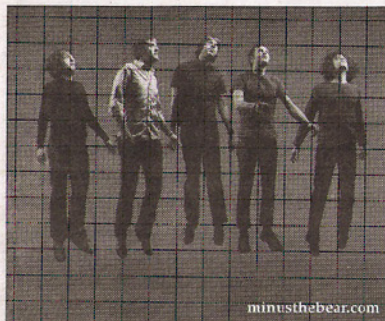


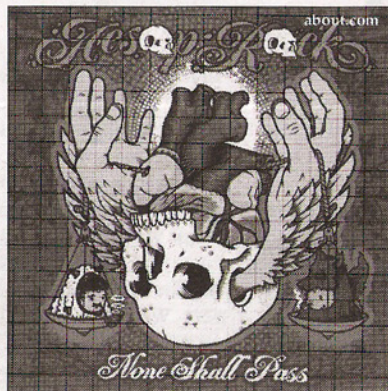
# Student guide to impressive upcoming and current album releases

By Calista Condo  
Photo Editor

Fall is a major season for new music. There are some up-and-coming artists with sophomore albums as well as many still-underground artists just breaking the invisible line into the mainstream. Here are some new and yet-to-be-released albums by five very talented artists and groups.



**Minus the Bear** – *Planet of Ice* was out in stores on Aug. 23. This is Minus the Bear's fourth full-length album and one of their most forward pieces. This strong five-piece rock band has just enough experimental tendencies to create an extremely new and unique sound of their own. *Planet of Ice* contains slightly less tapping from guitarist Dave Knudson, who has helped create Minus the Bear's sound; however, they never go far from their syncopated riffs and fluid guitar sound. Their lyrics have also evolved into more complex and interesting passages, rather than their not-so-versatile literal lyrics from past CDs. This album contains intricate layering of vocals, keyboards, and guitar riffs to create that smooth summer night and winter day sound that Minus the Bear does so well. They have also added more synthesizer and audio to their already innovative formula, allowing themselves to stand out even more.



**Aesop Rock** – This wordsmith from New York has been working creatively since 1997, when he self-financed his first records. Today, he is one of the most credible rap artists slowly breaking into a mainstream type of recognition. Unlike the somewhat repetitive, mind-numbing, "I wanna grab your ass" type hip-hop on MTV and the radio, Aesop Rock brings deep, symbolic, and enigmatic lyrics to his already creative beats and music. With his latest album released on Aug. 28, Aesop Rock changed up his sound by keeping his high-quality poetic writing and putting it into a more conventional musical setting. While *None Shall Pass* incorporates experimental beats and audio clips, Aesop Rock, for one of the first times in an album, has created songs with conventional structure: choruses, verses, and so on. The songs on this album may mean something to each individual who hears it, but it is clear that *None Shall Pass* deals with imitators, pressure to fit into the norm, and American apathy, all the while keeping the same sarcastic, mocking and humorous tone from previous albums. His blend of poetry and creative production makes *None Shall Pass* a high-quality album with artistry and memorable musicianship.

**Between The Buried And Me** – North Carolina band Between The Buried And Me's new album, *Colors*, could possibly be the first metal album to focus on everything other than metal. This progressive metal band has found a way to push the limits of a somewhat repetitive genre by weaving their influences on their sleeves. Incorporating everything from The Smashing Pumpkins and Counting Crows to Pantera and even King Crimson, Between The Buried And Me has created a CD with room for all the members to really show their musical talent. The transitions are so smooth from one extreme to another that it sounds completely natural. The vocals are perfect on both sides of the spectrum, from the powerful, clear screaming to the melodic and harmonious singing, experimenting with opposing sounds. The instrumentation contains the perfect darkness and intensity to keep the whole album together.



**Jose Gonzalez** – Acoustic guitar may not be everyone's cup of tea when it comes to music because of its slightly mellow connotation. However, when it comes to Jose Gonzalez, the listener may be surprised to know that this classically-trained guitarist plays all of his intense and rhythmic music only on his acoustic guitar. While his music is calming and easy to listen to, the compositions of his songs are complex as well as tech-

nical. *In Our Nature*, Gonzalez's sophomore full-length album, is similar to his first album *Veneer*, while bringing a new sophistication and focus. *In Our Nature* is simple but strong because Gonzalez allows each note stand on its own; it has a meaning and a purpose. This 29-year-old songwriter from Sweden combines his low, calm singing with intricate rhythmic guitar to create a beautiful and intense type of music.



**Sigur Ros** (pronounced *si-ur rose* and translated to *victory rose*) – If you ever wondered what Iceland sounds like, you should check out Icelandic band Sigur Ros's new album *Hvarf-Heim*, due out on Nov. 5. *Ambient* is used to describe the genre of music they fit into, but no genre can ever explain the type of dark Icelandic angel-music Sigur Rose does so well. *Hvarf-Heim* was written to accompany a documentary film that Sigur-Rose created. It contains five tracks of new recordings and six acoustic tracks of previously recorded songs that have been reworked. They were not afraid to incorporate any instrument they could in *Hvarf-Heim*. This CD is slightly darker and bolder than their past album, *Takk*. It combines Birgisson's smooth vocals that turn into high and completely unusual childlike noises with dark, melodic guitar and string instrument workings to create a solid picture of their homeland.