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By Lina Lecaro
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PHO LEGEND
FRI 6/7

DANCE/CULTURE

Mystical Movements
The opening night of the long-running Middle Eastern dance themed celebration known as the Cairo ShimmyQuake Belly Dance Festival will be enchantingly dark and decadent. Conceived, directed and narrated by Princess Farhana (punk legend and longtime L.A. Weekly contributor Pleasant Gehman), Mystique traces the evolution of mystical dance, meshing ritual and movement to evoke expression from ancient civilizations and the sensual performance of modern times. Opening with a traditional Egyptian exorcism, the ominous show infuses Vedic astrology, sorcery, voodoo and more with a diverse cast of local troupes and solo dancers. Glendale Civic Auditorium, 1401 N. Verdugo Road, Glendale; Fri., June 7, 7 p.m.; $15 in advance, $20 at the door. cairo-shimmyquake.com.

SAT 6/8

DANCE

Changing of the Guard
In a short decade, Pieter Performance Space has made a name as a supportive space for dance as well as for its distinctive ticketing system for performances. Admission is a non-monetary contribution to the free bar and/or boutique. The series Hi, Solo presents 10 choreographers, each with a three-minute solo, a first look at what often has evolved into larger, longer works. Over 70 choreographers have been presented during the four years Alexx Shilling and Devika Wickremesinghe helmed the series. This edition marks the passing of the torch to Miles Brenninkmeijer and Alexza Durrans, both Hi, Solo alumni. Pieter Performance Space, 420 W. Avenue 33 #10, Lincoln Heights; Sat., June 8, 8:30 & 10 p.m.; admission is a non-monetary contribution to the free bar and/or boutique. pieterpasd.com.

SUN 6/9

CULTURE

Preaching Positivity
The key to happiness is self-love. But thanks to societal standards perpetuated by the beauty industry, entertainment and, worst of all, each other (thanks, social media), it can be a hard thing to achieve. It’s true these days for everyone but in particular women, and even more so women of color. Xipi~Teca’s Love Thyself Festival aims to counter the naysayer noise by gathering women to share, connect and focus on the undercurrents of self-love, something women from marginalized groups may find more challenging due to not necessarily looking like pop culture’s “ideals” or not having the means to achieve the lifestyles we are told we should want to have. Workshops and performances include crystal healing by The Hoodwitch, a self-love demo and ritual by Maitri Healing Co., a self-love altar from Locatora Radio’s Mala y Diosa, Mapache Jewelry, meditation and yoga, music from Sin Color and Tona Flores, makeup demos, an open mic, dance, a “Divine Diosa” photo booth, DJ Hella Breezy, and a performance by revered local reina Yesika Salgado called How to Love Yourself as a Brown Fat Fly Mujer. Food and vendors galore too. La Plaza de La Raza, 3540 North Mission Road, Lincoln Heights; Sun., June 9, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; $27 (GA)–$90 (includes all workshops). eventbrite.com/e/love-thyself-selflove-festival-tickets-57601176670.

FILM/CHARITY

Getting the Best of Addiction
Take a load off and/or take the edge off when director David Lynch and comedian Russell Brand answer all your questions on consciousness and creation at this benefit for the addicts at Friendly House. Addicts need transcendence and meditation more than most, and Brand — a staunch advocate for such things — tonight receives the Freedom from Addiction Award. Lynch himself considers stress a “suffocating rubber clown suit of negativity” — and showing up tonight means that you’re literally being present, so you’re halfway there already. The Fonda, 6126 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood; Sun., June 9, 6:30 p.m.; $49.50-100. (323) 464-2121, fondatheatre.com.

BOOK 6/10

Catharsis and Healing
Eve Ensler has used the power of words to champion female sexuality in her landmark and ever-evolving 1996 play, The Vagina Monologues. She has also used her words to lay bare the secrets of her life in the memoir In
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**TUE 6/11**

**MUSIC**

Grand Finale

Yuval Sharon has been the wizard behind the curtain for some astonishing visual productions with L.A. Phil, including launching the Nimbus installation of colorful, cottony clouds above Disney Hall’s escalators; marshaling an invasion of gigantic, tripod-like Martian space creatures simultaneously across several downtown locations during Annie Gosfield’s War of the Worlds; and shuffling multiple scenic backgrounds and costumed characters like a deck of cards across a film-studio set during John Cage’s insanely sarcastic operatic mash-up Europeras 1 & 2. He concludes his three-year residency with one final tour de force — a challenging presentation of composer Meredith Monk’s rarely performed opera Atlas, a transcendent symphony of sighs and other artfully evocative, ethereal vocal exhalations. Walt Disney Concert Hall, 111 S. Grand Ave., downtown; Tue.–Wed., June 11–12, 8 p.m. & Fri., June 14, 8 p.m.; $32–$164. (323) 850-2000, lawhitech.com. —FALLING JAMES

