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MICHAEL GILTZ AT WORK

THE 250 BEST ALBUMS OF THE 21ST CENTURY...SO FAR

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Rolling Stone posted a feature on the 250 Best Albums of the 21st Century...So Far. To me—a diligent, obsessive list-maker—their's fighting words. At first, I thought, "already?" But oops, we're 25 years into the century so maybe it's *not* too soon to take a first look at all the great albums already out. I haven't counted them up, but my list is substantially different from RS. I've got more jazz, more world music, certainly more cast albums (Not even *Hamilton*? Really, Rolling Stone!) and let's face it, more NPR-type music for adults.

Are they right? Am I wrong? Nope. It's just a reflection of how much terrific music is released (literally, thousands of albums worth every week and I'm not even counting A.I.-generated crap!) Plus, we've all got our biases. Rolling Stone needs to be hip and reflect the radio, the kids, the cool stuff. Not me. I'm so old fashioned I listen to *albums*—not playlists and certainly not random singles. So enjoy this list for what it is, a grab-bag of music from the past 25 years I've loved, some of which I've been playing and enjoying for longer than you've been alive (if perhaps we're talking about one of the older albums and you're, say, 21.) Unlike Rolling Stone, I am allowing only one album per act so I can offer up as many different artists as possible. (But I cheat a little.) So enjoy! And let me know what albums are missing from this list!

They're not in any particular order, though perhaps my initial ten picks are ten of my absolute favorites. But to prove they're not ranked, I end with Joni Mitchell's



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BLOG ARCHIVE

- ▼ 2025 (38)
 - March (7)
 - February (25)
 - ▼ January (6)

magisterial covers album *Both Sides Now* and I'm not *about* to tell Joni Mitchell one of her albums ranks #250 out of 250. Uh-uh. It's great and I could easily put it at the top. So there.

Pro tip: if you get to the bottom, you'll find a *bonus* list of the best reissues/boxed sets and a *bonus* bonus list of the best Christmas albums.

First, if you're interested, I've also got a list naming my favorite album for every year from 1924 to the Present. Yes, 100+ years of great albums! And then I list all of my favorite albums for each year. What great albums came out the year you were born? Have you heard them all? Check it out!

The Best Albums of the Year: 1924 to the Present

If you prefer to stroll through my library or wonder exactly how crazy I am about Paul McCartney or Prefab Sprout or Joni Mitchell or whomever, here are a bunch of albums I've listened to over the years, arranged by artist, going from ABBA to ZZ Top, as well as lists of cast albums, soundtracks, Christmas music and various artist compilations.

Michael's Music Library: Arranged By Artist From A to Z

Like I said, I like lists!

Okay, let's get streaming! Here are my picks for...

THE 250 BEST ALBUMS OF THE 21ST CENTURY...SO FAR

- SUFJAN STEVENS – *(Come On Feel The) Illinoise*
MANU CHAO -- *Proxima Estacion: Esperanza*
CÉCILE MCLORIN SALVANT -- *Dreams And Daggers*
GREEN DAY -- *American Idiot*
SHARON JONES AND THE DAP-KINGS -- *100 Days 100 Nights*
PAUL MCCARTNEY -- *Chaos and Creation In The Backyard*
MAXWELL --
BLACKsummers'night /blackSUMMERnights (two albums in a trilogy)
RUMER -- *Seasons Of My Soul*
A TRIBE CALLED QUEST -- *We've Got It From Here...Thank You For Your Service*
JOHN LUTHER ADAMS -- *Become Ocean*

