



PROFILE

HEARTTHROB

Violinist Owen Pallett really knows how to tug on the (heart) strings!

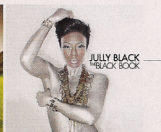
For committed Owen Pallett fans, it's been a long time coming, but the avant-garde violinist has *finally* released his third Final Fantasy album, *Heartland* (For Great Justice/Sonic Unyon). "There were moments when I felt I would never finish it, but I did," says Pallett. "There were many highs and many lows. I've worked on 30 different records over the last three years—it's been pretty crazy. I have a hard time saying no to people."

Often billed as a baroque pop artist and violin prodigy, Pallett has composed and/or performed for Arcade Fire, Pet Shop Boys, Mika, The Hidden Cameras, Beirut, The Mountain Goats and Grizzly Bear. Film directors are also smitten with the Toronto-based artist. Pallett co-wrote, orchestrated and conducted the score for Richard Kelly's new thriller, *The Box*, and he's already at work on his next assignment: John Cameron Mitchell's *Rabbit Hole*. But for now, Pallett will concentrate on taking *Heartland* on the road.

Like Pallett's second album, *He Poos Clouds*, which was based on the fantasy role-playing game *Dungeons & Dragons*, *Heartland* tells the story of an imaginary kingdom called Spectrum. "It's inhabited by a violent farmer named Lewis and a supreme deity named Owen," he explains. "It also documents the beginning, middle and end of a relationship between me and a boy, but it's all told from the boy's perspective." The album features a full orchestra, soaring alongside Pallett's trademark violin and soft, ethereal vocal stylings.

Will it be another three years before he releases his fourth album? "I've still got tons of songs—they collect like flies," he says, laughing. "I'm going to start on a new Final Fantasy record as soon as I can."

BRIONY SMITH



music

- Those who missed **Tom Waits'** acclaimed 2008 tour can get a taste of how wonderful it must have been on *Glitter & Doom Live* (ANTI-/Epitaph). Waits' remarkable voice—rich, growly and doom-laden but imbued with tenderness—is the star attraction. He tells his timeless, hard-luck stories in a kind of deranged, bluesy music-hall style accompanied by piano, harmonica, guitars, sax and vibes. There's also a bonus CD of between-song stories, the likes of which only Waits can tell.
- **Blue Rodeo** marks 25 years as a band not by slowing down or getting stale but by audaciously recording a double album—*The Things We Left Behind* (Warner Music Canada)—and packing it with some of its strongest songs and performances ever. From the startling flute and timpani on the title track to the sweet harmonies of "Don't Let the Darkness in Your Head" to the uptempo rock of "Never Look Back," the whole band sounds revitalized.
- The indomitable **Jilly Black** returns in full force on *The Black Book* (Universal Music), the Toronto R&B dynamo's third album. Armed with new confidence, Black blasts her way through the barriers between musical genres, filling out her tales of positive living with hard-rock guitar riffs, '80s synths, frenetic dance rhythms, guest vocalists and, on the closer, "Time of Your Life," soft acoustic guitar. **MARY DICKIE**