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Create Your Own Style

Relief from the cares and woes of modern living comes in many forms, and at this evening’s Relief Printmaking Workshop you’ll use linoleum blocks to smash the state you’re in by carving your own statement into them. Such blocks are the traditional building materials of protest movements, and you can conjure up your own placard or t-shirt once you’ve mastered the form. The workshop is free, but be sure to make advance reservations for materials like $12 for a 9x12 linoleum block and $5 for 4 sheets of Stonehenge paper. Last Projects, 206 S. Ave. 20, Lincoln Heights; Tue., June 11, 6 p.m.; free. (323) 356-4225, facebook.com/events/2321562741432202 —DAVID COTNER

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**WED 6/12**

**BOOK**

What Are Words Worth?

Amanda Montell loves language. The local
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writer and self-described "wordy gal" not only revels in words and their multiple definitions, she also celebrates the secret meanings and usages of words in her new book, Wordslut: A Feminist Guide to Taking Back the English Language. The local writer parses the histories, the distinctions between, and the meanings of such loaded words as "bitch" and "woman," as well as the Valley Girl tendency to, like, use "like" too often. These seemingly simple and lighthearted digressions lead to more serious points about how language is used by those in power to divide us all. Skylight Books, 1818 N. Vermont Ave., Los Feliz; Wed., June 12, 7:30 p.m.; free. (323) 660-1175, skylightbooks.com.

—FALLING JAMES

Hollywood's Mater Familias

If you're the Hollywood Women's Film Institute and looking to kick off your 2019 festival with panache, you can't do better than to premiere Why Not Choose Love? A Mary Pickford Manifesto — unless it's to debut this stirring, stylized biopic of Hollywood’s literal founding mother at the gloriously restored United Artists Theater Pickford founded in the first place. Before she established UA itself, the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences, and the ground rules for the rights of creatives, Pickford was a young woman with a dream. Tonight’s gala also includes a pre-reception and a post-screening discussion. As singer Angela McCluskey describes the experience of playing Mary’s mother Charlotte in the film, “It was mind blowing to realize this was literally the conception of the very first name-in-lights movie star!”

Theater at the Ace Hotel, 929 S. Broadway, downtown; Wed., June 12, 6 p.m.; $50. (213) 235-9614, theatre.acehotel.com.

—Ishana Nys Dambrt

I Am a Camera

The stellar career and indelible vision of 20th-century photographer Cartier-Bresson was a game-changer for contemporary art, and even for the modern era's idea of itself. Inventor of the photographic concept of the decisive moment, Cartier-Bresson was not only the godfather of street photography and the perennial chronicler of Lost Generation Paris, but a sort of golden god to the Leica camera brand. Now Leica’s L.A. Gallery opens the new exhibition Henri Cartier-Bresson: The Eye of the Century, co-presented with classic photo emporium Peter Fetterman Gallery, offering exceptional prints of the classic images that gave us the dream of the old European city as we know it. Leica Gallery Los Angeles, 8783 Beverly Blvd., West Hollywood; opening reception: Thu., June 13, 6-9 p.m.; exhibit: Mon.-Sat., 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Sun., noon-5 p.m., through July 31; free. (424) 777-0341, leicagalleryla.com. —Ishana Nys Dambrt
Enchanting China: An Orchestral Extravaganza

Arrives in L.A. for one night only June 21st

SPONSORED BY: ENCHANTING CHINA

On Friday, June 21, the China Broadcasting Chinese Orchestra will electrify the Dolby Theatre for one night only with Enchanting China: An Orchestral Extravaganza. A celebration of Chinese culture, the show presents a diverse program consisting of Peking Opera, classical hits, and traditional folk music, transforming ancient Chinese traditions and customs into a more modern, contemporary musical experience. A beautiful combination of east meets west, the orchestra is made up of western and eastern instruments playing together in symbiotic harmony to reflect the performance’s international spotlight, a dialogue between Chinese and Western culture.

