

# Music Review: OutRun Soundtrack Comes to Vinyl

**David Sobel**  
COPY EDITOR

Let me begin with a brief recounting. On Saturday, November 5, after a doorbell ring and a trip to the front door, I found myself in possession of an order I'd made: a vinyl pressing of the original soundtrack of "OutRun." With that in mind, here's my review of "OutRun" on vinyl, produced by Data Discs, a small, recently founded company located in the U.K. specializing in being "purveyors of quality game soundtracks on glorious vinyl."

I'll start with the visual, because Data Discs has a wonderful presentation alongside all (currently) seven of their soundtrack pressings. The record jacket itself has a "window" in the center, looking similar to one of those 3D pop-up books, which allows for the record owner to customize the look. There are two two-sided inserts that come with the record, each featuring a scenic view from the game, along with a note from the original composer of "OutRun"'s soundtrack, Hiroshi "Hiro" Kawaguchi, noting his excitement to see this vinyl pressing happen in 2015. Depending on when you placed an order for this vinyl release, you had a limited opportunity to receive the version pictured in this article. Sadly, I was unaware of Data Discs before I knew of the option. That said, I ended up purchasing the mint green edition, which mostly sufficed, still looking quite nice with the purple and white record label in the center.

So how's it sound?

The first thing I noticed was what we've come to expect of vinyl: every sound was so defined and on point, creating an amazing experience. Music from the Genesis era was itself analog, being played through a



Photo courtesy SEGA

16-bit MIDI, so soundtracks from the era had a very exact sound to begin with. Combine that with the analog sound of vinyl, and you've got yourself in for a treat. Video game fan or not, this particular experience in itself can be appreciated by anyone. As far as the track list goes, it's short but sweet, each track being five to six minutes long:

Side A

Magical Sound Shower

Passing Breeze

Camino a Mi Amor

Anyone who had the chance to read my previous article, a retro review of the "OutRun" game, will be at least somewhat familiar with the songs on side A, along with "Step on Beat" on side B. The last two songs of side B, featured in the 3DS rerelease of "OutRun", I had not previously heard before, and the new experience was very welcome. They both sound like tracks that could have been in the original release, although "Camino a Mi Amor" sounds a lot more original in my opinion. If you're interested in hearing these tracks before or just without ordering the album, you can easily look them up on YouTube.

DATA006: "OutRun" comes out swinging before you even drop the needle, providing an amazing visual accompaniment to an equally amazing vinyl pressing quality. I'm no record reviewer, but taking these two factors into account, I have no qualms with issuing a solid 9/10 to the overall presentation of this album. However, I have to rate the cost at about 6/10, because £30 (British pounds) converts to approximately \$40, which made my wallet cry just a little bit.

If you're interested in investing in a video game soundtrack on vinyl like this one, take a look at data-discs.com, which currently provides seven soundtracks, with an eighth and ninth release coming soon.

Splash Wave

Last Wave

Side B

Step on Beat

Cruising Line



## Reviews:

### Jim James Turns from Mystic to Skeptic on "Eternally Even", his second solo LP

**Soren Spicknall**  
WIIT STATION MANAGER

In more ways than one, the roots of the newest solo album from My Morning Jacket frontman Jim James can be traced back to 2008. That year, his pioneering southern psych rock band released their most adventurous album to date, the R&B-influenced "Evil Urges". Having just found broad international acclaim with their previous album, the instant indie rock classic "Z", the band debuted "Evil Urges" to a public that perhaps wasn't quite ready for such a dramatic shift in style. 2011's follow-up, "Circuital", was considered an intentional return to form for My Morning Jacket, but James's interest in exploring grooves outside the broad spectrum of rock was privately still strong.

In early 2013, the deeply spiritual singer recorded his first full-length solo album, "Regions of Light and Sound of God", a reflection both of a personal philosophy

drawing from multiple religions and a musical atmosphere at the time that was very receptive to neo-hippie exultation (see: Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeros, The Mowgli's, and others who rose to prominence in that period). Barack Obama had recently been elected for a second term, the specter of the Tea Party seemed to be diminishing, and the sudden rise of the Islamic State was yet to come. While these may seem to be incongruous topics, they hold great relevance in an examination of James's work, which has responded clearly to his mindset over the last decade and a half of professional performance. "Regions of Light and Sound of God" was a 40-minute exploration of pseudo-religious feelings and ruminations on the potential of mankind, instrumented in an ethereal fashion to match.