THE ULTIMATE GRAMMY
PREVIEW: THE BEST
ALBUMS OF 2024

WORLDWIDE BOX OFFICE
FOR WEEK ENDING
JANUARY 26, 2025

THE 250 BEST ALBUMS OF
THE 21ST CENTURY...SO
FAR

WORLDWIDE BOX OFFICE
FOR WEEK ENDING
JANUARY 19, 2025

WORLDWIDE BOX OFFICE
FOR WEEK ENDING
JANUARY 12, 2025

WORLDWIDE BOX OFFICE
FOR WEEK ENDING
JANUARY 5, 2025

- 2024 (37)
► 2023 (8)
► 2022 (6)
► 2021 (8)
► 2020 (7)
► 2019 (93)
► 2018 (34)
► 2017 (6)
► 2016 (2)
► 2015 (11)
► 2014 (2)
► 2013 (5)
► 2012 (17)
► 2011 (15)
► 2010 (10)
► 2009 (43)
► 2008 (86)
► 2007 (781)
► 2006 (2405)
► 2005 (5)
-

ROBERT PLANT AND ALISON KRAUSS -- *Raising Sand*
KAMASI WASHINGTON -- *Heaven And Earth*
KATE BUSH -- *Aerial*
ORCHESTRA BAOBAB -- *Specialist In All Styles*
RUFUS WAINWRIGHT -- *Want One*
KENDRICK LAMAR -- *To Pimp A Butterfly*
AMY WINEHOUSE -- *Back To Black*
ESLABÓN ARMADO -- *Nostalgia*
AIMEE MANN -- *Bachelor No. 2 or, The Last Remains of the Dodo*
VARIOUS ARTISTS -- *Music from The Singing Detective And More*

EMINEM -- *The Marshall Mathers LP*
ORIGINAL CAST ALBUM -- *Spring Awakening*
JOHNNY CASH -- *American IV: The Man Comes Around*
SOLANGE -- *A Seat At The Table*
WILCO -- *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot*
FLOATING POINTS AND PHAROAH SANDERS -- *Promises*
COURTNEY BARNETT -- *Sometimes I Just Sit And Think And Sometimes I Just Sit*
THE WHITE STRIPES -- *Elephant*
ALI FARKA TOURE AND TOUMANI DIABATE -- *In The Heart Of The Moon*
KING CREOSOTE AND JON HOPKINS -- *Diamond Mine*

BRANDI CARLILE -- *In These Silent Days (In The Canyon Haze edition)*
BRIAN ENO AND ROBERT FRIPP -- *The Equatorial Stars*
KANYE WEST -- *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy*
DOLLY PARTON -- *Little Sparrow*
GRUPO FRONTERA -- *El Comienzo*
ORIGINAL CAST ALBUM -- *Hamilton*
TINARIWEN -- *Aman Iman: Water Is Life*
RYAN ADAMS -- *Gold*
IMMANUEL WILKINS -- *Omega*
THE TALLEST MAN ON EARTH -- *The Wild Hunt/Sometimes The Blues Is Just A Passing Bird ep*

STURGILL SIMPSON -- *Metamodern Sounds In Country Music*
PJ HARVEY -- *Let England Shake*

ARCTIC MONKEYS -- *Whatever People Say I Am, That's What I'm Not*
ALLEN TOUSSAINT -- *The Bright Mississippi*
ORIGINAL CAST ALBUM -- *Hadestown* (Off Broadway production)
PESO PLUMA -- *Génesis*
PETER GARLAND -- *The Basketweave Elegies* (performed by William Winant)
KASEY CHAMBERS -- *Dragonfly*
WILLIE NELSON AND WYNTON MARSALIS -- *Two Men With The Blues*
BEASTIE BOYS -- *Beastie Boys Music*

FIONA APPLE -- *Fetch The Bolt Cutters*
OUTKAST -- *Speakerboxxx/The Love Below*
DIXIE CHICKS -- *Home*
AMADOU AND MARIAM -- *Dimanche a Bamako*
RICHARD SWIFT -- *The Richard Swift Collection, Volume One*
BRANFORD MARSALIS -- *Four MF's Playin' Their Tunes*
THE EELS -- *Blinking Lights and Other Revelations*
BETTYE LAVETTE -- *I've Got My Own Hell To Raise*
JOSH ROUSE -- *1972*
ORIGINAL CAST ALBUM -- *The Scottsboro Boys*

