A Tale of 2 Captain Marvels

Biopic looks at the debauchery and depravity of '80s rock & roll through today's lens

The Dirt on Motley Crue

By Brett Callwood
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GO LA...7
A selection of events to mark International Women’s Day, a pow wow at Cal State Long Beach, a celebration of the humanities, a discussion of truth and more to do and see in L.A. this week.

FEATURE...11
Mötley Crüe biopic The Dirt looks at the debauchery and depravity of ’80s rock & roll through today’s lens. BY BRETT CALLWOOD.

EAT & DRINK...16
Burbank’s Beirut Cafe offers an authentic taste of Lebanon. BY BARBARA HANSEN.

CULTURE...17
Bone up on the history of comic book heroine Captain Marvel before competing movies open. BY BRETT CALLWOOD.

ARTS...19
“Focus Iran 3” photo exhibition turns its lens on intolerance. BY NADIA MAIWANDI.

FILM...21
NATHANIEL BELL recommends Captain Marvel and foreign-language film Transit this week.

MUSIC...22
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The Clemency of Titus: L.A. Opera presents See Wednesday.

9 p.m.-mid.; free. facebook.com/

Jardin Seco

Hollywood. 9 p.m.-mid.; free. facebook.com/
Past Tense throughout her prolific career, but her new gender, class, family and politics into sharp focus has brought issues of race, the best work by people of color continues to be exclusionary practices decades ago, but some of mainstream art establishment. It would be niceican artists have long been overlooked by the and identity.

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Weems stands at a pulpit and re-examines the and music, a Greek chorus of vocalists serenades Weems stands at a pulpit and re-examines the and music, a Greek chorus of vocalists serenades

Reclaiming Her Time

The aspirations and creations of African-American artists have long been overlooked by the mainstream art establishment. It would be nice to say that society evolved beyond past such exclusionary practices decades ago, but some of the best work by people of color continues to be ignored today. Multimedia artist/photographer Carrie Mae Weems has brought issues of race, gender, class, family and politics into sharp focus throughout her prolific career, but her new performance piece, Past Tense, might be her most ambitious project yet. Using video imagery, text and music, a Greek chorus of vocalists serenades as Weems stands at a pulpit and re-examines the myth of Antigone via themes of social justice and identity. The Theatre at Ace Hotel, 929 S. Broadway, downtown; Fri., March 8, 8 p.m.; $26-566. (213) 623-3233, theatre.acehotel.com.

—FALLING JAMES

Feminism

Women of the World, Unite

March is Women’s History Month, which includes International Women’s Day today, a date celebrated since 1987, when women gained suffrage in Russia. It’s been an important day in the U.S. since 1975. Today, it’s about recognizing the historical and cultural achievements of women and taking action against gender inequality. You’ll find a wealth of women-driven events all month, kicking off with some inspiring events today. The fifth installment of We Choose Art: A Feminist Perspective 5.0 — Movement & Motion, curated by Baha H. Danesh, features a “Feminist Portrait Gallery” and live performances that evoke female strength, collaboration and “dialogue of equality for all.” Performers include Karine Fleurtima, Less Bells and Miss Barbie-Q. The Montalbán Mezz Gallery, 1615 Vine St., Hollywood, 7-11 p.m; $10 before 9 p.m., $15 after. facebook.com/events/388526091721948.

Part dance party, part march and part rally, the International Women’s Strike Los Angeles is our city’s answer to the global movement initiated in Poland and Argentina, addressing issues such as stopping wars on women, children, migrants and the planet. Speakers include Tandiiwe Abdullah, the 15-year-old who helped to found the Black Lives Matter youth vanguard; Arlene Inouye, chair of the UTLA bargaining team; Judy Vaughn, founding member of Alexandria House; and Watts native Helen Jones, whose son John Horton was murdered by sheriff’s deputies at Men’s Central Jail in 2009. DJ Daisy O’Dell spins for the event. 300 N. Los Angeles St., downtown; 4-7 p.m.; free. parodojumplujeres.com/march-8th-womens-strike-marzo-8-paro-de-mujeres. Or join L.A. Weekly’s Culture Editor (disclosure: That’s me!) for the panel discussion Rebel Girls: Women in Media, Music and Art. Inspired by our cover story “Roaring & Soaring,” which explored women’s struggle for equality in the L.A. music and club scene, this discussion features Save Ferris’ Monique Powell, DJs Ana Calderon and Daisy O’Dell, writer-ghostwriter Lisa Derrick and entrepreneur and YouTube personality Vanessa James Decker, and marks the closing of Burgundy Room Gallery’s current exhibition, “Art of Female.” 1621 Cahuenga Blvd. Hollywood. 9 p.m.-mid.; free. facebook.com/events/782069582159844.

—LINA LECARO

SAT 3/9

On Their Own Kaleidoscope are an interesting ensemble who forged having a conductor as they perform a mix of classical music and more experimental works. This evening’s performance is a typically atypical program of such traditional pieces as W.A. Mozart’s Quintet for Piano and Winds, K. 452, juxtaposed with stranger fare, such as contemporary composer Joan Tower’s whirlwind of flutes and strings, Petrouchka, and Valerie Coleman’s airy ebullient work for winds and horns, Umoja. The program also includes Cuban-American saxophonist Paquito D’Rivera’s merry Aires Tropicales and the world premiere of Catalan composer Josep Maria Guix’s Jardin Seco. Westbrock Hall, Pasadena City College, 1570 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena; Sat., March 9, 7 p.m.; pay what you can. (213) 891-2104, kco.la. Also at First Presbyterian Church, 1220 Second St., Santa Monica; Sun., March 10, 2 p.m. (310) 451-1303. —FALLING JAMES

MUSIC

Complex Ambiguities

Artist- provocateur Christy Roberts Berkowitz has built her own figure-skating rink complete with torturous obstacles to address global warming; planted thousands of poppy seeds as a guerrilla gardener to bring attention to public spaces; and hosted feminist wrestling matches. Her latest project is “The Distance Between the Grooves in My Fingerprint,” a solo exhibition in which she employs video, mixed media, text and installation. The artist-activist examines the ambiguities of her Russian-Jewish heritage while conflating themes that are both personal (her ambivalent relationship with her father) and universal (socialism, the patriarchy and gender). “I am 400 years of making art, but I am also 400 years of colonial violence,” she says. American Jewish University, 15600 Mulholland Drive, Bel Air; opening reception Sun., March 10, 3 p.m.; through July 1; free. (310) 440-1280, arts.auj.edu. —FALLING JAMES

MUSIC

Classical Women

In the classical-music world, ads for various performances often list just the last names of various composers to draw attention; Mozart, Stravinsky, Bartók, Schumann, etc. But composer-pianist Clara Schumann, whose work was overshadowed by husband Robert’s career, was a major creative force in her own right, even if she’s still left out of the classical boys’ club these days. Violinist Tien Hsin Cindy Wu leads the Da Camera Players through works by such female composers as Louise Ferrenc and Amy Beach. Any chance to become wrapped up in the lyrically entrancing passages of Clara Schumann’s Piano Trio should not be missed. Ebell Club of Los Angeles, 743 S. Lucerne

tacos. Cal State Long Beach, 1250 Bellflower Blvd., Long Beach; Sat., March 9, 10 a.m. - 10 p.m.; Sun., March 10, 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.; free. (562) 985-4111, web.csulb.edu/divisions/students/sid/american_indian_services/pow_wow/. —FALLING JAMES

PHOTO BY CORY WEAVER

L.A. Opera presents

The Clemency of Titus:

See Wednesday.

