

Ranking the Best Albums of All Time

Albums are portfolios of the musical world, allowing an artist to showcase a complete body of work. From the revolutionary pop album "[Pet Sounds](#)" to the punk-rock defining "[London Calling](#)" and the timeless "[Abbey Road](#)," each collection immerses the listener fully in the artist's world, extending beyond hit singles and popular tracks.

Ask anyone their favorite album and you're sure to get a wide range of answers. With so many albums to choose from, which ones are truly the greatest?

To crown the best albums of all time, [PrettyFamous](#), an entertainment data site by [Graphiq](#), ranked all of the albums in its database by Album Score — a customized statistic out of 100 that aggregates album ratings from external sources, including [AllMusic](#), [Metacritic](#), [Rolling Stone](#), [Pitchfork](#) and many more. From the ranked albums, only those with a score greater than or equal to 95 were included. It should be noted that these ratings are pulled from an album's Wikipedia page, so in the event that an album does not have a page, or its page does not have ratings, it will not appear on this list.

[The Beatles](#) and [Miles Davis](#) reign supreme, with six albums from each appearing on the list, solidifying their positions as musical icons for the ages. [The Rolling Stones](#) are close behind, with an impressive five albums; and Elvis Presley, The Velvet Underground, Van Morrison and The Clash round out the all-star group with four albums each. Shockingly, none of these artists managed to nab the number one spot.

Whether you are looking to expand your musical horizon or dust off some vinyls and fire up the analog, the following list contains a bonafide collection of some of the most important and influential music to date to fuel your creative inspiration.

Note: Ties are broken by number of ratings and the year the album was released. Album review excerpts are sourced from Rolling Stone, Pitchfork, AllMusic, Sputnik Music, Slant Magazine and others.

[Graphiq](#)

Alison O'Brien 4/6/2017

2/107 SLIDES © Columbia Records / amazon.com

#106. "Mingus Ah Um" by Charles Mingus

Album Score: 95 **Release year:** 1959 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Hard bop, jazz

"One of the best jazz albums I've heard. 'Mingus Ah Um' is a near perfect combination of atonality and speed with vulnerability and beauty." — Sputnik Music

3/107 SLIDES © Fantasy Records / amazon.com

#105. "Willy and the Poor Boys" by Creedence Clearwater Revival

Album Score: 95 **Release year:** 1969 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Blues rock, rock, swamp

"No group that comes to mind has relied less on funk, esoterica, cultism, charisma or extravaganza and made it work so well, so successfully and so artfully. This seems due to the talent and vision of John Fogerty and to the fact that Creedence has been together, playing rock, for 10 years." — Rolling Stone

4/107 SLIDES © Reprise Records / amazon.com

#104. "After the Gold Rush" by Neil Young

Album Score: 95 **Release year:** 1970 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Folk rock, folk, country

"'After the Gold Rush' is a moderate to slow-paced album, which may require a certain type of mood to enjoy, but once tuned in, the music is an infusion of genres, a nice variety of electric and acoustic guitars along with steady rhythms and just enough intense edge to make it artistically viable. Every track is good, all showing some value with very little filler, making the album solid as a whole." — Classic Rock Review

5/107 SLIDES © RCA Records / amazon.com

#103. "The Sun Sessions" by Elvis Presley

Album Score: 95 **Release year:** 1976 **Album type:** Compilation album **Genre:** Rock, pop

"Modern day listeners coming to these recordings for the first time will want to reclassify this music into a million sub-genres, with all the hyphens firmly in place. But what we ultimately have here is a young Elvis Presley, mixing elements of blues, gospel and hillbilly music together and getting ready to unleash its end result — rock & roll — on an unsuspecting world." — AllMusic

6/107 SLIDES © Chess Records / amazon.com

#102. "The Great Twenty-Eight" by Chuck Berry

Album Score: 95 **Release year:** 1982 **Album type:** Compilation album **Genre:** Rock, blues

"The Great Twenty-Eight' is true rock & roll, and if it's not in your collection, do yourself a favor and pick up a copy. If you're at all curious about where every form of rock & roll got started, this is the place. If you wonder where all those forms of music that influenced rock & roll actually meshed to form rock & roll, this is it." — Sputnik Music

7/107 SLIDES © Monolith Graphics / amazon.com

#101. "Carnival of Lost Souls" by Nox Arcana

Album Score: 95 **Release year:** 2006 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Dark ambient, dark wave, dark cabaret

"All of the songs are masterful arrangements that drag you deeper into the mythology Nox Arcana has created. This is a fantastic album. I highly recommend all of Nox Arcana's aural horrors". —Hacker's Source

8/107 SLIDES © Korova / amazon.com

#100. "Jeopardy" by The Sound

Album Score: 95 **Release year:** 1980 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** New wave

"Jeopardy' is the band's debut release; it bursts with fresh energy while also maintaining a startling maturity and skill. These are songs that haunt, blaze, rip and govern, sometimes within the same moment." — PopMatters

9/107 SLIDES © Touch & Go Records / amazon.com

#99. "Goat" by The Jesus Lizard

Album Score: 95 **Release year:** 1991 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Noise rock, indie rock

"Few albums replicate the sheer intensity that this album emulates. Out of all the metal I listen to, nothing quite gets my head banging as hard as The Jesus Lizard does. Crack open a few cold ones, have some friends over and blast this; you can't go wrong." — Sputnik Music

10/107 SLIDES © INO Records / amazon.com

#98. "She Must and Shall Go Free" by Derek Webb

Album Score: 95 **Release year:** 2003 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Christian pop, Americana

"What Webb has accomplished with the opus is a grand statement about love, the church and life through the eyes of a man that humbly serves Christ. With cuts like the title track and 'Lover,' Webb paints a rich musical picture with an acoustic brush stroke that floods the canvas." — AllMusic

11/107 SLIDES © Columbia Records / amazon.com

#97. "Jack Johnson" by Miles Davis

Album Score: 95 **Release year:** 1971 **Album type:** Soundtrack album **Genre:** Jazz

