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SCHIZOPHRENIA: 40 YEARS IN SHODDY
GROUP HOMES

BY HILLEL ARON



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iAsk A Mexican!

by Gustavo Arellano

¿Por Que the Putdowns?

DEAR MEXICAN: Why are we put down by our own people for being educated and articulate (I've been called *gabacho*, and I'm as brown as the next guy) while the Anglos accept us for being smart? I'm a high school teacher in Santa Ana and am considered very good at what I do, but when I meet with Mexican parents, it almost borders on mistrust. What is it — envy, paranoia, jealousy?

—*Smart Mexican-American Reading Teacher Asking Serious Stuff*

DEAR SMARTASS WAB: Don't flatter yourself *too* much. Anti-intellectualism is rampant in American life — witness this country electing Dubya as president for two terms, liberals slobbering over Hillary Clinton and conservatives elevating Michelle Malkin and Hugh Hewitt to *sabios* when the thinking part of this country rightfully relegates them to *pendejo pendejos*. But tell you what: You're enlightened, so guide those hater Mexicans to the light. Let them know that the only way ahead in this country is to be educated and articulate — and then guide them to me instead of your arrogant ass.

DEAR MEXICAN: I know they're biased and I've no doubt only the most incendiary shots were used. But I was watching YouTube last night, and there were a lot of videos of the amnesty marches of a couple of years ago. Naturally they're one-sided yet I couldn't help but notice two recurring themes: One was Mexicans burning, stomping and desecrating the American flag. Another was Mexicans using the terms "racist" or "Nazi" to describe American citizens, born or naturalized, who oppose amnesty. Certainly, sympathy for the cause was not a goal of this march. What is your take on that? —*Old Glory Gary*

DEAR GABACHO: I've been to immigration protests where Know Nothings assaulted peaceful protestors and burned the Mexican flag. I've seen immigration protests where *gabachos* called little kids "cockroaches" and "savages" and *gabachos* menaced college students. I've seen immigration protests where Know Nothings spewed all sorts of modern-day blood libel on Mexicans, with little fear of reprisal. I agree that burning American flags ain't going to win anyone over to amnesty, but at least the only people on our side who support such moves are indigenazis and yaktivists who grow out of it. Your side, on the other hand, not only condones the boorishness of your worst Know Nothings — you elect them again and again to office *because* of those tactics. Or do you think the only reason Sheriff Joe Arpaio has stayed in office so long is because of his porcine good looks?

Ask the Mexican at themexican@askamexican.net or be his fan on Facebook!

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ILLUSTRATION BY JONATHAN BARTLETT

WHY LAPD DIDN'T HAVE TO SHOOT ON SKID ROW

A journalist and vet remembers a day in Vietnam when many could have died

BY H.G. REZA

The man charged at the four American soldiers with a bayonet in hand. The pig-sticker made him a threat, but the wispy goatee hanging delicately from a pointed chin hardly made him look menacing. The confrontation seemed like a sketch from the theater of the absurd.

He screamed incoherently, making slashing motions with the bayonet in one hand and gesturing at the sky with the other. He was oblivious to the four rifles pointed at him, a finger on the trigger of each. The man's wife and children were wailing and yelling at him to stop and at the GIs not to kill him. Combat instincts took over and the soldiers spread out, putting about four feet of space between them as the enraged farmer stopped a little more than arm's length away from the nearest American.

Despite the threat, the soldiers maintained fire discipline. Someone said, "Do we waste him?" The reply from the sergeant leading our team was unequivocal: "No. If the four of us can't take him down without killing him, we ain't worth a shit."

We were in a free-fire zone in Ap Trung Thanh, north of Hue, and the rules of engagement permitted us to shoot with minimal restrictions. But it seemed unsporting to shoot the guy when we clearly had the upper hand in firepower and numbers.

In nearly 40 years of newspapering, my memory of that 1967 day in Vietnam sometimes was triggered by police shootings I covered or read about. The recent killing of Charley Leundeu Keunang on Skid Row by L.A. police set off that flashback. Keunang, who was unarmed and on the ground, was shot multiple times by three of four officers, who couldn't subdue him.

Police Chief Charlie Beck said Keunang grabbed an officer's pistol, but LAPD has not made it clear whether he ever had the weapon in his possession. LAPD spokesman Commander Andrew Smith did not respond to emails seeking clarification.

The incident reminded me of two other controversial officer-involved shootings where cops used deadly force against a suspect even though they had numerical superiority.

In 1991, William Slusar, who police said threatened them with a stick, was shot three times and killed by San Diego officer Charles M. Rice Jr., one of four cops at the scene. At the time, Rice had been a cop fewer than five years and had been involved in a previous on-duty shooting. He had been found to have used unnecessary force three other times. District Attorney Edwin Miller ruled the shooting justifiable but said his decision was not "an endorsement of the actions of the officer involved." Miller's report said, "It seems exceedingly unfortunate that four officers were unable to disarm a man wielding a stick."

In 2006 Huntington Beach police officers Read Parker and Shawn Randell shot 18-year-old Ashley MacDonald 15 times. A third officer present did not fire his weapon. Orange County District Attorney Tony Rackauckas said the 120-pound woman threatened the cops with a knife with a four-inch blade. She was shot after getting within eight to 10 feet of the officers.

Rackauckas said it was a "clear-cut case" that Parker and Randell had acted legally because "they were really left with no other choice," according to the *L.A. Times*, where I was a reporter at the time.

In the Skid Row shooting, Beck promised a thorough investigation of his officers by his investigators and full disclosure of his department's findings. He and others asked the public not to rush in judging the officers. But there are signs that Beck has already made a judgment about the officers' conduct and, at the same time, offered a possible clue about the investigation's outcome. The *Times* reported three days after the incident that the officers returned to work on administrative duty after Beck was "briefed on the deadly encounter."

The public is asked not to judge the officers, but at the same time law enforcement has rushed to judge Keunang and mitigate the police shooting. Media reports revealed that Keunang had been using the stolen identity of a French citizen for more than 15 years. In selective leaks to the *L.A. Times*, Keunang's past as a violent armed robber

was revealed; an enhanced video of the shooting reviewed by the *Times* "showed [Keunang's] arm reach toward an officer's waistband" but the paper didn't say if he took possession of the officer's handgun; and the paper reported that the three cops who fatally shot Keunang had never before fired their weapons on duty.

What the paper and LAPD officials didn't reveal was whether there have been citizen complaints against the officers or if they have ever been disciplined for excessive force. The department waited more than two weeks to identify the officers who fired the fatal shots, Sgt. Chand Syed and Officers Francisco Martinez and Daniel Torres.

In contrast, five days after the Skid Row shooting, a Madison, Wisconsin, officer fatally shot a 19-year-old African-American man, and that officer's name was released within hours — along with information that he had been involved in a previous fatal shooting that resulted from suicide by cop. On Feb. 28, a Santa Ana officer shot a robbery suspect; the officer's name was released three days later.

I never covered cops in L.A., but I did in San Francisco, San Diego and Orange County. In my career, I know of only one officer prosecuted for a fatal shooting while on duty. He worked in Escondido and killed a woman taken hostage by a bank robber in 1983. The officer was acquitted.

I suspect that the three officers who killed Keunang will be cleared in what law enforcement will find was another "good shooting." If the past is prologue, the police will claim that they were scared, scared for their lives, scared for the other officers' lives and scared for the lives of Skid Row residents. Investigators and the district attorney will find their fright justifiable, even if the dead guy was unarmed and on the ground when fatally shot.

The final report will have a history of Keunang's criminal past, previous contacts with police and a toxicology report; it will note that he refused to comply with officers' commands and that a Taser was ineffective in subduing him. There will be precious little information about the officers except for their names and perhaps their length of service and training.

But none of this will alter the facts. Police shot an unarmed man multiple times and killed him while he was on the ground.

Nearly 48 years ago in Ap Trung Thanh, our U.S. Army advisory team faced a threat from an armed man who our South Vietnamese troops said was "dinky dau" (a crazy person), or "5150" in cop jargon. He had emerged from a bunker where his family had taken refuge. We had taken automatic weapons fire from a bamboo grove alongside the village and called in artillery. As was often the case, the enemy melted away, leaving villagers to pick up the pieces and suffer the consequences.

The four of us took down the overwrought farmer without killing him. It wasn't a gentle takedown, but he lived to tell about it and so did we.

Back home, America was becoming embittered by that divisive war and viewed her warriors with indifference or contempt.

But on that afternoon in Ap Trung Thanh we were worth a shit, regardless of what anyone thought.

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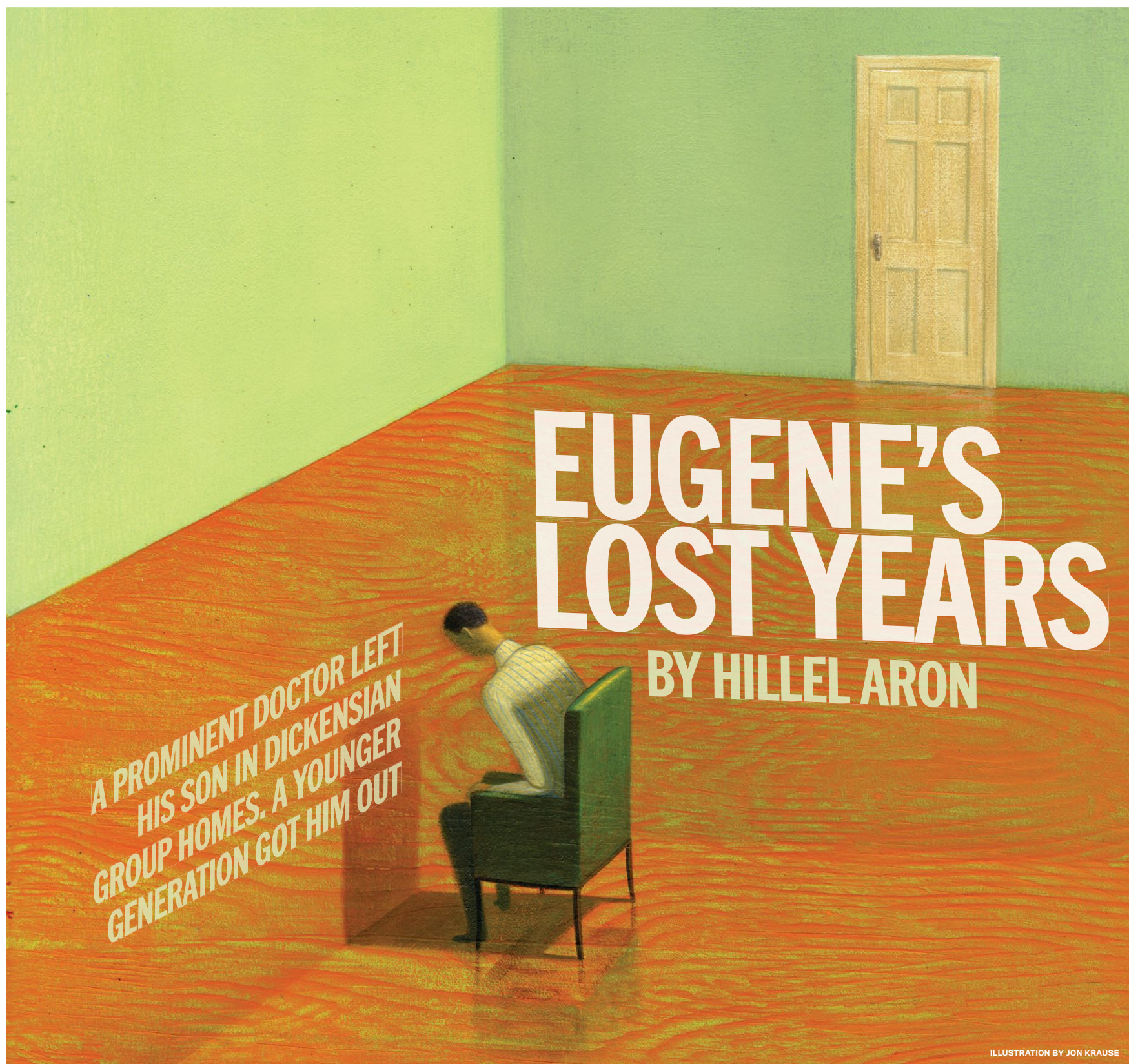


ILLUSTRATION BY JON KRAUSE

Eugene Walker's room at the Golden Manor nursing home may not seem like much: cream-colored walls, cottage cheese ceiling with metal sprinklers poking out, two sagging twin beds with floral bedspreads, a gray carpet that looks like television static. But it's clean, it has air conditioning and, at around 200 square feet, it's the biggest room he's had in three decades.

"It's better than where I was living at," he says. "The worst thing about it is they make you get up at 7 o'clock for breakfast."

His gentle voice carries a subtle lisp, perhaps the remnant of a stroke he had sometime around 2004, which rendered him blind in his left eye. His frame is slender, like that of a teenager. When he talks, his eyes widen, as if he's about to tell you something incredible. Yet he seems perpetually unimpressed with his strange journey. Indeed, one symptom of schizophrenia is a narrow range of emotional responses.

His journal is almost laughably antiseptic. A typical entry reads: "I worked out at the gym. Then I went to math class. When I came back I talked to Britany. After dinner I watched TV

and used my computer until bed." Nearly every entry ends with "until bed."

Lying on his bedside table, sandwiched between a remote control and a Motorola flip phone, is a copy of *The Golden Ass*, by Apuleius, the only Latin novel from ancient Rome to survive in its entirety. Eugene is reading it for his history class at Santa Monica College. The hero of the book, Lucius, is obsessed with magic; he tries to turn himself into a bird but messes up the spell and instead transforms himself into an ass. He is saved, in the end, by the goddess Isis.

Eugene still thinks about his lost years, going to sleep before sunset, waking up at 5 a.m., walking outside to smoke a cigarette and listen to the radio and maybe drink some coffee if there was any. Days upon days spent in a haze of the powerful drug Thorazine.

"I was heartbroken at all the years I wasted, not doing anything," he says. "Just kind of vegetating. Well, there was nothing I could do."

From 1986 to 2010, Eugene lived in a series of boardinghouses in cramped, almost Dickensian conditions. He barely left the property. He barely showered. He barely did anything. His family had all but forgotten him.

>>11) “I didn’t really see him,” says his sister, Paula. “No one in the family talked about him. It was kind of like he didn’t exist.”

Paula directs commercials. She’s a storyteller; she wants to shape Eugene’s story as a redemptive tale. And perhaps it is. After all, Eugene used to call Paula 15 times a day, begging her to rescue him from the unlicensed boardinghouse where he was all but trapped for more than 24 years. Now when he calls Paula, he talks about how he needs to study, how he wants to transfer to UCLA, how he wants to get a job and his own apartment. His problems today are, in the end, common.

In 1955, there were roughly 558,000

help integrate patients into the world.

The community care model relied on the theory that patients would live in nursing homes or boardinghouses while receiving treatment at outpatient facilities. This was made feasible by a then-new drug, Thorazine, which sedated patients to the point where they would no longer have violent outbursts, though it did have terrible side effects, causing patients to tremble uncontrollably, as if they had Parkinson’s.

In reality, deinstitutionalization did little more than move mental patients off of state budgets and onto the federal budget, through SSI checks. But the money wasn’t enough to actually treat patients, only enough to hide many of them in plain

almost always strikes perfectly normal people in young adulthood, in their late teens or early 20s. It comes on fast, often without warning.

And it didn’t just affect Eugene. It tore apart his family.

Paula and Eugene grew up in black upper-middle-class Baldwin Hills, on a winding, tree-lined street high atop a hill. The entire backside of the house was made of glass, offering a sweeping view of Los Angeles.

It was a dynamic, intellectual home in the 1960s. Eugene’s parents’ friends were always dropping by. Politics was never far from anyone’s mind. Revolution was in the air — civil rights, women’s liberation, the

life,” Paula says. “She said, ‘Don’t see yourself as being a member of any one country.’ She didn’t want us to define ourselves as black Americans.”

Olive was also an alcoholic and epileptic who often behaved erratically.

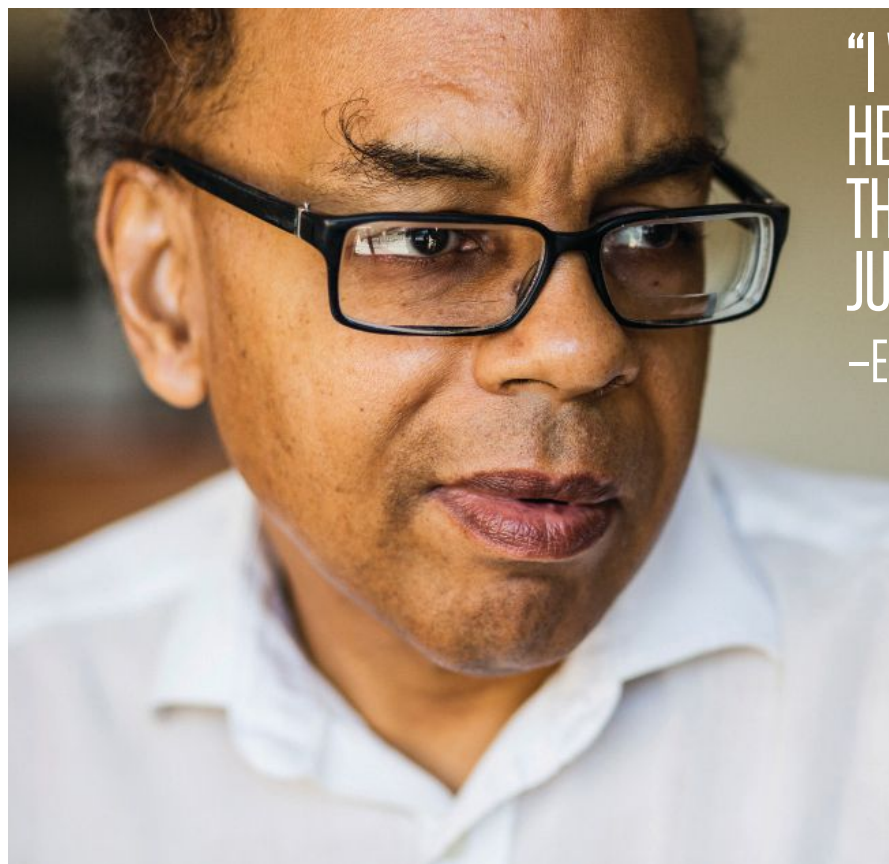
“It could go totally bright or it could be darkness,” says Paula, who remembers coming home to find that her mother had taken a scissor and cut up all the sheets and thrown them outside.

And then there was Eugene. “My mom was very psychically connected to my brother,” Paula says. “And she became increasingly concerned about him.”

Eugene was Paula’s older brother. But on the Baldwin Hills playground, it was she who protected him. He was shy, awkward, very smart and very bookish. He was a geek before that was even remotely acceptable.

“He was bright, but he had social problems,” Paula says. “He had a psychiatrist in Beverly Hills when he was young. I was always jealous — ‘Why does he get all this attention?’”

Eugene enjoyed a brief period of semi-popularity in middle school, at private Campbell Hall in North Hollywood, where he was elected student treasurer. Then he went to Cate School, an elite boarding school in the hills near Santa Barbara. His grades were mediocre, but he got into



“I WAS HEARTBROKEN AT ALL THE YEARS I WASTED, JUST VEGETATING.”

—EUGENE WALKER



PHOTOS BY TED SOQUI

Once all but trapped in group homes, Eugene now is studying history at Santa Monica College.

patients in mental hospitals in the United States. Now there are fewer than 40,000.

“It should be over a million, if we still institutionalized at the same rate,” says Andrew Scull, a sociologist at UC San Diego. “There’s a million people gone missing and the question is, what’s become of them?”

Many, of course, are on the street, and many are in jail. Some live with their families. But mental illness can wreak havoc on a family — just ask the Walkers — so many end up in private facilities.

This shift was known as deinstitutionalization, though Scull calls it trans-institutionalization. America played a sort of shell game with its mental patients.

In 1967, a bipartisan state law abolished the involuntary institutionalizing of all but the most troubled mentally ill. Then in 1972, a bipartisan Congress approved Supplemental Security Income (or SSI) for the institutionalized. The hope, even the promise, was that the new approach, often called “community care,” would be more intimate and humane than large, sometimes abuse-ridden institutions, and would

sight, paying for a roof over their heads but not for badly needed care.

“The aim of mental health policy has been increasingly to get people out of mental health care,” says Dr. Joel Braslow, a psychiatrist and historian at UCLA.

Unlicensed boardinghouses are prohibited from providing therapy or any other mental health care. And because they are unlicensed, they are largely unregulated — and thus unwatched.

“They are these privatized little islands, where oversight is really minimal,” Braslow says. “Honestly, it’s really a way of conveniently abandoning people with severe mental illness.”

Eugene wasn’t the same when he came home from his freshman year at Yale in 1972. Maybe it was the LSD — that’s what some people said, that the psychedelic had altered his mind. Eugene says the drug had long-lasting effects: His Yale roommates had been burning strawberry incense, and five years later he could still smell it.

But it wasn’t the LSD. Schizophrenia

anti-war movement, the anti-death penalty movement. The movements kept coming.

Paula and Eugene grew up wealthy. Their father, Eugene Henry Walker (whose grandfather was born a slave and went on to found Morristown College in Tennessee), was a well-respected doctor who co-founded Vern-Bro Medical Group, one of the first medical facilities in South L.A. The elder Walker wore his salt-and-pepper hair in a ponytail — a friend thought he looked like Steven Seagal. His nickname in the Air Force was “Sugar Child.” He commanded the attention of a room just by walking in. A rapid-jazz aficionado, he was graceful, cool, aloof and, above all, calm.

His wife, Olive, was different, incandescent, a free spirit. She had worked in politics, had been a member of the Communist Party. She started a magazine devoted to civil rights, *The Integrator*. She loved to travel, and took the family to Paris when Paula was 10.

“She just had this really expansive view of

Yale on the strength of his impressive SAT scores. At Eugene’s high school graduation, his busy doctor father was a no-show.

At Yale, Eugene’s problems began almost immediately. He did poorly in math. He didn’t have a typewriter. He was only 17, younger than most of his classmates. There were too many choices. It was cold, and he didn’t have a warm enough coat. Distractions were everywhere: marijuana, LSD, movies in the dorm every night. He stopped studying. He stopped attending classes, stopped showering. He was told to see a psychiatrist or be expelled. He saw a psychiatrist; he was expelled anyway. Eugene didn’t make it to the end of his first year.