PHOTO BY CORY WEAVER
MON 3/11

**FILM**

**A Different Perspective**

Slamdance Cinema Club brings films from the 2019 indie festival to the ArcLight Hollywood, saving you the trek to Sundance. Tonight it’s documentary *Behind the Bullet*, which explores the impact of pulling the trigger on a few of those who participate in the 32,000-plus shootings each year in the U.S. Laura Allison Wasser moderates a post-screening Q&A with director Heidi Yewman.


—LISA D. HOROWITZ

TUE 3/12

**ARTS**

**Yay for Humanity!**

A nationwide coalition of arts and humanities advocates gathers today in Washington, D.C., for its annual conference and creative lobbying event. Around the country, satellite celebrations pop up with solidarity and regional programs. Cal State L.A.’s Arts & Letters department hosts National Humanities Advocacy Day, with events from futurist philosophy debates to printmaking, music and poetry, scavenger hunts, cosplay and art shows. Highlights include a reading with L.A. poet laureate Robin Coste Lewis and a tour of the campus gallery’s “Lesbians to Watch Out for: ’90s Queer L.A. Activism” — a history-rich trove of art, ephemera, performance and inspiration.

Cal State L.A., 5151 State University Drive, El Sereno.; Tue., March 12, 11 a.m.-8 p.m.; free. (323) 343-3000, calstatela.edu/academic/al/national-humanities-advocacy-day. —SHANA NYS DAMBROT

WED 3/13

**ART/LECTURE**

**Truth Tellers**

The American Dialect Society voted “fake news” the 2017 word of the year, defining it as “disinformation or falsehoods presented as real news” and “actual news that is claimed to be untrue.” But the term existed long before Trump made it a part of his rhetoric. Zócalo Public Square’s *Did Truth Ever Matter?* looks at fake news throughout history and how it relates to even classic art. Moderated by L.A. Times writer Sandy Banks, panelists include New York Times film critic A.O. Scott, Lee McIntyre, author of *Post Truth: The New War on Truth and How to Fight Back*; and Jennifer Kavanagh, co-author of *Truth Decay: An Initial Exploration of the Diminishing Role of Facts and Analysis in American Public Life*. They’ll examine people’s ability to distinguish between basic facts and raw data as well as personal bias and how it affects important issues, especially political discourse.

The Getty, 1200 Getty Center Drive, Brentwood; Wed., March 13, 7:30 p.m.; free, resv. required. (310) 440-7300, getty.edu. —SIRAN BABAYAN

**OPERA**

**Classic Clemency**

After the minimalist staging of L.A. Opera’s introspective psychological drama *The Loser*, the local company returns to lavish sets, elaborate...
costumes and a large cast with its fancy new production of W.A. Mozart’s rarely performed opera *The Clemency of Titus*. powerhouse tenor Russell Thomas, who has been such a charismatic force in previous performances with L.A. Opera and L.A. Phil, portrays the titular emperor who struggles through a variety of Machiavellian machinations while Rome burns. Chinese soprano Guanqun Yu makes a welcome return to the company with her sterling tone. Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Wed., March 13, 7:30 p.m.; through Sun., March 24, 2 p.m.; $16-$249. (213) 972-0777, laopera.org. —SHANA NYS DAMBROT

THEATER

**The Next Will Ferrell?**

Will Ferrell has played a lot of memorable roles but when it comes to comedy classics, *Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy* reigns supreme. The 2004 parody skewering 1970s TV news and culture has become one of the most meme- and gif-friendly films ever. The writing is brilliant but it’s Ferrell’s delivery that makes it work. Or is it? This will be put to the test in *Anchorman: The Unauthorized Musical Adaptation of the Legend of Ron Burgundy*, which aims to capture the retro-wacky spirit of the film. *Anchorman* tells the story of boastful but lovable buffoon Burgundy, San Diego’s top-rated TV news personality — until an ambitious female reporter is hired as his new co-anchor. Starring Trent Mills and Shanera Richardson, this one promises to make you feel you’re in a very real “glass case of emotions!” El Cid, 4212 W. Sunset Blvd. Silver Lake; Thu., March 14, 7 p.m.; $20, 21+. eventbrite.com/e/anchorman-the-unauthorized-musical-tickets-56721345070. —LIMA LECARO

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**Flash of a Neon Light**

Enter the elaborate and ornate architecture space of the Fine Arts Building lobby downtown, and it feels more like a Victorian church or maybe Hogwarts than a place of business. A designated historic landmark, its carved stone, warm wood and brass, marble floors, churning balustrades and especially the Gothic glass vitrines that line the lobby walls are worth seeing on their own merits. It is an unexpected and always engaging proposition, then, when the Art Meets Architecture program places contemporary art in the cases. This month it’s even more eccentric, as they show the work of neon artists Linda Sue Price and Michael Flechter. Both Price’s largely abstract and gestural works and Flechter’s more pop art- and pun-centric works sending up signs, symbols and quirks of language inhabit the space with pizzazz, making it a priority stop on tonight’s Downtown Art Walk, or anytime you’re in the area this month. Fine Arts Building, 811 W. Seventh St., downtown; Downtown Art Walk reception Thu., March 14, 6-8 p.m.; daily through Sun., April 7, 8 a.m.-8 p.m.; free. artmeetsarchitecture.com. —FALLING JAMES

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A NIGHT OF MUSICAL PERFORMANCES AND SPECIAL GUESTS
Biopic looks at the debauchery and depravity of '80s rock & roll through today's lens

BY BRETT CALLWOOD

We're on the phone with Mötley Crüe bassist Nikki Sixx, the first of many interviews we conduct in preparation for this cover feature to discuss the release of new Crüe biopic The Dirt, a Netflix production, and we opt to address the enormous elephant in the room. "How do you think the band's attitudes toward women in the '80s is going to play when presented to a #MeToo-era audience, in their own homes?"

Sixx barely has time to let out an "ummm" before the publicist interrupts and asks us to keep the questions geared toward the movie and music, as that is what everyone is "excited about." No doubt, she's right. This movie has been 18 years in the making, ever since journalist Neil Strauss released his celebrated book of the same name. Meanwhile, the soundtrack features four new songs, the first material recorded by the band since their farewell tour. There's a lot to talk about.