"Jack Johnson' is the purest electric jazz record ever made because of the feeling of spontaneity and freedom it evokes in the listener, for the stellar and inspiring solos by McLaughlin and Davis that blur all edges between the two musics, and for the tireless perfection of the studio assemblage by Miles and producer Macero." — AllMusic

#96. "Star Wars: The Force Awakens: Original Motion Picture Soundtrack" by John Williams

Album Score: 95.08 **Release year:** 2015 **Album type:** Soundtrack album **Genre:** Soundtrack, classical

"The 77 minutes fly by and I can't remember the last time I was so disappointed when a soundtrack album ended because I simply wanted it to keep going on and on. The Force remains strong in John Williams and long may it continue. This music is just glorious."
— Movie Wave

#95. "Mothership" by Led Zeppelin

Album Score: 95.14 **Release year:** 2007 **Album type:** Compilation album **Genre:** Rock, classic rock

"Essentially a primer for those who actually might not be familiar with the Led Zeppelin catalog, this is a collection of unimpeachable songs in search of an audience." — Pitchfork

#94. "The Velvet Underground" by The Velvet Underground

Album Score: 95.17 **Release year:** 1969 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, experimental rock, art rock

"This album sounds less like the Velvet Underground than any of their studio albums, but it's as personal, honest and moving as anything Lou Reed ever committed to tape." — AllMusic

#93. "Sticky Fingers" by The Rolling Stones

Album Score: 95.17 **Release year:** 1971 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, pop rock, blues rock

"Sticky Fingers' came at a time when — on record, at least — the Rolling Stones could do no wrong. This album could reasonably be called their peak. They were called the world's greatest rock & roll band for entirely too long, but if that designation ever applied, it was here." — Pitchfork

#92. "Songs in the Key of Life" by Stevie Wonder

Album Score: 95.21 **Release year:** 1976 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Disco, soul, R&B

"Songs in the Key of Life' was the culmination of a historic period of creativity for Stevie Wonder. Its ambition and scope were unprecedented, and he never approached its caliber or impact again." — Pitchfork

#91. "Wide-Eyed and Mystified" by downhere

Album Score: 95.28 **Release year:** 2006 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Christian rock

"Wide-Eyed and Mystified' is a line in the infectious track 'The More,' referring to the awe with which we look at God, but it could just as easily denote the reaction of fans who first become familiar with this Canadian-bred Christian band on this third effort and wonder how they lived so long without this masterly crafted melodic rock." — AllMusic

#90. "Trans Europa Express" by Kraftwerk

Album Score: 95.33 **Release year:** 1977 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Synthpop, electronic, electro

"Ripe with unlikely hooks and hypnotic, minimalist arrangements, tracks like the bright, crisp 'Europe Endless' and the existential 'The Hall of Mirrors,' were (and are) the sound of the future, employing sounds similar to the video games and sci-fi films of the era and informing an entire generation of music-makers." — Slant Magazine

#89. "Unknown Pleasures" by Joy Division

Album Score: 95.33 **Release year:** 1979 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Indie rock, post-punk, new wave

"It's noteworthy how many songs on 'Unknown Pleasures' fade in like something emerging from the shadows. It's also worth noting how heavy songs such as 'Day of the Lords,' 'New Dawn Fades,' 'Shadowplay' and 'Interzone' are, while sinewy anthem 'Disorder' and the discordant anti-funk of 'She's Lost Control' are glorious anomalies in both their precision and concision." — Pitchfork

#88. "Focus" by Cynic

Album Score: 95.4 **Release year:** 1993 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Avant-garde, rock, experimental

"Cynic has always been way ahead of their time, as is proven in their first true album 'Focus.' The simple fact is that the writing behind most of their material is extremely creative, fueled by some sort of combination of musical genius and extensive talent." — Sputnik Music

#87. "Let's Get It On" by Marvin Gaye

Album Score: 95.42 **Release year:** 1973 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Soul, pop, pop soul

"With each performance laced with innuendo, each lyric a come-on and each rhythm throbbing with lust, perhaps no other record has ever achieved the kind of sheer erotic force of 'Let's Get It On,' and it remains the blueprint for all of the slow jams to follow decades later — much copied, but never imitated." — AllMusic

#86. "Wish You Were Here" by Pink Floyd

Album Score: 95.42 **Release year:** 1975 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Pop rock, rock, space rock

"It's chilling, emotional, passionate and truly deserving of every ounce of acclaim the record has received over the years. Essentially, 'Wish You Were Here' exists as one of the greatest achievements in progressive rock as a whole." — Sputnik Music

#85. "Murmur" by R.E.M.

Album Score: 95.5 **Release year:** 1983 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, alternative, college rock

"R.E.M. sets the bar very high with its stellar debut, containing some of the band's best moments. This is where R.E.M.'s legacy began, as they gradually evolved from an underground college rock band into prominent musical role models." — Sputnik Music

#84. "Fear of a Black Planet" by Public Enemy

Album Score: 95.5 **Release year:** 1990 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Hip hop, political hip hop, rap

"'Fear of a Black Planet,' which has been preserved by the Library of Congress in the National Recording Registry, is a black empowerment piece with strong criticisms of institutional racism, and though not Public Enemy's best work, it is the truest to the group's core mission statement." — Consequence of Sound

#83. "Let It Be" by The Replacements

Album Score: 95.56 **Release year:** 1984 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, punk rock, alternative rock

"'Let It Be' looms large among '80s rock albums, generally regarded as one of the greatest records of the decade. So large is its legend and so universal its acclaim that all the praise tends to give the impression that the Replacements' fourth album was designed as a major statement, intended to be something important when its genius, like so many things involving the 'Mats, feels accidental." — AllMusic

26/107 SLIDES © Cuneiform / amazon.com

#82. "Ten Freedom Summers" by Wadada Leo Smith

Album Score: 95.57 **Release year:** 2012 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Jazz, contemporary classical

"Without doubt 'Ten Freedom Summers' is the crowning achievement of trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith's distinguished career to date." — All About Jazz

27/107 SLIDES © Polydor Records / amazon.com

#81. "Emergency!" by The Tony Williams Lifetime

Album Score: 95.59 **Release year:** 1969 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, jazz