Famed conductor Pang Ka Pang, one of China’s “10 most influential cultural figures” leads Enchanting China on its US tour, bringing to the show his evocative combination of delicate precision and energetic vigor. Joining him on the stage is renowned violinist Lu Siqing, the first Asian to win the Paganini International Violin Competition, performing on his 320-year-old violin. Also accompanying the orchestra are contemporary Huqin player, actor and the honorary chief of the China Broadcasting National Orchestra, Jiang Kemei, and young Chinese Opera Academy Peking Opera actor, Zhang Gaoxiang.

The 2019 Enchanting China tour is the latest iteration of the popular show that has become famous for celebrating Chinese history and culture through music in performances for more than 70 years. A carefully crafted and designed showcase of Chinese music, the show includes Chinese favorites such as “Deep Night,” “Moonlight of the Spring River,” “Dance of the Golden Snake,” “Terracotta Warriors Fantasia,” and excerpts of Ode of Pear Blossoms by the famed Peking Opera. A breathtaking evening of sight and sound, this one-night-only event is one sure to dazzle both those knowledgeable of Chinese culture and newcomers alike.

Produced in Los Angeles by Hsi An Chen of Novartizan, Enchanting China: An Orchestral Extravaganza arrives at the Dolby Theatre Friday, June 21 at 7:30 p.m. For tickets and more information, visit www.EnchantingChina.com.
A NEW GALAXY

Disneyland’s *Star Wars*–themed attraction is an out of this world experience

*BY LINA LECARO • PHOTOGRAPHY BY STAR FOREMAN*

*Star Wars* is an essential part of pop culture for pretty much every generation living right now, permeating contemporary consciousness in ways that go beyond sci-fi nerdom, childhood nostalgia or even cinephilic obsession. Boomers created it, Gen-X made it a phenomenon and every generation that’s followed has been equally beguiled by most everything in, related and connected to this universe. Based on mythology and the “hero’s journey” construct that drives history’s most compelling classics, George Lucas’ original trilogy, as well as its prequels and sequels, continue to fascinate new audiences thanks to the timeless good-versus-evil narratives, ground-breaking special effects and simply cool aesthetics.

If there is any one entity with a more profound influence on culture in terms of entertainment, it is of course Disney. So when the most magical place on Earth joined forces with the most stirring saga in the galaxy, it was almost too big to comprehend. But things started off fairly measured. 1987’s Star Tours, the first attraction based on licensed intellectual property from outside of Disney, opened to throngs of lightsaber toting Jedi and Leia-bunned young ladies looking for a different, more empowered kind of princess. (Cosplay, by the way, is not allowed for adults at Disneyland — only “bounding,” aka referencing characters.) The ride was updated in 2011, a year prior to Disney’s purchase of Lucasfilm for more than $4 billion. The monumental meeting of imagination and genius marketing finally came to full fruition in 2017, when Disney bought 20th Century Fox, which owned the original trilogy; they only had rights to digitally remastered versions before that.

And then, the announcement that has had fans in exclamatory anticipation for the past four years: Disney was constructing a brand new *Star Wars*-ian world, a hidden 14-acre attraction behind Frontierland that would be its largest singular-theme addition in history. The immersive environment called *Star Wars*: Galaxy’s Edge promised to transport guests to Batuu, the stark and dusty planet where smugglers and bounty hunters — and the ominous First Order — await, as well as members of the Resistance (which can be you, if you play along, enhanced by Disney’s smartphone app).

“So many of us remember seeing *Star Wars* for the first time,” said Disney CEO Bob Iger at the induction ceremony and media preview for Galaxy’s Edge’s last week, two days before it opened to the public on May 31. Addressing the crowd and backdropped by the front end of the Millennium Falcon, an awesome sight all lit up in front of the night’s sky, he added, “I’m sure some of you fantasized about traveling in hyperspace and being among the most diverse set of characters imaginable. The dark side and the light side, bounty hunters, space pirates, rebel spies, and all sorts of alien misfits in all shapes and sizes. Personally I always wanted to sit up to the bar at the cantina — although nothing would’ve excited me more than to climb into the cockpit and pilot the fastest hunk of junk in the galaxy, the Millennium Falcon. And now with the opening of Galaxy’s Edge, we can do all of that and so much more.”

Iger then introduced George Lucas himself, who gave the honcho props for doing “a good job,” and said of the new attraction, “It’s Star Tours on steroids at a level you can’t possibly believe.”

