

# frontrunner

## intune ListeningList

Music for Musicians

Welcome to the In Tune Listening List, a collection of new and noteworthy songs we think musicians should check out. Each cut can be streamed in its entirety on [intunemonthly.com](http://intunemonthly.com).

The Script is a trio from Dublin who have been chart-toppers in the U.K. for some time. Their international hit **The Man Who Can't Be Moved**, from their self-titled debut album on Sony BMG, actually came out last summer, but it's new music here in the States. Think U2 meets John Legend. Give it a listen and hear how this band's love of American R&B shines through...Ryan Leslie is a record producer who writes and plays a variety of instruments and sings backup on some of the songs he produces for singers like Cassie, but he wants to do his own stuff. So he streams his own music on YouTube and releases some singles, but never really makes it. Nevertheless, he eventually releases his debut album, and we really like it. Check out **Wanna Be Good** from Leslie's self-titled Casablanca Music album and see if you don't agree that this guy is something special...We've been watching and listening to the band called Mute Math for some time, and though we like their past work, we think they've upgraded their output considerably with their latest EP, *Spotlight* on Warner Bros., featuring a tune by the same name from the movie *Twilight*. But it's the song **Clockwork** from the EP, with its tight harmonies and rich construction, that suggested to us that Mute Math's moment could be now...After having had their music played on a number of U.S. TV shows, and working for more than a decade together, the South African trio Civil Twilight has released a self-titled debut album on Wind-up Records. The cut **Next to Me** is our favorite, a sweet, piano-driven tune featuring Steven McKellar's impressive vocal. McKellar, his brother Andrew, and drummer Rich Wouters produce a remarkably lush sound for a trio, and this tune is sure to give them the notice they deserve...Rebecca Muir has been the darling of the Berklee College of Music, winning awards and scholarships, performing with visiting superstars and, in general, hanging

## Missy Higgins

An established sensation in Australia, she's building toward true stardom here.

Earlier this decade, Missy Higgins solidified her position as a top singer/songwriter in Australia with an avalanche of that country's ARIA nominations and awards, but lately, her popularity has been growing in the U.S.—so much so that she will embark on her first headline tour here this summer. She opened for Ben Folds on his tour last summer. Her recent piano-based hit “Where I Stood” has opened all sorts of doors for Higgins, but she hasn't gone in for the media-circus promotion that “of the moment” acts tend to use. Instead, she's relied on live performances and the power of her work to lead the way, suggesting that she may have an enduring career as a music creator and performer.



## Carolina Liar

Featured three months ago in the Listening List, they're breaking out all over the place.

We couldn't believe that California Liar's big new hit “Show Me What I'm Looking For,” the followup to the smash “I'm Not Over,” was iTunes' free single of the week. What is happening to the music business! As of this writing, it's one of the best songs out. What a wonderful sweeping anthem. Great choral backing, perfect drums, and a totally sweet melody line. Liar seems to be the truth when it comes to

songwriting; a couple more of these tunes and we could have the first act In Tune's covered that goes from Listening List to Frontrunner to our cover in one year. Love these guys.



## Alpha Rev

Austin's perennial opening act gets its moment in the sun.

You need to hear the music made by this six-member ensemble, fronted by Casey McPherson (formerly of Endochine).

We've just listened to their first album and bought it on the spot. It sports a dreamy electrified cello backing many songs; a piano-and-vocal combination that rivals, if not bests, Coldplay; in-your-face percussion; and truly creative production. Our thought? This band can't (shouldn't?) miss. They're now in the studio working on their first album for Hollywood Records, and we are as excited to hear the new effort as any on the horizon.



## The Temper Trap

They made a stand at the SXSW festival, but then headed back down under. Mistake.

Breaking the U.S. market takes a huge commitment, and while Australian electro-rockers the Temper Trap did make the most of a late winter trip, doing a date in London and another in New York before heading to Austin for the South by Southwest new music showcase, at this point these guys can't be all hit and run. Yes, they still need a label in the U.S., but a good listen to their driving atmospheric sound tells most any critical listener that this band's ready for its closeup. Instead of packing up for more dates in Australia, they need to be touring here!



## This Providence

A big hit online, they're now trying to conquer the “real” music industry.

They began as a Seattle, Washington band formed by friends from a Christian youth group when they were in high school. After local success and a few different names, more than a few personnel changes, and years on the road, they now appear to have found a winning formula. Their latest album on the Fueled By Ramen label exhibits a more varied array of sounds than many others of their ilk, and the combination of strong players and a frontman with great vocal appeal allows them to create “album perfect” live shows. They're still the opening act on tour, but they seem to be on the upswing, and perhaps one big single away from headliner status.



out at the top of her class. A featured artist on Berklee's student-run Heavy Rotation Records (see story on page 48), she's now put out a self-produced EP. Check out **Send Down the Rain**—and remember you heard about her first on the In Tune Listening List...Legend has Tommy Joe Wilson singing in a Nashville honky-tonk when Scott Weiland, lead singer for Stone Temple Pilots and Velvet Revolver—and now owner of SoftDrive Records—walked in, jumped onstage, sang with Tommy Joe, and signed him on the spot to a record deal. Listen to the first single from his first album, **Tryin' to Find the Sun**, and you'll see why that all makes sense...In honor of storied record label Blue Note's



70th anniversary, a jazz supergroup consisting of Bill Charlap, Ravi Coltrane, Nicholas Payton, Steve Wilson, Lewis Nash, Peter Bernstein, and Peter Washington hit the road as the Blue Note 7, playing fresh arrangements of the label's classics. 50 cities later, they recorded eight cuts and called it *Mosaic* after the opening track. We think the album's a masterpiece but especially like the closer, a Charlap arrangement of **The Outlaw**...Latin Christian/pop singer Ana Laura has released a new album on Integrity Records called *Feliz* and it's a great one in any language. The track **Quiero Volar** sits at the bottom of the album's list, but because of its construction and rhythm, we think it's one of the best...Lisa Batiashvili is a Georgian violin soloist whose latest record with the Bremen Philharmonic on Sony BMG features the 6 Miniatures by Georgian composer Sulhkan Tsintsadze. She is absolutely magnificent on these short pieces, particularly the one called **Lale**...In Tune's May classic rock closer is always a special one because it's our last recommendation of this magazine season (however, we hope you'll check out our monthly Listening Lists on [intunemonthly.com](http://intunemonthly.com) all summer long!). Because they didn't write many originals and the critics never gave them much respect (although they sold 25 million albums), Grand Funk Railroad was never viewed as one of the greatest rock acts of all time. They did have their moment in the sun, though, and created one song regarded popularly as a true classic. It was called **I'm Your Captain**, from the 1970 album *Closer To Home* on Capitol Records. So, if summer is where you want to be, there's no question that you're now getting closer to your home.

MISSY HIGGINS: KRISTIAN DOWLING/GETTY IMAGES; THIS PROVIDENCE: JOHNNY MINARDI; ALPHA REV: CAMBRIA HARVEY; CAROLINA LIAR: JEFFREY MAYER/WIREIMAGE.COM