"This is the album that turned the jazz world upside down, and established a whole new approach to the genre. 'Emergency!' is the template that all future jazz fusion acts would soon follow, mirroring its hyperactive and assiduous display of musicianship." — Sputnik Music

28/107 SLIDES © RCA Records / amazon.com

#80. "Hunky Dory" by David Bowie

Album Score: 95.65 **Release year:** 1971 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Pop rock, rock

"'Hunky Dory' not only represents Bowie's most engaging album musically, but also finds him once more writing literally enough to let the listener examine his ideas comfortably, without having to withstand a barrage of seemingly impregnable verbiage before getting at an idea." — Rolling Stone

29/107 SLIDES © SST Records / amazon.com

#79. "Double Nickels on the Dime" by Minutemen

Album Score: 95.67 **Release year:** 1984 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Alternative, rock, hardcore

"The Minutemen's classic double album is unlike any punk record, or double album, before or since. It is a compact explosion of ideas and a prism for the energies coursing through the '80s underground." — Pitchfork

30/107 SLIDES © Capitol Records / amazon.com

#78. "Birth of the Cool" by Miles Davis

Album Score: 95.71 **Release year:** 1957 **Album type:** Compilation album **Genre:** Jazz

"'Birth of the Cool' serves as a perfect example of how the music can evolve to create something timeless. But this wouldn't be the last time Davis started a revolution in the jazz world." — All About Jazz

31/107 SLIDES © Elektra Records / amazon.com

#77. "Funhouse" by The Stooges

Album Score: 95.73 **Release year:** 1970 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Protopunk, psychedelic rock, garage rock

"Ah, good evening my good friend. Good evening and welcome to the Stooges' 'Funhouse.' We are so glad you could come. Oh, do not be alarmed, dear one, if things should seem a trifle unusual ... or, as the natives say, 'oh-mind' ... at first. You'll doubtless get used to it. Perhaps, you may even begin to ... like the things you see." — Rolling Stone

32/107 SLIDES © London Records / amazon.com

#76. "Beggars Banquet" by The Rolling Stones

Album Score: 95.74 **Release year:** 1968 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Pop rock, blues-rock, rock

"The Stones forsook psychedelic experimentation to return to their blues roots on this celebrated album, which was immediately acclaimed as one of their landmark achievements." — AllMusic

#75. "Sketches of Spain" by Miles Davis

Album Score: 95.75 **Release year:** 1960 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Jazz

"Miles takes Gil Evans' arrangements and compositions and puts his own jazzy soloing over them. Backed with more of a wind ensemble than a jazz band, 'Sketches of Spain' is a blend of styles that is still unforgettable today." — Sputnik Music

#74. "The Smile Sessions" by The Beach Boys

Album Score: 95.77 **Release year:** 2011 **Album type:** Compilation album **Genre:** Pop, rock

"Befitting an album concerned with history, 'SMiLE' feels strangely adrift from time, using the technology of the day and an avant-garde approach to pop song form to make the past look both familiar and strange. In 1966 and 1967, old-timey music, if you squinted at it just so, could be imbued with a haze of psychedelia." — Pitchfork

#73. "Bringing It All Back Home" by Bob Dylan

Album Score: 95.95 **Release year:** 1965 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Acoustic, folk, rock

"When Bob Dylan entered Columbia Records' Studio A in mid-January 1965 and blew out an 11-song LP in three days, he didn't merely go electric, invent folk rock and transition from an acoustic troubadour to a boundary-pushing rock & roller. He conjured performances that would completely reimagine how pop music communicated – not just what it could say, but how it could say it." — Rolling Stone

#72. "Free Jazz: A Collective Improvisation" by The Ornette Coleman Double Quartet

Album Score: 96 **Release year:** 1961 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Jazz, free jazz

"For being the inaugural record of a notoriously daunting genre, 'Free Jazz' swings as hard as anyone, while never daring to stay on its comfort zone. A surprisingly accessible first shake at an amazing genre and an excellent album on its own right." — Sputnik Music

#71. "The Band" by The Band

Album Score: 96 **Release year:** 1969 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, funk rock, folk rock

"It is full of sleepers, diamonds that begin to glow at different times. As with the Beatles and Dylan and the Stones and Crosby-Stills and Nash, the album seems to change shape as you continue to play it. The emphasis shifts from song to song and songs prominent in the early listening will retreat and be replaced in your consciousness by others, only in later hearings to move to the fore again." — Rolling Stone

#70. "Call Me" by Al Green

Album Score: 96 **Release year:** 1973 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Gospel, R&B, soul

"Al Green reached his creative peak with the brilliant 'Call Me,' the most inventive and assured album of his career. So silky and fluid as to sound almost effortless, Green's vocals revel in the lush strings and evocative horns of Willie Mitchell's superbly intimate production." — AllMusic

#69. "Jaws" by John Williams

Album Score: 96 **Release year:** 1975 **Album type:** Soundtrack album **Genre:** Soundtrack

"This was not only where Williams' career as a superstar soundtrack composer began, but also where he first started using the musical attributes that would identify that phase of his career." — AllMusic

40/107 SLIDES © Polydor Records / amazon.com

#68. "The Scream" by Siouxsie and the Banshees

Album Score: 96 **Release year:** 1978 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Alternative, rock, punk

"Matched with a downright creepy cover and a fair enough early producing effort from Steve Lillywhite — well before he found gated drum sounds — it's a fine balance of the early band's talents." — AllMusic

41/107 SLIDES © Sony Music / amazon.com

#67. "5" by Alizée

Album Score: 96 **Release year:** 2013 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Pop, electronica, dance

"If I were to describe '5' in only five words, I would use: mature, relaxed, classy, cinematic and organic. For those reasons fans and critics alike will find it worthwhile, although '5' is not aiming to win the crowds. It's quite an intimate record, perfect to play softly in the background as you unwind after a long days work." — Music Shell

42/107 SLIDES © King Records / amazon.com

#66. "Live at the Apollo, 1962" by James Brown

Album Score: 96 **Release year:** 1963 **Album type:** Live album **Genre:** Soul, funk