“I worked with imagineers in the old days… [and] it was hard to do anything,” the famously subdued Lucas continued, before being joined by the likes of Billy Dee Williams, Mark Hamill and Harrison Ford. “Now the technology is here. This thing is amazing. Something we couldn’t even dream about 20 years ago. So I hope you enjoy it. It was a great experience for me and I think it will, uh, it’ll change your life.”

Offering fans an opportunity to engage in the wondrous worlds Lucas created, and we mean really engage — as in learn to read a new planetary language, build a droid, eat alien food (while washing it...
down with blue milk, natch) and yes, pilot the Falcon — Galaxy’s Edge may in fact, be life-changing for some. But for others, maybe not so much. It will be a major success no matter what, but as the largest expansion to Disneyland dedicated to a single franchise, the reported $1 billion project is surprisingly specific, limited even, in its focus.

It’s to be expected that hardcore Star Wars followers (those who know everything concerning its expansive lore, the characters, the storylines, past and present, and even beyond all the films via TV shows, cartoons, comics and novels) will most appreciate and “get” it, but many guests with a more casual connection to the franchise might be surprised by the lack of Disney’s signature whimsy. Unlike the rest of the park, Galaxy Edge isn’t about audacious or mindless escapism. You won’t be posing for pictures with characters or standing in stroller-stuffed lines for a bunch of thematic kiddie or thrill rides. There are only two rides total here — Millennium Falcon: Smugglers Run and the yet-to-open Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance, described in the press notes as “a climactic battle between the First Order and the Resistance… aboard a full-size transport shuttle and then into a nearby Star Destroyer on a harrowing and thrilling adventure that blurs the lines between fantasy and reality.” Both are motion simulator-driven with interactive elements that conjure realism in more ways than one.

We were obviously excited to be one of the first people to ride Smugglers Run last week, and boarding it virtually line-free was a real gift from the galaxy. But having only limited knowledge about the current films and how the craft plays into the contemporary Star Wars story, we weren’t quite clear what we were supposed to be doing. Wrangled by a weird space pirate named Hondo Ohnaka (seen in The Clone Wars and Rebels animated shows), for a smuggling mission, boarders meander through the usual maze-like line, which provides great views of the Falcon from several angles that truly do feel “real.”

One vantage faces out into Black Spire Outpost, the crossroads town where Edge is set, and it’s pretty epic. Embedded in the mountainside, the Falcon is most awesome to look at from the outside, and standing in front of it is sure to provide the ultimate selfie op. Still, what happens inside the iconic vessel is one of the most unforgettable parts of the Galaxy’s Edge experience. An immersive adventure awaits in which groups of six are given “IDs” that appoint them different jobs on the flight including: pilot, gunner and engineer. The most responsibility lies with the pilot of course, and the chance to actually helm a simulated flight of the Falcon looks pretty surreal. Obviously it will be the most popular position, but during the preview, roles and seat assignments were handed out randomly. We got the engineer, which has the least work involved (pressing buttons as they flash) and seats you in the third row of the “cockpit,” providing its own uniquely cinematic view.

The fast-paced jaunt through the galaxy is as heart-stopping and exciting as you might expect, and apparently it varies depending on the crew and the skills of all involved. In this way, it offers an individualized gamer component not unlike other Disney rides, such as Buzz Lightyear Astro Blasters. The more enemies you destroy on the way to your destination, the better your score, but the mission tally also subtracts damage incurred by the craft at its completion. If you engage the app with the ride, there are special Easter eggs too; both in terms of the setting and how cast members will treat you throughout the land based on your ride performance.

Like Universal Studios’ The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, and its centerpiece ride Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey, every detail is significant in Galaxy’s Edge and Smugglers Run, from backdrops and sets (many in Batuu’s native language, which the app translates when you scan with your phone) to the in-character conversations everyone engages in (think Renaissance Faire gab but more dramatic). The marketplace items available for purchase also have an old world Faire-style feel, from authentic looking cloaks and clothing and hand-stitched dolls to vintage-looking figurines and space creature pet puppets. No Mickey Ears or mylar balloons here, folks.
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In addition to the marketplace, there's an impressive museum-style gift shop called Den of Antiquities that lets you try and buy an array of lightsabers. But after the Falcon, Oga's Cantina will probably garner the longest lines, and not just because it's the first time Disneyland is serving booze. (The adjacent California Adventure park has always done so, and the exclusive Club 33 restaurant does, but it's invite-only.)