“I was kind of relieved,” he says. “Because I was freezing. And I wasn’t taking showers. I was really in a bad state of mind.”

Back in L.A., Eugene started hallucinating and hearing voices. Sometimes they came from the TV. They hurled racial insults at him. They told him to give



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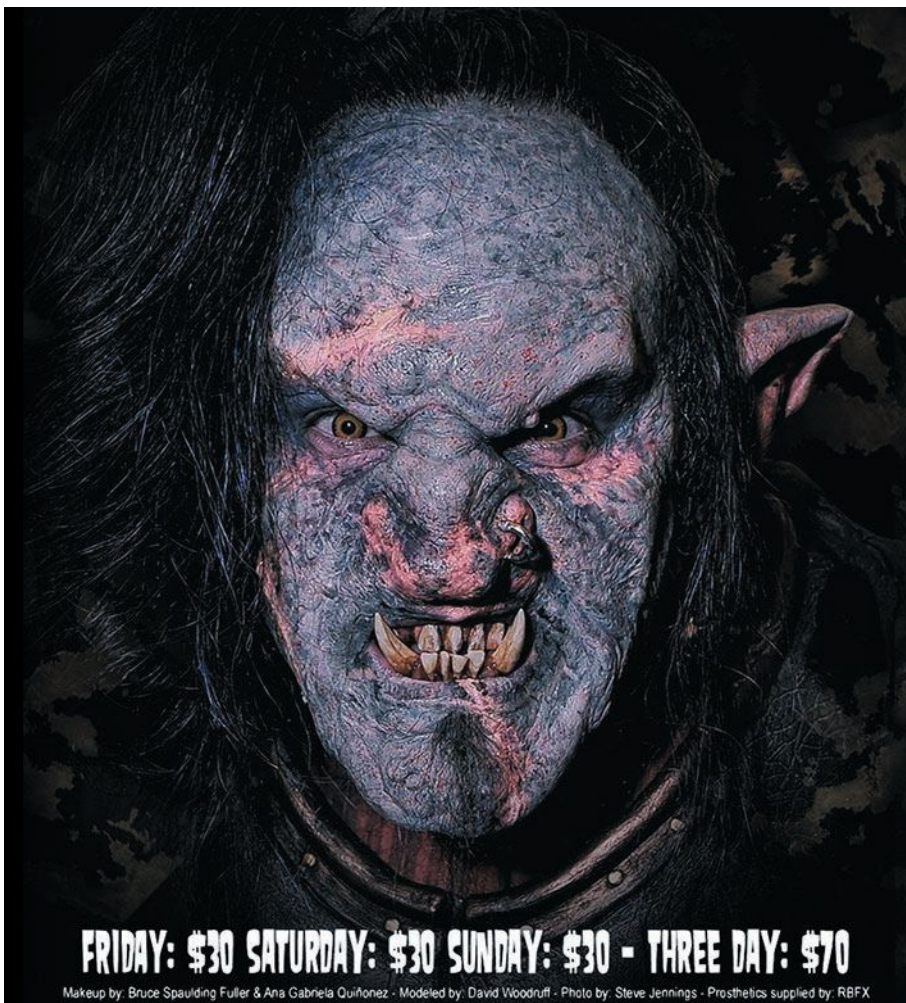
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>>12) away his things, to attack people. And he listened.

"I heard those voices and did what they said," Eugene says. "When they said fight, I fought."

Once, he punched his sister in the face. He shouted obscenities at his mother. He called the cops and told them that his father had been physically abusive. Within 24 hours of that call to police, Eugene was on the way to his first mental hospital, in Alhambra, where the teenager was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia.

When Paula saw Eugene, he was in five-point restraints. He looked like an animal, all drugged up and deranged. He shrieked: "Help me! Get me out of here! They're beating me!"

The family, meanwhile, was imploding. Eugene's illness was the final straw, particularly for his mother.

"There was a lot of guilt and a lot of blame," Paula says. "Whatever coping mechanism that anyone has to deal with it gets triggered. And if you don't have healthy coping mechanisms.... We didn't do family discussions. There would just be these huge arguments and fights. And then just silence. And another round. And another round."

Dr. Walker became lost in his work, and in the arms of a younger woman, Dottie Ransburg. They married in 1978 and had a daughter, Erica. Olive grew more detached from reality and began telling Paula she planned to move to Massachusetts. Sometime in the mid-'80s, after Paula graduated college and returned to Los Angeles, she knocked on the door of her mother's Mid-City home. A stranger answered and told Paula that her mom had sold the house. Olive was never seen again, at least by family or friends. A private detective Paula hired couldn't find her.

Now back in L.A., Paula rarely visited her brother at the boarding facilities where his father had placed him. "I saw him every once in a while on the street corner," in L.A., Paula says. "I would drive somewhere and I would see this crazy-looking person, and I would realize that was my brother."

For the next decade or so, Eugene was in and out of mental hospitals. He was arrested twice, once for driving under the influence, once for spraying cops with insecticide. They beat him, he claims, and threw him in L.A. County Jail.

Like his mother, Eugene has epilepsy, and he would wake up from a seizure not knowing who or where he was. He clearly didn't have the capacity to live on his own. But the places that his father paid for grew worse and worse. Eventually, in 1986, Dr. Walker put his son in the meager boardinghouse run by a Westside couple. It would be Eugene's home for the next 24 years.

No government entity keeps track of how many unlicensed boardinghouses (sometimes called board-and-care homes)

have sprung up in L.A. Harold Turner, of the National Alliance on Mental Illness in Urban Los Angeles, guesses they number in the thousands, nearly all of them for-profit.

Legally, the houses are supposed to pro-

"NO ONE IN THE FAMILY TALKED ABOUT EUGENE, LIKE HE DIDN'T EXIST." —HIS SISTER, PAULA WALKER



Paula Walker, right, wanted to get her brother, Eugene, out of the boardinghouse but was paralyzed by fear — until her daughter, Isabella, intervened.

PHOTO BY TED SOQUI

vide a place to sleep and a certain number of meals. They are not allowed to medicate or to manage clients' finances. Unless the state Department of Social Services receives a complaint, it won't check on the conditions in a boardinghouse.

"They range from hardly habitable shacks next to Nickerson Gardens to equestrian ranches in Malibu," Turner says. Most open in low-income neighborhoods and are, he says, "not a place you'd want to leave a loved one in."

"There's a multitude of concerns with the unlicensed facilities," says L.A. City Councilman Mitchell Englander. "One is the services [residents] might be getting. Some cloak themselves in the promises of services, and it's not true care." He has been trying to pass a law regulating boardinghouses, but people who run sober-living homes protested a number of the restrictions, and his changes went nowhere.

When Eugene first moved into the Westside couple's boardinghouse almost 30 years ago, there were six or seven other patients. By that time, his father had stopped paying steep amounts to keep him in homes with more amenities, instead using only Eugene's SSI check to cover the bill.

The boardinghouse owners controlled a number of properties, and moved their charges every few years or so, according to Paula and Eugene. First the boarders were kept in a small house in Mid-City. Then, Eugene recalls, a garage in Westchester. Then a small adobe cottage in Compton. Then back to Westchester.

"One time," Eugene says, "one of the staff there kicked me in the face. They spat on me. They stole from me. One time, I got cigarettes from my dad. They stole the cigarettes, stole my clothes. Stole my money. One time I went to the dentist. The dentist gave me some medication, gave me some antibiotics — my teeth hurt

amendments on the L.A. city ballot in March.

But there is still a madness there. "I want to tell you something," he says at one point. "Those bugs — when I was at the [boardinghouse], those bugs came out of my abdomen. They ate my hair. They were eating my hair out — this is what happened to it."

Family members reiterate that conditions at the homes were less than humane. Paula says the tiny garage in Westchester housed three patients in twin beds — two men and a 19-year-old woman, separated by sheets of plywood and hanging beach towels. Paula and Eugene say the boarders were discouraged from leaving the house on their own.

"It was like a prison camp," says Paula's husband, German-born cinematographer Rolf Kestermann. "They had a person outside making sure they wouldn't drift away. [Eugene] was disheveled, unshaven. Obviously he just had a pretty dismal life."

When one of the boardinghouse's owners fell ill, management passed down to her son and his wife. As caretakers, the second generation was as unprepared to cope with Eugene as the first, according to Eugene's family.

"[The wife], she would call me up in the middle of the night and say he used up too much toilet paper," Paula says. Eugene claims the unlicensed caretakers handed out medication to all patients at dinner and made sure they took it, which is not permitted under California law. (The second-generation owners did not return numerous phone calls made by *L.A. Weekly*.)

Eugene was getting worse. He developed glaucoma, which went undiagnosed for years. His stroke went unnoticed. He was kept on Thorazine long after a new generation of antipsychotics became available. He suffered from incontinence and hypertension.

Eugene's condition required more support — an adult residential care facility, a nursing home or permanent supportive housing.

And Eugene's father, a doctor who should have known better, didn't do anything, despite Eugene's pleas.

"I told my father, this is a terrible place," Eugene says. "Why is he keeping me here? He said he can't take me. He kept saying that. He came over every week to bring me food, and usually a carton of cigarettes, until I quit in '93. He wouldn't take me back."

Eugene's half-sister, Erica, was long disturbed by the way Eugene lived. "I'll never understand why my father did what he did," she says. "Maybe it was [him] not understanding mental health."

In January 2007, Dr. Walker lay dying of stomach cancer at Saint Vincent Medical Center, where he had once served as chief of internal medicine. Paula sat by his bed. He spoke to her in an eerie tone. She'd never heard him sound like that.

"I have secrets," Paula recalls **(17»**

— and they stole them!"

He claims there was, at times, no heating, he was given meals only once or twice a day, and showers were limited to once a week. The doors were locked at night — and he recalls being told that if he left, he could never come back.

L.A. Weekly is not identifying the facility's operators. Multiple messages left with a family member, and on the owner's private voicemail, were not returned.

Eugene's account of life at the boardinghouse must be taken with a grain of salt. One of the symptoms of his condition, after all, is paranoia. In 2000, his father stated on an SSI form that Eugene "has paranoid ideas, thinks people don't like him or they are trying to hurt him. He is better on medication but has not been normal since his breakdown."

Usually, Eugene speaks intelligently and logically. He follows the news and had a well-informed opinion on two charter

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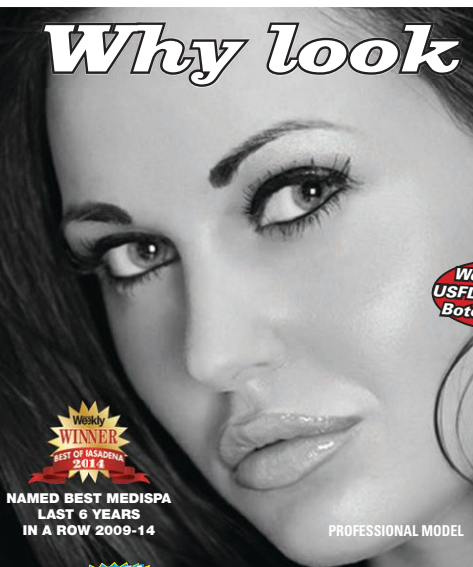
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"SEE YOU AT THE 'O'"

>>14) him whispering. “There are things I’ve done that I don’t want people to know.” He told her there were things that had happened that weren’t right. Unfortunately Paula would have to take care of them.

“Eugene,” he said. “Eugene has to be taken care of.”

Days later, Dr. Walker was dead.

Paula and her husband hadn’t seen much of Eugene over the decades. “His dad would bring him over for, like, a Christmas event,” Kestermann says. “He was still pretty aggressive, angry at everybody.”

“Fucking kraut,” Kestermann recalls Eugene snarling at him. “What are you doing with my sister?”

Now Paula was tasked with visiting Eugene on weekends and bringing him food and movies.

“I started getting all these calls,” Paula says. “Day and night: ‘Help me. Help me. You gotta get me out of here. Save me. You’ve got to save me. Please help me. I’m gonna die here. I need help.’ Day and night.”

Eugene left up to 20 messages every day. He called Paula’s cellphone. He called her work. He called her house in Eagle Rock. Oftentimes her high school

“MOM, WE’VE GOT TO GET HIM OUT OF THERE.” —ISABELLA, EUGENE’S NIECE, NOW 19

daughter, Eugene’s niece, Isabella, was home alone and answered the phone.

The calls “would start with, like, ‘Hey, is your mom there?’” Isabella says. “I would be, like, ‘No, she’s not there.’ He would be, like, ‘Well, can you tell her I need to talk to her?’ Sometimes our call would end just like that. Sometimes he would tell me things, like the people took away his toilet paper.”

The calls grew more desperate. “There would be times where they would lock him up, or they wouldn’t let him go out of the house or in his rooms,” Isabella recalls Eugene telling her.

Paula wanted to help Eugene, but she was scared. “It triggered back my childhood,” she says. “When he originally got into the mental institution, and he was tied up, he kept saying, ‘Help me, help me, you’ve got to save me.’ I was a kid. I didn’t know what to do. What was I gonna do? Cut the bandages and run away?”

For the longest time, Paula didn’t see it as her mess. It was her father’s mess, but her father was dead and her mother had vanished.

One night in 2009, Isabella walked into Paula’s room, crying, and said, “Mom, you’ve got to get him out of there.”

Paula hadn’t realized how much Eugene

and his teenage niece had been talking, but now she realized “if I didn’t do something, it was going to pass on, the legacy was gonna go on to [Isabella], and she would be scarred by it,” Paula says. “That was kind of my wake-up call.”

In March 2009, Paula threw a birthday party for Eugene, his first in decades.

“He didn’t have any friends, so I invited over Isabella’s school friends,” she says. “It was all these little girls. He said, ‘This is the best moment of my life. Every birthday he’d been alone, for so many years.’”

“I had never had a cake before,” Eugene says. “I had candles on the cake, I blew out the candles, I made a wish: ‘I want to get out of the [boardinghouse].’”

But for another year, Paula was deeply conflicted. She was afraid of her brother and afraid of choosing the wrong path. Finally, she sought advice from a mental health expert (who declined to discuss the case with the *Weekly*). In late 2010, Paula borrowed a truck from a production assistant she knows and drove to Westchester.

“I just showed up at the place and said, ‘I’m here to take Eugene.’ They were very angry. He’d been with them for 24 years or whatever. His room was so tiny. All he had was stuff under his bed. There was no heat.”

Another bed in the garage was occupied by a 19-year-old girl. Paula was alarmed that unstable adult men and a vulnerable teen girl were roomed together, and she thought about reporting the boardinghouse.

“I was torn about it,” she says. “As bad as it was, if we closed the place down, where would this girl go? On the streets.”

Paula got Eugene settled in Golden Manor nursing home in Cheviot Hills and enrolled in a well-known outpatient program, Step Up on Second, which helps the mentally ill. He saw a doctor, was given new medication, started going to the gym and doing tai chi. He enrolled in Santa Monica College and is studying history.

“I want to get my bachelor’s degree,” Eugene says. “And see what happens next. I don’t know what I’m gonna do. I’m 60 now. So that’s kind of against me.”

Eugene can seem dour at times. But when pressed, he’ll admit: “Well, I persevered. I went against the odds. ... In the [boardinghouse], I was dying there. I guess it’s a happy ending.”

Someone, possibly one of Eugene’s social workers, did report the boardinghouse owners to the California Department of Social Services in November 2010, alleging that the home was administering “unlicensed care.” Months later, two agents made an unannounced visit there. Their report read, in part:

“[The owner] stated they are not providing any elements of care or supervision to the residents. [He] stated they had a resident that moved out and he required care; he was the only person that required any type of care and supervision.”

The boardinghouse was deemed legal and was allowed to continue operating — not because its care was good enough, but because it wasn’t providing any care at all.




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Tranche of roasted butternut squash, wheat berries, preserved blueberries and pumpkin seeds



PHOTO BY ANNE FISHBEIN

| Eats // Fork Lift //

FARM TO COUNTER

Le Comptoir takes bare-bones dining to the extreme

BY BESHA RODELL

The purest expression of chef Gary Menes' vision comes early in a meal at Le Comptoir, the new, permanent iteration of what had been his transient pop-up restaurant. Fol-

lowing a small amuse, perhaps a blistered shishito pepper over a tablespoon or so of crispy rice, and after a silky soup of early heirloom tomatoes poured over a Japanese sweet potato velouté with creme fraiche and fried bread, comes the "vegetable and fruit plate," a gorgeous and artful arrangement of the day's bounty. The description of this might read "potato, broccoli, corn, cauliflower marrow, beet, celery, celtuce, calamansi, pickled onion, persimmon, carrot, tangerine, cucumber, peas, broccoli, grape and more ..."

Menes has been making versions of this plate, with its multitudes of flavors, for

years, though never in his own space. That has now changed, and while "permanent" is the differing factor here (Menes signed a 10-year lease),

it's not a word I'd use to describe the feel of the place. It's as if Menes' aesthetic remains tied to the restlessness that has been a mainstay of Le Comptoir thus far.

In the world of ever-more-stripp-

down, ever-less-luxurious "fine" dining, no operation is more spare than Le Comptoir, which now is fixed in a small storefront attached to the Hotel Normandie. The restaurant is nothing more than a counter facing a kitchen. There's no sign, no art on the walls, no stove in the kitchen (the cooking is done on hot plates) — barely anything that would indicate this is a place you might come to be fed, and not a bar of some sort that's still under construction. Even more so than Alma or Trois Mec or Starry Kitchen or any of our city's many experiments in austerity, Le Comptoir raises the question of how much one can remove from the restaurant experience before it ceases to fulfill its main objective. And what is that objective?

Menes himself has been working at this particular form of dining for a long time, since before the sparse chef + food + diner — anything else style of eating became a trend. Prior to Le Comptoir's arrival in late December, Menes had been surfacing in various spaces for years, always with the same format. You sit at a counter (Le Comptoir means "the counter" in French), he does the cooking with perhaps a few helpers (generally nonprofessional chefs, including, in this iteration, a UCLA biochemistry major and a bartender), and over a couple of hours he presents a tasting menu. His menus have always been vegetable-focused — since way before the glut of "veggies are the new pork belly!" trend pieces of the past couple of years. In this latest configuration, there are supplements that can be subbed in for several courses, and many of those are meaty, but a serious focus on vegetables remains Menes' pas-

sion. In fact, without the supplements the six-course, \$69 menu is pure vegetarian.

Since leaving the traditional restaurant world in 2011 (he trained at the French Laundry and cooked at Palate Food + Wine, Patina and Marché before launching Le Comptoir as a pop-up), Menes has devoted himself to a simple task: growing vegetables on an organic farm in Long Beach and cooking and serving those vegetables to just a few people. This is the format; he's never wavered from it.

In this particular room, there are 10 seats, though I've eaten here with as few as three other customers. It's dining as intimate as it comes (if intimacy with your cooks and not necessarily your dining companion is what you're after).

Menes' farm and its harvest provide the basis for the six-course meal he serves, courses that pair decidedly unsweet butternut squash with the sugary pop of preserved blueberries, or stone-ground polenta with sweet onion, onion jus, apple, almonds and romanesco. Though veggies are Menes' main infatuation, other obsessions reveal themselves: the stretchy, chewy, crusty bread made from a 20-year-old starter; the single-origin coffee; the optional cheese course with rare cheeses. For any and all of these items, Menes will give you the rundown as he serves you, gushing about the 90-year-old who produced your creamy Roquefort or describing the exact roasting process of his coffee beans.

For an extra \$25, you can forgo the vegetable and fruit plate and instead have a slab of foie gras terrine, or give up the decadent *oeuf en cocotte* — an egg bathed in brown butter, served with delicate baby

lettuce and slabs of bread — and opt for the Santa Barbara rock lobster with a "bisque" foam and cauliflower leaves. These supplements are more in line with what you'd get at a traditional tasting-menu joint and can provide a nice contrast to the grains and roots and berries.

About those supplemental items: On my visits to Le Comptoir, many customers (myself included) played the game where one person in the party got all the optional dishes while the other had the regular menu, thereby allowing both guests to share and try everything on offer. This is entertaining but makes the meal insanely expensive and far too rich (if you swap out every possible item, your personal bill will be around \$170 before drinks, tax or tip). My feeling is, that's not how Menes intended the supplements to be experienced. Instead, I'm guessing he imagined folks might opt for one or two of the alternative dishes, treating themselves to a \$30, showered-with-truffles tagliolini or a \$16 dry-aged prime beef, which might bring the check closer to \$100 a person and make it slightly more personalized.

There's a lot at Le Comptoir that will frustrate the traditionalist. There is a wine pairing, full of oddball and delicious finds, and it's basically the only option for wine. "We can, of course, sell you a regular glass of wine," one of the helpers/cooks/servers said to me on one occasion; another evening they seemed uncertain of that possibility. You cannot buy wine by the bottle, though you may bring your own if you're willing to pay \$42 per bottle for corkage. The high stools you'll sit on are hardly plush comfort. The entire experience is calibrated for focus on the food and nothing else.

In the end, it comes down to whether you're willing to remove your ego from the dining experience and give in completely to the will and vision of this chef. It's not something we're used to in the U.S., though it's a tenet of Japanese dining, where the sushi chef is the master and obeying his whims is part of the experience. In fact, eating here is very much like eating at the sushi bar of a serious *omakase* spot, albeit a little friendlier overall. But for this kind of money, Le Comptoir is a little too austere, even for my taste. A certain amount of wine and revelry is appreciated when it comes to \$100-plus-per-person meals.

This doesn't change the fact that Le Comptoir is so much more interesting, and memorable, than many of L.A.'s more luxurious endeavors. Menes is not here to please everyone, and some will question whether his enterprise could really be called a restaurant at all. It's a place where one man cooks the food he wants to and serves it with the wine he likes. He's excited to share these things with you, to let you in on his passions and have you enjoy the literal fruits of his labor. For the right diner, this level of personal ardor will feel superior in every way to the more comfortable but purely transactional experiences available everywhere else.

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Brewmaster Alexandra Nowell checks her brew.

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MEET L.A.'S ONLY FEMALE BREWMASTER

ALEXANDRA NOWELL OF THREE
WEAVERS BREWING LEADS THE WAY

Before the sun comes up most days, Alexandra Nowell is already at work in her stainless steel brew-house at Three Weavers Brewing in Inglewood. On a recent Wednesday, wearing steel-toed brewing boots and fitted jeans, she grabs a hulking 55-pound sack of grain, cuts open the top and hoists it shoulder-height, dumping the grains into the nearby mill. The metal monster of a crushing device grinds the grains and deposits them into the mash tun, a giant steeping vessel of gurgling hot water. There, the sugars will be extracted.

