

More music picks

By [Steve Thorngate](#)

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The *Century* recently published my [2012 music picks](#). Here are a few more I didn't have space for:

[*Old Believers*, by Cory Chisel and the Wandering Sons](#). Cause guy can seriously sing.

[*Toward the Low Sun*, by Dirty Three](#). Aggressive, beautiful instrumental music. Really glad these guys finally made a new record.

[*Provincial*, by John K. Samson](#). An old-fashioned sense of both melody and place.

[*50 Words for Snow*, by Kate Bush](#). The album concept strains at places, but I love how she's always weird and tuneful at the same time. Also the restrained emotion of her piano playing.

[*Blunderbuss*, by Jack White](#). I can take or leave White's carefully constructed mystique, but as a musician he's really the complete package. And I like him better on his own than when he's manically dominating his collaborators.

[*Gossamer*, by Passion Pit](#). So smart and so, so catchy.

[*Babel*, by Mumford and Sons](#). This one I actually wrote up for the print magazine, but it got cut for space at the last minute. Here's my blurb review:

I've resisted the Mumford bandwagon. It's weird to hear the same songs whenever I visit a young-adult-oriented church or a Starbucks. And some of the tricks in the folk-rockers' bag—bluegrass banjo over four-on-the-floor dance beats, choruses repeated an octave higher for intensity—would be more effective used more sparingly.

But the band's second release grows on you. Marcus Mumford's singing is compelling, its husk and phrasing formed by American roots influences even as his British accent comes through thick. The harmonies are impeccable yet raucous. And they've mastered the skill of writing from a place of Christian

particularity while appealing to something broader. The band has done for folk-rock what the Arcade Fire did for indie pop: made it safe for big, anthemic music, all sincerity and uplift.