RECORDS)

Titans of world music, this Malian husband-and-wife duo continue to transcend borders. On the mind-blowing "Sabali" (produced by Gorillaz mastermind Damon Albarn), they meld their trademark African-blues sound with an indie-rock melody, seventies ELO synths, and programmed beats to create a soulful and modern pop masterpiece.

3 BONNIE "PRINCE" BILLY BEWARE
 (DRAG CITY)

Will Oldham is quietly prolific, like Ryan Adams: He's released 15 studio albums since

1993—without much mainstream success. That could change with *Beware*, which, thanks to his country melancholy (at its peak on "I Don't Belong to Anyone"), is richer, fuller, and more satisfying than anything else he's done.

4 THE DECEMBERISTS THE HAZARDS OF LOVE
 (CAPITOL RECORDS)

Sure, lead singer Colin Meloy is a word nerd, but that doesn't excuse this spectacularly overwrought fifth album. The verbose lyrics tell a single bizarre story (at one point, a woman is ravaged by an animal), and the

messy marriage of English folk and Sabbath-esque metal offers no escape. Even diehards will have a tough time getting through this one.

6 DEPECHE MODE SOUNDS OF THE UNIVERSE
 (MUTE)

On their first album in four years, the elder statesmen of electro-pop travel back to the seventies, utilizing vintage synthesizers and drum machines. But clichéd lyrics about longing, yearning, and, well, more longing—and a conspicuous lack of hooks—make for a rather uninspired journey.

5 PETER BJORN AND JOHN LIVING THING
 (ALMOST GOLD/STARTIME INTERNATIONAL)

Animal Collective could learn a few things about accessibility from these Swedes, who spin gloriously listenable pop from out-there influences. PB&J jump from ringing guitar (on "I Want You!") to doo-wop vocals (on "Stay This Way")—all with a bit more thump than their twee-ish *Writer's Block*—and still make a frenzy sound focused.