Then Nowell (along with an assistant brewer) does the same with 17 more giant bags, which will make one batch of beer. Since she is creating double batches, multiply by two the 1,000 pounds that she just lifted, and that's literally a ton of grain. All the spent grain must be scooped out of the mash tun, put into oil drums and moved onto a pallet to be picked up by a local farmer, who feeds it to his livestock. Repeat that process three days a week. That's the manual labor that goes into beers such as Three Weavers' fine extra special bitter, Deep Roots ESB.

In an industry dominated by men, Nowell, 30, is the only female brewmaster in Greater L.A. and one of only a handful of women brewmasters in California. "There's nothing glamorous about it, but it's fun and it's a lifestyle," she says, with a slight lisp and an easy smile. "I'm always working, but there's something about the industry that's fulfilling to me."

After studying religion and photography in her native Florida, Nowell moved west to take a paid internship at Sierra Nevada Brewing Company in Chico,

the biggest town in the rural northern Sacramento Valley. She turned out to be quite a bit more than an intern, learning all she could about ingredients and writing a training program on brewery operations. She later used that knowledge to her advantage and was hired as lead brewer at Bay Area powerhouse Drake's Brewing, where she was at the time the only woman on the brew team.

She moved to Southern California early in 2013, becoming head brewer at Kinetic Brewing in L.A.'s high-desert suburb of Lancaster, and promptly went to work tweaking Kinetic's house favorites, Potential Blonde and Torque session ale. That October, her altered recipes won two bronze medals at the Great American Beer Festival, an impressive feat for a young brewer.

"People are sometimes surprised when they learn that I'm the one who brews the beers, but I'm used to it at this point," she says. "These days, though, most beer drinkers are so disconnected from the industry that they see the tap handle and don't even think about the person behind it."

Nowell opened Three Weavers in 2014 with financial planner Lynne Weaver, another standout in L.A.'s growing craft beer scene. Weaver named the brewery after her three children, and today the brewery serves as a hub for women working in the craft beer industry. Earlier this month, the L.A. chapter of the Pink Boots Society — an international organization that aims to empower female beer professionals — held its second meeting in Three Weavers' taproom, with Nowell serving as president.

A week later, on March 8, her brewhouse hosted L.A.'s contribution to a global movement known as International Women's Collaboration Brew Day — a day when a beer dubbed Unite was brewed simultaneously by female brewers around the world. Proceeds from sales of the beer go directly to the Pink Boots Society's scholarships and programs for girls and women.

L.A.'s Pink Boots Society is made up of dozens of ladies earning at least some of their income from craft beer, working in jobs ranging from assistant brewers to bar managers to distribution representatives to marketing managers (the author of this story is a journalist member).

"L.A. is very progressive as far as having a diverse group of women in the beer industry, but it's definitely not a universal thing," says Frances Lopez, social media



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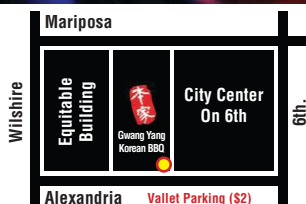
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manager at Golden Road Brewing, which is located in an industrial area near Glendale. Lopez, co-founder of the Pink Boots Society's L.A. chapter, says, "In New Orleans as recently as a few years ago, there was only one Pink Boots Society member — and she works in a tasting room."

Women have always had held leadership roles in L.A.'s brewing industry: Two of the first three breweries in L.A. County (Ladyface Ale Companie and Eagle Rock Brewery) were founded by women. And you're just as likely to see a woman behind the bar, in a sales position and at the taproom as you are a dude. Through mentorship and organizations such as the Pink Boots Society, that diversity may translate into more female brewers, like Nowell, making waves in the national craft beer scene.

"I don't need to prove anything," Nowell says. "My beer speaks for itself."
—Sarah Bennett

CALIFORNIA DROUGHT

Want Water With Your Meal? You'll Have to Ask

You'll soon have to speak up when you're parched at an L.A. restaurant. State officials voted Tuesday to prohibit food service establishments from serving water to customers unless requested.

As much as L.A.'s unseasonably warm March weather makes for great humblebrags to your East Coast friends, the heat is a chilling reminder that rainy season is nearly over and we are nowhere near undoing the last four years of unprecedented, historic drought.

With talks of dry years becoming the "new normal" in California, the California State Water Resources Control Board approved drastic expansions to emergency regulations on potable (aka drinkable) water use. This is on top of the 2014 grounds-watering limitations imposed on property owners.

The new restrictions are set to go into effect in late April or early May and last for 270 days unless renewed. In addition to restaurants only serving water upon request, hotels must now provide guests with the option of choosing not to have their linens laundered daily.

"We are experiencing the lowest snowpack and the driest January in recorded history, and communities around the state are already suffering severely from the prior three years of drought," State Water Board chair Felicia Marcus said in a press release. "If the drought continues through next winter and we do not conserve more — the consequences could be even more catastrophic than they already are. Today's action is just a tune-up and a reminder to act, and we will consider more significant actions in the weeks to come."

Cities including Malibu and water districts like Palmdale's already have restrictions in place that prevent restaurants from serving water as a default.

According to the State Water Board, local agencies can fine individual property owners up to \$500 a day for doing things such as watering a lawn within 48 hours of rainfall or washing a car without a shut-off

nozzle. The board has not yet indicated whether it will enact similar penalties for restaurants that serve unrequested water.
—Sarah Bennett

FOOD SAFETY

Your Cheap Wine May Be Filled With Arsenic

Arsenic-tainted wine? It's not just the fate that befell Napoleon — Californians are unwittingly drinking it, too.

Many popular, low-priced brands of wine sold in California contain high levels of poisonous arsenic, according to a class-action lawsuit filed March 19 in California Superior Court.

The suit claims dozens of California wineries are violating state law by knowingly producing, marketing and selling arsenic-contaminated wine. Independent testing showed the wine contained up to five times the maximum amount of arsenic that the Environmental Protection Agency allows for drinking water.

Some of the popular wine brands named in the lawsuit include Franzia, Ménéage à Trois, Sutter Home, Wine Cube, Charles Shaw, Glen Ellen, Cupcake, Beringer and Vendage. The wines named in the lawsuit are primarily white or blush varieties including moscato, pinot grigio and sauvignon blanc that are priced under \$10.

"These wineries have long known about the serious health risks their products pose to customers," said Brian Kabateck of L.A.-based Kabateck Brown Kellner, which filed the suit. "Yet instead of reducing the exposure to acceptable levels, the defendants recklessly engage in a pattern and practice of selling arsenic-tainted wine to California consumers."

Arsenic is an odorless, colorless poison known to cause illness and death when ingested in large amounts. Some of the long-term health effects of arsenic exposure include various types of cancer, cardiovascular disease and diabetes, medical experts say.

Of the two forms of arsenic, organic and inorganic, the inorganic version is accepted to be hundreds of times more toxic, scientists say. The arsenic in the defendant wines is the inorganic type, according to the lawsuit.

"Until now, consumers have no way to know how much arsenic they're getting in their wine," said Michael Burg, partner in Denver-based Burg Simpson Eldredge Hersh & Jardine law firm. "This class-action suit will help shine a light on the wine industry's dirty secret."

The 28 California defendant wineries "produce and market wines that contain dangerously high levels of inorganic arsenic, in some cases up to 500 percent or more than what is considered the maximum acceptable safe daily intake limit," according to the lawsuit.

The arsenic testing referenced in the suit was conducted by BeverageGrades, an independent lab in Denver. Its results were confirmed by two additional labs. Of 1,306 different types of wine tested, 83 showed dangerously elevated arsenic levels.

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ing," BeverageGrades CEO Kevin Hicks said. "The levels of arsenic in some of these wines were beyond belief." Among his findings: Trader Joe's Two-Buck Chuck White Zinfandel, which came in at three times the EPA's limit, a bottle of Ménage à Trois moscato at four times the limit and a Franzia white grenache at five times the limit.

One factor he found in common: "The lower the price of wine on a per-liter basis, the higher the amount of arsenic."

Hicks, a former beverage-industry executive, says he first went to the wine-makers more than a year ago to show them his discovery. "They didn't want to know about what was in their wines," he said. "They heard the words 'arsenic' and 'wine' and the conversation was over."

Hicks then went to the attorneys at Denver's Burg Simpson with his findings. The attorneys have established a website for consumers seeking additional information at TaintedWine.com.

The federal government does not regulate wine the way it does water. However, California law requires businesses to warn consumers if their products contain "a chemical known to the state to cause cancer." California's threshold for arsenic is 10 parts per billion, the same as the EPA's water standard. "There is more regulation in the caramel corn industry in the United States than in the wine industry," Kabateck said at a March 19 news conference.

It's not clear how the arsenic gets in the wine, but the attorneys said it may come from a clarifying agent or from inadequate filtration of pesticides used on grapes.

The lawsuit doesn't specify a dollar amount but seeks "injunctive relief, civil penalties, disgorgement and damages." Kabateck said its goal is to get the wines recalled, customers' money refunded and the industry "clean[ed] up." —Samantha Bonar

RESTAURANT OPENINGS & CLOSINGS

Kenney to Close M.A.K.E. in Santa Monica Place, Open New Concept in Venice

Matthew Kenney, one of the country's leading raw/vegan chefs, is moving his operation south. Kenney tells *L.A. Weekly* he's planning to open a second restaurant in Venice (along with Plant Food & Wine, soon to open on Abbot Kinney) and close up shop at M.A.K.E. in Santa Monica Place.

Kenney's cooking school, which is adjacent to M.A.K.E., will move to an upstairs space attached to Plant Food & Wine. Classes at the new space begin May 1.

The new restaurant will be opened in partnership with Ilan Dei, founder of Ilan Dei Studio, the Venice design/manufacturing studio known for its work with Lemonade, the healthy fast-casual chain. While there isn't a name or location for this new concept yet, Kenney and Dei hope to be open by this fall. The restaurant, like M.A.K.E., will focus on raw foods. Reps for Kenney tell us that it will be "marked by its moderate pricing, casual, welcoming design and approachable culinary offerings."

Meanwhile, M.A.K.E. will depart its current location atop the Santa Monica shopping center as of April 30. —Besha Rodell

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SHOW UP?



Monster makeup by Bruce Fuller and Ana Gabriela Quinonez at Monsterpalooza. See Friday.

PHOTO BY STEVE JENNINGS

fri 3/27

COMEDY

She's Getting Busy

Last we saw of **Amy Schumer** on Comedy Central's *Inside Amy Schumer*, she went to the prom, contracted herpes and was visited by God — played by Paul Giamatti — who reprimanded her for getting herpes. Schumer has been the potty-mouthed, younger-sis-of-Sarah Silverman heroine for the *Girls* generation since appearing on NBC's *Last Comic Standing* in 2007. This year Schumer stars in the Judd Apatow-directed *Trainwreck*, hosts the MTV Movie

Awards and, for a third season, produces her hit sketch-comedy show. If you don't want to wait until then, the comedian returns to her stand-up roots to talk about her favorite topics: sex, relationships and vagina. *Orpheum Theatre*, 842 S. Broadway, downtown; Fri., March 27, 7:30 p.m.; \$36.50. (877) 677-4386, laorpheum.com. —Siran Babayan

CONVENTIONS

Will the Monsters Destroy Burbank?

At **Monsterpalooza**, the weirdly witty world of ghouls, demons and slime-dripping beasts comes to "life." This year's shebang boasts 200-plus vendors, a monster museum, makeup demonstra-

tions by a gigantor list of horror specialists and a big cast of super scary guests, including director George Romero (*Night of the Living Dead*, *Creepshow*) and actors Sonny Chiba (*Kill Bill*, *The Street Fighter*), Yaphet Kotto (*Alien*), Cloris Leachman (*Young Frankenstein*) and Linda Blair (*The Exorcist*). *Marriott Burbank Hotel and Convention Center*, 2500 N. Hollywood Way, Burbank; Fri., March 27, 6-11 p.m.; Sat.-Sun., March 28-29, 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; \$30 per day, \$70 three-day pass, children under 10 free when accompanied by adult. monsterpalooza.com. —John Payne

DANCE

I'm Back in Town and I Want to Dance

Holly Johnston and her intriguingly named dance troupe, Ledges and Bones, have been a force on the local dance scene for more than a decade, with a distinctive take on contemporary choreography that is intense and primal and at the same time thoughtful and vulnerable. Johnston has been absent while gaining a master's degree out of state, but her new show, *Unbecoming Woman*, promises to prove she is back with exclamation points. The concert reunites Johnston with longtime collaborator Sarri Sanchez and her favored venue. *Diavolo at the Brewery*, 616 Moulton Ave., Lincoln Heights; Fri.-Sat., March 27-28, 8 p.m.; pay-what-you-can donations at door. ledgesandbones.org. —Ann Haskins

BOOKS AND POLITICS

Conscience of Congress

For 30 years, **Barney Frank** fought indolence and arrogance in the House of Representatives, standing fast for everything from gay rights to financial reform. Here's your chance to see his cantankerous mojo up close when Vroman's presents the congressman discussing and signing *Frank: A Life in Politics From the Great Society to Same-Sex Marriage*. It's not all about politics, of course — there's material in here about finding love with his husband, Jim Ready, as well as his latter-day atheism. But there's likely a lifetime of barbs leveled at those in power who'd rather sit or quit than make

society a better place. *South Pasadena Library Community Room*, 1100 Oxley St., South Pasadena; Fri., March 27, 8 p.m.; \$30, includes copy of Frank's book. (626) 449-5320, vromansbookstore.com. —David Cotner

sat 3/28

SHOPPING

Dress Like a Diva

The costumes might just be the best part of going to the opera. But where do those extravagant pieces go once the season is over? They're not burned up, Marie Antoinette-style — they stay at the L.A. Opera's Costume Shop, which is preparing to move. The **Costume Shop Moving Sale** — only the third open-air sale in the company's history — will offer costumes from productions such as *The Grand Duchess* and *Cinderella* at prices from \$25 to \$650 for entire ensembles (you can snag accessories for \$2 to \$20). With deals like those, who needs a fairy godmother? *L.A. Opera Costume Shop parking lot*, 330 S. Alameda St., downtown; Sat., March 28, 10:30 a.m.-4 p.m.; free. laopera.com. —Sascha Bos

BOOKS

Poetry in the Park

If you like spending lazy Saturday afternoons reading a book under a tree at Grand Park, make sure to show up this weekend — there'll be hundreds of people joining you. The third annual **Downtown Bookfest** mainstage features 2014 Los Angeles poet laureate Luis J. Rodriguez, plus L.A. writers doing readings in other languages and young-adult readings. The Music Center's Artizen Lab boasts kids storytelling, poetry and crafts, while the Family Pavilion includes more readings for young'uns, bilingual English/Spanish sing-alongs and a preview of the Ahmanson Theatre's upcoming *Matilda the Musical*. And if you're looking to take home more than sunburn, Writ Large Press' pop-up shop offers books, graphic novels and other souvenirs. *Grand Park*, 200 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Sat., March 28, noon-5 p.m.; free. grandparkla.org. —Siran Babayan

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Julee Cruise: See Wednesday.

mon 3/30

GAMES

Not Pizza – the One With Dots

The Universal Domino League, billed as the world's biggest, hosts the L.A. Open Domino Tournament, which spans six mind-melting, spine-shattering hours. You'll see the best players in the region competing for up to \$5,000 in prizes and the coveted championship belt — and no, it is not made entirely of dominoes. Hosted by longtime domino enthusiast and Married... With Children actor David Faustino, it may be the one time in your life when experiencing the domino effect is a good thing. West Coast Hooters, 1248 S. Figueroa St., downtown; Mon., March 30, 6 p.m.-mid.; free to watch, \$100 for participants. (213) 222-9464, universaldominoleague.com. —David Cotner

sun 3/29

THEATER

Ancient Rome With a Mexican Spin

Sometimes it feels as if humans have never been greedier than in today's supercapitalist society — but it's all just history repeating. In the second century, Roman playwright Titus Maccius Plautus penned The Pot of Gold, which revolves around one man's obsessive guarding of a literal pot of gold he found buried under his house. Inspired by Mexico's Rumberas noir films, the Latino Theater Company adapts Plautus' classic into La Olla, the tale of a struggling entertainer in 1950s Los Angeles who stumbles across a large amount of money, which turns his life upside-down. The Getty Villa hosts a one-weekend presentation of the work in progress. Getty Villa Auditorium, 17985 Pacific Coast Highway, Malibu; Fri.-Sat., March 27-28, 8 p.m.; Sat.-Sun., March 28-29, 3 p.m.; \$7. (310) 440-7300, getty.edu. —Sascha Bos

FILM

Pacino Meets De Niro

You should feel at least a little guilty if you've never seen Heat, which is among the greatest action movies of all time, but you should also be excited to experience it for the first time. Your dereliction of moviegoing duty may be remedied tonight at 7 p.m. and/or tomorrow at 8 p.m., thanks to the tireless efforts of the New Beverly's month-long program of '90s classics. Al Pacino and Robert De Niro go head to head as cop and criminal in this most epic of genre exercises, which sees action auteur Michael Mann expand against the backdrop of our own Los Angeles. Heat is one of those rare films that instantly reshapes your conception of the entire genre to which it belongs — like something you've always been waiting for without fully realizing it. New Beverly Cinema, 7165 Beverly Blvd., Fairfax; Sun., March 29, 7 p.m.; Mon., March 30, 8 p.m.; \$8. (323) 938-4038, thenewbev.com. —Michael Nordine

tue 3/31

SPOKEN WORD

Feminism on Tour

Writers, artists and performers fill the lineup for Sister Spit: The Next Generation at the Hammer tonight. A continuation of the touring, spoken-word crew formed by Sini Anderson and Michelle Tea in the 1990s, the current show is hosted by Virgie Tovar, the body-image activist behind the hashtag #losehateandweight. This tour features authors Myriam Gurba (Dahlia Season), Thomas Page McBee (Man Alive) and Kate Schatz (Rad American Women A-Z), as well as artist Miriam Klein Stahl and drag performer Mica Sigourney. Special guests include Weetzie Bat author Francesca Lia Block, writer Nikki Darling (whose work has been featured in L.A. Weekly) and artist Zackary Drucker. Hammer Museum, 10899 Wilshire Blvd., Westwood; Tue., March 31, 7:30 p.m.; free. (310) 443-7000, hammer.ucla.edu. —Liz Ohanesian

SPORTS AND SCIENCE

A 120mph Fastball?

As baseball season starts, USC takes a scientific look at the sport with Velocity and Vulnerability: Baseball Pitchers and the Limits of Human Performance. Representing the players will be Robb Nen, of the 1997 World Series champion Florida Marlins, and Tom House, an Atlanta Braves pitching legend and USC alum. The scientists will be Keck School of Medicine orthopedic surgeon Seth Gamradt and USC Biological Sciences and Biomedical Engineering professor Jill McNitt-Gray. Among the questions raised: Has the human body reached its limit when it comes to pitching? Is a 120mph fastball something we'll ever see? And what do the catchers think about all this? Dedeaux Field, University Park Campus, 1021 Childs Way, University Park; Tue., March 31, 6 p.m.; free, RSVP required. (213) 740-0483, visionsandvoices.usc.edu. —David Cotner

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wed 4/1

FILM AND MUSIC

Make Sure to Wear Blue Velvet

Rare is the filmmaker who uses music in such a way that it becomes inseparable from his identity as an artist. Dario Argento and Werner Herzog are notables in this vein; another is David Lynch. Tonight you'll witness this revered aspect of his films in **The Music of David Lynch**. Admirers including Moby, Karen O, Wayne Coyne, Sky Ferreira and Duran Duran appear with Lynch collaborators Angelo Badalamenti (*Blue Velvet*), Julee Cruise (*Twin Peaks*) and Rebekah Del Rio (*Mulholland Drive*) in a dreamlike evening of performance, reinterpretation and revival. Proceeds benefit the nonprofit David Lynch Foundation, whose goal is to bring Transcendental Meditation to at-risk humans with PTSD. What, no Toto? *The Theater at Ace Hotel, 929 Broadway, downtown; Wed., April 1, 8 p.m.; \$45-\$1,000. (213) 623-3233, acehotel.com. —David Cotner*

FILM

Hollywood to New York and Back

Hollywood and Broadway collide at the El Capitan's screening of *Newsies*, the 1992 Hollywood movie (based on the New York City newsboys strike of 1899) that inspired the 2012 Tony-winning musical of the same name. In attendance will be special guests to be announced from both the film and the Broadway show, which — you guessed it — is on tour in L.A. at the Pantages until April 18. And if any New Yorkers try to assert their Broadway superiority, just remind them that Hollywood's version of the story stars Christian Bale. *El Capitan Theatre, 6838 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood; Wed., April 1, 9:30 p.m.; \$20. (800) 347-6396, elcapitantickets.com. —Sascha Bos*

thu 4/2

BOOKS AND SPORTS

A Laker and a Bruin (Not Kareem)

Lakers Hall of Famer Jamaal "Silk" Wilkes discusses and signs *Memoirs of the Original Smooth as Silk*, which includes the forward's beginnings at UCLA with coach John Wooden, two NCAA Championships and an 88-game winning streak, plus the 1975 Lakers' championship season. Silk — who entered the Hall in 2012 — has had a storied life, doing everything from starring in the film *Cornbread, Earl and Me* to becoming a popular motivational speaker. His jersey may be retired, but Wilkes is anything but retiring. *Eso Won Books, 4327 Degnan Blvd., Leimert Park; Thu., April 2, 7 p.m.; free. (323) 290-1048, esowonbookstore.com. —David Cotner*

For more events see the art, stage, film and music sections, and visit laweekly.com/calendar.

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Darren Romanelli

Arts //

GURU OF COOL

Darren Romanelli brings together L.A. artists and brands — using pancakes

BY ISAAC SIMPSON

Darren Romanelli is the man behind Pancake Epidemic. If you don't know what that is, don't worry. Neither does he. "I think the fact that I can't explain exactly what it is is why I'm still into it," Romanelli says with a laugh.

Put simply, Pancake Epidemic is a Parisian salon in 21st-century Los Angeles. Being part of a salon is a vague dream we've all had, one that begins with everyone in heated conversation around a table in low light, debating art and politics, sure, but mostly drinking wine. Then word travels throughout the city and suddenly celebrities are beating down the door and publishers are lining up for your manifesto.