BRIGHT EYES -- *I'm Wide Awake, It's Morning*
YOUSSOU N'DOUR -- *Nothing's In Vain*
LEONARD COHEN -- *You Want It Darker*
ERYKAH BADU -- *New Amerykah Part One (4th World War)*
JOSHUA REDMAN AND BRAD MEHLDAU -- *Nearness*
LORETTA LYNNE -- *Van Lear Rose*
MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE -- *The Black Parade*
LINA RODRIGUEZ -- *Lina_ Raúl Refree*
NAS -- *Nas*
TEDDY THOMPSON AND KELLY JONES -- *My Love of Country/Once More* (w Jenni Muldaur)

MIDLAKE -- *The Trials of Van Occupanther*
IRMA THOMAS -- *After The Rain*
BRIAN WILSON -- *Brian Wilson Presents Smile*
THE ROOTS -- *The Tipping Point*
RADIOHEAD -- *Kid A*
KENNY BARRON -- *Book Of Intuition*
PAUL BUCHANAN -- *Mid Air*
BOUBACAR TRAORE -- *Mali Denhou*

MADELEINE PEYROUX -- *Bare Bones*
BUZZARD BUZZARD BUZZARD -- *Backhand Deals*

THE STROKES -- *Is This It?*
EVERYTHING BUT THE GIRL -- *Fuse*
THE LEMON TWIGS -- *A Dream Is All We Know*
CAROLINA CHOCOLATE DROPS -- *Genuine Negro Jigs*
ORIGINAL CAST ALBUM -- *Avenue Q*
BAD BUNNY -- *X100PRE*
TONY BENNETT AND BILL CHARLAP -- *The Silver Lining: The Songs Of Jerome Kern*
iLe -- *Almadura*
JASON ISBELL -- *The Nashville Sound*
JOHANN JOHANNSSON -- *The Miners' Hymns*

KAISER CHIEFS -- *Education, Education, Education and War*
BECKY G -- *Esquinas*
KEITH JARRETT -- *Somewhere*
BOYGENIUS -- *The Record*
CHANCE THE RAPPER -- *Coloring Book*
ORIGINAL CAST ALBUM -- *Billy Elliot*
LIZZO -- *Cuz I Love You*
DWIGHT YOAKUM -- *3 Pears*
C. TANGANA -- *El Madrileño*
BARRY MANILOW -- *Night Songs*

MAVIS STAPLES -- *Live: Hope At The Holdout*
BOB DYLAN -- *Fallen Angels*
BOMBINO -- *Agadez*
CAT POWER -- *The Greatest*
D'ANGELO -- *Voodoo*
THE MAVERICKS -- *En Español*
TERENCE BLANCHARD -- *A Tale of God's Will*
LINDA THOMPSON -- *Won't Be Long Now*
THE MAGNETIC FIELDS -- *50 Song Memoir*
THE FEELING -- *Boy Cried Wolf*

WILLIAM BASINSKI -- *The Disintegration Loops*
SAULT -- *Untitled (Black Is) and Untitled (Rise)*
JOAN BAEZ -- *Day After Tomorrow*
BALLAKE SISSOKO AND VINCENT SEGAL -- *Chamber Music*
TRACEY THORN -- *Love and Its Opposite*
CHRIS STAPLETON -- *Traveller*
ORIGINAL CAST ALBUM -- *Grey Gardens*

SONNY ROLLINS -- *Road Show Vol. 1*
TANYA TUCKER -- *Sweet Western Sound*
VARIOUS ARTISTS -- *I Believe To My Soul*

