

NOW STREAMING:



KALEO / A/B

Jennifer **RUSSO**

I can't recall when I came across Kaleo's music last year, but I do recall how I felt when I heard it. This bluesy rock band, originally from Iceland, packs a punch with music you can feel down to your bones and in every nook and cranny of your being. The music simply seeps in, embracing your very soul.

"Way Down We Go" is the most notable song, and one that they also did live from the depths of a volcano. The acoustics on that version are phenomenal and unlike anything I have ever heard. "Broken Bones" speaks about an encounter with the devil himself and "Hot Blood" is a fiery song with poignant lyrics like "You wanna prove you're the better man/You wanna reach for the things that nobody can/Oh, all you need is to break away..." that speak to many.

My personal favorite is actually the one song on their album that is in their native tongue, "Vor í Vaglaskógi." I am not sure what the translation is, but the sense I get is that it is about a love for what is around you. This ballad enters with a stunningly beautiful guitar intro, which carries through the whole song, setting the stage for the heartfelt and soulful vocals of vocalist JJ Julius Son. His range is a wonder throughout the song list, too, where he can be anything from low, growling and gritty with a tense vibrato to a clean and pure falsetto in the higher register.

If you have not yet heard of Kaleo, which released their debut album *A/B* last year, I recommend acquainting yourself with them immediately. The musicianship is creative and authentic, and I can say without hesitation that they are one of the most talented bands out there today. They happen to be playing at the House of Blues in Boston on Oct. 16.

For more information, visit officialkaleo.com.



LANA DEL REY / Lust for Life

Mike **WOOD**

Its title might throw you if you know anything about Lana Del Rey or her previous four albums. She is known to be melancholic and ethereal, but *Lust for Life* sounds wistful, hopeful and, dare we say, at points, happy? Well, Del Rey fans need not worry, the singer-songwriter is still truthful and telling and as poetic as in the past, but there is a subtle exuberance in the proceedings, which might explain the artist's huge, toothy grin on the album artwork.

The tortured poet of the past is still present, but Del Rey is also embracing pop music on this album much more than ever before (you'll even find cameos by The Weeknd, A\$AP Rocky and Stevie Nicks), even as she delves into the divisive state of our country. Remember when Katy Perry told us she was going to get political but abandoned that ship without ever looking back? Del Rey has stepped up to the proverbial plate and hit it out of the park.

Leaving baseball analogies behind, the music is as moody as fans might expect, but it's also tonally positive throughout its 16 songs, and with a running time of about 1 hour and 10 minutes, that's a relief. Make no mistake, this is still Lana Del Rey, but the poppier version we meet here is a most welcome deviation from business as usual.

For more information, visit lanadelrey.com.



EDGE OF FREE / Edge of Free

Jason **SAVIO**

When Scott Sneddon sings, "As autumn leaves fall/So does my soul/As autumn leaves take hold/It's time to let go," in the song titled (you guessed it) "Autumn," you can't help but feel a tinge of melancholy. And that's the way with Edge of Free's self-titled debut album. But the brooding and ominous 8-track effort doesn't quite take advantage of Sneddon's lyrics as much as it could.

Produced by Toby Wright (Korn, Metallica, Alice in Chains), Edge of Free doesn't shy away from acoustic grunge rock and instead embraces it with unabashed determination. The similarities to Alice in Chains – from Sneddon's singing to John Hussey's guitar – are at times uncanny and almost a little too coincidental. There is a nice balance in numbers like "Blood Eagle" and "Soul of Grace," showcasing the group delivering crisp acoustic verses before exploding into heavier rock choruses. The only problem is that the band seems to get too comfortable with this formula, allowing the listener to eventually zone out and miss the vulnerable lyrics of Sneddon. When his words do come through, such as in "In My Time (Falling)" – "I'm the one you know/Fallen and alone" – you appreciate them more than the rest.

There is certainly an audience that will enjoy this first effort by Edge of Free, even if at times it may struggle with keeping your attention. These guys leave a good last impression with two pulsing tracks to finish the record, which hints at more of the same to come.

For more information, visit edgeoffree.com.