The real thing, of course, looks nothing like the fantasy. Pancake Epidemics occur in the morning above a Miracle Mile IHOP. There is no rigid schedule — sometimes they're every week, other times six months will pass between them. At each one, a project, often a newly released collaboration between an artist and a brand, is the centerpiece. The attendees circulate the project and mingle. They've included musicians (The RZA, Riff Raff, h09909 [see Music, page 44], Action Bronson, James Fauntleroy), artists (Bert Rodriguez, Blanda Eggenschwiler), chefs (Animal's Jon Shook and Vinny Dotolo, Eddie Huang), surfers (Jordy Smith), athletes (Baron Davis) and other creatives (MOCA's Emma Reeves), all with a

certain anticorporate edge.

Bringing together a group like this requires quite a Rolodex, but that's not enough on its own. The reason Pancake works is that it's run by Romanelli, a cultural puppetmaster with an uncanny ability to match artists with patrons — patrons, in this day and age, being brands. There are others like him, such as Daniel Lahoda, L.A.'s so-called "wall dealer," who deftly juggles street artists, business owners and brands to create murals downtown. Outside-the-box agencies including Alt Terrain and the Marketing Arm mix brands and celebrities into concoctions of publicity. But nobody does it like Romanelli. Not even close.

Great artists are perennially concerned about selling out and are thus allergic to anything smelling of corporateness, and some corporations want to associate with artists only so that the artists will paint their logos in murals. What makes Romanelli special is that he combines the two parties in a way that makes them both happy. It would seem impossible that legendary Beautiful Losers-generation graffiti artist Barry McGee would design a limited-edition speaker for Beats, but that's exactly what was on display at a Pancake in February.

Romanelli's enthusiasm about the creations excites the brands and convinces artists that brands are paying them to do what they would be doing otherwise.

Growing up in L.A., Romanelli always loved brand iconography. He went to the University of Oregon because Nike was

founded there. After graduating in the late 1990s, he began performing surgery on vintage items from well-known brands, cutting them up, mixing the components and putting them back together under the alias Dr. Romanelli. People went head over heels for the results. Usher and Chris Brown both rocked his famous Nike Flight jacket, made from snipped old logos, patches of leather and a lining of fine silk.

Actually connecting with the streets, instead of just pretending to, has always been Romanelli's priority, and the streets have been eager to connect back. He had a sewing facility in Crenshaw and used to take duffel bags out of his car and bring them inside. He was approached by some guys who hung around the neighborhood and wanted to rob him. "What's in the bags?" they asked him, hovering. "When I showed them, they tripped out," Romanelli says. "The idea of reconstructing these [Michael] Jordan track suits was kind of a new idea those days." He gave them a couple jackets and they became fans.

Dr. Romanelli's early work led to the creation of StreetVirus, a successful marketing agency Romanelli still runs with his partner, Nate Hahn. StreetVirus specializes in reinvigorating old intellectual property. For example, when Disney hired Street Virus to make Mickey Mouse cool again (or maybe for the first time), Romanelli bought the rights to the walls of liquor stores throughout L.A. and put up murals of old Mickey cartoon strips. He projected old silent Mickey Mouse films on the side of a building on Sunset and La Cienega.

Two years ago he was hired to revive

Popeye. He created a mash-up of Popeye and Beetle Bailey, pitting Army versus Navy. Army and Navy apparel with patches and prints of Popeye and Beetle Bailey started showing up at Bloomingdale's, and suddenly Wilco released a music video with the band animated in Popeye world.

"Nine out of 10 projects, there's a music layer," Romanelli says.

As he grew into a full-fledged kingmaker, Romanelli's sense of community, that irreplaceable ear to the streets, seemed to fade. So he started Pancake Epidemic as a sort of think tank to power StreetVirus' creativity. It was essentially a party of mostly artists he knew, who came to drink coffee and eat breakfast and talk about making stuff.

At one recent Pancake, an Echo Park street vendor named Alejandra fried purple tortillas on a portable propane stove. She served pickled cactus and a red salsa that was so spicy it made people sweat. They begged Brandon, who brews Stumptown espresso at the coffee bar, for cups of milk.

Alejandra's business manager — her 8-year-old daughter — sat next to her, playing games on her iPhone, while a part owner of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, an art writer for the *L.A. Times* and Money Mark from the Beastie Boys ate their breakfasts three feet away. The wall of one room was covered in rows of identical Felix the Cat clocks, creating an eerie funhouse vibe. StreetVirus has been hired to reintroduce Felix and cool him up. The 40 or so attendees flowed through the room, giggling and snapping photos for Instagram.

These days, Romanelli is pushing Pancake to churn out original properties. He opened a Pancake Epidemic-themed, Stumptown-supplied coffee shop and barbershop in Seoul, South Korea. He also started Pancake Epidemic Press, whose first publication is *Supermarket Supergroup*, a children's book and music album Romanelli created with his wife, Candice. It focuses on promoting healthy eating.

The album *Supermarket Supergroup* is produced, in part, by James Fauntleroy, a Grammy winner who writes songs for Common, Rihanna and Justin Timberlake.

"He bribed me with some amazing jackets, although he wouldn't have had to," says Fauntleroy, who has been a fan of Romanelli's work for a decade. "I have a daughter who has eating restrictions, so when he described it to me I was super excited."

Romanelli's recent projects include bringing Kendrick Lamar and artist Eddie Peak together for Lamar's "Sing About Me" video, last year's exhibit of actor Steve McQueen's personal effects that stuffed his motorcycle and favorite refrigerator into a room at StreetVirus' headquarters, and a futuristic Daniel Arsham sculpture of Felix the Cat.

Romanelli can't possibly barter jackets for every one of his stellar collaborations, so what's his secret?

"Patience of understanding how long things take to come to life in the collaboration world. Sometimes they take months or years to get them done," Romanelli says. "I see the project coming to life, then I work backwards. You put it out in the universe, then you water it till it becomes something."

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Anthony Lepore and Michael Henry Hayden's *Sleepyhead*



PHOTO BY ANTHONY LEPORE

Arts // Art Picks //

A SLEEPING TREE

AND KHALIL JOSEPH'S FILM OF KENDRICK LAMAR'S *GOOD KID, M.A.A.D. CITY*

BY CATHERINE WAGLEY

This week, an archive on the oddity of copyright law pops up downtown, and two artists install a sleeping tree in an apartment complex in Los Feliz.

5. A book of text messages

The opening of "Duh Angel Live @ Jenny's" was also a book launch and a performance. People took turns standing on small white pedestals in front of microphones and reading from New York artists R. Lyon and Jessie Stead's *Duh Angel*, a volume made up of their prolific texts to one another. A live feed of the readers played on a screen behind them. The event was filmed, and if you go now, you'll see footage of people reading text messages about Rubik's Cubes and "butt models" at an impressively relentless pace. Shattered rearview mirrors with rhinestones hang on walls. So do cans with straws protruding from them flattened between sheets of glass. 4220 Sunset Blvd., Silver Lake; through April 18. (323) 741-8237, jennys.us.

4. Epic music video

The two-channel film Khalil Joseph made to accompany rapper Kendrick Lamar's memoir-ish album *Good Kid, M.a.a.d. City* showed at the Underground Museum in West Adams and at Sundance last year. Now it's at MOCA. It's set in Compton. Shots get fired, bodies move backward or hang upside down. It's like a dream where everyone is familiar, the stakes feel high, everything is careening toward somewhere but you're not sure where. 250 S. Grand Ave., downtown; through Aug. 16. (213) 626-6222, moca.org.

3. Patriotism on its back

In the back room of his new exhibition at Regen Projects, artist Glenn Ligon has

placed two of his signature neon "America" signs face down, so that mostly what you see is not the glow of the blue light but the big black metal backs and the heavy black cords that wind toward the socket in the wall. The night of the opening, a guard in a black suit stood near those sockets, making sure no one tripped and that the sculpture stayed unharmed. It's all very grave, so it's easy to forget that the work itself is a kind of funny anti-patriotic one-liner: neon America flipped upside down. 6750 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood; through April 18. (310) 276-5424, regenprojects.com.

2. Owning the play

Go to REDCAT right now, and the first thing you encounter is a tall wall of cardboard filing boxes. Once you walk past them, you'll find a few lines of "forensic tables" on which Kobe Matthys, the founder of Brussels-based project Agency, has neatly laid out "things" as if they're specimens. Each thing has been somehow implicated in an intellectual property-rights dispute, and a typed paper on a clipboard next to it explains how. Footage of a 1980s Baltimore Orioles game plays on the first table because, in 1985, the Orioles and other baseball teams claimed they owned the "performances" that appeared on telecasts of their games. Players challenged this claim in a Chicago court, arguing that the teams had no ownership over their on-screen movements and performances. It's easy to get pulled into these absurd-seeming real-world scenarios. 631 W. Second St., downtown; through April 12. (213) 237-2800, redcat.org.

1. Under the sheets

Artists Anthony Lepore and Michael Henry Hayden have put an 8-foot-tall kalanchoe tree to bed in the Finley, the walk-by apartment window gallery in Los Feliz (you have to stand on steps in the front flower bed to see in). A mattress protrudes from the wall above the stairway. Lepore and Hayden have covered it in white, pink and red floral bedsheets, like the kind you might find in your grandmother's closet, and the tree—a gorgeous tropical thing with a slender trunk—lies with its big leaves on the pillow. Its roots bump up underneath an off-white blanket. 4627 Finley Ave., Los Feliz; through (617) 794-4530, thefinleygallery.artcodeinc.com.

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Danielle Marcelle Bond, pictured, plays a dying Marilyn, while Jamie Chamberlin plays her in her prime.



PHOTO BY KEITH IAN POLAKOFF

Stage //

SOME LIKE IT COLD

Why is this Marilyn Monroe opera so un-sexy?

BY CHRISTIAN HERTZOG

Marilyn Forever sounds like the title of a campy revue at the Cavern Club, but Long Beach Opera's production at the Warner Grand Theatre in San Pedro is a morose meditation on stardom, sex and self-destruction.

Unfortunately, this U.S. premiere never comes together. Is it the fault of Marilyn Bowering's vague libretto, a jumble of half-factual, half-imagined episodes from Monroe's life? Could it be 80 nonstop minutes of Gavin Bryars' brooding, amorphous music? Is it director Andreas Mitisek's unclear telling of the story, or his bizarre decision to split the role of Marilyn between two singers?

Bowering's libretto is a memory play. Monroe lies dying on her bed, incidents from her life oozing through the barbiturate fog — a late arrival at a studio, an inability to sing (or act?), a boudoir scene with a man (possibly Arthur Miller), a mysterious booty call.

Is the libretto too ambiguous for its own good, or does it have latent possibilities for creative staging? Hard to tell here, as Mitisek's design and direction either disregarded the libretto's instructions or did a poor job rendering them comprehensible.

Mitisek divides the single role of Marilyn into two separate parts: overdose-suicide Marilyn (portrayed by Danielle Marcelle Bond) and past-memories Marilyn

(Jamie Chamberlin). This drains the lead part of its bipolar showmanship. The role should spotlight a singer's acting skills as she bounces from woozy, dying Marilyn to sex symbol or troubled wife.

The libretto uses familiar iconography: Monroe as an insecure woman whose radiant sexuality blinded men to her other traits. Bryars gives Marilyn's part no compelling melodies, and the musical differentiation between her dying and lively personas is too subtle. To do justice to this character requires a singer with a dazzling, oversized voice and a magnetic

stage presence.

Chamberlin possessed a firm, focused voice, but there was no brilliance to it. Her acting didn't exaggerate enough the feminine qualities of Marilyn, winding up a mere simulacrum of Marilyn's potency.

Bond's voice had more oomph, and she sold us on the pathetic, fading Marilyn, but it's unclear if she could shift dramatically and vocally into the powerful movie star, if she were to one day inhabit the full role.

Marilyn's part lies in an unexciting midrange for a mezzo soprano. There

are few attention-grabbing high notes or meaty lows, the aspects of a mezzo voice that inspire composers to write for it. It would be enlightening to see what a superstar such as Joyce DiDonato or Elina Garanča could do with this part; if they couldn't breathe life into it, no one could.

There are two accompanying ensembles, a pit orchestra of low winds and strings and an onstage jazz trio of tenor sax, piano and bass (which the composer adequately, if unexcitingly, plucked on opening night). The overall sound of the ensemble was gray and muddy. The few times the score opened up were when the tenor saxophone (nicely played by Gavin Templeton) improvised over the ensembles.

Any one of Bryars' chords was not very dissonant, but the way he connected those chords was untraditional. His harmonies slowly meandered up and down. The tonal aimlessness and the unrelenting darkness of the pit orchestra became oppressive after an hour — more variety would help.

The male lead, Lee Gregory, sang in an impressively solid baritone, becoming a director, husband or obscene phone caller as needed. Tenor Robert Norman and baritone Adrian Rosales were the chorus, occasionally stepping forward into the action, singing their subordinate parts cleanly. The musicians played competently under Bill Linwood's direction.

Video cameras followed the two Marylins, magnifying faces, arms, photos and prescription pill bottles on the huge screens behind the singers. Paradoxically, enlarging these things made them more emotionally distant — yet another dramatic miscalculation. The intimate moments should have been quiet and reflective, the showbiz movements more garish. Instead, *Marilyn Forever* turns the brilliant public and the tragic private personae of Monroe into an undistinguished, gooey smear of music and drama.

MARILYN FOREVER | Long Beach Opera at Warner Grand Theatre, 478 W. Sixth St., San Pedro | Sun., March 29 | (562) 432-5934 | longbeachopera.org

STAGE REVIEWS

The Best of L.A. Opera's Figaro Trilogy

In opera's *Figaro* trilogy, true love always wins out in the end, but it first requires the intervention of a small village of scheming eavesdroppers, nearsighted voyeurs, reverse cross-dressers and dancing maidens. Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, L.A. Opera's final production in its presentation of the trilogy, is its most fully engaging.

L.A. Opera has given us three strikingly different Figaros. Whereas Lucas Meachem swaggered recklessly in *The Ghosts of Versailles*, and Rodion Pogosssov exuded a jaunty charm in *The Barber of Seville*, Roberto Tagliavini made his version here sterner and more conflicted.

As Figaro's fiancée, Susanna, South African soprano Pretty Yende lived up to her first name with sweetly melodious phrasing, and her duet with Guanqun Yu was beyond enchanting. But it was Yu who elevated the opera from mere farce into grand romantic passion when she imbued her first aria with a breathtaking beauty that alternated between majestic vocal power and aching heartbroken delicacy. The Chinese soprano is clearly a star on the rise.

—Falling James

L.A. Opera at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 N. Grand Ave., downtown; through April 12. (213) 972-8001, laopera.org.

All the Southern Gothic Cliches

Perhaps the best way to describe *Thieves*, Charlotte Miller's half-baked, histrionic Texas homecoming drama making its world premiere at El Portal's Monroe Forum Theatre, is to quote novelist Pat Conroy quoting his mother on the Southern Gothic: "All Southern literature can be summed up in these words: 'On the night the hogs ate Willie, Mama died when she heard what Daddy did to Sister.'"

And if Miller doesn't literally include carnivorous pigs in her tale of three severely dysfunctional and antagonistic siblings who gather at their childhood home (on Deb O's dirt-yard set) to divide their late mother's legacy, the playwright leaves few other clichés of the genre unturned.

Failed New York dancer Lana (Sarah Shaefer), lesbian military veteran Lottie (Samantha Soule) and paroled pedophile Walter (MacLeod Andrews) trade bitter recriminations — too often as screaming tantrums — over sins of the past that vaguely concern their ex-alcoholic father (John Wojda).

Despite acting up a gale-force storm, the ensemble is unable to lift Miller's language and situations from the earthbound into something more satisfyingly mythic. Director Daniel Talbott adds entertaining flourishes, but his penchant for chewed scenery proves a disservice to all. —Bill Raden

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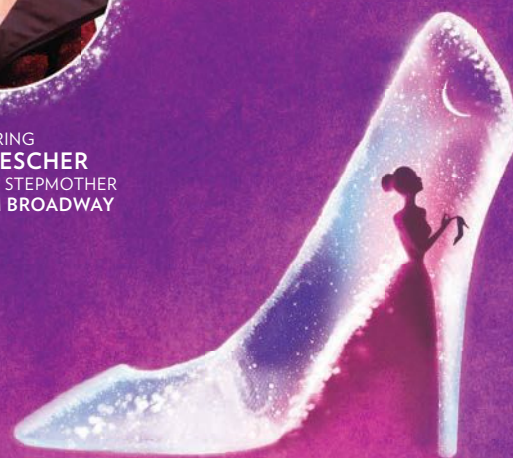
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Ben Stiller and Naomi Watts



PHOTO BY JON PACK

| Film //

CAN'T GEN X GROW UP?

While We're Young director Noah Baumbach discusses 40-something angst

BY AMY NICHOLSON

Noah Baumbach has always had a dash of hypochondria, but in the last few years, his doctor's visits have changed. "If you're a worrier like I am, or Ben," he says, referring to Ben Stiller, the star of his 2010 movie *Greenberg*, "you're used to going, 'Is this something that should be cause for worry?'" Before, the doctors would smile patiently and say no. Now that Baumbach and Stiller are 45 and 49, respectively, the doctors order an MRI. Baumbach jokes, "Shit — now you're taking me seriously."

While We're Young, the title of Baumbach and Stiller's new film, is a mild slap to the face of worriers in their 30s and 40s who, having aged out of being prodigies, prematurely fear they're old and irrelevant. Middle age is exactly that: You still have half your life ahead of you. But it's hard to give up being precocious. "You're used to having that reaction, 'Oh, you're just a baby,'" says Baumbach, who made his first film, *Kicking and Screaming*, at 26. "And then people stop saying that."

Stiller, too, started young. At 24, he was writing for *Saturday Night Live*. Soon after, he launched *The Ben Stiller Show* and then wrote, directed and starred in 1994's *Reality Bites*, branding him the face of Generation X, a label Baumbach tried to fight off when *Kicking and Screaming* came out the following year. "I hated the idea then," Baumbach confesses. "I was just trying to

make this movie about me and my friends."

But today, both men — and the generation they reluctantly represent — must pass the torch to the millennials while hovering close to their light. In the last three years, Baumbach has made two films about 20-something angst, *Frances Ha* and the upcoming *Mistress America*, both starring his 31-year-old girlfriend, Greta Gerwig, though her status as a millennial is up for debate. "Is my 5-year-old son a millennial?" Baumbach muses, imagining out loud if his boy went full Brooklyn and churned his own butter.

While We're Young wrestles with aging and maturity, which aren't always synonymous. Stiller plays a dawdling documentary filmmaker who made one good film a

decade ago and has been anxiously tinkering with his second ever since. Childless in their early 40s, Josh and his wife, Cornelia (Naomi Watts), are suddenly hipsters without a tribe. Their closest friends (Maria Dizzia and Beastie Boys' Adam Horowitz) are absorbed by a new baby, and drunken group weekends at the lake house have turned into diapers with a bunch of squares they can't stand. Where do you belong when your peers have grown past you?

"Options you imagined are closed off," Baumbach says. "It can be liberating, but it's painful. Everybody has to come into some kind of contact with the person they're actually being instead of the person they thought they hypothetically might be."

But Josh and Cornelia's stasis is a dif-

ferent kind of panic than when the baby boom generation hit 40 and felt trapped by past decisions. In response, the boomers' children have been afraid to make any decisions at all. Adulthood isn't a must; it's a choice. "My parents' generation, this was much rarer," Baumbach says. "They'd just all be in second marriages."

When Josh and Cornelia meet an early-20s married couple, Jamie and Darby (Adam Driver and Amanda Seyfried), the pair is re-energized. Forget boring brunches — now they're tripping on ayahuasca. Ten years ago, the joke would be Jamie and Darby teaching their elders how to text. But to Josh and Cornelia's surprise, today's cool kids are technophobes who elbow them to put down their smartphones. The dream of the '90s is alive in its toddlers.

Josh fancies himself a mentor to Jamie, an aspiring director. It's a dynamic Baumbach gets, as he was befriended by Brian De Palma, Peter Bogdanovich and Mike Nichols. ("I'm aware of what I imagined these people would be versus who people actually are.") There's a touch of *All About Eve* in this fictional friendship, especially when Jamie's new documentary is so hip that he's guaranteed to be cooler than Josh ever was. Meanwhile, Josh's overly ambitious follow-up has dragged on so long that people no longer care to hear what he has to say. Baumbach admits, "Even the best version of that movie is still going to be No. 2 on the marquee at Cinema Village."

Baumbach is less afraid of teamwork. He and Gerwig co-wrote *Frances Ha's* script, and here, several lines of Darby's dialogue come straight from Gerwig being herself. "She's very quotable," he beams. "People my age grew up with this idea of genius and the lone artist who creates in his room. Obviously, now, there's a more group-collaborative idea and appropriation."

Onscreen, Baumbach has immortalized his whole life to date, from his childhood in *The Squid and the Whale* to the questions he's asking himself today. "They don't feel like home movies," he explains. He can't rewatch them. "It feels like some other version of myself who made it."

Instead, they're like notches on a doorframe: a timeline of growth. "I chart my life by movies," Baumbach says. "When people say, 'What year was that?' I can remember only by what movie I was making." That's as good a reason to keep on creating as any.

THE BAUMBACH FILM WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR

When you're young, to be old — even just the 44 kind of old — is unimaginable. There's no single moment of passing to the other side; the only thing that's real is the bewilderment of realizing that you've somehow squeezed through to it.

That bewilderment is the guiding force of Noah Baumbach's fearless half-a-comedy *While We're Young*, an unsparing consideration of what makes the young different from the not-so-young. Ben Stiller plays a onetime documentary filmmaker who's hit his 40s and stalled out on the masterpiece he's been painstakingly crafting for years. He gets a jolt when he meets young aspiring filmmaker Jamie (Adam Driver) and his artisanal ice cream maker wife, Darby (Amanda Seyfried), both about 20 years his junior. Josh is inspired by their energy, their casual generosity, their drive to "make stuff," and while his wife, Cornelia (Naomi Watts), isn't sold at first, eventually she, too, falls prey to the couple's charms. But it turns out that Jamie is a climber of the worst sort and, tragically for Josh, perhaps one



Ben Stiller and Charles Grodin

PHOTO BY NICOLE RIVELLI

with actual talent. Baumbach's eighth feature isn't just sharp, it's serrated — its jokes, and there are lots of them, come at you with rows and rows of tiny teeth. Even if Baumbach betrays his annoyance with the sense of entitlement and soufflé-high overconfidence of millennials, in the end he comes down hardest on beleaguered Josh, his semi-hero. He's the one we most frequently laugh at but also the one we feel the most for. Youth may be wasted on the young, but midlife ennui is unbecoming, and *While We're Young* refuses to give in to middle-aged self-pity. —Stephanie Zacharek

WHILE WE'RE YOUNG | Written and directed by Noah Baumbach | A24 | ArcLight Hollywood



Kevin Hart, left, and Will Ferrell

PHOTO COURTESY OF WARNER BROS. PICTURES

Film //

YES, THERE ARE PRISON RAPE JOKES

KEVIN HART'S NERDINESS RESCUES *GET HARD* FROM ITS UNCOMFORTABLE HOMOPHOBIA

BY AMY NICHOLSON

Get *Hard*, Etan Cohen's comedy about a white stockbroker who hires a black man to prepare him for a 10-year stretch in San Quentin, is like a spoon that's almost but not yet sharpened into a shiv. With just a little more effort, it could kill.