We tasted a couple of concoctions during a private walk-through and later at the media preview party, which also provided samples of all the cosmic culinary options. Served specimen-style in plastic cups for the opening bash, bites included "Fried Endorian Tip-Yip" (chicken tenders with mashed potatoes) and "Ronto Wraps" (roasted pork, sausage, peppercorn sauce and slaw, wrapped in a pita taco). Everything was tasty, but not amazing — at least when it came to the savory stuff.

The desserts, such as the "Oi-oi Puff" (raspberry cream puff, passion fruit mousse) and the "Batuu-bon" (chocolate cake, white chocolate mousse, coffee custard), were out of this world delicious. The drinks in the cantina are inventive enough to make you believe they're from another planet, offering a twist on tiki-style mixology, infused by juices, rums and textural touches (gelatinous bobo-type balls floating inside). We sampled the "Yub Nub" (named after the celebration song sung by Ewoks in Return of the Jedi) and it was yum yum.

As for the cantina vibe, it's a sight to behold for sure, but the robot DJ Rex is a little too Short Circuit-esque for our tastes and his mid-tempo techno mix was meh. We'd have much preferred to see a live band of costumed creatures playing music from the original film. But as with most amusements here, one must remember this world is supposed to be real and in the present, not retro. At least the land itself realizes the importance of atmospheric music; orchestral sounds from Star Wars' soundtracks are played throughout the park, creating a dramatic ambiance that, like everything here, sucks you in.

Disney really went for something different here. From Edge's rusty industrial look to the mindful inclusion they provide every single person who enters, this is a realistic and authentic replication of a planet from the Star Wars universe right now. This means — perhaps disappointingly for some — it is missing many beloved characters from the past. Chewbacca and Storm Troopers are around, but there's no Vader, no Luke or Leia, no Yoda or Jabba, and definitely no Jar Jar Binks! Apparently you can still see and interact with these characters over in Tomorrowland, where Star Tours will continue to run indefinitely, an odd old school ode to Lucas' early films that serves as a contrast to the innovative new surroundings of this latest creation.

"In designing the Star Wars universe, we don't consider it science fiction or fantasy — we think of it more as a period piece, and we look at it almost from a documentary point of view," said Doug Chiang, Lucasfilm's vice president and executive creative director, in a media statement. "Star Wars design is grounded in reality, and we're creating a place that is believable, authentic and real. Then we exaggerate that reality and add in a distinct visual vocabulary to turn the ordinary into something extraordinary. For this land, we wanted to create something fresh and also timeless — just like our films."

Galaxy's Edge marks a big shift for the land that Walt built, moving away from cartoonish enchantment into more sophisticated, filmic experiences. It wasn't made with small children in mind (take them to Fantasyland or Toontown) and yet, it's also not really targeted at older folks, either. Those of us who grew up on Lucas' original trilogy will probably always think that its characters and storylines were the best, and a significant "resistance" has emerged when it comes to comparing them to more recent offerings.

If you are one of these people, you can still enjoy Galaxy's Edge, but not to the full extent. To get the most out of this majestic menagerie, one must let the past go, make an effort to learn a little about where the Star Wars universe has gone and how it's evolved, and appreciate the bold new wonders that Disney imagineers and Lucasfilm's innovators came together to create — wonders that can only be found in this particular galaxy, far, far away.
Guess what you’ll find at Commerson? Really good Mexican food. Don’t go expecting a Mexican restaurant, though. Commerson’s food is typically Californian, like smoked salmon Benedict, waffles and French toast for brunch, fried chicken sandwiches for happy hour and, for dinner, pasta Bolognese, burgundy-braised short ribs and agnolotti filled with English pea puree mixed with mascarpone. The peas are fresh off the farm, because Commerson endorses the farm-to-table approach.

You might not even notice the Mexican dishes, because there are so few. Each is a gem, thanks to executive chef Sal Garcia. Garcia is from San Juan Guelavía, a small town in the state of Oaxaca, and cooks what he learned there.

Commerson’s chilaquiles are like those his grandma made and his family ate on Sundays. Eggs any style come on a base of cut-up tortillas in tomato sauce with roasted guajillo chile. On top are queso fresco, guacamole, pickled red onions and micro cilantro.

The fried masa cakes called molotes will appear soon. In Oaxaca molotes are street food, a Sunday afternoon snack, Garcia says. He stuffs them with chorizo and shrimp and serves them on pureed pinto beans.

