

## 2013 Mix: Various Methods of Escape

**Track 1: "Banged And Blown Through" by Saul Williams.** Don't let the prurient-sounding title fool you. This cut from Williams's 2008 album, produced by Trent Reznor, posits that "We are broken instruments. Burst wide open. Smashed and bent. Not what you'd expect from these city streets. Who serves to protect the orchestra in me? Instruments, banged and blown through." I came across this album whilst obsessively re-listening to any-and-everything NIN related in the fall. I might be five years late to this party, but I'm glad I didn't miss out altogether. [www.saulwilliams.com](http://www.saulwilliams.com)

**Track 2: "Ghosts" by Communist Daughter.** I saw this St. Paul-based sextet as an acoustic duo at a house concert in my new hometown of Northfield, Minnesota. In that setting, harmonies, song-craft and storytelling took center stage--well, center "living room." On this opening number from their 2012 *Lions & Lambs* EP, Communist Daughter is firing on all six cylinders! [www.communistdaughter.com](http://www.communistdaughter.com)

**Track 3: "Gone Blind" by The Ericksons.** This haunting opener to the Minneapolis based duo's album, *The Wild*, snuck up on me. When I first saw sisters Bethany Valentini and Jenny Kapernick perform at The Chapel in Northfield, I didn't quite "get it" like others seemed to. Then, I saw them a few weeks later at a Little Pond Productions house show and lost my mind over this song. It's not only one of my favorites of 2013 but in recent memory in general. - [www.theericksonsmusic.com](http://www.theericksonsmusic.com)

**Track 4: "Neon Bible" by Arcade Fire.** This is another party to which I'm a latecomer. I've always wanted to like Arcade Fire more than I do. I want them to be Joy Division, and they probably want to be themselves (the *nerve* of these Canadians, I *tell* ya!). Anyhow, I discovered this song after hearing "Antichrist Television Blues" (another track from the *Neon Bible* album) at the end of the *Mohr Stories* podcast. I thought it sounded like Bruce Springsteen, so I looked up the lyrics online to see what band it actually was. Whatayaknow... It was Arcade Fire from 2007! I got the CD from the library and really dug it. So... If you've wanted to get into Arcade Fire but haven't been able to, try the *Neon Bible* album. <http://arcadefire.com>

**Track 5: "Every Gun" by Patrick Sweany.** My friend Darrell Branch classifies music in one of two ways: It's either badass or it's not. This song, from Sweany's new *Close To The Floor* LP, is the epitome of badass. It's tough; it's funky; it's everything you want it to be and more. Dan Auerbach from The Black Keys used to be in Seany's band before starting his very successful duo; but, for my money, "Every Gun" is more badass than any Black Keys song! [www.patricksweany.com](http://www.patricksweany.com)

**Track 6: "It's Not Too Late" by Brian Ullman.** The "badassery" continues with my brother Brian's hard-rockin' contribution to this year's collection. Starting out with a cool guitar riff, this track cracks wide open with an awesome SUPER-HEAVY section at about the 1:25 mark. You can actually download this one (and other killer tracks) for FREE at Brian's sound cloud site - <https://soundcloud.com/brian-ullman>

**Track 7: "So It Goes (2010 Demo)" by Sean Kammer.** My friend and collaborator for 20-some years (remember *Illusions*, buddy?!), Sean shared this song he'd apparently forgotten about on Facebook recently, and I loved it right away. If this track is any indication of what he's got in his "unfinished" folder, I think we should all encourage him to get off his butt and start making more music! Check out his albums @ <http://seankammer.bandcamp.com>

**Track 8: "Blood Brothers" by Bruce Springsteen.** The very emotional live clip of this song in the *Springsteen & I* movie that came out this year led me to track down this studio recording. For old friends... <http://bruce.springsteen.net>

**Track 9: "minus one together" by batteryboy.** This rousing song from Cobey Rouse's orchestral indie-folk group was commissioned by the Groninger Museum in the Netherlands and appears on a benefit CD for UNICEF. I had the good fortune of sharing a show with batteryboy last month and am very grateful to Cobey for giving "the new guy in town" an opportunity to play for his audience. [www.batteryboymusic.com](http://www.batteryboymusic.com)