Judging by the poster, in which Kevin Hart braids cornrows into Will Ferrell's auburn curls, *Get Hard* looks as hoary as a *Night at the Apollo* stand-up still flogging the old "White people walk like this" culture-clash shtick. In truth, Ferrell's ultra-rich James King does walk kinda funny. Sauntering past his worshipful underlings at the brokerage firm run by his fiancée's (Alison Brie) father (Craig T. Nelson), Ferrell glides like a prize goose.

But *Get Hard* is hunting another target: not King but the privilege he represents. Intercut with glimpses of King's Bel-Air life — organic farmers markets, brunchers ordering their dog its own plate of steak — Cohen inserts shots of the have-nots begging for work outside of Home Depot and scrounging in trash cans for scraps. Darnell's (Hart) situation isn't quite so dire. He has a house, a family and a steady business washing cars in King's tower. Still, he's short the down payment he needs to move into a better school system than the one in Lower South-Central, where his young daughter (Ariana Neal) is wanded by security guards.

Upstairs in the office, King

makes the firm \$28 million with one phone call. In the garage, Darnell scrubs and sweats for fivers. Yet when Darnell gets up the nerve to ask King to invest in the future of his cleaning company, Ferrell delivers a fatuous speech on the importance of hard work. Like the tight-fisted conservatives in Congress, Ferrell's Harvard-educated silver-spooner is so blind to his own privilege that when his boss brags about founding their agency with only "me, my computer and an \$8 million loan from my father," he applauds.

As befits their characters, Hart acts like a normal human, and Ferrell a cartoon. To enjoy *Get Hard*, you have to get over two impossibilities: 1) that a stock-market shark could be such a buffoon and 2) that when said white millionaire is accused of fraud, the courts actually bother to sentence him to a decade in prison. (Even the judge delivering the ruling shrugs, "We don't usually do this.")

Ferrell's idiocy doesn't work. But his decency does. Instead of playing King as a callous corporate villain, he's a well-meaning sap who sincerely believes he's a good person — or, at least, certainly not a bigot. Mistaking Darnell for a carjacker, he can't admit that it was because he's black, swearing that he'd have reacted the same if he were "rich or poor or white or ... miscellaneous."

We empathize with King, at least to a point. And so we're both in on the joke and complicit in it when King mistakenly assumes that Darnell is an ex-con, citing the one-in-three incarceration statistics for black men. His prejudice is the punch line. Still, he's

willing to pay Darnell \$30,000 to teach him to act tough. The extra twist is that King can't tell Darnell is a straight-arrow nerd. Darnell's wife (Edwina Findley Dickerson) is sure King will see through his thug act. But Darnell simply puts on a black skullcap and lets cultural assumptions take care of the rest.

Get Hard can't escape what it's really about: King's fear of prison rape. (To bulk up, Ferrell bench-presses Hart — a good use of their foot-long discrepancy.) The script takes circuitous detours trying to find a way to make rape funny. One scene where Hart runs in circles pretending to be three different crews in a prison-rape showdown almost works thanks to Hart's manic energy and Ferrell's daft punch line: "Are there any French gangs?" Another, where Darnell drags King to a gay restaurant so he can practice sucking dick, doesn't. Cohen earns points from casting the other patrons as normal non-stereotypes, then squanders that credit when a man gets too persistent.

The comedy is better when Cohen takes aim at benevolent racism. In an ideal world, this would be *Blazing Saddles* for folks who chug kombucha. Yet it's arguably harder to satirize race today than it was 40 years ago — more sensitive times impose gentler jokes. A scene with a white-supremacist biker gang is an easy bull's-eye. It's harder to watch the conversation just before, where Darnell tries to prepare his student to pass as racist by having King call him the N-word. King chokes it out, and Darnell whipcrack-fast clocks him in the jaw. "A reflex," he apologizes. This June, the exact same punching gag will pop up in the Sundance hit *Dope*. In 2015, we can talk bluntly about color — but there will be consequences. Even Mel Brooks would get smacked.

Still, *Get Hard* is most comfortable — and funny — when Cohen gets back to skewering class warfare. After Darnell turns King's mansion into a mock prison, the maids and gardeners play-act at treating their master as an inmate. They don't say much, but their smiles speak volumes. Chaplin's Little Tramp would be proud. And then he'd roll his eyes as if to say, "It's been 85 years since the Great Depression, and you guys are still working this out?"

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A SONY PICTURES CLASSICS RELEASE. A DECCA FILMS PRODUCTION. AMAZONAS IMAGENS FONDAZIONE DELLE ARTI. LA RÉGION ÎLE-DE-FRANCE LES AMIS DE LA MAISON EUROPÉENNE DE LA PHOTOGRAPHIE. "THE SALT OF THE EARTH" PRODUCED BY DAVID ROSIER. COSTUME DESIGNER LÉLIA WANICK SALGADO. EDITOR ANDREA GAMBETTA. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JULIANO RIBEIRO SALGADO, WIM WENDERS, DAVID ROSIER. PRODUCED BY LAURENT PETTIGAND. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS HUBO BARBIER, JULIANO RIBEIRO SALGADO. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS MAXINE GOENCKE, ROB MYERS. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS REGIS MÜLLER, AYMERIC DEVYLDÈRE, JEAN PAUL HURIER. PRODUCED BY WIM WENDERS, JULIANO RIBEIRO SALGADO. © DECCA FILMS. AMAZONAS IMAGES - 2014.

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OPENING THIS WEEK

52 TUESDAYS The most distinctive detail about *52 Tuesdays* — that it was filmed in bursts once a week over a year — is just one of this impressive debut film's many highlights. The 16th year of Billie's (Tilda Cobham-Hervey) turbulent life becomes the most trying one yet when her lesbian mother (Del Herbert-Jane) undergoes the transition from Jane to James. Needing the space and freedom to medically alter himself, James requests that Billie live with her dad (Beau Travis Williams) for a year, but that they spend every Tuesday together. It's during these few hours that this intimate near-masterpiece takes place, weaving James' transition tale with Billie's sexual coming of age. (The voyeuristic high schooler meets her new best friends by spying on their make-outs, and later plays director of their caresses before wedging herself between them.) James' exposition-heavy story can feel overly educational, but Billie's is a heady exploration

of sexual and gender expression, familial responsibilities and adolescent friendships. Billie accepts James' new identity completely but can't help resenting — or taking advantage of — her mother's parental hiatus. Later, she's slow to realize that having a transgender mother is far from the worst fate she can suffer. Despite his deep reserves of kindness, James, too, is a compellingly flawed parent, making for an emotionally resonant family drama that comes to a head when a teacher discovers the naked photos on Billie's phone. Grippingly plotted and exquisitely thoughtful, *52 Tuesdays* is a poignant reminder that neither confusion nor crisis is doomed to be calamitous. (Inkoo Kang) **APARTMENT TROUBLES** Nothing says "plot device" like an impromptu vacation, and such is the case with *Apartment Troubles*, an aimless, take-things-as-they-come comic jaunt from first-time writer-directors Jess Weixler and Jennifer Prediger. Upon learning of their impending eviction from an illegal New York City subplot, roommates

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marked by courageous performances and exquisite production values. Lawrence looks every inch the Golden Age siren and makes good on her proven chemistry with Cooper, who acquires himself with stoic intelligence with flourishes of Clark Gable bravado.

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—Peter Bradshaw, THE GUARDIAN



"IMPRESSIVE PERFORMANCES, STRIKING production design and lustrous cinematography."

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YOUR WEEKLY MOVIE TO-DO LIST

TCM Fest Brings Woody Allen, Orson Welles and More

Friday, March 27

After a glitzy screening of *The Sound of Music* on March 26, **TCM Fest** begins in earnest today. The weekend-long celebration of classic cinema is one of our L.A.'s premier events devoted to the art of motion pictures, as evidenced by the throngs of out-of-towners who attend. Highlights from today's schedule include *Lenny*, the inimitable Bob Fosse's Lenny Bruce biopic starring Dustin Hoffman; Woody Allen's tragicomic *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, one of the writer-director's best outings; and Orson Welles' Shakespeare-inspired *Chimes at Midnight*. All screenings are in the Hollywood and Highland area. *TCL Chinese Theatre, 6925 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood; Fri., March 27, various times. (323) 461-3331, tcm.com/festival.*

Czech That Film takes over USC for the next five days and proves that Czech Republic-related puns remain charming and hilarious. Andrea Sedláčková's *Fair Play* is the opening-night selection tonight at 7. Set in the 1980s, when the Central European nation was still known as Czechoslovakia and under the thrall of the U.S.S.R., it tells of an aspiring Olympic runner faced with a moral quandary in the form of anabolic steroids. After the movie, which was this year's Czech Oscar submission, Sedláčková will participate in a Q&A. The excellent miniseries-turned-film *Burning Bush*, screening Sunday at 4 p.m., also is definitely worth ... czeching out (sorry). *USC, 900 W. 34th St., University Park; Fri., March 27, 7 p.m.; free, RSVP required. (213) 740-2804, cinema.usc.edu.*

Saturday, March 28

There's no one like Ralph Bakshi in today's Pixar-dominated animation landscape. Have your mind blown by the Aero's 7:30 double feature of *Lord of the Rings* (1978) and *Wizards* (1977). The transgressive animator condensed Tolkien's epic trilogy into a svelte two hours, eliding much and infusing his trademark oddity into the tale of mystical jewelry and the madness it inspires. *Wizards* is even stranger, injecting Nazi iconography into a conflict between two magic-sensitive brothers. The result is a movie that would never get made by a major studio today. Between the two films, Bakshi will field questions from the audience. *Aero Theatre, 1328 Montana Ave., Santa Monica; Sat., March 28, 7:30 p.m.; \$11. (323) 466-3456, americancinemathequecalendar.com.*

UCLA's Festival of Preservation continues with the



The Purple Rose of Cairo

long-forgotten *Spring Night, Summer Night*, a dark Appalachian drama from 1967. A number of screenings and essays have brought writer-director J.L. Anderson's only feature to greater attention these last few years, with tonight's event (made possible by the restoration of Anderson's own 35mm print) poised to cement its status as a reclaimed classic. Anderson will be on hand to discuss *Spring Night*, whose portrayal of small-town USA sounds positively Lynchian. *Billy Wilder Theater, 10899 Wilshire Blvd., Westwood; Sat., March 28, 7:30 p.m.; \$10. (310) 206-8013, cinema.ucla.edu.*

Monday, March 30

Get your regional experimental cinema on at REDCAT with **Transforming Spaces: New Films From L.A. Filmmakers**. Several L.A., U.S. and world premieres comprise the program, which explores the many approaches L.A. filmmakers have taken to conceptualizing and making sense of this most cinematic city. Among them are Janie Geiser's *The Hummingbird Wars*, Julie Murray's *End Reel* and Abigail Severance's *Kinesthesia Series*. *REDCAT, 631 W. Second St., downtown; Mon., March 30, 8 p.m.; \$11. (213) 237-2800, redcat.org.*

Tuesday, March 31

If screenings of the entire Antoine Doinel saga didn't give you your fill of François Truffaut, allow LACMA to satiate your craving with a 1 p.m. screening of *Jules and Jim* on 35mm. Perhaps the French New Wave icon's greatest film, it has all the verve and style associated with that period — in spades. The story of two friends whose friendship is tested when they fall in love with the same woman is by turns tragic and endearing. A bizarre love triangle indeed, as well as one of the most moving films of its era. *LACMA, 5905 Wilshire Blvd., Mid-Wilshire; Tue., March 31, 1 p.m.; \$5. (323) 857-6000, lacma.org.* —**Michael Nordine**

Nicole (Weixler), a stubbornly off-the-grid artist, and Olivia (Prediger), a soft-hearted aspiring actress with a mystic streak, feel the universe signaling that they should ignore the problem and get away for the weekend. It says a great deal about the kind of universe these two are living in that they're able to hop on a private jet belonging to Nicole's adoptive father (he isn't speaking to her, but she's buddy-buddy with the pilot) and head to L.A., where they plan to mooch off Nicole's aunt (Megan Mullally), a judge on an *America's Got Talent*-like show. She greets them with a glass of wine in hand and the news that Nicole's immediate family is already on vacation — without her. That dark streak of humor runs through Weixler and Prediger's screenplay — an early scene has the girls creating a cat on a rooftop barbecue, while the funniest sequence sees them trapped in a car with a wild-eyed, alarmingly medicated Will Forte — and it indicates that *Apartment Troubles* could have turned into something much meaner and more to the point, à la Nicole Holofcener. But Weixler and Prediger's vision is too vague

to really get to the meat of these characters. During an improvised inspirational speech to a subway car full of commuters, Olivia interrupts herself to ask, "Do I seem weird right now?" The joke, of course, is that nobody would know. (Abby Garnett) **BACKCOUNTRY** Urbanite anxiety over the big, bad woods is stoked yet again by *Backcountry*, an ostensibly based-on-real-events tale in which camping vet Alex (Jeff Roop) takes his lawyer girlfriend, Jenn (Missy Peregrym), into the Canadian wilderness, where their every imaginable fear comes true. No sooner have the happy couple begun their hike than they're getting lost, injuring themselves, screaming at each other and having alarming run-ins with a menacing stranger (Eric Balfour) and a hungry black bear — all problems that are compounded by the fact that (plot contrivance alert!) arrogant Alex refused to bring along a map or workaholic Jenn's cellphone. Writer-director Adam MacDonald's direction creates an ominous sense of rural-nowhere isolation, and his script avoids contrived banter while shrewdly suggesting it's headed

toward horror before unexpectedly veering into survival-story territory. Nonetheless, such misdirection can't compensate for hopelessly routine action. Dully stoking terrors about the unpredictable hazards of the great outdoors, which can render vulnerable even the most modern and hyper-competent city folk, *Backcountry* is simply another paranoid cinematic reminder that exiting the beaten path is a course best avoided — or, at least, one that also requires taking some basic, common-sense precautions beforehand. (Nick Schager) **THE BARBER** Veteran character actor Scott Glenn relishes the opportunity to sink his teeth into a rare lead role in this tawdry, if stylishly shot, serial-killer flick. Looking grizzled and emaciated, Glenn is compelling as small-town barber Gene Van Wingerdt, a buttoned-down blend of Billy Bob Thornton's saturnine sniper in *The Man Who Wasn't There* and Michael Douglas' simmering white-collar workhorse in *Falling Down*. Like countless other movie psychos, Gene marries a strict puritanical bent — he doesn't like it when his young Hispanic employee Luis (Max

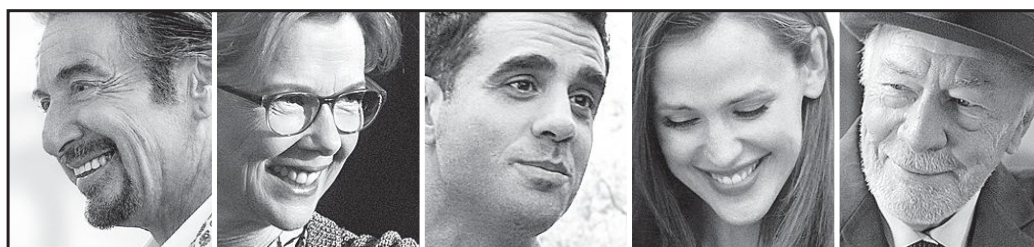
Arciniega) curses, for example — with an extremely dark past. Two decades prior, he was arrested for murdering several women but released due to insufficient evidence. The outcome drove the case detective to commit suicide, and now the dead man's swaggering son (Chris Coy) arrives on Gene's doorstep, seeking not to exact vengeance but, in an oddly intriguing twist, to become the barber's protégé in future acts of killing. Early scenes mine suspense from the younger man's cloudy motivations. Sadly, the tense mood soon is extinguished by a script full of undercooked ruminations on the nature of evil, as well as silly plot contrivances and crime-movie clichés (one enraged cop actually bellows the line "He's a loose cannon!" with no apparent irony). *The Barber* is further marred by flat characterization, including appallingly weak roles for its actresses; women seem to exist here mainly to suffer brutal violence. Only Glenn, whose taciturn performance is punctuated by flashes of genuine menace, lifts *The Barber* to "watchable." (Ashley Clark)

THE FORECASTER The story of espionage and duplicity that financial adviser Martin Armstrong relates in Marcus Vetter's documentary *The Forecaster* is as serpentine and fascinating as a John le Carré novel. Its narrative thread convincingly weaves multiple financial collapses, the ouster of Boris Yeltsin and the rise of the Putin oligarchy around Armstrong's life's work — a mathematical model that predicts market peaks and collapses and, allegedly, the wars that accompany both. Martin's Economic Confidence Model tracks 26 market panics over 224 years, applies some arithmetic and extrudes a market cycle based on pi. Apparently! His published work from the 1980s to the present is uncanny in its accurate predictions of the market crash of 1987, the Soviet collapse, the first Gulf War and the housing collapse of 2007. Director Vetter's film, which includes Armstrong's preposterous 11-year incarceration on contempt charges for refusing to turn over his source code, includes a lot of Ken Burns-style pans across scary-looking graphs of money apocalypses past and future, as well as interviews with Armstrong's many supporters, all set to a pensive soundtrack of ominous tones. With his interpretation of global events, Armstrong tells one hell of a good story. Is any of it true? All of it, including his computer model, is built on the tectonically immovable bedrock of human corruption, so it's certainly plausible. Spoiler: The world economy is going to

experience a "sovereign-debt big bang" sometime in October 2015, according to Armstrong's model, so this will provide another validating data point if it happens. (Chris Packham)

A GIRL LIKE HER Amy S. Weber's heart-wrenching *A Girl Like Her* begins by solving one mystery while posing another. As teenager Jessica (Lexi Ainsworth) tries on a spy camera that records from a seemingly impossible p.o.v. angle, the scene is intercut with footage from that same camera a year later as she takes an overdose of prescription hydrocodone. Ostensibly shooting a documentary about Jessica's high school's awesomeness, filmmaker Amy Gallagher (played by director Weber) begins investigating why Jessica attempted suicide, leading her to investigate popular girl Avery (Hunter King), who reportedly bullied Jessica. *A Girl Like Her* uses up-to-the-nanosecond technologies and storytelling methods to convey age-old messages about the cycle of violence and bullying — the strong have always preyed on the meek, but there's often a bigger bully behind the scenes — without taking the fashionable route of suggesting that those technologies have changed human nature for the worse. Indeed, devices that once were farfetched in Bond films are crucial to the plot in a good way, and *A Girl Like Her* focuses on the characters' emotional traumas while eschewing moral panic about how Kids These Days are so wrapped up in their phones and the Internet. And speaking of moral panic: To maintain a PG-13, the word "fuck" is bleeped out, but "shit" is not. Thanks for protecting teenagers from how they really speak, MPA! (Sherilyn Connelly)

HOME There's much to recommend *Home*, DreamWorks' animated adventure about a winsome polychrome alien trying to make a place for himself on Earth, but only because it offers so many vague teachable moments that you're bound to find something you approve of. Hoping to expose your tot to jumbled, diffuse, anti-gentrification, anti-colonialist, anti-fascist messages? *Home's* got 'em. But if director Tim Johnson — adapting Adam Rex's book *The True Meaning of Smekday* — can't do much with the story's confused, if well-intentioned, agenda, at least he's got some charming, vivid characters to work with. Chief among them is Gratuity "Tip" Tucci (voiced by Rihanna), a little girl from Barbados who, after struggling to make a new home with her mom in an American city that looks something

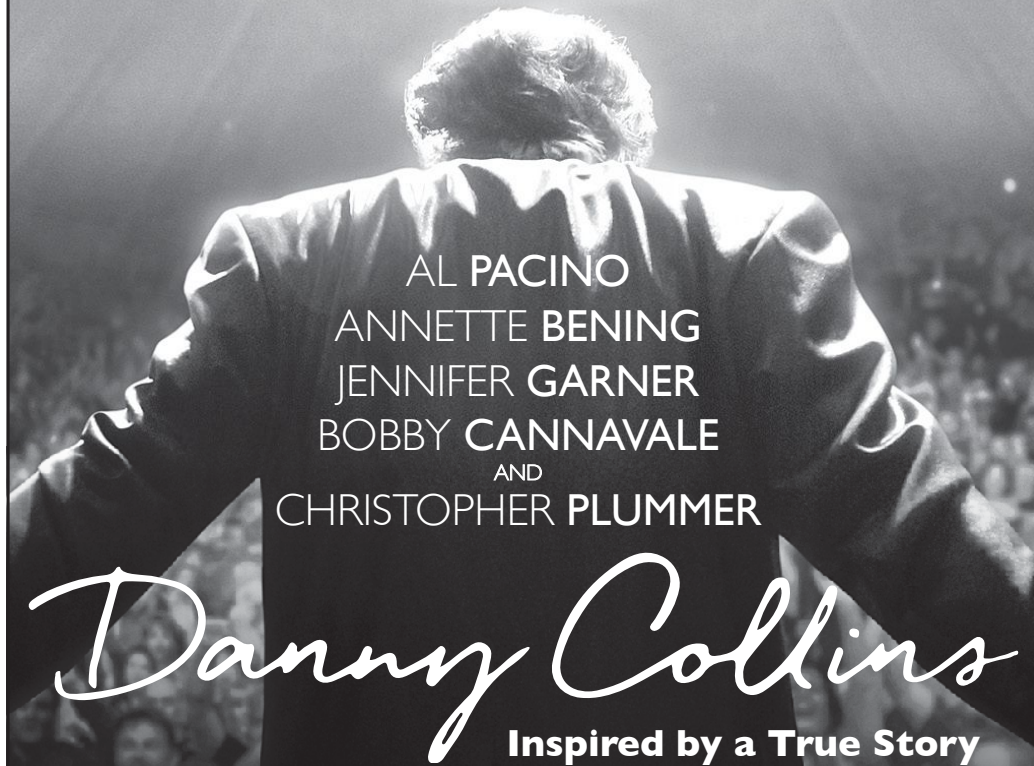


Rolling Stone

"HILARIOUS AND HEARTFELT!"
Al Pacino is the life of the party. **Annette Bening** is reliably wonderful. **Bobby Cannavale** digs deep into the role. Irresistible."