A GIRL CALLED EDDY -- *Been Around*
WYNTON MARSALIS -- *Standards and Ballads*
FLEET FOXES -- *Helplessness Blues*
SOLOMON BURKE -- *Nashville*
DARYL HALL AND JOHN OATES -- *Do It For Love*
ROSEANNE CASH -- *Black Cadillac*
MAX RICHTER -- *The Blue Notebooks*
ORIGINAL CAST ALBUM -- *The Wild Party* (Michael John LaChuisa)
KONONO NO. 1 -- *Congotronics*
PETER WOLF -- *Midnight Souvenirs*

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN -- *We Shall Overcome: The Seeger Sessions American Land Edition*
JILL SCOTT -- *Woman*
RON SEXSMITH -- *Long Player, Late Bloomer*
BASSEKOU KUYATE AND NGONI BA -- *Segu Blue*
SUZANNE VEGA -- *Beauty and Crimes*
FOUNTAINS OF WAYNE -- *Welcome Interstate Managers*
kd lang -- *Hymns Of The 49th Parallel*
BRAD PAISLEY -- *American Saturday Night*
ORIGINAL CAST ALBUM -- *The Band's Visit*
BRAD MEHLDAU -- *Your Mother Should Know: Brad Mehldau Plays The Beatles*

WEYES BLOOD -- *Titanic Rising*
ELO aka Electric Light Orchestra -- *Zoom*
CASSANDRA WILSON -- *Thunderbird*
NEIL DIAMOND -- *12 Songs*
THE LICKERISH QUARTET -- *Threesome*
MARGO PRICE -- *All American Made*
AFRICAN HEAD CHARGE -- *A Trip To Bolgatonga*
CLARICE JENSEN -- *The Experience Of Repetition As Death*
PANIC! AT THE DISCO -- *Pray For The Wicked*
LOUDON WAINWRIGHT -- *High, Wide And Handsome: The Charlie Poole Project*

NORAH JONES -- *Come Away With Me*
DAVID BOWIE -- *Heathen*
THE JOHN SALLY RIDE -- *Now Is Not A Great Time*
PATTY GRIFFIN -- *Children Running Through*

FATOUMATA DIAWARA -- *Fatou*
JAMES HUNTER -- *People Gonna Talk*
ANDY BEY -- *American Song*
REGINA SPEKTOR -- *Begin To Hope*
VARIOUS ARTISTS -- *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*
THE MONKEES -- *Good Times!*

GILLIAN WELCH -- *The Harrow and the Harvest*
BECK -- *Sea Change*
THE AVETT BROTHERS -- *I And Love And You*
DIANA KRALL -- *The Look Of Love*
THE LAST SHADOW PUPPETS -- *The Age Of The Understatement*
JOHN MORELAND -- *Big Bad Luv*
DR. JOHN -- *Locked Down*
M. WARD -- *Hold Time*
CHUCK PROPHET -- *The Land That Time Forgot*
MUDCRUTCH -- *Mudcrutch 2*

JANELLE MONAE -- *The Electric Lady*
THE WHIFFS -- *Take A Whiff*
COWBOY JUNKIES -- *Notes Falling Slowly*
KALI MALONE -- *The Sacrificial Code*
VAMPIRE WEEKEND -- *Modern Vampires Of The City*
JUDY COLLINS -- *Silver Skies Blue*
JAMES COTTON -- *Cotton Mouth Man*
LORDE -- *Pure Heroin(e)*
JESSE WINCHESTER -- *Love Filling Station*
BOZ SCAGGS -- *But Beautiful*

JOHN MAYER -- *Born And Raised*
CAROLINE SHAW -- *Orange*
THE CORAL -- *Coral Island*
SHELBY LYNNE -- *The Servant*
JAMEY JOHNSON -- *Living For A Dream: A Tribute To Hank Cochran*
TAME IMPALA -- *Currents*
CHARLIE GABRIEL AND THE PRESERVATION HALL JAZZ BAND -- *89*
ALLISON RUSSELL -- *Outside Child*
CHEAP TRICK -- *The Latest*
VARIOUS ARTISTS -- *Once Upon A Time...In Hollywood* original soundtrack