But fuck, this is Mötley Crüe. They have gleefully wallowed in and played up the fact that, for the first 10 years of their existence at least, they went out of their way to bring as much decadence, debauchery and depravity down upon themselves and everyone around them as possible. The movie shows it all (or an abridged version of it) in all its gory detail. There are shits and giggles, for sure. But there are also parts that portray frankly disturbing scenes of objectification and misogyny. These were not enlightened young men.

So we put that to Sixx and his publicist cuts in. To his immense credit, the bassist says, "It's OK, I'll answer it." Not to suggest that this response excuses everything that came before it, but he had an out and he chose not to take it.

"I will say that it's not how people act in 2019," Sixx says. "It's definitely not how bands act. It's era-specific. If we're watching a movie from the 1700s and they're burning witches, obviously no one's burning witches in 2019. It's kinda the same with the Mötley movie. That was part of the story. I think it would have been a mistake to whitewash it and make it super Disney-like. What I've gotten from a lot of people, male and female, is, 'I was so scared that the film would be neutered.' We've stayed true to the story. We're not talking about 2019, we're talking about the '80s."

Douglas Booth is the actor who plays Sixx in The Dirt; having spent time with his subject prior to filming, he firmly believes that Sixx, as well as the other band members, are not the same guys that they were back in the '80s.

"We made a movie that was true to Neil Strauss' book, which was about a very specific time in history," Booth says. "We wanted to make a movie that didn't shy away from what the book was and what people who read the book know."

Both men raise points that aren't without merit. That said, were there people alive today who "burned witches," we probably wouldn't be saying that they should be left alone because it happened in a different era. It's inevitable that Mötley Crüe have to face this music head on. Director Jeff Tremaine (Jackass) went in knowing all of this but he also knew that he had to tell this story honestly.

"Our goal was just to portray it accurately," Tremaine says. "This is a true story and we're trying to show it without pulling punches. It's warts and all. There was a fun aspect to it and there was a dark aspect to it, and we're showing all of it."

Iwan Rheon is best known for playing sadist Ramsay Bolton in HBO's Game of Thrones, so it's something of a departure for him to portray Mick Mars, the most responsible member of Crüe. He says that, naturally, conversations took place between the cast, crew and Netflix (the studio behind the film).

"It was very important to Netflix that, while making this movie, everyone felt comfortable as you should in any work environment," Rheon says. "We made sure it was..."
"Two things: One is, if you’re pulling from any point in history, you have to be true to that history," says The Dirt author Neil Strauss. "You can’t whitewash it. Anything through a historical lens is by nature problematic as we grow and evolve as a culture and a society. If you whitewash it, that’s inauthentic but it’s also similar to what fascist countries do when they just change their histories. But the other part is, there’s a saying: ‘You’ll know your intention by the results.’ In other words, with all the guys in rehab, Nikki killing himself, Vince’s alcoholism — you know that way of life didn’t pay off.”

Mötley Crüe were far from the only band to dive head-first into murky waters in the ’80s (and prior), but they have come to encapsulate the sheer excess, for better or worse. Like many of their ilk, Crüe weren’t averse to sporting a confederate flag on their torn jeans vest (in California, for Christ’s sake). But their darkest moments can’t be explained away by ignorance or questionable aesthetics.

There’s a very clear moment in The Dirt (the movie as well as the book), when the tone drastically and dramatically shifts. It’s all fun and games, everyone is fucking around and having a blast. Then Tommy Lee hits his fiancée. It’s an agonizing scene to watch, primarily because we know that it actually happened. Those who have read the book know that Lee talks about it openly and honestly. It played out pretty much as we see it on the screen.

“When I took the script to [Tommy’s] house a week before we went down to film, and that scene came up, he was just very honest about it,” says Colson Baker, aka rapper Machine Gun Kelly, who portrays Lee in the film. “It was even more intense in the book. I guess the fact that he was so open about it and willing to confront it, it was pretty easy for me to take the pain that I saw and put it onscreen.”

Strauss agrees that the scene signals a change in the camp, thanks to the ramifications of their carefree attitude.

“It’s almost like, it’s fun to race down the PCH until they hit someone, and then there are real-world consequences,” Strauss says. “So whether it’s Razzle, or that scene on the bus with Tommy, or Nikki dying, each of them has that point of, this is where it leads. That’s a theme in movies but also in life. You have to hit your bottom to get out of something. That scene is definitely Tommy’s bottom.”

Whatever your views about Mötley Crüe, this is why the movie succeeds. You can detest them as people, you can hate their music, you can believe that they shouldn’t be forgiven for any of their wrongdoings. The Dirt lays it all out for you, the audience, to make up your own mind. There’s no glorification here, no hiding from the truth. Just a story, told honestly (with some necessary creative license but no changes to key facts).

Those familiar with Mötley Crüe’s history won’t be surprised to learn that two of the most powerful moments in the movie belong to Vince Neil and Daniel Webber: the car crash (due to Neil’s drunken driving) that led to the death of Hanoi Rocks drummer Razzle, and the death of Neil’s young daughter, Skylar.

“A lot of things come up, like the part with my daughter,” Neil says. “All those feelings came right back to the surface, for me, watching that movie. It was hard, and very sad. But that just shows how true the movie was. It just brought all the emotions back. It’s something that happened in 1995 — a long time ago. Losing a child, though, it’s never going to go away.”

“It’s such a sad part of the Crüe’s history and Vince’s history,” Webber says. “It was something that I was very aware of and cautious of, in the sense of, because he’s still alive, trying to pay as much to respect to him, his family and to the people involved in the car crash and Razzle, and really try to tell the story as honestly as possible. I didn’t know another way to do it. Just really try to convey those situations as honestly as possible.”

Befitting a story as turbulent as Crüe’s, getting the movie made was no easy task. Studios were in and then out, scripts...
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**New Orleans, we’re presented with a view of ‘80s rock culture that I obviously heard their music before. For me, it was a real rediscovery, and I completely fell in love with them when I did the movie.”**

Even the director admits that he was more of a fan of Strauss’ book than of the band and their music.

“I’m not the biggest Motley Crue fan, though I do like them,” Tremaine says. “I was connected to that book in that when I was reading it, we were right in the middle of going through our own roller coaster with Jackson. It’s just such a similar story in a lot of ways. The guys were sort of just wild animals, going through this rise and fall. Some of it’s super-fun and some of it’s dark, some of it’s sad. Just a very similar story, so I was very connected to it and I wanted to tell that story with accuracy and authenticity. This was an easy story to f**k up.”

That they didn’t fuck it up is testament to those involved. The Dirt does a wonderful job of telling the story of four very different people who had grown tired with the music that surrounded them. Their blend of second-wave metal and New York Dolls-/Alice Cooper-esque garage-glitz, which first saw the light with the seminal Too Fast for Love album, was undeniably groundbreaking. We see all of that unfold, as they first grab the attention of an adoring Sunset Strip and then go on to shock the world. While the movie is primarily shot in New Orleans, we’re presented with a view of ‘80s Hollywood that feels authentic and takes in all of the iconic features, including a mocked-up L.A. Weekly cover.