"The James Brown of 'Live at the Apollo' was an ace balladeer years removed from inventing funk, but what Mr. Dynamite did deliver to the famously tough Apollo fans was a relentless, driven set steeped in the church, the cotton field and the juke joint, pushing his waistband-tight musicians like a drill sergeant." — Rolling Stone

43/107 SLIDES © Apple Records / wikimedia commons

#65. "The Beatles" by The Beatles

Album Score: 96 **Release year:** 1968 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, pop, avant-garde

"Indulgent, sprawling, overflowing with ideas and excess, the White Album became not only a monument to unbridled creativity but a rock archetype." — Pitchfork

44/107 SLIDES © Polydor Records / amazon.com

#64. "Layla and Other Assorted Love Songs" by Derek and the Dominos

Album Score: 96 **Release year:** 1970 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Adult contemporary, rock, blues rock

"Clapton and the then relatively unknown second lead guitarist, Duane Allman, swirl in the whirlwind of each other's wild gifts on the title track and on a ravaging version of Jimi Hendrix's 'Little Wing.' Meanwhile, on 'Keep On Growing' and 'Anyday,' Clapton and Whitlock share vocals in raggedy emulation of the American soul duo Sam and Dave. Best known for his blues-playing and pop songs, Clapton rocks harder on those tracks than he's done before or since." — Rolling Stone

45/107 SLIDES © Reprise Records / amazon.com

#63. "Rust Never Sleeps" by Neil Young & Crazy Horse

Album Score: 96 **Release year:** 1979 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, folk rock, hard rock

"For anyone still passionately in love with rock & roll, Neil Young has made a record that defines the territory. Defines it, expands it, explodes it. Burns it to the ground." — Rolling Stone

46/107 SLIDES © Bearsville Records / amazon.com

#62. "Something/Anything?" by Todd Rundgren

Album Score: 96.19 **Release year:** 1972 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Blue-eyed soul, protopunk, hard rock

"Rundgren occasionally touched on the sheer brilliance of 'Something/Anything?' in his later work, but this extraordinary double album is the one time where his classicist song craft and messy genius converged to create an utterly unique, glorious record." — AllMusic

#61. "Rubber Soul" by The Beatles

Album Score: 96.33 **Release year:** 1965 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Pop rock, Britpop, psychedelic

"To modern ears, 'Rubber Soul' and its pre-psychedelic era mix of 1960s pop, soul and folk could seem tame, even quaint on a cursory listen. But it's arguably the most important artistic leap in the Beatles' career — the signpost that signaled a shift away from Beatlemania and the heavy demands of teen pop, toward more introspective, adult subject matter." — Pitchfork

#60. "Closer" by Joy Division

Album Score: 96.33 **Release year:** 1980 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Ambient, rock, gothic rock

"It's a heavy album,' says Bernard Sumner, who played guitar and keyboards with Joy Division and still can't listen to 'Closer.' 'It was a voyage into the dark side of yourself.' 'Mother I tried/Please believe me/I'm doing the best that I can/I'm ashamed of the things I've been put through/I'm ashamed of the person I am,' Curtis sang on 'Isolation.' As if to prove he really meant it, Curtis took his life soon after the album was recorded, hours before the band was to embark on its first American tour (the band changed its name and carried on as New Order)." — Rolling Stone

#59. "The Modern Lovers" by The Modern Lovers

Album Score: 96.37 **Release year:** 1976 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, indie rock, punk

"Jonathan Richman moved from Boston to New York as a teenager in hopes of sleeping on Lou Reed's couch. That influence shows on the two-chord anthem 'Roadrunner.' Recorded in 1972 but not released until 1976, Lovers turned the tough sounds of the Velvet Underground into an ode to suburban romanticism, pure love, parents, the Fifties and all kinds of other things that were totally uncool in the early Seventies." — Rolling Stone

#58. "Let It Bleed" by The Rolling Stones

Album Score: 96.46 **Release year:** 1969 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Blues-rock, pop rock, rock

"Let It Bleed' is the last album by the Stones we'll see before the '60s, already gone really, become the '70s; it has the crummiest cover art since 'Flowers,' with a credit sheet that looks like it was designed by the United States Government Printing Office (all courtesy of the inflated Robert Brownjohn), and the best production since, well, 'Honky Tonk Women.' The music has tones that are at once dark and perfectly clear, while the words are slurred and often buried for a stronger musical effect." — Rolling Stone

#57. "Pretzel Logic" by Steely Dan

Album Score: 96.67 **Release year:** 1974 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Pop rock, jazz-rock, pop

"In a short time, Steely Dan has turned into one of the best American bands, and surely one of the most original. Their only problem is the lack of a visual identity to go with their musical one — as pop personalities, they're practically anonymous. But with music as accessible and sophisticated as Steely Dan's, no one should care." — Rolling Stone

#56. "Saxophone Colossus" by Sonny Rollins

Album Score: 96.67 **Release year:** 1956 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Jazz, hard bop

"Saxophone Colossus' marks one of the most prominent Jazz albums to ever hit the market. The melodies, relaxing vibes and gradually developing movement of the horns really capture what Jazz can fulfill for a single set down." — Sputnik Music

53/107 SLIDES © ATCO Records / amazon.com

#55. "Otis Blue: Otis Redding Sings Soul" by Otis Redding

Album Score: 96.67 **Release year:** 1965 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Soul, R&B

"Otis Redding's third album, and his first fully realized album, presents his talent unfettered, his direction clear and his confidence emboldened, with fully half the songs representing a reach that extended his musical grasp." — AllMusic

54/107 SLIDES © Motown Records / amazon.com

#54. "Innervisions" by Stevie Wonder

Album Score: 96.67 **Release year:** 1973 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Funk, soul, psychedelic soul

"The one album that basically all Wonder lovers can agree represents the man working at the very pinnacle of his considerable abilities is the keenly focused, brooding 'Innervisions.'" — Slant Magazine

55/107 SLIDES © Warner Bros. / amazon.com

#53. "Psychocandy" by The Jesus and Mary Chain

Album Score: 96.93 **Release year:** 1985 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Pop rock, noise, rock