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

"FUNNY AND AFFECTING."



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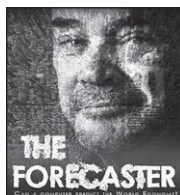
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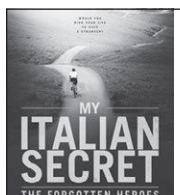
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A DIRECTOR WHO'S SHOWING HOLLYWOOD HOW EASY IT IS TO CAST ASIAN ACTORS

When writer-director Dave Boyle was 19, he spent two years as a Mormon missionary in Australia. He mainly hung out with Japanese surf bums, picking up enough of the language that when he returned to the States, he cast himself as a Japanophile businessman in his debut feature, *Big Dreams Little Tokyo*.

Ever since, he's specialized in indie films about Asians in America, or, more precisely, indie films that happen to star Asian actors as just a matter of fact, without flogging their casting into a pronouncement on the state of race relations. It's a curious career for an early-30s white dude, and thank heavens for it.

Boyle's fifth and newest film, *Man From Reno*, is a San Francisco noir with a canny twist on *Vertigo*. Suicidal mystery novelist Aki (Ayako Fujitani, Steven Seagal's daughter) reluctantly allows a hunk named Akira (Kazuki



Ayako Fujitani

Kitamura) to pick her up at a hotel bar. The morning after their tryst, he vanishes and men start pounding on her door, including an old sheriff (Pepe Serna) who claims Akira was already dead. *Man From Reno's* droll joke is that Asian double-crossers have it even easier than Kim Novak — Westerners don't even try to tell them apart.

Boyle could shear a few twists from the plot, which is almost too clever for its own good. Though it ticks on too long, watching Fujitani's fascinating sleuth overestimate her skills is as satisfying as a mug of hot matcha on a soul-chilling night. —Amy Nicholson

MAN FROM RENO | Written and directed by Dave Boyle | Gravitas Ventures | Playhouse, Royal

like Philadelphia, is displaced yet again when a bunch of cute, tubby aliens invade Earth and corral its humans into cheerful-looking but obviously undesirable housing projects in Australia. Actually, I can't believe I just sat through a movie with that plot, though it all sounds much scarier than it is, which is part of the problem: The horror of what these little invaders — called Boovs — actually do is so muted, for the tykes' sake, that it hardly seems villainous at all. Then again, we're supposed to be invested mostly in the plight of our googly-eyed Boov hero, a misfit named Oh (Jim Parsons), whose stilted English and misuse of prepositions ensure many moments of mild hilarity. If your planet has to be stolen by aliens, they may as well be adorable ones. (Stephanie Zacharek)

GO JAUJA Sometimes, particularly in the presence of an actor whose face is worth watching, a long or medium shot is a filmmaker's best ally: In Argentine director Lisandro Alonso's splendid, quietly passionate dream-Western *Jauja*, we want to creep closer to the film's star and enigmatic center, Viggo Mortensen, as a Danish military engineer overseeing the establishment of a "promised land" for European settlers, somewhere on the coast of Patagonia in the 19th century. Mortensen has the kind of face — both chiseled and mobile, with eyes that hold as many secrets as they spill — that's made for close-ups. But Alonso and his cinematographer, Timo Salminen, give us more by showing us less. Our attention is more deliberately focused on Mortensen's place in the landscape, and in the way his soul inhabits his body. The story is simple enough to sum up, but it winds its way into a realm that isn't so easy to explain: Mortensen's Gunnar Dinesen is stationed in a strange and threatening land still populated by its native inhabitants. He's brought his 15-year-old daughter, Ingeborg (Vilbjørk Malling Agger); when she runs off with a soldier, Dinesen, both surprised and heartsick, sets out to find her. His search puts him directly in the path of a local legend, Zuluaga, a former general gone mad who's now a ruthless killer. It also results in an encounter with a mystical dog, a sort of long-legged, wire-haired wolfhound, who leads him to answers for which he's barely articulated the questions. *Jauja* is almost mystically captivating, not least because of Alonso's ability to capture the cruel beauty of the natural landscape — you can almost see the earth itself refusing to accept European imperialism. (Stephanie Zacharek)

THE MAFIA ONLY KILLS IN SUMMER (LA MAFIA UCCIDE SOLO D'ESTATE) The city of Palermo has long suffered under the rule of a criminal empire: the Sicilian Mafia, better known as the Cosa Nostra. Anti-mob group Addiopizzo reported in 2008 that the Mafia extorts more than \$200 million annually from local businesses — in a city of fewer than 700,000 residents. In the 1990s, when things were really dire, Palermo was besieged by bombings and assassinations. An article on Italian travel in *The Guardian* cautioned that, in those days, the city "had all the tourist appeal of a city break in Kabul." Part of the problem, as Pierfrancesco Diliberto's *The Mafia Only*

Kills in Summer smartly observes, is anyone with the power to confront the Cosa Nostra, no matter how well known or well protected, tends to turn up dead. Speaking out about the corruption is pointless, too: Everyone is already aware of the problem. So Diliberto has devised a rather more unusual method of addressing Palermo's Mafia infestation. If he can't fight them, he'll skewer them — scathingly, uproariously, with great comic verve. Diliberto's film, a buoyant farce, chronicles two decades in the history of Palermo and the Cosa Nostra, lampooning the atrocities and hypocrisies of the Mob in a manner not unlike what Abderrahmane Sissako's recent *Timbuktu* did to radical Islam. Cleverly splicing himself into archival news footage and dramatizing a romance around the historical action, Diliberto has managed to make a political comedy that seems at once tremendously funny and intensely serious — a provocative, and perhaps even important, combination. (Calum Marsh)

GO METALHEAD As both a musical genre and a subculture, heavy metal has always lent itself to exaggerated depictions. It's easy to dismiss any art form that takes itself so seriously, and most of the reductive metal send-ups have been well deserved. But what's also deserved is a more accurate, even affectionate portrayal that gets the smallest details right and comes from a place of good faith. That void has been filled by writer-director Ragnar Bragason's *Metalhead*. Set in Iceland in the early '90s, just as the darkest, most genuinely violent strain of metal was taking hold elsewhere in Scandinavia, the film deftly marries the essence of the music to a moving coming-of-age framework. As is often the case with burgeoning metalheads, everything under 150 beats per minute seems helplessly remote to traumatized teen Hera (Thorbjörg Helga Thorgilsdottir). The unintelligible vocals and anti-establishment lyrics of her new idols offer her a haven — King Diamond understands her pain even if her parents don't. The lucky few in the shaded area of the arthouse-cinema/extreme-metal Venn diagram will cherish these details like a new Sunn O))) album on 180-gram double vinyl. Thorgilsdottir is commanding in the grief-stricken lead role, nailing not only the power stances and other musical affectations the character demands but, more pressingly, the permeating sorrow. *Metalhead* is shot in a grainy, understated fashion appropriate to its dreary setting and subject matter, like a more oppressive *We Are the Best!* It holds honorably to metal tropes, but it's actually the departures that make the film so special; Darkthrone never wrote anything this moving about the power of forgiveness. (Michael Nordine)

OCCUPY THE FARM The Occupy movement persists in fits and stutters around the globe, and though its inability (stateside at least) to resolve internal issues around race, class and gender shouldn't be ignored, neither should its successes. One of those is the Bay Area's 2012 Occupy the Farm movement. In the East Bay town of Albany, students, faculty and everyday people took over the Gill Tract, property of UC Berkeley, to protest (and hopefully thwart) the administration's plans to turn the land over to private interests — includ-

“★★★★★
A BRILLIANT COMEDY.”

— Catherine Shoard, THE GUARDIAN

“BLISTERINGLY OF-THE-MOMENT AND CLASSICALLY ZANY IN THE SAME BREATH.”

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WHILE WE'RE *Young*

FROM WRITER/DIRECTOR
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EXCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENTS
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ing Whole Foods. While sympathetic with Occupy, director Todd Darling allows the other side to have its say without reducing it to caricatured villainy. (Its own demeanor and hypocrisy pretty much cover that.) The film is riveting from the start, with its ragtag, multi-cult heroines and heroes meshing multiple identity markers (activist, academic, refurbished hippie), often within individual selves. And they do so while dropping crucial historical and analytical information in support of their case. Brutal confrontations with cops and last-minute political maneuvering by government officials make the film a nail-biting experience even for those who know the outcome. But while *Occupy the Farm* ends on a happy note, it's almost impossible to come away from the film feeling anything but unease. It illustrates the staggering extent to which corporate interests dictate policy and shape scientific research (who it is for, where it is applied.) That's the grim dark cloud hovering over this Occupy victory lap. (Ernest Hardy)

GO THE SALT OF THE EARTH (LE SEL

DE LA TERRE) Even if you think you don't know the photographs of Sebastião Salgado, you've probably seen them. In one of his most famous pictures, taken in the mid-1980s in Mali, a woman whose face is half-hidden by a dark, rough-textured cotton veil, her bearing as elegant as anything you'd see in fashion photography, appears to gaze off into the middle distance. But when you look closely, her left eye is clouded, obviously sightless. The image is both arresting and moving — you want to stop short of calling it “beautiful,” which implies patronization, objectification and all other sorts of -ations that we've been schooled to avoid. But there's no way around it: This is a stunning photograph, complex in all the ways that true beauty can often be. We see that photograph, and many more, in Wim Wenders and Juliano Ribeiro Salgado's bracing documentary, *The Salt of the Earth*, which covers Sebastião Salgado's globetrotting career from its beginning, in the 1970s, to the present day. Juliano is Sebastião's son, and the affection and respect between them is implicit in the film's tone. Juliano and Wenders have fashioned their own marvelously detailed portrait of a man and an artist whose compassion has informed his way of looking. Whether Salgado was photographing mud-covered workers at a Brazilian gold mine in the 1980s or documenting even greater horrors in the midst of the Rwandan genocide, his work stands as a record of many, many situations and events we'd rather turn away from — and yet, through his camera lens, he coaxes us to look. (Stephanie Zacharek)

SERENA Beware the Serena who is too serene. The title character in novelist Ron Rash's backwoods Gothic is a decisive, collected queen bee who rules through retribution and murder. It's a great role for the Jennifer Lawrence of *Winter's Bone*, whose fierce intelligence, quiet strength and deep understanding of rural life would make her a formidable lumber baroness. But that's not the Serena of Susanne Bier's adaptation — and not the Lawrence who embodies her. In Rash's novel,

Serena arrives at a North Carolina train station on the way to her husband's logging camp in an oxford shirt, leather jodhpurs and boots. Bier introduces Serena to her new home deep in the Smoky Mountains wearing a silk dress, fur-topped cloth coat and T-strap heels. Lawrence maintains her luxe wardrobe and platinum marcelled curls throughout *Serena*, whose glorious production design and sumptuous cinematography re-creates opulent 1929 America in the Czech Republic. By making Serena ornamental, Bier (*In a Better World*) diminishes her power, and Lawrence plays her as a petulant Lady Macbeth wannabe. Worse is Bradley Cooper, whose Pemberton comes off like an entitled scion, not a clear-cut timber king. Screenwriter Christopher Kyle touches on hot-button issues of class conflict, land use and no-holds-barred capitalism. He also strips *Serena* of moral ambiguity, turning deeply twisted relationships into a doomed romance where transgressors punish themselves. Cutting Serena down to size doesn't fully diminish her towering presence; even the makers of this misbegotten adaptation acknowledge that she's the only one who can determine her fate. (Serena Donadoni)

SHE'S LOST CONTROL “We moved to genital touching, as you suggested. He was present throughout.” That's how sex-surrogate therapist Ronah (Brooke Bloom) reports to her boss about one of her sessions with a client suffering erectile dysfunction and a general inability to connect. While smart, well acted and shot with a vigorous chilliness, *She's Lost Control* shares one of that client's maladies: You try to get close to it, and it shies away, even as its subject and protagonist fascinate. That's more due to a principled asceticism than any hangups. Writer-director Anja Marquardt chooses to observe Ronah from behind, from down the hall, in silhouette, alienating viewers from a lead who is increasingly

alienated from herself. Ronah strides with decreasing purposefulness through a New York tinted the cold blue-gray of *Cold Case* episodes and framed at times to suggest Eastern Bloc apartment complexes. Marquardt works many threads — Ronah's ambitions, her plan to freeze her eggs, her growing interest in intimacy with one of her clients, her relationship with a mentor who once worked the same gig, the threat of one ex-client's attempts to contact her in real life — but, while individually interesting, they're never woven into a truly compelling whole. Suspense enlivens the final reels, but those scenes prove less rich than what the movie at first appears to aspire to, seeming to reach the same simple conclusions about surrogacy — creepy! dangerous! — that Spike Lee's *Girl 6* did about phone sex. All that said, I'm eager to see Marquardt and Bloom's next projects. (Alan Scherstuh)

WOLF AT THE DOOR (O LOBO ATRÁS

DA PORTA) Despite the popularity of *Scandal*'s Olivia Pope, most mistresses

probably don't rank much higher than kidnapers on the social hierarchy. A detective threatens to knock the teeth out of an “other woman” (Leandra Leal) in the lean and menacing Brazilian thriller *A Wolf at the Door*. No one would give a fuck if a “tramp” got what she deserves, he hisses, especially if she really did abduct the 6-year-old daughter of her philandering lover as revenge. Based on actual events from the 1960s, Fernando Coimbra's debut isn't just another retread of *Fatal Attraction* but a fairer-minded attempt to see things from the scorned woman's perspective. Young Rosa reveals everything — though we get only her account — of the increasingly cruel affair she had with family man

Bernardo (Milhem Cortaz). She shows up at his house to befriend his lonely wife (Fabiula Nascimento) and fabricates pretenses to take a shower in their home. But it's Bernardo who's the real creep, threatening to rape Rosa as retribution and committing an even more unforgivable act once she becomes pregnant. *Wolf* never strains credulity, but it occasionally makes for punishing viewing. As with so much of Brazilian cinema, the framing of the plot as a social allegory instead of a psychological portrait doesn't yield the most emotionally satisfying experience. But *Wolf* serves as an important feminist correction — and a compelling reminder that predators can come from anywhere. (Inkoo Kang)

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ho99o9

PHOTO BY HADAS DI

| Music //

JERSEY DEVILS

Newark-to-L.A. transplants ho99o9 ignite a punk-rap revolution

BY PETER HOLSLIN

The mutants descended on Superchief Gallery in downtown Los Angeles like insurgents from across the hilltop. Their smashing drums shuddered through the warehouse space,

while electronic noise whipped up against throaty raps and chest-pumping screams. Audience members responded with chaos: flailing limbs, colliding bodies, delirious smiles. Some took spills against the cold pavement floor, only to jump right back up and rejoin the pit.

It was a recent Saturday night, and ho99o9 were in communion once again with their tribe.

Hardcore punk has gone through innumerable permutations since the heyday of Bad Brains and Black Flag. With each generation, musicians find new ways to push the sound to greater extremes. Now, ho99o9 — whose name is pronounced “horror” — are taking the latest step in hardcore’s evolutionary process. Their music features noise and rap, but their anti-establishment, postconformist ethos is 100 percent punk rock.

“We’re neutral, man,” says Jean Stanley Lebrun, aka the OGM, who founded the duo with bandmate Lawrence Lewis Allen Eaddy. “No masters. No fucking bosses. No gods. No nuthin’. We don’t fuck with none of that shit.”

The triple 9s in the ho99o9 name are meant to signify an inverted 666 — “999” being an emblem of dispassion toward ideologies and doctrines of all stripes. But of course, in this day and age, it’s pretty hard to live completely outside the norm, especially if you’re an ambitious band looking to build some notoriety.

Eaddy and Lebrun hail from New Jersey, but they moved to L.A. late last year, where they’ve built a steady cult following on the strength of their volatile sound and spectacular live show. In recent months they’ve been working with a management team, and they’re making plans to play Warped Tour, set up tour dates in Europe and drop a debut LP later this year.

Lately they’ve been joined by drummer Ian Longwell, who also plays and DJs for Santigold. The duo apparently have other collaborators in the wings, though Lebrun won’t name them all. “Just know that we got an army,” he says, “different factors of the whole ho99o9 brand.”

Brand? Not all chaotic bands prove sustainable, but clearly this is one with goals. A week before the Superchief Gallery show, the pair meet up for an interview at their management team’s offices downtown. Sitting on a red leather sofa, Lebrun and Eaddy make for a freaky yin-yang pairing. Lebrun, 29, is like a character out of an industrial fetish fairy tale, rocking an enormous blue wig and a straitjacket — yes, like a mental patient might wear, only

more fashionable, with black fabric and shiny padlocks fastened across the front. As for Eaddy, 26, he’s a punk-rock bruiser with his studded vest and heavy-duty shitkickers.

Ho99o9 haven’t put out a whole lot of music, but recent three-song *Mutant Freax* EP gives an idea of how they roll. On the first two tracks, they do all they can to make the listener uncomfortable, slowing the BPMs to a crawl while conjuring ghoulish synths and demonic, Tyler, the Creator-style rhymes. But then they turn around and knock you in the head with “Hated in Amerika,” an anti-police anthem driven by pummeling riffs and feral screams run through a delay processor.

The duo’s schizophrenic sound clearly owes a lot to incendiary acts such as Odd Future, Clipping, and Death Grips, and sometimes the touchstones are a little too on-the-nose. But if anything, ho99o9 feel strongly rooted in vintage hardcore. Like Black Flag, Lebrun and Eaddy have a penchant for fast tempos but also slow, oppressive brutality. And like D.C. hardcore pioneers Bad Brains, they’re elbowing their way into a predominantly white genre, remaking it to reflect their own passions and interests.

Oh, and Eaddy also does a mean back flip — just like Bad Brains frontman H.R.

“I’ve been doing back flips since I was a kid,” Eaddy says. “I grew up in the ‘hood, so there was always a fucking mattress

outside waiting to be fuckin’ thrown away. And as kids, we would take the mattress and jump on it, do WWF moves on it, and eventually it was like, ‘Oh, let’s try some flips.’”

Eaddy and Lebrun both grew up in Jersey — Eaddy in Newark and Union; Lebrun, the son of Haitian immigrants, in Elizabeth and Linden — and like many black kids in the area, they were reared not on punk but on hip-hop: DMX, Ja Rule, Bone Thugs. But around the late ’00s, they started venturing out to DIY spaces in New York City to check out ultra-raw bands such as Hoax and Dawn of Humans, and that’s how they were exposed to the wonders of the pit.

“I’d get a crazy adrenaline rush to be in a mosh pit or dive offstage,” Eaddy says. “I just loved the fucking chaos. People falling on top of each other, kicked in the head. It’s like a beautiful badness.”

Occasionally things got out of hand — at one show, somebody chucked a keg across the room, hitting a girl in the face and sending her to the hospital. Still, the shows gave Eaddy and Lebrun an appreciation for performers who go the extra mile. Today, for all their love for rap music, they still get frustrated when MCs rap along to their recorded vocal tracks onstage.

“That’s one of our pet peeves, yo. I hate that shit,” Lebrun says. “If you call yourself a performer, you gotta earn that right, man. You gotta go up there and work. That shit is work. You gotta actually perform the songs, the lyrics.”

Around that time they rolled with a crew of friends dubbed the NJ Street Klan (aka the Jersey Klan), and it wasn’t long before the crew was bringing the free-for-all punk vibe to its own shows. It was a challenge getting New Yorkers to take the PATH train across the Hudson, but apparently it was worth the ride, as a wildly diverse crowd — college kids, ravers, gangbangers and more — came out to see crazy bills featuring bands and rappers alike.

Salomon Anaya, who at the time ran a gallery space in downtown Newark called Submerged Art, says the Jersey Klan would often throw shows on the space’s third floor. With no security or rules to worry about, parties would rage till dawn.

“I used to be upstairs working sometimes, or downstairs just filming some things,” Anaya recalls. “I’d just hear glass break all the time and I was like, ‘Oh, there goes the other window.’”

Today, Ho99o9 bring that same anarchic spirit to their live shows. At the Superchief Gallery, the OGM and Eaddy egged on the crowd with screams and chants and ventured into the pit. The crowd was happy to give back — sometimes literally, as when someone flung a bra at Eaddy, who promptly strapped it across his chest.

Ho99o9 champion a mutant music, with divergent styles colliding to make something new. In order to really make this work, they need to give that extra push to the crowd. Only then can various tribes truly come together, in pain and glory, forever entangled in the blessed and eternal swirl of the pit.

“If you’re gonna create this kind of music, when you perform it you have to dish it out that way,” Lebrun says. “Because how else are they going to fucking believe it?”

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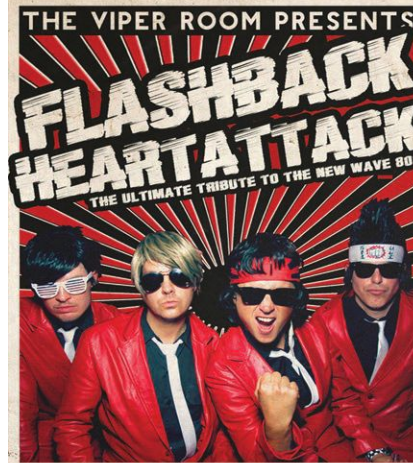
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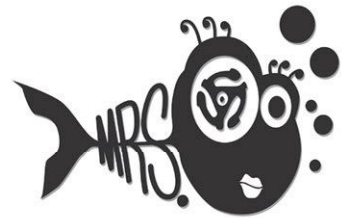
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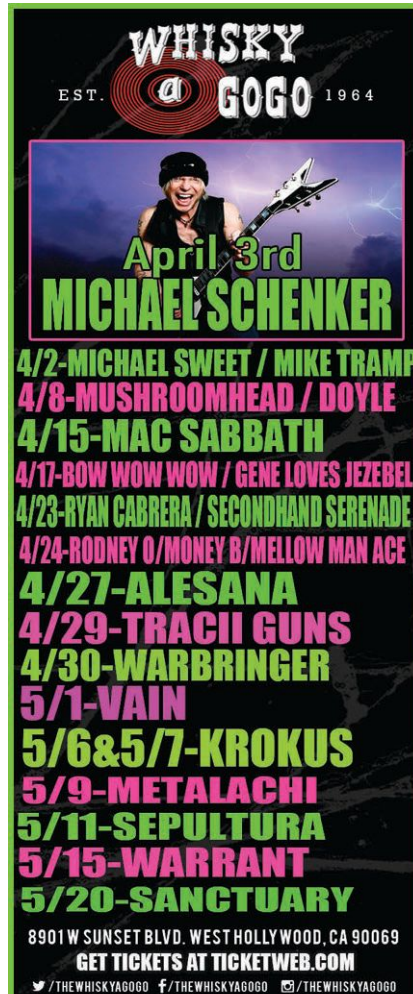
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REAL PROBLEMS

BY REMOVING ART LABOE AND TAKING ON POWER 106, NEW HIP-HOP STATION THE REAL 92.3 FM FACES AN UPHILL BATTLE

BY JEFF WEISS

Around 9 a.m. on a Friday in February, the radio station 92.3 FM abruptly switched formats. Out went old-school funk and R&B. In came The Real 92.3, offering 10,000 joints in a row of “real hip-hop and R&B.” This loosely translated to a playlist disproportionately comprised of Drake featuring Drake.