And watching closely, of course, were the band members themselves. They must have been impressed with the very believable on-stage footage, something that the movie band rehearsed for hours. Crue drummer Tommy
Lee says as much, stating that he was amazed at the attention to detail regarding the clothes, cars and technology of the time, and also of the actors and their performances.

“I remember sitting in New Orleans watching the band rehearse,” Lee says. “Nikki and I were looking at each other going, ‘This is fucking ridiculously surreal. I feel like we’re watching us. It’s bizarre but beautiful.’”

Meanwhile, that theme of not pulling punches is reiterated by Sixx, who says the band said whatever they wanted to in interviews from the very beginning.

“If you’re gonna have a career, it means that you’re gonna have hills and valleys,” Sixx says. “It’s pretty easy to be at the top — in fact, it’s a lot of fun. At the bottom, you’ve just got to ride it out and keep doing the work. ... The music business is slow sometimes but the movie business is really slow. There’s a lot of checks and balances. It was optioned to Paramount, but it was a little too raw. They were maybe hoping we’d clean it up a little bit but that wasn’t really who the band was. We’d rather not have a movie than have a vanilla movie. So it took a while. Netflix has

“ANYTHING THROUGH A HISTORICAL LENS IS BY NATURE PROBLEMATIC AS WE GROW AND EVOLVE AS A CULTURE AND A SOCIETY.”

— NEIL STRAUSS, AUTHOR OF THE DIRT

balls of steel. They just told us, make the movie that is the book.”

“I love the film,” Vince Neil says. “When I saw it, I thought I’d be critiquing it, going, ‘That wasn’t like that,’ or whatever. But after the first three minutes of the movie, I actually forgot it was about us. It was like a really cool rock movie. It’s pretty accurate. They stuck right to the book. Obviously it’s hard to put 10 years of craziness into two hours. They did a great job of picking and choosing the right things for the storyline.”

While Sixx says that the film was therapeutic, he admits that the scenes involving his mother were tough to watch. His mom died a few years ago, before the pair made peace.

“I guess this is a life lesson,” Sixx says. “I’m very stubborn and determined man, and I like to think that I stick to my guns and keep my word. My mom could never apologize for abandoning me. That’s all I ever wanted, was for her to say, ‘I was young, I fucked up.’ Every time I tried to get me and her on the same page, she always played the victim. That always angered me, so every time we hung up the phone, there was no resolve. Shamefully I never went to my mother’s bedside when she died. It’s not one of my prouder moments.”

“One of the beautiful things about this film is it’s not just ‘PARTY, YEAH,’” Lee says. “That’s not what it was like all the time. We had some serious fucking highs and some serious, serious lows. The beauty of the film is it shows them. It was fucking mad back then. The fact that we’re all alive is beyond me.”

On a happier note, Mötley Crüe recorded four new songs for the film, including the title track (which featured the rapping talents of Machine Gun Kelly) and a bizarre cover of Madonna’s “Like a Virgin.” All this, despite the four of them contractually agreeing to never tour together again.

“Everyone thinks we broke up,” Neil says. “We didn’t break up, we just stopped touring. We’re still a band, we’re still four guys that have a really cool company called Mötley Crüe. You’ll always be hearing from us, one way or another.”

Sixx says that writing and recording with his old colleagues again was like riding a bike.

“Everybody does something in this band that is unique,” he says. “Bob [Rock, producer] is so good for us at making us be the best version of our band as possible. He lets the band be a band, and then he figures out where to tighten it up or push it together. We’ve always allowed it to not be perfect because that’s the bands we grew up with — Cheap Trick, Aerosmith, the Pistols. I think these new songs feel like Mötley Crüe.”

“For me it was a last-minute thing,” Mars adds. “I just went in there and did my parts. But with today’s technology I could do them in just a few days and I think they sound really good. A new step for Mötley”

The Dirt probably will suffer when mentioned in the same breath as another L.A.-centric movie, Straight Outta Compton, or recent mega-success Bohemian Rhapsody, because of how damn uncool Mötley Crüe are according to conventional wisdom. And sure, there are no actors here likely to win Oscars next year. But the movie benefits from having a real story to tell, and a passionate team behind it. We put it to Baker that The Dirt could have a similar impact to Straight Outta Compton, in that it likely will have an appeal stretching far beyond the band whose story it tells. Machine Gun Kelly wholeheartedly agrees.

“Yes, because people want attitude again, people want honesty again,” the rapper-actor says. “It’s not easy to be squeaky clean. You’re a fucking liar if that is your story. People need a punch in the face, especially in cinema right now. Straight Outta Compton was a knockout punch. [The Dirt is] a movie about a genre that people have written off for the last 10 years, and they shouldn’t have. We’ve seen the term ‘rock star’ be thrown around so lightly to all these people who aren’t fucking rock stars. People need to put some respect back on the term ‘rock star’ because it shouldn’t be thrown around loosely. There are people who have died by that term.”

The Dirt is released on Netflix on Friday, March

22
Imagine you’re in a cozy mountain cabin in Lebanon, eating delicious home-cooked food.

But you don’t have to imagine this. You can experience it right here, at the Beirut Cafe in Burbank. Step inside and you are in a wood-paneled room with just seven tables. The owners are Joelle and Jimmy Awad, siblings from Faraya, a mountain village in northern Lebanon. Jimmy Awad is the chef. Joelle Awad runs the front of house and takes over the kitchen when her brother is away. A prep cook is their only helper.

The Awads cook dishes they learned from generations of family. Their mother, Alice Awad, contributes her own specialties, such as kebeh b’laban, a yogurt-garlic stew with meatballs, and stuffed eggplant in tomato garlic sauce. These aren’t on a regular schedule. You have to call and ask what Alice has come up with that day.

Joelle Awad goes to Lebanon once a year, bringing back new ideas, spices and accessories such as the miniature red fezzes in which meal checks are presented. The village painting in the restroom is her work.

The lengthy menu ranges from hummus, which is prepared fresh daily, to a whole sheep’s head, a hard-to-find Lebanese delicacy called mif. “We get a lot of orders from those who know about it,” Joelle Awad says. On certain days there’s fresh whole branzino, fried or grilled and served Lebanese style with French fries, fried pita, lemons and tahini sauce sprinkled with paprika.

Jimmy Awad’s beef shwarma is fragrant with cumin, allspice, cinnamon and a seven-spice mixture, all from Lebanon. To make kafta kebabs, he mixes ground beef with parsley, onions, allspice, cumin and salt and threads the little kebabs on skewers for grilling. Chicken breast kebabs come with garlic sauce. There’s chicken shwarma, too.