"Arguably 'Psychocandy' is an album with one trick and one trick alone — Beach Boys melodies meet Velvet Underground feedback and beats, all cranked up to 10 and beyond, along with plenty of echo. However, what a trick it is. Following up on the promise of the earliest singles, The Jesus and Mary Chain with 'Psychocandy' arguably created a movement without meaning to, one that itself caused echoes in everything from bliss-out shoe gaze to snotty Brit pop and back again." — AllMusic

56/107 SLIDES © Slash Records / amazon.com

#52. "Wild Gift" by X

Album Score: 96.95 **Release year:** 1981 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, punk

"John Doe and Exene Cervenka harmonize about doomed love over L.A. garage-rock thrash, changing the emotional language of punk. They were the White Stripes of their day, a young couple messing with country and blues in gems such as 'Adult Books,' 'Beyond and Back' and 'We're Desperate.'" — Rolling Stone

57/107 SLIDES © Columbia Records / amazon.com

#51. "Bitches Brew" by Miles Davis

Album Score: 97 **Release year:** 1970 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Jazz, jazz fusion

"The freedom which Miles makes available to his musicians is also there for the listener. If you haven't discovered it yet, all I can say is that 'Bitches' Brew' is a marvelous place to start. This music is so rich in its form and substance that it permits and even encourages soaring flights of imagination by anyone who listens. If you want, you can experience it directly as a vast tapestry of sounds which envelop your whole being." — Rolling Stone

58/107 SLIDES © Epic Records / amazon.com

#50. "London Calling" by The Clash

Album Score: 97 **Release year:** 1979 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Punk, pop rock, new wave

"'London Calling' is spacious and extravagant. It's as packed with characters and incidents as a great novel, and the band's new stylistic expansions — brass, organ, occasional piano, blues grind, pop airiness and the reggae-dub influence that percolates subversively through nearly every number — add density and richness to the sound." — Rolling Stone

#49. "Modern Sounds in Country and Western Music" by Ray Charles

Album Score: 97.14 **Release year:** 1962 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, R&B, adult contemporary

"Inventing soul music as a combination of blues sensuality and gospel fervor, as Ray Charles did, would be enough to put him in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's inaugural class. But 'Modern Sounds in Country and Western Music' is even more audacious, quite possibly the ultimate crossover move. Running country standards by the likes of Hank Williams and Eddy Arnold through his inimitable soul-man filter, Charles won over both audiences — and even beat Frank Sinatra at his own big-band game." — Rolling Stone

#48. "Journeys by DJ: 70 Minutes of Madness" by Coldcut

Album Score: 97.14 **Release year:** 1995 **Album type:** DJ-Mix album **Genre:** Electronica, electronic, oldschool jungle

"Although this mixed CD is a compilation of material by numerous different artists (from Harold Budd to Dillinja, Joanna Law to the Jedi Knights), only some of which are Coldcut's own, it's an ample illustration of the sort of freestyle approach to composition the pair helped popularize. The group jump from style to style at will, drawing out the connections between hip-hop, jungle, techno, electro, ambient and beyond, with first-rate mixing and turntable work." — AllMusic

#47. "Abbey Road" by The Beatles

Album Score: 97.17 **Release year:** 1969 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Pop rock, rock, britpop

"The perfect ending to a recording career, this LP shows a band still in its prime, capable of songwriting and recording feats others could only envy. " — Pitchfork

#46. "Marquee Moon" by Television

Album Score: 97.17 **Release year:** 1977 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Pop rock, new wave, alternative

"'Marquee Moon' is comprised entirely of tense garage rockers that spiral into heady intellectual territory, which is achieved through the group's long, interweaving instrumental sections, not through Verlaine's words. That alone made 'Marquee Moon' a trailblazing album — it's impossible to imagine post-punk soundscapes without it." — AllMusic

#45. "Moondance" by Van Morrison

Album Score: 97.19 **Release year:** 1970 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Folk, pop, rock

"'Moondance' is an album of musical invention and lyrical confidence; the strong moods of 'Into the Mystic' and the fine, epic brilliance of 'Caravan' will carry it past many good records we'll forget in the next few years. Van Morrison plays on." — Rolling Stone

#44. "Off the Wall" by Michael Jackson

Album Score: 97.22 **Release year:** 1979 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Soul, rock, R&B

"'Off the Wall' is the sound of young Michael Jackson's liberation. Though he would become even more successful in the '80s, 'Off the Wall' remains unabashedly fun to return to for its joy and lack of baggage. For 41 minutes, we can live in the eternally young Neverland Michael longed for, a universe largely without consequence or death." — Pitchfork

#43. "Rain Dogs" by Tom Waits

Album Score: 97.22 **Release year:** 1985 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, folk, blues

"On the album 'Rain Dogs,' Waits incorporates a wide range of sounds including marimba, accordion and various other percussions that are not usually heard in popular music. This album is very much a followup to 'Swordfishtrombones.' The style is similar, but there is a major edition, Marc Ribot's electric guitar leads. This album is not near as focused as his previous albums, and it is that artistic freedom that allows this to shine." — Sputnik Music

#42. "Dirty Mind" by Prince

Album Score: 97.33 **Release year:** 1980 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, synthpop, pop

"Prince's first fully actualized album is an unrelenting dance party, its kinky ambiguities blurring lines between genres and genders and pretty much everything else." — Pitchfork

#41. "The Velvet Underground & Nico" by The Velvet Underground

Album Score: 97.38 **Release year:** 1967 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Avant-garde, alternative, rock

"Singer-songwriter Lou Reed documented carnal desire and drug addiction, decadence and redemption, with a pop wisdom he learned as a song-factory composer for Pickwick Records. Cale introduced the power of pulse and drone (from his work with minimalist composer La Monte Young); guitarist Sterling Morrison and drummer Maureen Tucker played with tribal force; Nico, a German vocalist added to the band by manager Andy Warhol, brought an icy femininity to the heated ennui in Reed's songs. Rejected as nihilistic by the love crowd in '67, the Banana Album (so named for its Warhol-designed cover) is the most pro-phetic rock album ever made." — Rolling Stone

#40. "In a Silent Way" by Miles Davis

Album Score: 97.5 **Release year:** 1969 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Jazz, avant-garde