NELLIE MCKAY -- *Normal As Blueberry Pie: A Tribute To Doris Day*
BETA RADIO -- *Seven Sisters*

TOM WAITS -- *Bad As Me*
IRIS DEMENT -- *The Trackless Woods*
ANDY BURROWS AND MATT HAIG -- *Reasons To Stay Alive*
JAY-Z AND KANYE WEST -- *Watch the Throne*
RICK SPRINGFIELD -- *The Snake King*
BETTY BUCKLEY -- *Ghostlight*
STEVE EARLE -- *Ghosts Of West Virginia*
SPANISH HARLEM ORCHESTRA -- *Across 110th Street*

JOE JACKSON -- *Mr. Joe Jackson Presents Max Champion in "What A Racket!"*
KEITH JARRETT AND CHARLIE HADEN -- *Jasmine*
MIRANDA LAMBERT, JACK INGRAM, JON RANDALL -
- *The Marfa Tapes*
OLAFUR ARNALDS -- *Some Kind Of Peace*
ELVIS COSTELLO -- *The Boy Named If*
MELODY GARDOT -- *My One And Only Thrill*
THE FRATELLIS -- *Eyes Wide Tongue Tied*
MANDY PATINKIN -- *Diary: January 27, 2018/April May 2018*
AMY LAVERE -- *Runaway's Diary*
NICK HEYWARD -- *Woodland Echoes*

HARRY STYLES -- *Harry's House*
TONY BENNETT & k.d. lang -- *A Wonderful World*
IKE REILLY -- *Born On Fire*
GLEN CAMPBELL -- *Ghost on the Canvas*
WET LEG -- *Wet Leg*
BEYONCÉ -- *Cowboy Carter*
RICHARD THOMPSON -- *13 Rivers*
BON IVER -- *For Emma, Forever Ago*
THE VINES -- *Wicked Nature*
ANGELIQUE KIDJO -- *Remain In Light*

NICK CAVE -- *Ghosteen*
MARIA MCKEE -- *La Vita Nuova*
PAUL KELLY -- *Songs From The South: Paul Kelly's Greatest Hits 1985-2019*
KRONOS QUARTET AND TRIO DA KALI -- *Ladilikan*
MATTHEW SWEET AND SUSANNA HOFFS -- *Under The Covers Vol. 1*
MARCUS KING -- *Mood Swings*
TIM CHRISTENSEN -- *Honeyburst*
BUDDY GUY -- *Living Proof*
PET SHOP BOYS -- *Super*
THE FINN BROTHERS -- *Everyone Is Here*

CORINNE BAILEY RAE -- *Corinne Bailey Rae*
THE SMILE -- *Wall of Eyes / Cutout*
KELLY WILLIS -- *Cheater's Game* (w Bruce Robison)
ARI LENNOX -- *Shea Butter Baby*
TOUMANI DIABATE'S SYMMETRIC ORCHESTRA --
Boulevard De L'Independance
FRANK TURNER -- *Tape Deck Heart*
BILL FAY -- *Life Is People*
BONES -- *Skinny and Rotten and Seabeds* (all 2014)
WYNTON MARSALIS AND ERIC CLAPTON -- *Play the Blues*
ELLIOT BROOD -- *Town and Country*

THE CURE -- *Songs Of A Lost World*
SZA -- *Ctrl*
FRANK OCEAN -- *Channel Orange*
DAVID BYRNE AND BRIAN ENO -- *Everything That Happens Will Happen Today*
LADY BLACKBIRD -- *Slang Spirituals*
KASEY CHAMBERS AND SHANE NICHOLSON --
Rattlin' Bones
HOWARD TATE -- *A Portrait Of Howard*
ADELE -- *21*
LADYSMITH BLACK MAMBAZO -- *Songs From a Zulu Farm*
JONI MITCHELL -- *Both Sides Now*