Three years on, the social climate of the United States is very different. As a result, the latest solo album from James is very different as well. "Eternally Even", which hit stores on Friday, November 4, is more

immediate and vital than the album which preceded it both in music and in lyrics. Analog synths, clean bass guitar tones, and intimately rendered drums wash over melodies which confront more earthly subject matter than James's first solo LP, touching on topics of disillusionment and division among mankind. The album never turns explicitly cynical (even the tellingly titled "Same Old Lie", perhaps James's most overtly political track to date, ends with the optimistic lines "they say we can't live together but we know that's a lie / 'cause we know it in our heart we can make it if we try"), but it presents a grittier, more grounded vision of human relationships than on "Regions of Light and Sound of God".

In addition to marking a shift in emotional tone, "Eternally Even" more clearly demonstrates James's ongoing infatuation with R&B, soul, and blues than anything since "Evil Urges". The majority of the compositions on the album are danceable in the slow, smooth way that evokes scenes of smoke-filled lounges

in the velvet-cushioned '70s. The psychedelic synth and drum production, on the other hand, is reminiscent of Tame Impala and even has echoes of My Morning Jacket themselves, blending Memphis and California without coming off as forced. Where 2008's critically controversial "Evil Urges" was an experiment in stadium-size neo-soul, "Eternally Even" is a measured cutaway of a more traditional, smaller-scale sound. James keeps his voice low and rumbling, rarely reaching his upper register, which is perhaps the only major shared element that this release has with James's earlier solo work. It's territory at once novel and familiar for the singer, who has the financial comfort to take risks and explore his interests to their fullest extent. And though "Eternally Even" won't likely appear on any year-end lists, it's a strong album and a clear demonstration of James's current picture of the world. 6.7/10

### Up-and-coming Scottish band Honeyblood plays intimate show at Subterranean

**Liza McQueney**  
WIIT MUSIC DIRECTOR

Although the crowd gave them little to work with, Scottish duo Honeyblood put on a formidable performance at Chicago's Subterranean last week.

Opener Jay Som, a slowcore band from San Francisco, started the show on a reflective note. Jay Som is the musical pseudonym of multi-instrumentalist and songwriter Melina Duterte, who has supported artists such as Mitski and Peter Bjorn and John. Their set closed with "I Think You're

Alright", a lengthy jam rife with fuzzy guitars. It was a beautiful and emotionally captivating performance, and displayed Jay Som's live prowess.

The show happened to coincide with the North American release of Honeyblood's latest album, "Babes Never Die." The album has been receiving positive reviews from many major media outlets including NME, The Guardian, and Line of Best Fit. The pair worked their way through all of "Babes Never Die," as well as some older tracks from their 2014 self-titled debut. Truly impressive was the amount of sound produced from only

having two musicians on stage: their sound was full and developed and left no impression that another musician was needed. The small audience could have made for an awkward and unenjoyable show, but Honeyblood's strong performance filled in the gaps and their on-stage banter warmed up the sparse crowd and created a lighthearted, familiar atmosphere. Topics covered included Belle and Sebastian's drinking habits (the duo toured with the famed fellow Scottish indie rockers in 2015), their day in Chicago, and the names for all of the extra electronic noises that made it onto the new album (Sebastian). A dark spot on an otherwise

stellar show came from a boisterously drunk super-fan who insisted on heckling the band between each song. Other audience members were visibly embarrassed by the fan's behavior, and Subterranean is a small enough venue that the yelling could hardly be ignored, but they handled the situation with grace and humor and didn't let it affect the quality of the show they were playing. With the release of their latest album, Honeyblood continues to expand their sound and live shows, and hopefully this will result in gigs with fuller audiences and more enthusiasm for the work they are doing onstage.



Photos by Liza McQueney