"With 'In a Silent Way,' Davis embraced the future of both jazz music and music itself, while still retaining the childlike enchantment of his past masterpieces. If only musicians of modern times retained this fearlessness, perhaps albums of this caliber could appear a little more often." — Sputnik Music

#39. "The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders From Mars" by David Bowie

Album Score: 97.5 **Release year:** 1972 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, pop rock

"Truly timeless pop — truly timeless art in general — is transformative; you emerge somewhat different after experiencing it. And in giving in to his own imagination and creating his own world, Bowie changed ours immeasurably, and for that many a pop fan should be eternally grateful." — Slant Magazine

#38. "Histoire de Melody Nelson" by Serge Gainsbourg

Album Score: 97.53 **Release year:** 1971 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, symphonic rock, chanson

"Like a lot of 1971 records, 'Histoire de Melody Nelson' is a concept album: Unlike most, it's only 28 minutes long. The songs are lavishly orchestrated, yet the dominant instrument isn't guitar or organ but rather Herbie Flowers' lascivious, treacly bass, playing a seedy, rambling take on funk." — Pitchfork

#37. "Entertainment!" by Gang of Four

Album Score: 97.67 **Release year:** 1979 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, punk, post-punk

"One can spot a clear Gang of Four influence in R.E.M., INXS and U2, as well as countless other bands. Unfortunately, Gang of Four never quite matched 'Entertainment!' again and underwent a gradual and messy breakup, leaving behind this post-punk masterpiece as its legacy." — Rolling Stone

#36. "Electric Ladyland" by The Jimi Hendrix Experience

Album Score: 97.78 **Release year:** 1968 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, pop rock, electronic

"Jimi Hendrix's third and final album with the original Experience found him taking his funk and psychedelic sounds to the absolute limit. The result was not only one of the best rock albums of the era, but also Hendrix's original musical vision at its absolute apex. When revisionist rock critics refer to him as the maker of a generation's mightiest dope music, this is the album they're referring to." — AllMusic

#35. "Sign 'O' the Times" by Prince

Album Score: 97.92 **Release year:** 1987 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, R&B, soul

"Choosing a single high point from Prince's glorious run in the '80s is impossible, but 'Sign "O" the Times' surely stands as his most complex and varied statement." — Pitchfork

#34. "Graceland" by Paul Simon

Album Score: 97.96 **Release year:** 1986 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** World, rock, folk

"With 'Graceland,' Paul Simon hit on the idea of combining his always perceptive songwriting with the little-heard mbaqanga music of South Africa, creating a fascinating hybrid that re-enchanted his old audience and earned him a new one. An enormously successful record, 'Graceland' became the standard against which subsequent musical experiments by major artists were measured." — AllMusic

#33. "Court and Spark" by Joni Mitchell

Album Score: 97.96 **Release year:** 1974 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, folk, soft rock

"On first listening, Joni Mitchell's 'Court And Spark,' the first truly great pop album of 1974, sounds surprisingly light; by the third or fourth listening, it reveals its underlying tensions. The lyrics lead us through concentric circles that define an almost Zen-like dilemma: The freer the writer becomes, the more unhappy she finds herself; the more she surrenders her freedom, the less willing she is to accept the resulting compromise." — Rolling Stone

#32. "Horses" by Patti Smith

Album Score: 97.96 **Release year:** 1975 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, pop rock, punk

"Producer John Cale respected Smith's primitivism in a way that later producers did not, and the loose, improvisatory song structures worked with her free verse to create something like a new spoken word/musical art form: 'Horses' was a hybrid, the sound of a post-Beat poet, as she put it, 'dancing around to the simple rock & roll song.'" — AllMusic

#31. "Remain in Light" by Talking Heads

Album Score: 97.96 **Release year:** 1980 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, alternative, blues

"With 'Remain In Light,' Talking Heads took what was being increasingly regarded as a generally cerebral extension of punk and turned it into something far more global in musical and lyrical scope." — Slant Magazine

#30. "Elvis Presley" by Elvis Presley

Album Score: 98 **Release year:** 1956 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, pop rock, rockabilly

"This was as startling a debut record as any ever made, representing every side of Elvis' musical influences except gospel — rockabilly, blues, R&B, country and pop were all here in an explosive and seductive combination. Elvis Presley became the first rock & roll album to reach the number one spot on the national charts, and RCA's first million dollar-earning pop album." — AllMusic

#29. "The Essential Clash" by The Clash

Album Score: 98 **Release year:** 2003 **Album type:** Compilation album **Genre:** Punk, rock, pop rock

"The first disc shows the young Clash as the best rock band in the world: passionate, tough and tuneful. If those early punk songs don't have the shock now they once did — 'White Riot' can be found on karaoke machines these days — they still can straighten your spine. The hint of reggae in '(White Man) in Hammersmith Palais' becomes the story of the second disc, as the group heads in all directions at once: funk, dub, the top of the charts. The coda is 'This Is England,' the Clash's lost classic: Joe Strummer looks around him, his country and band both in ruins, and spits in the eye of the world." — Rolling Stone

#28. "This Year's Model" by Elvis Costello

Album Score: 98.15 **Release year:** 1978 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, new wave, punk

"This Year's Model' is not only Costello's best work, but one of the most distinctively brilliant albums ever to be released. For fans of rock music bursting with wit and character, it really just doesn't get any better than this." — Pitchfork

#27. "Another Green World" by Brian Eno

Album Score: 98.17 **Release year:** 1975 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Experimental, rock, ambient

"Brian Eno has done everything from producing huge pop stars to creating tiny art installations to touring with rock bands to inventing ambient music. 'Another Green World' remains his definitive album." — Pitchfork

#26. "Led Zeppelin IV" by Led Zeppelin

Album Score: 98.27 **Release year:** 1971 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, hard rock, heavy metal

"It might seem a bit incongruous to say that Led Zeppelin — a band never particularly known for its tendency to understate matters — has produced an album which is remarkable for its low-keyed and tasteful subtlety, but that's just the case here. If this thing with the semi-metaphysical title isn't quite their best to date, since the very chances that the others took meant they would visit some outrageous highs as well as some overbearing lows, it certainly comes off as their most consistently good." — Rolling Stone

