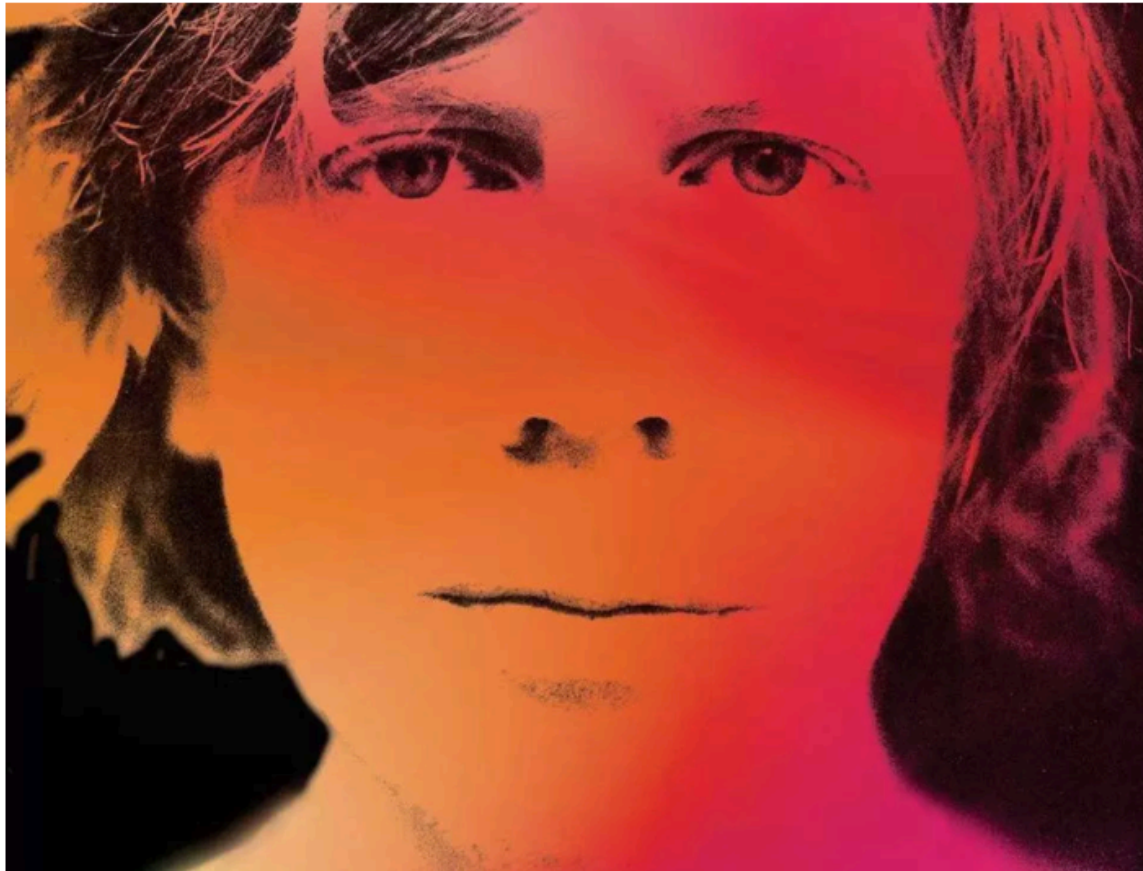


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The Month in Weird: May's Best Avant-Garde Concerts

By [Brad Cohan](#) • 05/01/17 6:30am



Thurston Moore's upcoming new solo album *Rock 'N' Roll Consciousness* is just one highlight too look forward to as May showers us with an embarrassment of riches of all things good and weird. [Facebook](#)

With the start of May we enter the oft-dreaded beginning of Festival Season. But don't jump to judgment too quickly: it's not all flower crowns and Coachella—as your trusty Sages of All Things Good And Weird, we're here to point you in the right direction.

First up, the monolith known as the Red Bull Music Academy actually started up in April, but the fest continues with a pair of must-see spectacles this month.

On May 20 RBMA hosts the 10-year anniversary celebration of Sacred Bones, the boundary-crossing Brooklyn-based record label.

The jaw-dropping lineup is as eclectic as the killer records Sacred Bones has been known to put out with current label trailblazers, alum and worshippers alike set to perform: Jenny Hval, Zola Jesus, Marissa Nadler, The Men, Psychic Ills, Uniform, Rose McDowall, and Genesis Breyer P-Orridge and Edley O'Dowd featuring Blanck Mass and Moon Duo jamming with film director Jim Jarmusch are on tap to unleash its beautiful noise.

The following day, on May 21, RBMA righteously bows down at the altar of avant-garde jazz legend, Alice Coltrane, wife of John Coltrane. Dubbed "The Ecstatic World of Alice Coltrane Turiyasangitananda," there will be sunset and evening sets, the latter led by her saxophonist son Ravi Coltrane.

Then there's two festivals on a smaller scale but no less forward-thinking. The experimental-leaning Fundamental Festival (at Planeta, 295 E 8th St, Basement, in NYC), puts together a stellar program of artists combining new music & sound art headlined by Aki Onda, Tyler Gilmore, Western Verse, Lea Bertucci, Tatsuya Nakatani, Mara Mayer/Herbst/Donovan/O'Koren, Tombstones and Earth Tongues.

Bertucci, a composer whose *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air* was just released by local label NNA Tapes, also serves as curator for Site : Sound, "a series of intimate site-specific lectures, sonic-spatial interventions and performances" happening across the city. Click [here](#) for the calendar of events.

Whether its sprawling festivals or just plain ol' shows, there's something for everyone to satiate their thirst for the weird in May.

Stuart Popejoy Quintet *Pleonid* CD Release Show with Ava Mendoza Solo and Kid Millions and Friends at Knockdown Center on Sunday, May 7



Last month, the Observer highlighted The 15 Best Metal Bands in NYC with sludge-metal crushers Bassoon leading the way. Not only will you get your chance to see Bassoon inflict its Melvins'y damage on May 2 at Gold Sounds, but the night before protean bassist/composer Stuart Popejoy shows off his avant-jazz chops as he joins forces with guitarist Brandon Seabrook and Talibam! drummer Kevin Shea for free-improv fireworks at Gowanus' jazz hub, ShapeShifter Lab.

Don't fret if you miss those gigs because come May 7, Popejoy, alongside an avant all-star group that includes violinist Sarah Bernstein, alto saxist Avram Fefer, trombonist Steve Swell and drummer/vibesman Kenny Wolleson, celebrates the release of the sprawling *Pleonid*.

A single, hour-long composition birthed from software Popejoy himself developed and broken up in seven-minute intervals, *Pleonid*'s mesmerizing angularity, dizzying patterns and conversational back and forth is both cathartic and intense.