Shrimp and chorizo also combine in burguers, seasoned with a dash of achiote paste. The brioche buns are spread with Sriracha and served with cilantro. The fried masa cakes called molotes will appear soon. In Oaxaca molotes are street food, a Sunday afternoon snack, Garcia says. He stuffs them with chorizo and shrimp and serves them on pureed pinto beans.

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If you’ve been to Puerto Escondido on Oaxaca’s Pacific coast, Garcia’s red snapper ceviche may taste familiar, but it doesn’t look the same. There, ceviche is spooned onto crisp fried tortillas. At Commerson, Garcia presents it with plantain chips.

Of course there are fish tacos. Garcia sautées the fish — red snapper — because this suits its delicate nature better than frying, he says. His way is a departure from the classic Ensenada taco, which is filled with fried, batter-coated fish. The Commerson tacos come with pineapple-tomatillo salsa and slaw drizzled with Mexican crema and lime juice.

Garcia came to the United States as “another Mexican dreamer,” he says, and put in years at Spago, Wolfgang Puck Catering and as chef de cuisine at Wilshire Restaurant.

He got the job at Commerson by impressing owner Raymond Eng with a plate of swordfish and lentils, not Mexican food. Eng cautioned Garcia that he did not want Commerson turned into a Mexican restaurant. So Garcia concentrates on dishes such as miso-brushed Scottish salmon with baby bok choy and braised daikon; seared scallops; and Spanish octopus, cooked sous vide, then grilled over charcoal and served with cranberry beans, haricots verts, braised cipollini onions and arugula pesto.

There’s no limit on things Mexican at the bar, however, and general manager Brandon Bernstein is working up a strong mezcal program. He’ll soon have 15, from entry level to advanced. And he’s planning a booklet of mezcal tips for those new to the drink. Oaxaca may be the center of mezcal production, but Bernstein also sources mezcals from the states of San Luis Potosí and Guerrero and from Mazatlán in the state of Sinaloa.

The dessert menu isn’t Mexican, but pastry chef Liz Sencion comes close with a baked Alaska surrounded by mango compote. Inside the meringue are tres leches cake and passion fruit and coconut ice creams. It’s flamed at the table with 151-proof rum.

Commerson is named for Philibert Commerson, a French naturalist who sailed around the globe in the 18th century. The connection is that Commerson the restaurant wants to be just as international as Commerson the naturalist.

Opened on Halloween 2016, the restaurant occupies a corner of La Brea Avenue, just south of Wilshire Boulevard. The look is industrial chic — large, airy, with communal tables, a busy happy hour and seating outside as well as in.

Commerson, 788 S. La Brea Ave., Mid-Wilshire; (323) 813-3000, commerson-restaurant.com. Dinner Tue.-Thu. & Sun., 5-10 p.m.; Fri.-Sat., 5 p.m.-mid. Lunch Tue.-Fri., 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Brunch Sat.-Sun., 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Happy hour Tue.-Sun., 5-7 p.m.
David Bradley's vibrant retrospective at the Autry Museum of the American West brings together a cross-section of his works, offering a curated look at his tenure from 1972 to 2001. The exhibition, which opened in November and runs through April 2020, provides an intimate glimpse into the artist’s evolution and the rich cultural tapestry that informs his practice.

Bradley was born to a Native mother and a non-Native father and grew up on the Minnesota Chippewa reservation. His early experiences as an “in-between” figure shaped his understanding of identity and influenced his later work. The exhibition highlights Bradley’s blending of historical narratives and modern aesthetics, creating a visual dialogue that challenges traditional perceptions of Native identity and experience.

Bradley’s art is a testament to his ability to bridge the past and present, using a range of mediums such as painting, sculpture, and performance to explore themes of memory, place, and cultural continuity. His works often feature vibrant palettes and cartoon-like figures, which are playfully dismantled in complex compositions that upend learned assumptions and原有的 perspectives.

The exhibition features a number of other works that were created during a time when Native peoples in American society were beginning to realize the potential for self-expression and cultural revitalization. Artists such as Rick Bartow and Harry Fonseca were instrumental in this phase, and their contributions are showcased alongside Bradley's.

The Autry's chief curator, Alan K. Trachtenberg, comments, “David Bradley’s retrospective is a testament to his life's work and a celebration of his contributions to Native art. His ability to engage with cultural narratives in a subversive, sly, and subtle way is truly inspiring.”