**Track 10: "Lights" by Battleme & The Forest Rangers.** Fans of the *Sons of Anarchy* TV show might recognize this song, but you don't need to be a SAMCRO fan to go for the haunting melodies, production and vocals of this tune. <http://battleme.tv>

**Track 11: "Let Me Hold You" by Josh Krajcik.** A beautiful ballad from Krajcik's major label debut, *Blindly, Lonely, Lovely*. I've been a fan of the man since seeing him portray a zombie hunter in Dustin Austen's homegrown home-video-gore-fest *Bakru* in the late 90s. Last August, I even got to share a show with Krajcik at the 7th Street Entry in Minneapolis. [www.joshkrajcik.com](http://www.joshkrajcik.com)

**Track 12: "A Drowning" by How To Destroy Angels.** The closing dirge from HTDA's 2010 self-titled debut sounds like just what you'd want from a female-fronted band from Nine Inch Nails mastermind Trent Reznor: dark, haunted, beautiful. <http://howtodestroyangels.com>

**Track 13: "Road Regrets" by Levi Weaver.** Originally written and performed by Dan Mangan, Weaver's cover came to my attention first and is my preferred version. For a while you could get it on his "Antipodes" EP via Noisetrade, but that seems to have been pulled. Lucky you, I nabbed it first! <http://leviweaver.com>

**Track 14: "E Major Tom" by Story Of The Sea.** This catchy instrumental from the Minneapolis trio's self-titled double album caught my attention after seeing them play the Triple Rock Social Club in their hometown last February. Rumor is, they're no longer together, but you can still dig their tunes @ [www.storyofthesea.com](http://www.storyofthesea.com)

**Track 15: "Home" by Alison Rae.** I saw Alison play this song at one of Jim Walsh's Mad Ripple Hootenanny in Northfield at The Chapel last year. She instantly hooked me with her introduction of the song, as I knew (and had played) the very same bar gig she's writes about! It's a really lovely tune. Download her album, whydon'tcha!? <http://alisonrae.bandcamp.com>

**Track 16: "Don't Say It's Hard" by Ben Aaron.** Ben released four albums in 2013--one for each season! He's got a great, 1963 Dylan vibe about him--crossed with the happy-go-lucky, aw-shucks demeanor of a Josh Ritter. He's a great talent as well as a hard-workin' "gee-tar" player and singer---but don't tell *him* that. He "know's" (he plays) "HARD!" [www.benaaronmusic.com](http://www.benaaronmusic.com)

**Track 17: "The Bad Days (Acoustic)" by David Ramirez.** A gorgeous, melancholy lament on living with and loving a traveling musician. I owe this discovery to the NoiseTrade eNewsletter. I saw a moody picture of Ramirez with an acoustic guitar and clicked over to his 7-song-sampler. The solo, guy-and-a-guitar version of the song included here is still available both as a free download at <http://davidramirezmusic.com> or on that NoiseTrade sampler I mentioned -

<http://www.noisetrade.com/davidramirezmusic/noisetrade-sampler>

**Track 18: "Various Methods Of Escape" by Nine Inch Nails.** I have been a big, big NIN fan for 20 years now, and it has been a really exciting time to be a Nine Inch Nails fan lately. The release of Trent Reznor's ninth album under the NIN banner--if you count the *Broken* EP as an album, which I do--sent me on a two-and-a-half month Nine Inch Nails bender. I re-listened to all 28 "Halos," watched every video release, read or re-read every magazine article I'd kept or could get my hands on, watched over 100 interview clips of TR on YouTube, so on and so forth! I simply could not get enough. This track is one of my favorites off of the *Hesitation Marks* album. <http://nin.com>

**Track 19: "Future Days" by Pearl Jam.** The closing number of PJ's 10th studio album is also the last track on my mix. It's a lovey-dovey ballad, but it's a beautiful one done by one of my all-time favorite bands. If you've ever been a fan of this band and haven't heard their new record, *Lightning Bolt*, you should check it out right now. After nearly 25 years, these dudes are still rocking--hard! <http://pearljam.com>

- David Ullman  
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