#25. "Anthology of American Folk Music" by Various Artists

Album Score: 98.33 **Release year:** 1952 **Album type:** Compilation album **Genre:** Country, world, blues

"When a generation encounters the 'Anthology,' it takes something new from it; in the 1950s, it kickstarted the national interest in folk that would eventually shape the consciousness of the 1960s." — Pitchfork

#24. "Tonight's the Night" by Neil Young

Album Score: 98.33 **Release year:** 1975 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Country rock, rock, classic rock

"Neil Young's 'Tonight's the Night' is a harrowing record about loss and death. Yet it often sounds like a raucous party thrown by a bunch of lovable knuckleheads having the time of their life." — Pitchfork

#23. "Never Mind the Bollocks Here's the Sex Pistols" by Sex Pistols

Album Score: 98.33 **Release year:** 1977 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, pop rock, punk

"Musically, 'Never Mind the Bollocks, Here's the Sex Pistols' is just about the most exciting rock & roll record of the '70s. It's all speed, not nuance — drums like the My Lai massacre, bass throbbing like a diseased heart fifty beats past bursting point, guitars wielded by Jack the Ripper and the songs all hit like amphetamines or the plague, depending on your point of view." — Rolling Stone

#22. "New Day Rising" by Hüsker Dü

Album Score: 98.33 **Release year:** 1985 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Alternative, hardcore punk, hardcore

"For 'New Day Rising,' the follow-up to their breakthrough double-album 'Zen Arcade,' Hüsker Dü replaced concept with conciseness, concentrating on individual songs delivered as scalding post-hardcore pop. 'New Day Rising' is not only a more vicious and relentless record than 'Zen Arcade,' it's more melodic. Bob Mould and Grant Hart have written tightly crafted, melodic pop songs that don't compromise Hüsker's volcanic, unchecked power." — AllMusic

#21. "The Best of Van Morrison" by Van Morrison

Album Score: 98.33 **Release year:** 1990 **Album type:** Compilation album **Genre:** Rock, pop, blues rock

"This collection makes Morrison's work seem a little more immediate and accessible than it usually is, but that's a blessing, since it provides a great summary of his hits and a nice introduction for the curious. Yes, it could have dug deeper into the catalog, but as a sampler, it can't be faulted." — AllMusic

#20. "Discography: The Complete Singles Collection" by Pet Shop Boys

Album Score: 98.33 **Release year:** 1991 **Album type:** Compilation album **Genre:** House, synthpop, electronic

"'Discography' collects all the duo's numerous hit singles, including a handful of non-album tracks, in their original 7" single mix, which occasionally varies from the album version, particularly in the case of the Introspective material. Presented chronologically, the singles not only demonstrate the band's increasing musical sophistication, they illustrate what fine songwriters Tennant and Lowe are." — AllMusic

#19. "Giant Steps" by John Coltrane

Album Score: 98.33 **Release year:** 1959 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Jazz, hard bop, blues

"History will undoubtedly enshrine this disc as a watershed the likes of which may never truly be appreciated. 'Giant Steps' bore the double-edged sword of furthering the cause of the music as well as delivering it to an increasingly mainstream audience." — AllMusic

#18. "Rumours" by Fleetwood Mac

Album Score: 98.44 **Release year:** 1977 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Folk, soft rock, pop rock

"'Rumours' is about the band laying all emotions out on the proverbial table and never holding back about what they feel about each other. 'Rumours' isn't just a perfect album on a musical level, but on every level imaginable." — Sputnik Music

91/107 SLIDES © Warner Bros. Records / amazon.com

#17. "Astral Weeks" by Van Morrison

Album Score: 98.75 **Release year:** 1968 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Blues rock, chamber folk, folk rock

"He didn't use the phrase for a song title until a year later, but 'Astral Weeks' was the album on which Van Morrison fully descended 'into the mystic.' Morrison's first full-fledged solo album sounded like nothing else in the pop-music world of 1968: soft, reflective, hypnotic, haunted by the ghosts of old blues singers and ancient Celts and performed by a group of extraordinary jazz musicians, it sounds like the work of a singer and songwriter who is, as Morrison sings in the title track, 'nothing but a stranger in this world.'" — Rolling Stone

92/107 SLIDES © Sire Records / amazon.com

#16. "Rocket to Russia" by Ramones

Album Score: 98.81 **Release year:** 1977 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, punk, college rock

"'Rocket to Russia' is the best American rock & roll of the year and possibly the funniest rock album ever made. Not that the Ramones are a joke — they're more worthwhile than almost anything that's more self-conscious because they exist in a pure and totally active state." — Rolling Stone

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#15. "Pink Flag" by Wire

Album Score: 98.81 **Release year:** 1977 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Punk

"'Pink Flag' is by turns angry, dark, witty and tuneful, yet still retains a unique identity throughout. In hindsight, it may be easy to forget its impact and uniqueness, especially with the gradual development of their aesthetic over subsequent albums. But it's their ability to vary the nature of their sound, combining raw punk speed and power with atmospheric textures and sweetly melodic daubs that makes this album a clear winner — both then, and now." — Sputnik Music

94/107 SLIDES © Polydor Records / amazon.com

#14. "Star Time" by James Brown

Album Score: 98.81 **Release year:** 1991 **Album type:** Compilation album **Genre:** Soul, funk, disco

"To hear him tell it, James Brown is one of the most dynamic and visionary musicians America has ever produced. After examining the evidence set forth in the 72 songs on 'Star Time,' however, only one conclusion is possible: James Brown is far too modest." — Rolling Stone

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#13. "Revolver" by The Beatles

Album Score: 99 **Release year:** 1966 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, psychedelic, psychedelic pop

"'Revolver' in the end is the sound of a band growing into supreme confidence. The Beatles had been transformed into a group not beholden to the expectations of their label or bosses, but fully calling the shots — recording at their own pace, releasing records at a less-demanding clip, abandoning the showmanship of live performance. Lesser talents or a less-motivated group of people may have shrunk from the challenge, but here the Beatles took upon the task of redefining what was expected from popular music." — Pitchfork