BONUS! THE 20 BEST REISSUES/BOX SETS OF THE 21ST CENTURY...SO FAR

ELLA FITZGERALD -- *Twelve Nights In Hollywood*
BOB DYLAN -- *Another Self Portrait*
BOBBIE GENTRY -- *The Girl From Chickasaw County*
JOHNNY ADAMS -- *South Side Of Soul Street (The SSS Sessions)/Only Want To Be With You comp*
VARIOUS ARTISTS -- *Does Anybody Know I'm Here? Vietnam Through The Eyes of Black America*
JOHNNY CASH -- *Unearthed*
VARIOUS ARTISTS -- *Night Train To Nashville: Music City Rhythm And Blues 1945-1970 Vol. One/Two*
THE WATERBOYS -- *Fisherman Box*
BARBRA STREISAND -- *Live At The Bon Soir*
THE REPLACEMENTS -- *Tim: Let It Bleed Edition*
GARNET MIMMS -- *Looking For You: The Complete United Artists and Veep Singles*

THE BEACH BOYS -- *The Smile Sessions* boxed set
 LINDA LEWIS -- *Reach For The Truth: Best Of The Reprise Years 1971-1974*)
 EDDIE CONDON -- *The Eddie Condon Collection 1927-1961*
 VARIOUS ARTISTS -- *Nigeria Special: Modern Highlife, Afro-Sounds And Nigerian Blues 1970-1976*
 ROLLING STONES -- *Live At The El Mocambo*
 LONE JUSTICE -- *Viva Lone Justice*
 EMMYLOU HARRIS, DOLLY PARTON, LINDA RONSTADT -- *Trio: The Complete Collection*
 TABU LEY ROCHEREAU -- *The Voice Of Lightness*
 THE BEATLES -- *1962-1966 (The Red Album expanded)/1967-1970 (The Blue Album expanded)*

BONUS BONUS! THE 13 BEST CHRISTMAS ALBUMS OF THE 21ST CENTURY...SO FAR

SIA -- *Everyday is Christmas*
 SUFJAN STEVENS -- *Songs For Christmas/Silver & Gold* boxed sets
 AIMEE MANN -- *Drifters in the Snow*
 LOS LOBOS -- *Llegó Navidad*
 TRACEY THORN -- *Tinsel and Lights*
 WYNTON MARSALIS/JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER BIG BAND -- *Big Band Holiday*
 JUDY COLLINS -- *Winter Stories*
 BRISTOL BRASS CONSORT -- *Festive Brass*
 TORI AMOS -- *Midwinter Graces*
 ROBBIE WILLIAMS -- *The Christmas Present*
 STILE ANTICO -- *A Spanish Nativity*
 THE LIVING SISTERS -- *Harmony Is Real: Songs For A Happy Holiday*
 VARIOUS ARTISTS -- *Where Will You Be Christmas Day*

POSTED BY MICHAEL GILTZ AT 12:08 PM 

2 COMMENTS:

ColdSh33p said...

Coming to you by way of a friend in Florida, I appreciate this list. I appreciate that you've taken the time to only give one album per artist even if they do deserve having multiple albums on the list. Great work! Thanks for letting me know that Mandy Patinkin has some studio albums out there.

PS: That's your Panic! At The Disco choice? Come on, man. We can do better than that. ;)

3:59 PM

Michael Giltz said...

Second! Remember when people would excitedly be the first to comment and say "first!"? Thanks for reading and commenting. Re: Panic! Ha, I really also love Vices & Virtues and Too Weird To Live (and the latest). I think they're really underappreciated. If I'd had more time I would have listened intensely to make my choice between them. Some artists boast a clear favorite. Other have a wealth of options. As for Patinkin, those intimate acoustic recordings are special. He has at least nine albums (not counting cast recordings) and I heartily recommend his debut titled Mandy Patinkin and "Oscar and Steve" as great places to start.

4:30 PM

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