The grilled meats can be ordered in sandwiches or as plates that include salad, hummus and rice flocked with golden strands of fried vermicelli.

Vegetables get special attention, too. Fried cauliflower is vegan, although the sauce on the side looks creamy. To make the white layer, lemon juice is squeezed over mashed garlic. The yellow layer on top is olive oil and salt. The cauliflower isn’t breaded but lightly browned from brief frying, just 15 seconds. The traditional way to eat this is to wrap the florets in pita and dip in the sauce.

Spicy diced potatoes are sauteed in a lemony garlic sauce with cilantro and paprika. They’re called spicy because of the paprika, not hot seasoning.

The salad fatbash mixes lettuce and vegetables with olive oil, lemon juice, sumac and crushed dried mint. Toasty baked pita crisps serve as croutons. Other than pita, which is delivered fresh daily, everything is made in-house.

To start, choose from a long list of mezza. And end with baklava. Filled with walnuts and sprinkled with pistachios, it’s light and flaky, not sticky sweet with syrup.

Even the drinking water has a Lebanese touch — a dash of orange blossom water. Try also jallab, made with a fruity syrup that Joelle Awad brings from Lebanon.

And be sure to have the café’s special cardamom-laced coffee. Brewed to order over open flames, it’s served in handsome brass pots from Lebanon. The little cups on the side are decorated with the Lebanese flag and a greeting in Arabic that speaks for the Awads: “Welcome.”

Beirut Cafe, 400 S. Glensoaks Blvd., Burbank; (818) 845-0028, beirutcafe.com/menus. Tue.-Sat., 11 a.m.-10 p.m.; Sun., noon-9 p.m. Alice Awad’s specialties are available Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday.
CULTURE

MARVEL AT THIS

Get ready for the upcoming dueling Captain Marvel movies with this history lesson

BY BRETT CALLWOOD

On March 8, the Captain Marvel movie, directed by Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck, and starring Brie Larson in the title role, will be released — the latest film from the unrelenting juggernaut that is the Marvel Cinematic Universe. While misogynistic haters have tried their best to destroy the film’s reputation before it’s even released, all the signs suggest that this will be another huge success story for Marvel, this time with a female-led film.

But here’s where it all gets a little bit odd. Just a month later, on April 5, a movie called Shazam! will be released by the other comic book giant, DC. Unlike Marvel, DC’s recent moviemaking history has been patchy at best. DC has been unable to create a cohesive universe, with many moving parts on the big and small screens, whereas Marvel has excelled. But the curiosity here stems from the fact that the character of Shazam was created in 1939 and originally called Captain Marvel. So, in other words, there are two movies about a character called Captain Marvel that are about to be released one month apart.

It gets weirder still. DC’s Captain Marvel (who from here on will be referred to as Shazam to avoid inevitable confusion) was created by the now-defunct Fawcett Comics, which in 1952 was sued for copyright infringement by, would you believe, DC, because the latter felt that Shazam was a blatant ripoff of its own Superman. So Fawcett stopped publishing the books. Then, 20 years later, DC purchased the rights to Shazam and any related characters, and he was back. Ironically, the first issue of DC’s Shazam in 1972 also featured Superman on the cover. That seems like a cruel joke.

Are you keeping up? Because we’re well into the rabbit hole now. By the time DC started publishing its Captain Marvel books, Marvel Comics had established a Captain Marvel character of its own. Rather cheekily, DC tagged its comics with the line “The Original Captain Marvel,” but a cease-and-desist letter from Marvel put a stop to that. So it was agreed that DC could keep using the name “Captain Marvel,” but all titles, toys and merchandise had to have the word “Shazam” front and center, hence the current usage.

Interesting side note here: The battle over names has occurred more than once between the two giants of the industry. In 1964, Marvel introduced a character called Wonder Man, and DC sued because of its own Wonder Woman; Wonder Man was temporarily discontinued. Then DC introduced a character called Power Girl in 1976, which angered Stan Lee because Marvel had already established Power Man (aka Luke Cage).

As for the DC character himself, Billy Batson is a homeless 12-year-old boy (or 14, in the later rewrite) who is granted the power of the Greek gods by the Wizard Shazam (those gods being Solomon, Hercules, Atlas, Zeus, Achilles and Mercury). So when he speaks the word “Shazam,” Batson is transformed into a fully grown adult with a red suit, white cape and a shit-ton of powers.

Incidentally, there have been two previous live-action versions of DC’s Captain Marvel — a 1941 12-part film serial called The Adventures of Captain Marvel, with Tom Tyler in the title role, and a 1974–76 TV show called Shazam! that saw Michael Gray play Billy Batson and both Jackson Bostwick and John Davey portray the Captain.

As for Marvel Comics, seven characters have held the title Captain Marvel since its creation in 1967. The first, and one of the two most important, was an alien military officer called Mar-Vell (see what they did there?). Sadly, Mar-Vell died from cancer in a 1982 book called The Death of Captain Marvel.

New Orleans cop Monica Rambeau was the second to hold the title from ’82, and she would later be known by a variety of names including Photon, Pulsar and Spectrum. In ‘93, the genetically engineered son of Mar-Vell, Genis-Vell, became the third Captain Marvel, and he was followed in 2004 by his sister, Phyla-Vell. In the 2007 book Civil War — The Return, Skrull sleeper agent Khan’nr became the fifth, before Noh-Varr (formerly Marvel Boy) joined the Dark Avengers as Captain Marvel.

That’s six. The seventh is Carol Danvers, also the first character to hold the title Ms. Marvel, and the version of the character that Larson is portraying in the new movie. Ms. Marvel history is interesting, too — there have now been four of those characters, including Danvers and, most recently, Kamala Khan, who happens to be the first Muslim Marvel Comics character to headline her own title.

Since her introduction in 1968, Danvers has gone through quite the evolution. As Ms. Marvel, her costume was practically nonexistent and certainly impractical for crime-fighting. Enlightened eyes don’t look kindly on it, nor should they. But as Captain Marvel, she wears much the same clothes as Mar-Vell. As ever, she’s a badass and it finally feels like she’s getting the respect she deserves. After all, many consider her to be the most highly powered hero in the Marvel Comics cannon. Meanwhile, Kamala Khan’s Ms. Marvel is also drawn dressing with dignity.

All of which means what? Again, two Captain Marvel–themed movies will be released in the next few weeks and, while Marvel’s Captain Marvel looks likely to be the film with more depth, not to mention that kick-ass female lead, both will have their merits. There have even been hints that the characters Kamala Khan and Monica Rambeau will appear in this movie or future installments in the franchise.