The exhibition is not just a showcase of Bradley's art, but also an invitation to reflect on the role of art in challenging and reshaping perceptions of identity and place. As a “precocious” student with a “very strong sense of identity,” Bradley's work serves as a reminder of the importance of cultural preservation and the power of art as a tool for understanding and shaping our world.

For more information, visit mistahb’s vibrant retrospective at the Autry Museum of the American West or contact info@brstrials.com.
DISPATCHES FROM “INDIAN COUNTRY”

David Bradley’s vibrant retrospective at the Autry transcends boundaries, affirms importance of humor

BY BEIGE LUCIANO-ADAMS

O n a visit to “Indian Country” at The Autry Museum, the final venue for Santa Fe-based artist David Bradley’s comprehensive and deeply satisfying retrospective, a group of fifth graders effortlessly picked up references to Warhol, Botero and Magritte. Their avuncular leader waxed on about lost societies, anthropomorphs and commercialization; of the cash that regularly pops up in Bradley's brimming tableaus and is broken up, his siblings sent to different foster families. “It’s the product of centuries of paternalistic attitude of ‘we know better than you’... shed native culture and embrace the mainstream,” Scott said, describing this phase in Bradley’s youth. “So Bradley grows up with that thinking that his own culture is different, less desirable, outside the mainstream.”

Bradley was born to a Native mother and a non-Native father and raised on the Minnesota Chippewa reservation, but the family was broken up, his siblings sent to different (non-Native) foster families. “It’s the product of centuries of paternalistic attitude of ‘we know better than you’... shed native culture and embrace the mainstream,” Scott said, describing this phase in Bradley’s youth. “So Bradley grows up with that thinking that his own culture is different, less desirable, outside the mainstream.”

Of course, some of the most interesting art arises out of exile — physical or otherwise — in-between spaces and the ability to straddle cultural and psychic divides, and Bradley’s capacity to see the world from more than one vantage point simultaneously is a defining, magical element. His “Indian Country” is both inside and out, forest and trees; the marginalized spaces that Native people are relegated to, and the whole country recast through a Native experience.

While serving in Latin America and the Caribbean as a Peace Corps volunteer, Bradley developed a keen interest in local indigenous folk art traditions, Scott explained. “‘Those tend to be very colorful, very vibrant,’ a focus he took with him to the newly formed Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, where he absorbed the Santa Fe Indian School painting style of the early 20th Century. It was there he met Rick West (then on the IAIA’s Board of Regents, now CEO of the Autry) and became the organization’s first student board member. A longtime friend, West remembers Bradley as a “precocious” student with a “very strong sense of identity” in those days. Years later, he highlighted Bradley’s importance as a Native artist with an “incredible voice in addressing subjects Native and among those who pushed the boundary between modern and contemporary art, and art inside and outside the Native community. “He connects the two... In his ironic sense of humor, in being on one hand Native on the other looking from outside, trying to make sense of the intersection. Sometimes it's difficult, and you can see that in his art,” West said.

“His art has political punch and point,” West said. “But at the same time — which I think saved Native people from dying psychologically — he has a wonderful sense of humor. So his art is in that respect transparent, it's communicative.”

Responding to Bradley’s assertion in a 2015 interview that he became and remains “the most blacklisted Indian artist in the country,” in part due to his activism against the market that arose around inauthentic Native arts and crafts, West suggests that times have changed. “Most people don’t have the same response to that now, as when David thought he was being yelled at by large sectors of the art community,” he said with an audible smile, and underlying affection.

Where earlier generations of Native artists focused more on preserving knowledge and tradition from communities at risk — “they could try to protect it by visualizing it” — West said, Bradley’s generation moved “to a point where we are engaging the outside world on questions that are very important to us.”

There is perhaps no example timelier than that of our impending ecological doom, which Bradley engages in references to material destruction, desecration and poisoning of tribal lands. His critiques of the commodification of Native identity, meanwhile, point to the dark irony in marketing ornaments of a culture while threatening the environment that sustains it.

As Native peoples, West said, “these are things that are important to us — but should be important to all of us.”

Autry Museum of the American West, 4700 Western Heritage Way, Griffith Park; though Jan. 5.
**FILM**

**FROM THE ASHES**

*Dark Phoenix* is last entry in standalone *X-Men* franchise

**BY NATHANIEL BELL**

Welcome to *L.A. Weekly*’s Movie Guide, your look at the hottest films in Los Angeles theaters this week — from indie art house gems and classics to popcorn-perfect blockbusters and new movies garnering buzz.