The shift disenchanting thousands of listeners. After all, the old Hot 92.3 doubled as L.A.’s lone funk bastion and home of the legendary lowrider Casanova, 89-year-old Art Laboe. Take Laboe off the air and incur the wrath. The rules are clear.

How the new iHeartRadio-operated station plans to differentiate itself from its direct competition, Emmis-owned Power 106, seems uncertain. The new 92.3 snatched away Power 106’s venerable morning host, Big Boy. The stations’ playlists are almost identical; I’ve flipped between stations and heard the same song (usually Disclosure’s “Latch” or Nicki Minaj’s “Only”).

For on-air promo, the Burbank-based 92.3 recruited rappers to hurl subliminal shade at Power 106 — as though it wasn’t a matter of them wanting to kiss the ring of iHeartRadio, the corporate behemoth formerly known as Clear Channel. Even by the overheated standards of terrestrial radio, it felt forced.

“The company saw an opportunity for a hip-hop and R&B station that could fill a market that wasn’t being served,” explains Doc Wynter, iHeartRadio’s senior vice president of urban programming and program director of The Real 92.3. “Although our competitor purported to be one, they’re more of a rhythmic station that plays some hip-hop.”

This is partially true. With the rise of dance music, Power 106 has gone from “where hip-hop lives” to where hip-hop sublets. But though the station has distanced itself from gritty rap, its bread and butter continues to be high-calorie, hook-glazed Top 40 hip-hop, blended with the occasional Calvin Harris track.

Though the station’s playlist has mostly not yet reflected it, Wynter envisions Real 92.3 as a more purist alternative.

“If you care about Nas, Biggie and 2Pac, as well as today’s hip-hop and R&B, you’ll want to spend time here,” Wynter says.



Power 106’s Big Boy has moved to The Real 92.3.

PHOTO COURTESY OF FLASHPOINTGRAFIX

“The next song played won’t be shark repellent; it’s going to be consistent with your expectations.”

He points out that the station honored the anniversary of The Notorious B.I.G.’s death by discussing the rapper’s legend on-air, and playing one of his songs each hour. I’ve also heard them play old DJ Quik. That’s more than I can say of Power 106, which has banished classic rap almost entirely to its throwback hour.

But if Real 92.3 wants to creatively thrive rather than play Pepsi to Power’s

IF REAL 92.3 WANTS TO THRIVE, IT MUST NURTURE LOCAL TALENT.

Coca-Cola, it must nurture local talent and break records from rising stars that have yet to hit Top 40. It wouldn’t hurt to follow the model of its ancestor, 92.3 The Beat, which featured Eazy-E’s “Ruthless Radio Hour.”

It’s been more than a dozen years since a local hip-hop station served as a legitimate talent incubator. Power 106 might regularly play Y.G., DJ Mustard and the artists on TDE, but it only began doing so after they’d built a national fan base.

Even though you’re still more apt to hear a Canadian artist than one from Compton on 92.3, Wynter says that local artists feature prominently in the station’s goals.

“We want to exude L.A.,” Wynter says. “Right now, we’re starting off with records that people are familiar with, but we have to break local records over time.”

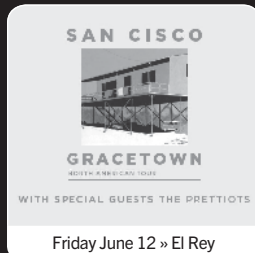
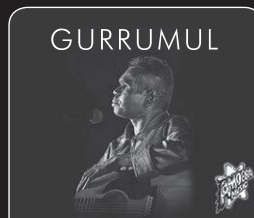
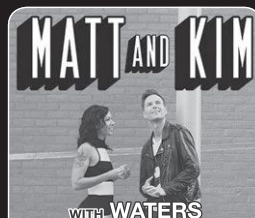
When asked what new L.A. rappers he was checking for, Wynter singled out The Game and Problem — both longtime staples on Power 106.

The new station deserves time to find its own voice and tone, but it would be wise to dig deeper than “Truffle Butter.” Plenty of regional stars with mainstream potential are out there.

And it wouldn’t hurt to bring back Art Laboe, either.

An L.A. native, Jeff Weiss edits *Passion of the Weiss* and hosts the *Shots Fired* podcast. Find him online at passionweiss.com.

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3/31 at Wilshire Ebell Theatre

THE ACID 5/8 at El Rey

RHIANNON GIDDENS
5/9 at El Rey

PUNCH BROTHERS 4/2 at Fonda

THE WOMBATS 5/12 at Fonda

THE WATERBOYS 5/13 at Fonda

KITTY, DAISY & LEWIS
4/3 at El Rey

ALISON WONDERLAND
5/16 at El Rey

A WINGED VICTORY
FOR THE SULLEN 4/5 at El Rey

SHAKEY GRAVES 5/20 at Fonda

SWANS W/ ANGEL OLSEN
4/14 at El Rey

IM5 + SAM POTTORFF
5/26 at El Rey

CLEAN BANDIT 4/15 at Fonda

MAE 5/28 at El Rey

ACTION BRONSON
4/15 at Belasco Theater

SMALLPOOLS 5/29 at El Rey

THE CAT EMPIRE 4/21 at El Rey

SNAKEHIPS 5/30 at Fonda

NOSAJ THING & CLARK
4/22 at El Rey

JIM JEFFERIES
5/30 at Theatre at Ace Hotel

FUZZ 4/24 at El Rey

EMBRACE & STARSAILOR
6/2 at Fonda

DIGITOUR FEAT. HAYES GRIER
4/29 at Belasco Theater

THE KIDS IN THE HALL
6/2 at Theatre at Ace Hotel

THE ORB 4/29 at El Rey

THE RENTALS 6/5 at El Rey

TWIN SHADOW 4/30 at Fonda

THE WEEPIES 6/9 at Fonda

DR. JOHN COOPER CLARKE
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YELAWOLF 6/10 at Fonda

MANIC STREET PREACHERS
5/2 at Fonda

THE LONE BELLOW
6/16 at El Rey

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Saturday • April 4 • 4pm

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Amoeba is happy to welcome back comedian KURT BRAUNOHLER as he hosts our April Auction! Proceeds benefit the Kids Ride and Activities at the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition River Ride – happening Sunday, June 28th!

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BRIGHT LIGHT

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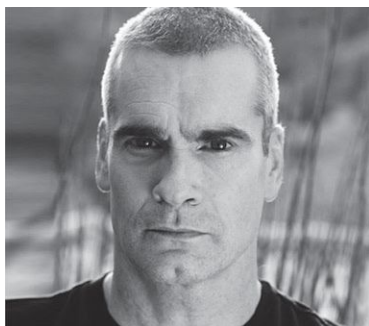
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Henry Rollins The Column!



HOT WEATHER MAKES MUSIC COME ALIVE

Remember when it rained several days ago? I think that's the only spring we're going to get. How long did that last, 72 hours? It's not yet April and we seem to be in summer already.

I dig how the weather puts us all in the same boat, like some great humanizing equalizer.

I prefer the warmer months. Many things seem to operate at a higher metabolism. I feel a need to get more done while also digging deeper into anything I'm working on. If there is a way to put more into each moment, that's what I aim to do. I approach all things with a noticeably spiked degree of furiosity.

Hot weather makes music come alive. It's my favorite time to be in front of the stereo. When off the road, the way I go about it is, at this point, ancient. I employ the Stone Age practice of first allowing the tubes to warm up for at least an hour, then hauling the vinyl from one room to another. My primary turntable requires that you wind a clamp onto the LP, pressing it onto the platter. All of this is like walking to the well for a drink, but if you're thirsty, the journey is as meaningful as the thirst is real.

Beware of anyone who tells you they know a lot about music. I've met some people — Byron Coley comes to mind as an example — who are vast warehouses of music factoids derived from decades of listening. But when you accuse them of being muso-scholars, they will usually deny that charge with great vigor.

This is one of the many great things about music. There is so much truly amazing material, you easily could devote yourself to one aspect of one genre from one time period, and even with that hyper-specificity still get stumped now and then.

One of my many approaches, which has worked incredibly well, is to spread my musical appreciation thinly, in an almost aerosol coating, over a lot of different kinds of music. This results in a borderline maniacal interest in what might appear to be far too wide a field. It is an exercise in willful futility.

If you take almost every course the university offers, there is a good chance you may never graduate. But if you love going to class that much, why would you ever want to leave campus? So I am the perpetual freshman, always running late.

At a certain point, I encountered a case of critical mass. I had more new records than I thought I was ever going to be able to listen to. I had to change my routine and spread myself even thinner. I had to reconcile myself to the fact that there were some records I was going to listen to only once or twice, the audio equivalent of that time I visited the Potala Palace in Lhasa, Tibet. The Chinese museum cops give you about an hour in this massive building. "We are walking," indeed.

Not wanting to treat fine wine like bathwater, I listen as intently as I can to a record, and often take notes to determine if I will come back for another spin. This is how I attempt to reconcile the fact that I have an espresso shot of a lifetime in which to gulp down a sea of music.

That being said, if you run all the time, the most beautiful garden may appear the same as one poorly kept. So, to go in the opposite direction, there is no such thing as spending too much time with any particular artist, album or track.

Extremes can be fun, and musical hyper-obsession is a great way to put off sleep. For the last few nights, I have been listening to every version I have of what I am convinced is one of Jimi Hendrix's finest moments, his song "Burning of the Midnight Lamp."

Hendrix was first and foremost a blues man, and his lyrics often expressed great loneliness and alienation. Next time you listen to the U.K. edition of *Are You Experienced* (hopefully in mono), one of the most mind-blowing debut albums of all time, you'll find the lead on "Red House" fairly incinerates all the other music on the entire record! Hendrix brought so much youthful, beautifully rendered angst to many of the first songs he committed to tape that when you listen carefully to what he's saying, it is very much at odds with all the smiling photos taken of him from that period.

"Burning of the Midnight Lamp" put the hook in me when I first heard it as a kid. In hot weather, it is one of my go-to tracks.

IN HOT WEATHER, "BURNING OF THE MIDNIGHT LAMP" IS ONE OF MY GO-TO TRACKS.

The song was issued in a few configurations, one of which is an absolutely amazing, two-song single: "Burning" on the A-side, with the psychedelic/blues/punk scorcher "The Stars That Play With Laughing Sam's Dice," perhaps my favorite B-side of all time and a track that perfectly illustrates the sheer awesomeness of a great B-side. (The best part of that opinion is that it took me more than 30 years of listening to several hundred singles to come to it!)

To be succinct: There is no wrong way to listen to music.

My father didn't listen to music. To be pseudo-intellectual: He listened to no music. As close as I get to "no music" is when I listen to Noh theater music, my favorite being the *Tsuxma* — *Hayashi Music of Noh* CD. Hey now! I'm here every week...

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<p>Sunday 3/29</p> <p>JEREMY ENIGK</p> <p>SPECIAL GUESTS: JEN WOOD MARK NICHOLS AND THE EVEREXPANDING MACHINE</p>	<p>Monday 4/13</p> <p>PLAIN WHITE T'S</p> <p>JESSARAE</p>
<p>Fri/Sat 4/4</p> <p>KITTEN</p> <p>3-DEAR BOY 4-HUNNY MIRROR TALK MEREKI THE AQUADOLLS FIONA GREY</p>	<p>Thursday 4/16</p> <p>A WILHELM SCREAM</p> <p>GOOD RIDDANCE</p> <p>BAD COP/ BAD COP</p>
<p>Tuesday 4/7</p> <p>CIVIL TWILIGHT</p> <p>KNOX HAMILTON</p>	<p>Sunday 4/19</p> <p>RECKLESS KELLY</p> <p>MICKY & THE MOTORCARS</p>

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Shannon and the Clams: See Tuesday.

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Music // Picks //

fri 3/27

Roky Erickson & the Hounds of Baskerville

@ THE ROXY

In the mid-1960s, Roky Erickson strode through the streets of Austin like a colossus. At a time when most American garage-rock singers were stiffly imitating Mick Jagger's secondhand blues affectations, Erickson and The 13th Floor Elevators were cranking out wildly propulsive, expansively psychedelic incantations such as "Reverberation" and the immortal garage nugget "You're Gonna Miss Me." The band's freewheeling hedonism and experimentation with drugs did not go unnoticed by the authorities in Texas, and Erickson found himself silenced and locked up in a psychiatric hospital for five years. A 2005 film, *You're Gonna Miss Me*, documented Erickson's sometimes surreal ordeal, but the good news is that he's finally productive and healthy again. On his most recent album, 2010's *True Love Cast Out All Evil*, Erickson was backed by Okkervil River and revealed a newfound rustic-folk vulnerability. —Falling James

Young Dubliners

@ CANYON CLUB

More than a quarter-century from their fluid-lineup beginnings at Santa Monica's Irish Rover pub, Young Dubliners are a Celtic-rock juggernaut. They tour stateside tirelessly and frequently travel to Europe, including the ultimate genre litmus test: tours of Ireland. A solid quintet since the turn of the millennium, the Dubs' sound reflects their trans-Atlantic makeup (founding frontman Keith Roberts and bassist Brendan Holmes are Dubliners; their bandmates are American): a steroidal, guitar-based and fiddle-fueled take on nostalgic Celtic sensibilities, with arena-scale hooks, radio-ready production and a wry wink of punky, Pogues-y irreverence. Boasting a swaggering crowd connection that only countless shows can craft, Young Dubliners' open-minded interpretation of musical tradition has made them a multidecade institution unto themselves. —Paul Rogers

sat 3/28 sun 3/29

Burgerama 4

@ THE OBSERVATORY

It might seem quaint that Burger Records specializes in retro garage rock, and quaint still that many of its releases are on cassette. But the Fullerton label nonetheless keeps getting bigger on its apparent path to total world domination. There isn't enough room to list every performer at Burgerama, a two-day festival that includes seemingly every punk, pop, garage, indie rock and psychedelic performer in the galaxy. Saturday is headlined by alt-rock vets Weezer, local skate-punk prodigies FIDLAR and postpunks Gang of Four, but the bill also encompasses the disparate likes of Roky Erickson, rap producer Madlib, sweetly engaging garage-pop duo Summer Twins and the doom-ridden blues of Bass Drum of Death. Sunday's bill answers with punk everyman Ty Segall, Atlanta sonic saboteurs Black Lips, Ariel Pink, Thee Oh Sees and Dinosaur Jr.'s J. Mascis, but arrive early to be beguiled by the haunting blues-rock chansons of Sarah Bethel Nelson. Also Sunday, March 29. —Falling James

Japan Nite with Quorum, Tsu Shi Ma Mi Re and The fin.

@ THE BOOTLEG

After celebrating the 20th anniversary of Japan Nite at SXSW, three artists are bringing the tour to the Bootleg. All-girl rock trio Tsu Shi Ma Mi Re shred genre lines, pairing heavy punk-rock breakdowns with sweet vocals and quirky lyrics (in Japanese) about everything from food to death to living by the sea. Hailing from Tokyo, classic rockers Quorum are breaking the mold in Japanese rock. Relying on '70s rock influences, their ingenious, technical guitar riffs and Ozzy-like vocals are head-spinning, as are lead singer Shintaro Namioka's lyrics, sung in English. Kobe-based indie quartet The fin. round out the night with a calming, energetic groove. Citing influences based in American chillwave, it's no wonder hints of Washed Out and Toro y Moi creep into their songs. —Britt Witt

45 Grave, Nervous Gender, Egrets on Ergot

@ THE ECHO

Los Angeles' original deathrockers, 45 Grave, emerged at the end of the punk era with hard-edged riffs and a bit of "Monster Mash"-style cheekiness. Singer Dinah Cancer is the rock equivalent of a TV horror-movie host, guiding the crowd through creepy tales with a wink and a smirk, letting you know that it's all in good fun. When 45 Grave were building the foundation for deathrock, Nervous Gender were pounding on synths inside venues like Hong Kong Cafe. While not as well known as like-minded U.K. artists of the time, such as Fad Gadget and The Normal, the band's influence is felt in a new generation of synthpunk bands that has emerged over the past decade. Locals Egrets on Ergot are part of the current crop of bands putting a 21st-century spin on deathrock. No less a genre legend than bassist David J (Bauhaus, Love and Rockets) will be the night's guest DJ. —Liz Ohanesian

Dirty Ed's "Dirty 69" Birthday Blowout

@ CAFE NELA

Venerable Hollywood rock-club soundman Dirty Ed is an underworld institution, an instantly recognizable character whose magnificently crusty presence is essential at both the control board and your next backyard BBQ. This mad-dog celebration for his 69th birthday features an appropriately unhinged line of local noisemakers, with the propulsive, Stoogized, slash-and-burn punk of Million Kids; the low-slung, throaty, thunderous trash supreme of former Civet guitar slinger Suzy Moon's Turbulent Hearts; and the wildly filthy rock & roll testimony of frantic local troubadour Lightning' Woodcock. The Ed-centric occasion also boasts a delicious wild card: the debut performance by CinX, a new trio fronted by The Gypz's Cindy Ramos, a visionary vixen who'll be debuting an all-original set of songs that's certain to thrill. —Jonny Whiteside

Brian Fest

@ FONDA THEATRE

One can never celebrate the music of Beach Boys mastermind Brian Wilson enough, and tonight's benefit for the Jame-son Neighborhood Fund offers another chance to marvel over his mini surf-pop symphonies through the perspective of his acolytes. This lineup includes many unex-pected performers, plus musicians often associated with Wilson, such as longtime bandmate Al Jardine and Wilson Phillips, which features two of his daughters. The surprise inclusions range from multi-in-strumentalist Gingger Shankar and Heart's Ann Wilson to Boz Scaggs and The Flam- ing Lips' Wayne Coyne and Steven Drozd. The sunny garage-pop reveries of Best Coast's Bethany Cosentino make her an obvious choice to pay homage to Wilson, but it will be fascinating to hear how psych- tropicalia bard Devendra Banhart and The Killers' Brandon Flowers reinterpret those classic melodies. —Falling James

tue 3/31

Seth Avett and Jessica Lea Mayfield

@ WILSHIRE EBELL THEATRE

The Avett Brothers' Seth Avett and Ohio folk-country balladeer Jessica Lea May- field are already compelling musicians, so the thought of them twining their voices together in harmony is even more intriguing. But their current tour as a duo is made even more unusual because they're setting aside most of their own songs in order to pay homage to the late local troubadour Elliott Smith. They have a new album, *Seth Avett & Jessica Lea Mayfield Sing Elliott Smith*, but its plain title barely hints at the woeful, beautiful laments and aching yearning their voices call up together. Smith's songs retain an emotional intensity, which the duo ad- mits can sometimes still be overwhelm- ing, but Mayfield and Avett revive his sad anthems and reinvigorate them with a clear-eyed, gentle intimacy. —Falling James

Shannon and the Clams

@ THE ECHO

The much-loved-locally Shannon and the Clams are garage rock, sure, but garage rock like The Pandoras as produced by Joe Meek — or maybe Shadow Morton — with plenty of emphasis on the sweet stuff, too. (Though check out stomper "The Rat House," off 2013's *Dreams in the Rat House*, if you wanna hear a feral one.) Their signa- ture moments are the ones where Shannon gets to sing heartbroke and ferocious at the same time, and although they've surely studied the same cream-of-the-creeps 45s that gave The Cramps their best cover songs, the Clams can hit you right in the gut in a way that the best fuzztone in the world could never quite manage. They just finished a new album, so get ready for a few selections from the private reserve at this show. —Chris Ziegler

North Mississippi Allstars and Anders Osborne Present N.M.O.

@ THE TROUBADOUR

Late last year, when North Mississippi Allstars and Anders Osborne announced they had collaborated on an album, fans of both artists rejoiced. Released in February, *Freedom and Dreams* is exactly what you'd expect when these veteran musicians team up. Cut in just four days, the 11-song effort's laid-back vibe showcases a strong chemistry between the musicians. But don't let the loose atmosphere fool you; *Freedom and Dreams* has the hallmarks, even at this early stage of 2015, of being a contender for one of the year's best blues albums. Each artist will play an individual set before they join forces for a blend of Southern-infused rock, blues and New Orleans soul. —Daniel Kohn

thu 4/2

Miles Davis/Gil Evans: Still Ahead

@ WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL

Jazz visionary Miles Davis and arranger Gil Evans' collaborations on *Porgy and Bess*, *Sketches of Spain* and *Miles Ahead* circa 1957-60 explored expansive new jazz orchestrations and drew from both European classical structures and world music. At the time, many jazz purists scoffed at this post-bebop cool as being nothing more than prettified mood music, though the classical world was quite receptive to Davis and Evans' ideas, aspects of which Debussy and Bartók had explored long before. The original arrangements from these three now-clas- sic albums, plus selections from *Quiet Nights*, will be performed by a group of eminently qualified musicians, led by Terence Blanchard and Sean Jones on trumpets and flugelhorns, and ex-Weath- er Report master drummer Peter Erskine. Vince Mendoza conducts the Still Ahead Orchestra. —John Payne

Testament, Exodus

@ HOUSE OF BLUES SUNSET STRIP

Metallica may have formed in Los Ange- les, but it was the burgeoning activity of the Bay Area thrash scene that lured them to relocate and truly find their footing in the early '80s. Testament and Exodus are two of the most enduring acts from that scene. While neither band reached the commercial heights of Metallica and Megadeth, both have displayed remark- able endurance and consistency, continu- ing to release expertly executed thrash records that hold up well next to their early genre milestones. Testament's most recent album, 2012's *Dark Roots of Earth*, shows a band that has firmly rediscovered its groove after health issues sidelined vo- calist Chuck Billy at the beginning of the millennium. Exodus were re-energized on 2014's *Blood In, Blood Out* by the return of vocalist Steve "Zetro" Souza, whose snarls are still as angry as ever. —Jason Roche

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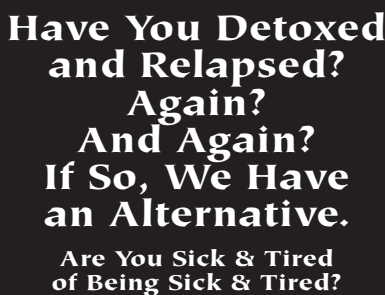
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p.m., \$5. Will Herrington, Thu., April 2, 8 p.m., \$15.
SEABIRD JAZZ LOUNGE: 730 E. Broadway, Long Beach.
 Azar Lawrence, Juini Booth, Sat., March 28, 9 p.m., free.