Some are comparing Shazam! to Tom Hanks’ 1980s fave Big, and there’s probably some truth there. That film explored the perils of adolescence, and Shazam! promises to do the same. While not homeless, Batson is an orphan in the movie, passing from home to home thanks to a broken system. Zachary Levi plays Shazam in the new film, while Asher Angel plays Batson. To his credit, Levi recently called out those looking to disparage the Marvel Comics/Brie Larson film through an online video, stating:

“There are people out there making defamatory and completely fictitious reviews and posts of Brie Larson’s Captain Marvel — and trying to pit Shazam! against it, saying they’re gonna support us and not them because of things they are making up. For anyone out there who thinks you’re doing me a favor, or you’re doing Shazam! a favor, you’re not. This is not helping anyone or anything. There is no competition.”

Of course, he’s right. But the bigger picture is, we have diversity of gender, color, religion and age, plus a hard look at the broken foster system, between all iterations of the Captain. And you thought it was just dumb shit for nerds.

Marvel’s Captain Marvel will be released on Friday, March 8, with DC’s Shazam! following on Friday, April 5.
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A FRESH LOOK

“Focus Iran 3” photography exhibition turns its lens on intolerance

BY NADIA MAIWANDI

In a stirring voice, “Focus Iran 3” pushes back against homophobia and patriarchy in many of the 43 photo and video installations that line the second-story walls at Craft Contemporary (as the Craft & Folk Art Museum has recently rebranded itself). With a subtler voice, the Farhang Foundation–presented exhibit challenges xenophobia, current U.S.-Iran relations and the ways in which Iranians are stereotyped by Westerners, and even by one another.

“There are a lot of messages in each image,” Farhang Foundation executive director Alireza Ardekani tells L.A. Weekly, from the “homoerotic” to “a kind of uprising against the hijab.” The theme selected by the L.A.-based foundation is Iranian youth culture — the secondary themes, the “messages” as Ardekani calls them, come from the artists themselves.

Winning top prize at the exhibition, collaborators Hushidar Mortezaie and Jiyan Zandi, both from L.A., offer a message of unity in The Brotherhood. The photo presents a “new, progressive narrative” of Iran and the region, Zandi says, one that embraces multiculturalism, gender fluidity and the LGBTQ community. The image shows two men wearing matching shirts with collages created by Mortezaie from 1970s news, sports and pop culture media clippings. They pose — one man with his arm proudly draped over the other’s shoulder — in contradiction to 1970s machismo, the floral backdrop and rose crowns resting on the men’s heads augmenting the juxtaposition. “This work,” she says, “is a chance to tell an untold story about marginalized identities and portray a brighter, more inclusive future.”

Judged by a multinational jury composed of art curators and photographers, the “Focus Iran” series looks to create a level playing field where artists from around the world can share their work with the international community. “We wanted to make something that is very democratic, especially for artists inside Iran,” Ardekani says. The exhibit showcases digital mediums so that anyone with access to the Internet, or even a smartphone, would be able to participate.

Now in its third edition, “Focus Iran” began in 2015 and takes place every other year. While the exhibition is open to all photographers regardless of race, ethnicity or nationality, roughly 80 percent of this year’s approximately 300 submissions came from inside Iran, according to Ardekani, providing those artists with unique opportunities.

For example, third-prize winner The Kiss would not be allowed to be displayed in Iran where artist Milad Karamoos lives, Ardekani says.

The image depicts a man wearing a bondage-style black lace harness; he’s lovingly clutching the arms of a man who stands shirtless behind him, donning black leather gloves and holding battered shears to the first man’s lips. While the photo may initially appear gratuitously provocative, its noteworthiness becomes apparent with the realization that it is a stinging indictment of Iran’s draconian anti-LGBTQ policies.

Ardekani says “Focus Iran 3” not only provided Karamoos an international platform but also gave him a sense of hope for his significance as an artist.

Ardekani acknowledges that politics on this side of the globe have had their own effects on “Focus Iran 3” as well. Karamoos and all other exhibiting artists from Iran who planned to attend were denied visas due to “what they call the Muslim ban,” he says. Despite this, Ardekani sees the exhibition as a community-building platform. Beyond opening a conversation between artist and audience on an international level, it also allows Iranian expatriates and those in the second generation an unfiltered, new look at Iran and its views, views so insubordinate that many Iranian-Americans are surprised, he says.

“We WANTED TO MAKE SOMETHING THAT IS VERY DEMOCRATIC, ESPECIALLY FOR ARTISTS INSIDE IRAN.”
— ALIREZA ARDEKANI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FARHANG FOUNDATION

Additionally, “Focus Iran” builds community by connecting local artists, he says, pointing to the collaboration by L.A. artists Labkhand Olfatmanesh and Gazelle Samizay, who won this year’s second prize. The two met as exhibiting artists during “Focus Iran 2” and created a video together for this year’s submission.

A haunting six-minute film, their Bepar examines the effects of male dominance on society in terms of war and female subjugation, Samizay explains. In the video, a young woman plays hopscotch while encountering bombings and familial control. Samizay, who was born in Kabul, Afghanistan, says she and Tehran-born Olfatmanesh related to each other’s upbringing on many levels and used their collective stories as inspiration. The film is soaked with symbolism: The central figure wears wedding shoes far too large for her — an implication of societal pressures upon women and girls in some communities.

Yet, Samizay points out, far from media reports that depict these cultures as one-dimensional, the reality is much more complex. “I think it’s very easy for people to think in that part of the world that’s just the way it is — that women are oppressed, period,” she says. “We tried to show it’s more complicated — that war has an effect, there are all these different families, that interpersonal relationships have an effect, there are all these different things.

“And, as human beings, no matter what culture you’re in, you kind of have to find your own path and navigate all of that.”

Craft Contemporary, 5814 Wilshire Blvd., Miracle Mile; (323) 937-4230, cafam.org/exhibitions/current-exhibitions. “Focus Iran 3” runs through May 12; $9; open Tue.-Fri., 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sat.-Sun., 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; open until 9:30 p.m. every first Thursday.
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MARVEL TOUCHES DOWN

And the Aero screens a 7-hour, Oscar-winning Russian War and Peace

BY NATHANIEL BELL

Wide release

Friday, March 8

The highly anticipated Captain Marvel arrives on the big screen after six years in development (see Culture, page 17). Marvel Studios had been hankering after a female-driven superhero film, and now it has one with Carol Danvers (Brie Larson), a former U.S. Air Force pilot who becomes the title character after a race of scientifically advanced aliens transforms her into a powerful warrior. Larson’s outspoken desire to turn this $150 million origin story into “a big feminist movie” recently rattled the tectonic plates of the comic book fan community. Whether the extratextual controversies will impact the economic juggernaut known as the MCU (Marvel Cinematic Universe) in any significant way remains doubtful. Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck (Half Nelson) directed.