96/107 SLIDES © Def Jam Recordings / amazon.com

#12. "It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back" by Public Enemy

Album Score: 99 **Release year:** 1988 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Political hip hop, hip hop, rap

"Virtually every track contains repeated shrill noises that are both irritating and riveting; its agit-rap sound communicates as much rebellion as the lyrics. 'Most people were saying that rap music was noise,' says producer Hank Shocklee, 'and we decided, if they think it's noise, then let's show them noise! But we're also gonna give them something to think about.'" — Rolling Stone

#11. "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" by The Beatles

Album Score: 99.17 **Release year:** 1967 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Pop rock, rock, hard rock

"Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band' is the most important rock & roll album ever made, an unsurpassed adventure in concept, sound, songwriting, cover art and studio technology by the greatest rock & roll group of all time. John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr were never more fearless and unified in their pursuit of magic and transcendence." — Rolling Stone

#10. "Exile on Main St." by The Rolling Stones

Album Score: 99.17 **Release year:** 1972 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, pop rock, hard rock

"A dirty whirl of blues and boogie, the Rolling Stones' 1972 double LP was 'the first grunge record,' guitarist Keith Richards crowed proudly in a 2002 interview. But inside the deliberately dense squall – Richards' and Mick Taylor's dogfight riffing, the lusty jump of the Bill Wyman-Charlie Watts rhythm engine, Mick Jagger's caged-animal bark and burned-soul croon – is the Stones' greatest album and Jagger and Richards' definitive songwriting statement of outlaw pride and dedication to grit." — Rolling Stone

#9. "Blood on the Tracks" by Bob Dylan

Album Score: 99.17 **Release year:** 1975 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Pop rock, country rock, rock

"As with the narratives of the songs themselves, 'Blood on the Tracks' continues to absorb yesterday, today and tomorrow, promising it can sustain new listeners as much as new meanings, should it ever have to be called back into service." — Pitchfork

#8. "Ramones" by Ramones

Album Score: 99.17 **Release year:** 1976 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Pop rock, punk, alternative

"This is the beginning of everything that punk truly was. Sure, there were punk bands before the Ramones, but in my opinion, this is one of the greatest and most influential albums of all time, and no other punk band will come close." — Sputnik Music

#7. "The King of Rock 'n' Roll: The Complete 50's Masters" by Elvis Presley

Album Score: 100 **Release year:** 1992 **Album type:** Compilation album **Genre:** Rock, pop

"Without minimizing these achievements, though, selecting the best treatment for the Fifties-era Elvis was relatively easy — just put it all out there, done properly once and for all. If anything in pop history deserves this kind of completist treatment, this is it." — Rolling Stone

#6. "A Love Supreme" by John Coltrane

Album Score: 100 **Release year:** 1965 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Free jazz, hard bop, jazz

"A Love Supreme,' recorded with what was later called his classic quartet, is Coltrane's musical expression of his 1957 epiphany. It's the sound of a man laying his soul bare. Structured as a suite and delivered in praise of God, everything about the record is designed for maximum emotional impact, from Elvin Jones' opening gong crash to the soft rain of McCoy Tyner's piano clusters to Coltrane's stately fanfare to Jimmy Garrison's iconic four-note bassline to the spoken chant by Coltrane — 'a-LOVE-su-PREME, a-LOVE-su-PREME' — that carries out the opening movement, 'Acknowledgement.' By the time the record gets to the closing 'Psalm,' which finds Coltrane interpreting on his saxophone the syllables of a poem he'd written to the Creator, 'A Love Supreme' has wrung its concept dry, extracting every drop of feeling from Coltrane's initial vision. It's as complete a statement as exists in recorded jazz." — Pitchfork

#5. "The Clash" by The Clash

Album Score: 100 **Release year:** 1977 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Punk, rock, pop rock

"'Never Mind the Bollocks' may have appeared revolutionary, but the Clash's eponymous debut album was pure, unadulterated rage and fury, fueled by passion for both rock & roll and revolution. Though the cliché about punk rock was that the bands couldn't play, the key to the Clash is that although they gave that illusion, they really could play — hard." — AllMusic

#4. "Kind of Blue" by Miles Davis

Album Score: 100 **Release year:** 1959 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Jazz, cool jazz, post-bop

"This painterly masterpiece would become one of the most important, influential and popular albums in jazz. But at the time it was made, 'Kind of Blue' was a revolution all its own, a radical break from everything going on. Turning his back on standard chord progressions, trumpeter Miles Davis used modal scales as a starting point for composition and improvisation — breaking new ground with warmth, subtlety and understatement in the thick of hard bop." — Rolling Stone

#3. "Are You Experienced" by The Jimi Hendrix Experience

Album Score: 100 **Release year:** 1967 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Pop rock, hard rock, blues-rock

"One of the most stunning debuts in rock history, and one of the definitive albums of the psychedelic era. On 'Are You Experienced?,' Jimi Hendrix synthesized various elements of the cutting edge of 1967 rock into music that sounded both futuristic and rooted in the best traditions of rock, blues, pop and soul." — AllMusic

#2. "Highway 61 Revisited" by Bob Dylan

Album Score: 100 **Release year:** 1965 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Classic rock, folk rock, acoustic

"Recorded in a staggering six days, 'Highway 61 Revisited' — named after the road that runs from Bob Dylan's home state of Minnesota down through the Mississippi Delta — is one of those albums that changed everything." — Rolling Stone

#1. "Pet Sounds" by The Beach Boys

Album Score: 100 **Release year:** 1966 **Album type:** Studio album **Genre:** Rock, surf, psychedelic

"'Pet Sounds'....nobody was prepared for anything so soulful, so lovely, something one had to think about so much. It is by far the best album Brian has yet delivered, and it paradoxically began the decline in mass popularity that still plagues this band. It also reflected Brian's preoccupation with pure sound. In fact, the credits on the new edition of 'Pet Sounds' read: 'This recording is pressed in monophonic sound, the way Brian cut it.' It's a weird little touch. The tone of it is so mythologizing it sounds as if Brian were no longer among us." — Rolling Stone

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