VIBRATO GRILL & JAZZ: 2930 Beverly Glen Circle. Bob Sheppard, The Pat Senatore Trio, Fri., March 27, 9 p.m., free. Tom Ranier, Ron Eschete, Sat., March 28, 9 p.m., free. Louie Cruz Beltran, Sun., March 29, 6:30 p.m., free. The John Proulx Trio, Wed., April 1, 6:30 p.m., free. The Reverend Shawn Amos, Thu., April 2, 6:30 p.m., free.

VITELLO'S ITALIAN RESTAURANT: 4349 Tujunga Ave. Nutty, Fri., March 27, 8 p.m., \$25 & \$50. Phat Cat Swinger, Sun., March 29, 7 p.m., \$25 & \$50. Lainie Cooke, Tue., March 31, 8 p.m., \$20 & \$45. Bethany Joy Lenz, Thu., April 2, 8 p.m., \$45 & \$95.

—Falling James

For more listings, please go to laweekly.com.

DANCE CLUBS

THE AVALON: 1735 Vine St., Los Angeles, 323-462-8900. Ganz, Jai Wolf, Vindata, A0 Beats, Fri., March 27, 9:30 p.m., \$20; Control, with DJs spinning dub-step and more, ages 19 & over, Fridays, 9:30 p.m. Avaland, where DJs are in the house with techno, trance and more, ages 21 & over, Saturdays, 9:30 p.m.; Herman Cattaneo, Guy J, Nick Warren, Enzo Muro, Sat., March 28, 10 p.m., \$35.

CREATE NIGHTCLUB: 6021 Hollywood Blvd. Ace, Nathan Scott, Richard Vission, Sgt. Slick, Tony Arzadon, Sat., March 28, 10 p.m., \$10.

EXCHANGE L.A.: 618 Spring St. Crookers, Fri., March 27, 10 p.m., \$20 & \$90. Riva Starr, Harvard Bass, Worthy, Sat., March 28, 10 p.m., \$20 & \$90.

LOS GLOBOS: 3040 W. Sunset Blvd. Das Bunker: Spring Dance Night, ages 18 & over, Fri., March 27, 10 p.m., \$5-\$10. Xcellerated, Drumsound & Bassline Smith, The Prototypes, Crissy Criss, DJ SS, Sat., March 28, 9 p.m., \$5-\$25; The Rap Party, ages 21 & over, Saturdays, 10 p.m., free. Rawtee, Jo-S, Shadow Sniper, DJ Precious, Kemsst, and others at Bass Lounge, ages 18 & over, Sun., March 29, 8:45 p.m., \$5-\$10.

THE MONTY: 1222 W. Seventh St., Los Angeles, 213-228-6000. DJ Corey Parks, Fri., March 27, 9 p.m., free.

QUE SERA: 1923 Seventh St., Long Beach, 562-599-6170. Release the Bats, Fri., 9 p.m., \$5.

THE REGENT THEATER: 448 S. Main St. Bootie LA, with a '90s mashup night, Sat., March 28, 9 p.m., \$15.

SOUND NIGHTCLUB: 1642 Las Palmas Ave. Trent Cantrelle, Fri., March 27, 10 p.m., \$15 & \$20. Bag Raiders, Sat., March 28, 10 p.m., \$25.

LATIN & WORLD

EL FLORIDITA RESTAURANT: 1253 N. Vine St., Los Angeles, 323-871-8612. Salsa Night, Fridays, 8 p.m.; Saturdays, 9:30 p.m., \$10.

THE GRANADA LA: 17 S. First St., Alhambra, 626-227-2572. Salsa Fridays, Fridays, 9:30 p.m., \$10. Salsa & Bachata Saturdays, Sundays, 7 p.m.-3 a.m., \$15. Salsa & Bachata Tuesdays, Tuesdays, 9:30 p.m., \$5. Bachata Thursdays, Thursdays, 8 p.m., \$5-\$10.

STEVEN'S STEAK & SEAFOOD HOUSE: 5332 Stevens Place. Son Mayor, Saturdays, 9 p.m., free.

—Falling James

COUNTRY & FOLK

BOULEVARD MUSIC: 4316 Sepulveda Blvd. Bernie Pearl & Mike Barry, Sat., March 28, 8 p.m., \$15.

THE CINEMA BAR: 3967 Sepulveda Blvd. The Marco Sanchez Band, Fri., March 27, 9 p.m., free. Black Mamboza, Sat., March 28, 9 p.m., free. Suzy Williams, Sun., March 29, 9 p.m., free. The Flat Black Straws, Wed., April 1, 9 p.m., free.

COWBOY COUNTRY: 3321 E. South St., Long Beach, 562-630-3007. Neil Morrow, March 27-28, 7 p.m.

THE COWBOY PALACE SALOON: 21635 Devonshire St., Chatsworth. Jimi Nelson, March 27-28, 8 p.m., free. Moonridge, Tue., March 31, 8 p.m., free. Rob Staley, Wed., April 1, 8 p.m., free.

EB'S BEER & WINE BAR: 6333 Third St. Bruce Ray White, Jamie Thomas, Sat., March 28, 7:30 p.m.

THE FRET HOUSE: 309 N. Citrus Ave., Covina, 626-339-7020. Richard Smith, Fri., March 27, 8 p.m., \$15.

IRELAND'S 32: 13721 Burbank Blvd. Cherry & the Bulldogs, Fri., March 27, 8 p.m., free. Magic Kramer, Sat., March 28, 8 p.m., free.

JOE'S GREAT AMERICAN BAR & GRILL: 4311 Magnolia Blvd., Burbank. The Mary White Band, Fri., March 27, 9 p.m., free. Rio Bravo, Sat., March 28, 9 p.m., free.

Toni Boller, The Hi-Flyers, Sun., March 29, 4 p.m., free; Lightnin' Willie, Sun., March 29, 8 p.m., free. Clint Baker's Hot 5, Mon., March 30, 9 p.m., free. Orquesta Charango, Wed., April 1, 9 p.m., free. The 24th Street Wailers, Thu., April 2, 9 p.m., free.

PAPPY & HARRIET'S PIONEERTOWN PALACE: 53688 Pioneer Road, Pioneertown. Gang of Four, Public Access TV, Fri., March 27, 8 p.m., \$25. The Shadow Mountain Band, Saturdays, 7 p.m., free; I See Hawks in L.A., Sat., March 28, 7 p.m., free. Cracker, Curtsey, Sun., March 29, 9 p.m., \$20. The Giving Tree Band, The Cerny Brothers, Thu., April 2, 8 p.m., free.

—Falling James

BLUES

ARCADIA BLUES CLUB: 16 Huntington Dr., Arcadia. Brethren of the Coast, Fri., March 27, 7 p.m., \$10. Jimmy Thackery & the Drivers, Sat., March 28.

STARBOARD ATTITUDE: 202 The Pier, Redondo Beach. Moondogg, Fri., March 27, 9 p.m., free. Detour, Sat., March 28, 9 p.m., free. Harbor Grove, Sun., March 29, 3-7 p.m., free.

—Falling James

For more listings, please go to laweekly.com.

CONCERTS

FRIDAY, MARCH 27

AARON CARTER: With Drake Bell, Josh Levi, This Boy That Girl, Matt Ryan King & Pop Fiction, 9 p.m., \$20-\$70. El Rey Theatre, 5515 Wilshire Blvd.

GO AFTERNOONS, HONEY CHILD: 8 p.m., \$10. Church in Ocean Park, 235 Hill St., Santa Monica.

AT THE GATES: With Converge, Vallenfyre, Pallbearer, 6 p.m., \$27.50. The Wiltern, 3790 Wilshire Blvd.

GO ECHOSMITH: With The Colourist, 9 p.m., \$20. The Fonda Theatre, 6126 Hollywood Blvd.

HAPA: 7:30 p.m., \$32-\$55. The Broad Stage, Santa Monica College Performing Arts Center, 1310 11th St.

JAZMINE SULLIVAN: 9 p.m., \$32. Club Nokia, 800 W. Olympic Blvd., Los Angeles, 213-765-7000.

RICARDO ARJONA: 8 p.m., \$60-\$250. Nokia Theatre, 777 Chick Hearn Court, Los Angeles, 213-763-6030.

SAWYER BROWN: 9 p.m., \$29-\$39. Morongo Casino Resort & Spa, 49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon, 800-252-4499.

SATURDAY, MARCH 28

AARON NIGEL SMITH: 2 p.m., \$10. Skirball Cultural Center, 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., 310-440-4500.

GO BURGERAMA: With Weezer, FIDLAR, Gang of Four, Beach Fossils, Black Angels, Tijuana Panthers, Cherry Glazerr, Roky Erickson, Madlib, Palma Violets, Bleached, Together Pangea, Mystic Braves, La Luz, Peach Kelli Pop, Summer Twins, White Fang, Jeff the Brotherhood, Corners, No Parents, Hinds, Public Access TV and others, 12 p.m., \$47.50-\$120. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, 714-957-0600. See Music Pick.

HELIX COLLECTIVE: The cinematic chamber ensemble provides live original scores to 10 short films., 8 p.m., \$10. Art Share L.A., 801 E. Fourth Place, 213-687-4278.

THE PINK FLOYD EXPERIENCE: 8 p.m., \$29.50-\$49.50. The Orpheum Theatre, 842 S. Broadway, Los Angeles, 877-677-4386.

RICARDO ARJONA: 8 p.m., \$60-\$250. Nokia Theatre, 777 Chick Hearn Court, Los Angeles, 213-763-6030.

SHAHKAR BINESHPAJOOH: 8:30 p.m., \$51-\$146. Dolby Theatre, 6801 Hollywood Blvd., 323-308-6300.

THE TOMASZ STANKO NEW YORK QUARTET: 8 p.m., \$30. Kirk Douglas Theatre, 9820 Washington Blvd., Culver City, 213-628-2772.

YOUNG THUG & TRAVIS SCOTT: 8 p.m., \$33.50-\$45. Club Nokia, 800 W. Olympic Blvd., 213-765-7000.

SUNDAY, MARCH 29

GO BURGERAMA: With The Mr. T Experience, J. Mascis, Mr. Elevator & the Brain Hotel, White Fence, Twin Peaks, Jacco Gardner, Craft Spells, The Queers, Curtis Harding, Dengue Fever, The Abigails, Lovely Bad Things, Audacity, Gap Dream, Froth, Cat Signs, Colleen Green, Part Time, Death Valley Girls, Girl Band, Sarah Beth Nelson and others, 12 p.m., \$47.50. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, 714-957-0600. See Music Pick.

JAMBO: 2 p.m., free. Skirball Cultural Center, 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., Los Angeles, 310-440-4500.

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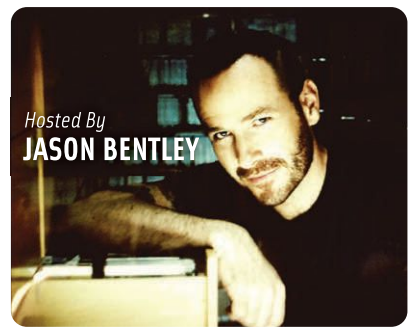
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Lina In L.A.

by Lina Lecaro

BURLESQUELAND VII

The happiest place on earth meets the naughtiest show on earth as Peepshow Menagerie presents a weekend extravaganza of "Disney"-inspired dance and decadence. It's the seven-year anniversary of the popular "Burlesqueland" theme show, and Peepshow promises plenty of Mickeyesque madness, cheeky/geeky revelry, guest stars, comedy and more.

At Friday's opener, held at Fais Do-Do, performers will include Scarlett Letter, Penny Starr Jr., Panama Red, Sheila Starr Siani and many more, conjuring childhood cartoon char-

acters and theme park memories in striptease skits that are definitely not for the kids.

On Saturday, the celebration moves to Silver Lake's Moving Arts, as Peepshow presents "Naked Show & Tell," a burlesque-meets-talk show event featuring discussion about princesses, mice, movies and park rides, plus exclusive-to-Saturday burlesque routines.

For night three (Sunday), performers and fans will gather informally at the 'Land itself, or just outside of it, at Trader Sam's Enchanted Tiki Bar at the Disneyland Hotel, for one last ball filled with Dis-minded drinks and dames.

CLUB FAIS DO-DO | 5253 W. Adams Blvd., West Adams | Friday, March 27, 9 p.m. | \$12 | burlesqueland.com

MOVING ARTS | 1822 Hyperion Ave., Silver Lake | Saturday, March 28, 9 p.m. | \$15 advance, \$20 door; weekend pass \$25 | burlesqueland.com

MONDAY, MARCH 30

GO BRIAN FEST: With The Cabin Down Below Band, Norah Jones, Brandon Flowers, Ann Wilson, Wayne Coyne & Steve Drozd, Devendra Banhart, M. Ward, Boz Scaggs, Bethany Cosentino, Joy Williams, Local Natives, Sebu Simonian, Doyle Bramhall II, Al Jardine, Wilson Phillips, Karen Elson, Jade Castrinos, Adam Busch & Danny Masterson, Ginggaer Shankar and Brian Wilson, 8:30 p.m., \$55-\$350. The Fonda Theatre, 6126 Hollywood Blvd. See Music Pick.

TUESDAY, MARCH 31

LARA FABIAN: 8 p.m., \$50-\$250. Saban Theatre, 8440 W. Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, 323-655-0111.

GO SETH AVETT & JESSICA LEA MAYFIELD: 8:30 p.m., \$45. Wilshire Ebelle Theatre, 4401 W. Eighth St., Los Angeles, 323-939-1128. See Music Pick.

THE USC THORNTON CONCERT JAZZ ORCHESTRA: 7:30 p.m., free. USC, Bovard Auditorium, 3551 Trousdale Parkway, Los Angeles, 213-740-2167.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1

IBEYL: With Flo Morrissey, 9 p.m., \$20. Hollywood Forever Cemetery, 6000 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, 323-469-1181.

GO THE MUSIC OF DAVID LYNCH: With Angelo Badalamenti, Chrysta Bell, Donovan, Duran Duran, Jim James, Julee Cruise, Karen O, Kinney Landrum, Moby, Rob Mathes, Sky Ferreira, Tennis, Twin Peaks, Wayne Coyne & Steven Drozd, Zola Jesus, 8 p.m., \$45-\$1,000. The Theatre at Ace Hotel, 929 S. Broadway, Los Angeles, 213-623-3233. See GoLA.

SKIZZY MARS: With Swizzmack (DJ set), Marc E. Bassy, in the Constellation Room, 8 p.m., \$15. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, 714-957-0600.

THURSDAY, APRIL 2

BONOBO: 8 p.m., \$25. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, 714-957-0600.

FASHAWN: With EarthGang, DJ Exile, in the Constellation Room, 8 p.m., \$15. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, 714-957-0600.

GUSTER: With Kishi Bashi, 7 p.m., \$20-\$50. The Wiltern, 3790 Wilshire Blvd., 213-388-1400.

GO THE PUNCH BROTHERS: With Gabriel Kahane, 9 p.m., \$41.50. The Fonda Theatre, 6126 Hollywood Blvd.

GO THE STILL AHEAD ORCHESTRA: With Terence Blanchard, Sean Jones, Peter Erskine and conductor Vince Mendoza, reviving the classic collaborations of trumpeter Miles Davis and arranger Gil Evans, 8 p.m., \$52.50-\$132.50. Disney Hall, 111 Grand Ave. See Music Pick.

-Falling James

CLASSICAL & NEW MUSIC

GO THE PENDERECKI STRING QUARTET. REBEKAH BARTON:

The quartet and soprano Barton examine the intersection of music by Thomas Adès, Joanna Bruzdowicz, Jeffrey Holmes, Veronika Krausas and Marek Zebrowski with imagery by such filmmakers as Agnès Varda, David Lynch, Michael Patterson and Candace Reckinger, Sat., March 28, 8 p.m., free. USC, Newman Recital Hall, 3616 Trousdale Parkway.

ABBEY SIMON: The pianist follows Beethoven's Sonata No. 31 in A-flat major, Op. 110, with Brahms' 7 Fantasien, Op. 116, Sun., March 29, 6 p.m., free. LACMA, 5905 Wilshire Blvd., 323-857-6000.

GO CONRAD TAO: The pianist covers the works of David Lang, Bach, Julia Wolfe, Rachmaninoff and Mussorgsky, Sat., March 28, 7:30 p.m., \$39-\$75. The Broad Stage, Santa Monica College Performing Arts Center, 1310 11th St., Santa Monica, 310-434-3412.

THE CSUN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: John Roscigno conducts the group in selections from *Fantasia*, Sun., March 29, 1 p.m., \$35-\$50. Valley Performing Arts Center, 1811 Nordhoff St., Northridge.

GAY MEN'S CHORUS OF LOS ANGELES: Sat., March 28, 8 p.m.; Sun., March 29, 3 p.m., \$30-\$85. Saban Theatre, 8440 W. Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills.

GO GIL SHAHAM: The violinist tears into Bach's Six Solos to accompany video imagery by filmmaker David Michalek, Sun., March 29, 7:30 p.m., \$56.50-\$117. Disney Hall, 111 S. Grand Ave.

L.A. OPERA ARTISTS IN CONCERT: Singers from L.A. Opera regale with selections from *The Barber of Seville* and *The Marriage of Figaro*, as part of this season's Figaro Unbound series, Sat., March 28, 3 p.m., free. Grand Hope Park, 919 S. Grand Ave.

THE LOS ANGELES HORN TRIO: Violinist Jacqueline Suzuki, pianist Susan Svrcek and horn player Steven Durrin shine a noontime light on the works of Christian Pezold and Leo Brouwer, Wed., April 1, 12:10-12:40 p.m., free. First Baptist Church of Glendale, 209 N. Louise St., Glendale, 818-242-2113.

GO MARILYN FOREVER: Long Beach Opera presents the U.S. premiere of composer Gavin Bryars and librettist Marilyn Bowring's evocative, poignant operatic reawakening of Marilyn Monroe, Sun., March 29, 2:30 p.m., \$29-\$160. Warner Grand Theatre, 478 Sixth St., San Pedro. See Stage, page 34.

GO THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO: Roberto Tagliavini stars in the title role, and South African soprano Pretty Yende portrays Figaro's beloved Susanna. As Countess Almaviva, soprano Guanqun Yu is a revelation, stirring up beautiful melodies that are alternately powerful and delicate, Sun., March 29, 2 p.m.; through April 12, \$22-\$325. Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 N. Grand Ave.

THE USC THORNTON CHAMBER SINGERS & CONCERT CHOIR: Fri., March 27, 8 p.m., free. USC, Newman Recital Hall, 3616 Trousdale Parkway.

THE USC THORNTON CONCERT JAZZ ORCHESTRA: Mon., March 30, 7:30 p.m., free. Carson Center, 801 E. Carson St., Carson, 310-835-0212.

-Falling James

For more listings, please go to laweekly.com.

PROP D COMPLIANT **SPECIAL OF THE WEEK: YODA'S BRAIN OG 120/230**

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<p>TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS 2 FREE GRAMS OF YODA'S BRAIN SHAKE, 1 JOINT & 1 EDIBLE WITH MIN \$25 DONATION</p>	<p>FTP: 1 JOINT, 1 MEDICATED EDIBLE, 1/8TH OF HOUSE STRAIN AND 1 JOINT (WITH MIN \$30 DON.)</p>	<p>ATF 30/60 BLUE MAUI DOGO 40 ABUSIVE OG DOGO 60 GREEN QUEEN 65/120 LITTLE SKYWALKER 100/190 XJ-13 120/240 MAD MAN OG 130/250 HEROJUANA 135/260 PRIVATE RESERVE OG 140/260</p>
<p>FRIDAY RECEIVE A FREE GRAM OF GHOST O.G., 1 JOINT & 1 PIPE</p>	<p>HAPPY HOUR 3PM-6PM 4 GRAM 1/8THS, 8 GRAM 1/4S, PLUS 2 GRAMS HOUSE SHAKE FREE WITH MIN \$30 DONATION.</p>	<p>818-761-1557</p>
<p>SATURDAY: HAPPY HOUR ALL DAY 1/8'S= 4GRAMS & 1/4'S= 8GRAMS, 10% OFF ANY OZ & 1/2OZ & 1/8 HOUSE SHAKE</p>	<p>EARLY BIRD SPECIAL 10AM-12PM 1/8TH HOUSE SHAKE FREE WITH MIN \$25 DONATION</p>	<p>TOTAL CARE & LOVE CANNAHEALTH@YAHOO.COM 10718 RIVERSIDE DR., NORTH HOLLYWOOD, CA. 91602 WE CARRY VARIOUS EUREKA CO2 OILS!</p>

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01

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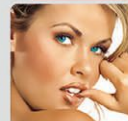
MUST BE 18+ TOTALLY NUDE ENTERTAINMENT



01

MUST BE 18+ W/ VALID ID - SUBJECT TO MINIMUMS
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\$10 ENTERTAINMENT FEE APPLIES * EXPIRES 04.17.15 LA WEEKLY

LOS ANGELES



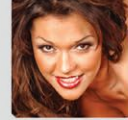
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CITY OF INDUSTRY



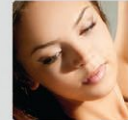
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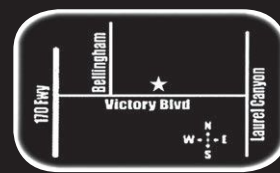
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