Also opening Friday, March 8: 3 Faces; An Elephant Sitting Still; Babylon; Black Mother; Ferrante Fever; Gloria Bell; I’m Not Here; The Kid; Photograph

Limited/art-house

Friday, March 8

Over the last 10 years, Christian Petzold has established himself as one of the best pure storytellers in European cinema, and Transit maintains that reputation. This quietly engrossing drama, based on Anna Seghers’ 1942 novel, updates the WWII setting to modern-day France without fundamentally changing the scenario. As an unspecified fascist power spreads its occupation throughout France, Georg (Franz Rogowski) assumes the identity of a writer who committed suicide. Knowing that a visa may be his only chance to escape, he uses the dead man’s papers to move between cities. Stuck in Marseilles waiting to buy a ticket to Mexico and freedom, Georg begins to mix with the refugees, and wait… and wait. He meets the writer’s wife (Paula Beer), who doesn’t know her husband has died; Georg is compelled to keep up the façade even as he falls in love with her. But she has a boyfriend (Godehard Giese) who intends to escape with her. An uneasy triangle forms.

Petzold maintains a firm grip on the tiller, steering a plot that deepens into a series of moral dilemmas. Not a shot is wasted. Without strain- ing, he conjures up a subtly paranoid atmosphere. The persistent sound of sirens evokes a militarized, authoritarian state.

Rogowski (Happy End) is an intriguing presence, with a sleepy, lisping delivery reminiscent of Joaquin Phoenix. Laemmle Royal, 11523 Santa Monica Blvd., West L.A.; Fri.-Thu., March 8-14; $9-$12. (310) 478-3836, laemmle.com.

UCLA launches a retrospective around the publication of a biography, Fay Wray and Robert Riskin: A Hollywood Memoir. Author Victoria Riskin offers valuable insight into her parents’ relationship, focusing on their dual careers — Riskin the screenwriter of several Frank Capra movies, Wray the star of King Kong. The series, curated by Jan-Christopher Horak, pairs a Wray with a Riskin each night. Tonight’s opening program features King Kong, the most famous of all pre-Code adventure films, and The Miracle Woman, a 1931 Capra picture starring Barbara Stanwyck. Victoria Riskin will sign her book at 6:30 p.m. UCLA’s Billy Wilder Theater, 10899 Wilshire Blvd., Westwood; Fri., March 8, 7:30 p.m.; $10. (310) 206-8013, cinema.ucla.edu.

Saturday, March 9

Victoria Riskin’s new book, Fay Wray and Robert Riskin: A Hollywood Memoir, pays tribute to her parents’ successful Hollywood marriage. UCLA’s retrospective explores their achievements. Tonight’s program begins with Meet John Doe, Frank Capra’s fable about a hobo (Gary Cooper) who’s elevated to celebrity status by a greedy politician. Riskin’s screenplay is a remarkable balance of cynicism and optimism. In The Most Dangerous Game, Fay Wray stars alongside Joel McCrea as the shipwrecked captive of an evil big-game hunter on an island vaguely reminiscent of King Kong. (It was shot on the same sets.) Riskin will sign her book before the show. UCLA’s Billy Wilder Theater, 10899 Wilshire Blvd., Westwood; Sat., March 9, 7:30 p.m.; $10. (310) 206-8013, cinema.ucla.edu.

Sunday, March 10

Sergei Bondarchuk’s War and Peace was a legendary undertaking that took five years to shoot and cost about $70 million. Based on Tolstoy’s novel, the movie won the 1969 Oscar for Best Foreign-Language Film and proved the Soviet film industry could play ball with Hollywood. The Aero Theatre will screen all 431 minutes of this staggering epic in a new restoration courtesy of Janus Films. There will be three intermissions. Aero Theatre, 1328 Montana Ave., Santa Monica; Sun., March 10, 2 p.m.; $15. (323) 466-3456, americancinemathequecalendar.com.
Joe Jackson
@THE ORPHEUM
It’s been 40 years since Joe Jackson glided onto the music scene with his signature mixture of beautifully introspective songwriting, intimately captivating showmanship and raucously exciting piano playing. To celebrate the intervening four decades — and all the ceaseless creativity that implies — Jackson tours America, with a stop tonight at the Orpheum, one of the few venues able to truly showcase the radiance of his works. You’ll hear Jackson’s renditions of songs from five of his albums: 1979’s Look Sharp, 1982’s Night and Day, 1991’s Laughter and Lust, 2006’s Rain and his latest, Fool, released in January. Besides all that, he’ll play some covers and odds and ends from other albums along the way. You never quite know what Jackson will do with the songs he commands — even his own music — so much so that every time he plays a song you love, he makes it new and unique. —DAVID COTNER

Rosie Tucker
@THE HI HAT
Among the personal interests listed on the Facebook page of Rosie Tucker, a solo singer and member of post-rock band Gypsum, are “spotting the homoerotic subtext, abandoning epic novels and DIY projects, junk art and Pauline Oliveros.” Several of the L.A. vocalist’s obsessions converge on her upcoming album on New Professor Music, Never Not Never Not Never Not. The first single, “Gay Bar,” is a loving look at the different characters at a favorite hangout. “If you told me that we’d died and gone to the gay bar, I woulda said, ‘That seems right,'” Tucker purrs dreamily. “Baby isn’t this gone to the gay bar, I woulda said, ‘That seems right,’” Tucker purrs dreamily. “Baby isn’t this the afterlife? Singing karaoke in a dive. ‘The harder-rocking’ Habit’ is an affecting lamentation about missing old friends. “I woke up bereft with no poetry left except that to be found in sweat stains and coffee grounds,” she confesses evocatively. —FALLING JAMES

Spear of Destiny
@THE REGENCY THEATER
There was a time in the mid-’80s when British mildly Goth post-punkers Spear of Destiny, led by the charmingly moody Kirk Brandon, had a string of hits, not least the00 earing call to arms of “Never Take Me Alive.” Brandon had a previous brush with near-fame thanks to the band Theatre of Hate and their “Do You Believe in the Westworld” single that seems to end up on every punk compilation album and box set. But anyway, the days of chart success are firmly behind Spear of Destiny, and now they have to be content touring as cult heroes before a loyal set of fans. In a just world, Brandon would be bigger than Morrissey. Local punk oiks The Wraith also play. —BRETT CALLWOOD

Julia Holter
@LODGE ROOM
Julia Holter’s music falls into an uncharted territory that’s somewhere between art rock, chamber pop and ambient electronica. The L.A. singer’s latest album, Aviary, is an epic work with 15 tracks, most of which clock in at well over six minutes apiece. Holter wails into a musical maelstrom on the opening song, “Turn the Light On,” a Björk-like reverie that swirls around her chaotically. “Whether” sounds like a slice of straightforward ’60s garage-rock psychedelia, followed by more experimental passages such as “Chaitius” and “Everyday Is an Emergency,” which wallow in a trance-like buzz of subdued instrumentation. Holter switches into a more playfully romantic idyll on “Les Jeux to You.” Elsewhere, she skates softly across the icy edges of the string-laden “Words I Heard.” —FALLING JAMES

