

# Calling all shoppers

*Stumped for gift ideas? Check out our cheat sheets.*

■ Try local groups when buying for the music lovers on your list.

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For the Statesman Journal

Looking to give the gift of music this season? Look beyond the usual pop, rock, rap or jazz from the average corporate music world. Why not try a local release instead?

There's more than a few reasons to consider a local release. Music recordings put out by local bands are on average less expensive than corporate counterpart cassettes and CDs. The recording and reproduction quality of regional studios has greatly increased in the past few years, and it's hard to tell any difference in sound between local and national releases anymore.

Frankly, the best reason to consider this as a gift is that local bands are generally more creative, raw and inspired than many nationals. They are artistically unspoiled by the record companies or demands of trends. And frequently, they are more on the cutting edge than national musicians.

Here are some recommended recordings by musicians popular in this area. Most CDs are about \$14 and cassettes are about \$8. All are available at Ranch Records downtown or Groovacious Platters in Keizer, or both.

## Blues

■ **Sheila and Backwater Blues:** *Sheila and Backwater Blues*, a stellar live recording of earthy, down home, folksy delta blues.

of jazz standards by Salem's largest big band.

## Alternative

■ **Noise Therapy:** *Noise Therapy*. Insanely kinetic grooves, frightening energy and great songs by this Vancouver, B.C., favorite. Hints of Nine Inch Nails and Eugene's Henry's Child.

■ **Henry's Child:** *Mumbles & Screams*. Some of the best tunes of the year stuffed into some of the best live performances of the year. Intense.

■ **Flake:** *Box*. A Seattle band with a punk edge and a penchant for unforgettable songs.

■ **Cherry Poppin' Daddies:** *Rapid City Muscle Car*. The Northwest favorite at its best. A variety of musical styles and creative fusions.

■ **Simpy:** *Sun's Last Ray*. Simply great songs done with vibrant energy and passion.

■ **The Violets:** *Wild Place*. Few bands can mix emotion, melody and danceability like these Portlanders.

■ **Solace:** *The Adventures of High Velocity*. Catchy songs with punkish, rough edges done in style by one of Salem's favorites.

■ **I-5 Killers Volume 3:** Various artists. Arguably the best of Salem's Schizophonic Records' catalog of great Northwest sounds. Among the best sampling of regional acts around.

■ **Northwest Post Grunge II:** Various artists. Elemental Records' Northwest compilation, with more of a slant toward funk and danceability. Another great sampling of Northwest bands.

■ **The Dandy Warhols:** *The Dandy Warhols*. Smooth, silky and psychedelic, the Portland



■ Boxed sets can make great gifts, and there are plenty to choose from.

Statesman Journal news service  
 Critics from *USA Today* recommend these boxed sets:

## Rock/pop

■ **The Velvet Underground:** *Peel Slowly and See* (Polydor/Chronicles, five CDs, \$57.99). This impressive and long-overdue textbook of America's most influential band painstakingly chronicles its rise from folk act to rock-visionary status in 74 diverse tracks — four remastered, full-length albums and 25 previously unreleased cuts including six live performances. The music's improvisation, sexual candor, bleak undertones and experimental din amply demonstrate why the groundbreaking group served as musical guru to everyone from David Bowie to Kurt Cobain. Much of its distinctiveness derives from the chemistry of Lou Reed's street-smart ironic lyrics and John Cale's avant-garde compositions. Rolling Stone writer David Fricke's articulate 20,000-word essay is essential reading.

■ **Bobby Darin:** *As Long As I'm Singing: The Bobby Darin Collection* (Rhino, four CDs, \$59.98). If Darin were alive today, he'd be radio's poster boy, a superb pop singer with a kaleidoscopic range of styles. This sweeping collection demonstrates his commanding presence and relaxed charm in all genres, from traditional pop, country and folk to R&B, rock, swing and even kitsch. He was 23 when his snappy *Mack the Knife* won a Grammy, and he subsequently elevated any tune he covered, from novelties to the sublime compositions of Hank Williams and Bob Dylan. The Bronx-born singer was never accorded appropriate credit