Gustafer Yellowgold
@ McCabe’s Guitar Shop
Gustafer Yellowgold is the creation of singer-songwriter Morgan Taylor, and the whole endeavor is quite ingenious. Without the financial support of a Nickelodeon or Disney, Taylor has melded his own children’s character into a cottage industry. There are songs and accompanying cartoons, stuffed toys and T-shirts. Gustafer Yellowgold, incidentally, came from the sun and his friend’s pets. He looks a bit like a yellow Smurf, minus the hat and stretched out a bit. More important, the music is actually wonderful. If parents want a break after being driven to distraction by the awful warbling of The Wiggles, Morgan Taylor and Gustafer offer just that. —BRETT CALLWOOD

The Monochrome Set
@ THE ECHOPLEX
Although The Monochrome Set emerged during the British punk-rock explosion in 1978, their music soon evolved into a wide variety of styles that anticipated modern indie pop.
**Coming Soon:**

- **3/14** Biggie! - The Birthday Party!
  - Hip Hop
  - Straight Outta Brooklyn
- **3/14** Katfish - The Party
- **3/15** Club 90's
- **3/16** Tone Depth by Noise Revolt
  - Depeche Mode Night
  - "Do Me Harder"
  - Jock/Underwear Party
- **3/17** P. A. Lante Live!
  - Present El Ritmo de Sol y Mal
- **3/19** The MOTH: Rush
- **3/21** Mad Sound Presents...
  - Time to Dance: Panici at the Disco Circus Dance Party

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**3/21** Jp the Wavy / Westside J Town
  - Dance Battle Vol. 1

**3/22** Club 90's Presents
  - Club 90's

**3/22** Tryvbl - DanceAfrica / Ritmo
  - Tribal w/ Blaq Pages + Canyon Cody

**3/23** Pesadilla y Tommy
  - Real Tour USA

**3/24** Asterism Live in LA

**3/24** P. A. Lante Live!
  - Present El Ritmo de Sol y Mal

**4/6** Leachfeast | Qaalm | Witherandrot

**4/7** Sean Healy Presents
  - LA's Next Up! Hip Hop Showcase

**3/25** Vamos a Gozari

**3/28** Homeward LA

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**Fri. March 8**

**Sat. March 9**

**Fri. March 15**

**Sat. March 9**

**Sat. March 9**
Lead singer Bid was briefly in The B-Sides, a group with Adam Ant (then known as Stuart Goddard). Former Adam Ant bassist Andy Warren has been a longtime member of The Monochrome Set, although the group's lineup has changed many times during their extensive career. The compilations Volume, Contrast, Brilliance … (Sessions & Singles Vol. 1) and last year's The Monochrome Set: 1979-1985: Complete Recordings are good places to catch up with their idiosyncratic early work. Their most recent album of new material, 2018’s Maisie-world, encompasses stirring pop-rock anthems such as "Stage Fright" and the sly folk-rock ditty "I Feel Fine (Really)."

MON 3/11

**Sam Fender**

@ MOROCCAN LOUNGE

The chisel-faced Sam Fender, who stares balefully out of his photographs, part belligerent, part come-hither, is the recipient of the Critics’ Choice Award at the 2019 Brits — the English cousin to our Grammys. Besides the credibility this accolade bestows on the 22-year-old singer-songwriter, it also means Fender is treaching the same ground as Adele, Sam Smith, James Bay and Florence + the Machine, among many lauded others. In the couple of years Fender has been making the live circuit rounds, he has released an album’s worth of ear-catching singles, plus the Dead Boys EP. His song “Play God” found its way onto FIFA 19 and his suicide lament, “Dead Boys,” is a prime example of Fender’s social-commentary lyricism that is largely informed by his Northern England birthplace, not too far from where his music gets its Arctic Monkeys-meet-The Smiths flavor. —**LILY MOAYER**

**Cherry Glazerr**

@ THE TROUBADOUR

“I can’t pretend to know anything because I’m just an idiot like the rest of you.” Clementine Creevy writes about Cherry Glazerr’s new album, Stuffed and Ready. “So it’s about me coming to terms with some of my major problems and trying to look them in the face.” The 22-year-old singer-guitarist turns her insecurities into a fascinating series of punk-grunge anthems for these chaotic times. On the surging “That’s Not My Real Life,” Creevy sees herself as “your naked tree” rooted unwillingly to the Earth. “I can sit in misery like a proper woman easier to see,” she sings enigmatically. “The suits, the people don’t want me to go/They just want me to bear it all for all the women.” The L.A. trio alternate between the hazy hard rock of “Ohio” and more melodic indie-pop-asides such as “Distressor” and “Stupid Fish.” Also Tuesday, March 12. —**FALLING JAMES**

TUE 3/12

**The Briefs**

@ BOOTLEG THEATER

Kudos, whoever is responsible for putting this tour together (the same show also hits Alex’s Bar in Long Beach the following night). As if the presence of hopelessly melodic Seattle punks The Briefs weren’t enough, we also get local horror-surf punks The Flytraps, hard-hitting Latin punks Generacion Suicida and snotty punks The Stitches. They all have “punk” in common, clearly. But this is a multicultural, diverse bill that highlights all that’s great about the wider genre. People from all walks of life are welcome, and you don’t have to conform to a uniform sound (indeed, you shouldn’t). You just have to mean what you say, and give it your all. All four of these bands do exactly that. Should be a killer night. —**BRETT CALLWOOD**

THU 3/14

**iHeartRadio Music Awards**

@ MICROSOFT THEATER

Yeah, we all know by now that Post Malone smells as bad as you think he’s gonna. And we also know that his face tattoos make him look like the wall of a dive bar bathroom. But it’s undeniable that, in recent years, he’s had a massive cultural impact. He’s just one of the artists set to be honored at this year’s iHeartRadio Music Awards, alongside Cardi B, Drake, Ariana Grande, Shawn Mendes, the interminably dull Maroon 5 and the ludicrously bad Imagine Dragons. Hey, this is a celebration of the big hitters and the mega-sellers. The bands that fill arenas and get the biggest listening figures. It’s tough to debate, so just dive in. —**BRETT CALLWOOD**

**Anna Ash**

@ BOOTLEG THEATER

Anna Ash possesses a lilting, stirring voice that courses through her songs like a delicate bird. The Michigan native belies the title track of her 2017 EP Going Down Fast, by singing in a languid tempo, her vocals draped across an austere backing of electric guitar. There are traces of Emmylou Harris’ graceful intonations on such reverential country-folk ballads as “Time to Waste.” “Everybody’s telling you, what a rough day they’ve had,” Ash murmurs consolingly on the aptly titled “Sweet Voice.” The L.A. singer opens her heart further on her 2016 full-length album, Floodlights, a similarly engaging collection of laid-back pop-country. She rocks out a little on the soulful track “Holding Out,” but most of the record centers on such tranquil interludes as the heartfelt “Let Me Love You.” —**FALLING JAMES**
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