**Opening wide**

**Friday, June 7**

*Dark Phoenix* sustains the *X-Men* franchise by focusing primarily on Jean Grey, the telepathic mutant whose tremendous abilities put her colleagues at risk. In this direct sequel to *X-Men: Apocalypse*, our superheroes must deal with Jean’s transformation into the titular creature, an entity of pure energy and cataclysmic power. Father-figure Professor Xavier (James McAvoy) and arch-nemesis Magneto (Michael Fassbender) both want to control her for different reasons. Simon Kinberg directed this 12th installment in the comic book saga (counting the two *Deadpool* movies), which essentially erases the events of *X-Men: The Last Stand*.

*The Secret Lives of Pets 2* is a 3D computer animated family flick brought to you by the creatives at Illumination. Its predecessor, released in 2016, hit the public in the funny bone and grossed $875 million worldwide. The plot, to the extent that it matters, involves Max the Jack Russell Terrier (voiced by Patton Oswalt) and the seismic life changes that result from his owner getting married and having a kid. Hijinks and life lessons ensue, with a roster of comedians voicing various domesticated animals. Harrison Ford has a substantial role as Rooster, a Welsh Sheepdog who mentors his young friend.

**Limited/art-house**

**Friday, June 7**

*Pavarotti* is Ron Howard’s documentary portrait of Luciano Pavarotti, the great operatic tenor whose recordings crossed over into the mainstream. Fusing footage of famous live performances with interviews from those who knew him, the /film is both grand and intimate.

*The Last Black Man in San Francisco* premieres at Sundance earlier this year, it was shot over a period of years and finally restored. Shot at the Million Dollar Theatre in collaboration with the Los Angeles Conservancy’s Last Remaining Seats program, the work of celebrated South American director Luis Schoenfinkel will present a special screening of the 1956 Argentine film *Los tallos amargos*.

**Saturday, June 8**

The Latin America Cinemateca of Los Angeles will present a special screening of the 1956 Argentine film *Los tallos amargos* at the Million Dollar Theatre, 1328 Montana Ave., Santa Monica; Sun., June 9, 7:30 p.m.; $10. (323) 466-3456, americancine-mathexcalendarr.com.

Also opening June 7: *The Black Godfather, Burn Your Maps, Late Night, Leto, Katie, Says Goodbye, The Other Side of Heaven 2, Papi Chulo*...


The astronomical success of *Bohemian Rhapsody* means more rock & roll biopics tumbling down the pipeline, an exciting trend for music fans. But Hollywood likes a sure thing, so when a film finds a winning formula, they don't veer off course. The new Elton John biopic/musical, *Rocketman*, does veer off — way off — which should be a good thing, but it also discarded the most important ingredients for this kind of vehicle: a concise narrative and actual character development. The filmmakers assumed the great music alone would make the rocket fly. It doesn't.

*Rocketman* opens with Elton John (Taron Egerton) strutting down a celestially-lit hallway, donning one of his outrageous stage costumes. When John enters an AA meeting in said wardrobe (a forced comic scenario if there ever was one), we already know we're in trouble. Where *Bohemian Rhapsody* at least tried to explore Freddie Mercury's career with some gravity and authenticity, *Rocketman* pinballs between an exuberant La La Land-style musical, an MTV videoesque fever dream and a screwball comedy. It possesses a fascinating sincerity, but the narrative feels imbalanced. For a good part of the film, it's hard to tell if the filmmakers are even taking their subject seriously (which is odd considering John himself was reportedly involved). By the time it's clear they do, the whole affair is bloated by melodrama.

The over-the-top approach works in terms of production design, wardrobe and look of the film, at least. *Rocketman* does take you back to the ’70s — a decade imbued with style, ambiguity and excess. And chronology-wise, it hits all its marks (something *Rhapsody* didn't). We watch Elton John grow up in a small English town with an obtuse father and belligerent mother, as he takes piano lessons and dreams of stardom. Soon, he meets his lifelong songwriting compatriot Bernie Taupin (Jamie Bell). After his breakthrough show at the Troubadour, he skyrocket to fame, enters a torrid affair with his manager John Reid (an excellent Richard Madden), struggles with his homosexuality and hits bottom with alcohol and cocaine.

The film’s trajectory is rushed and farcical, and it all bustles through the years of John’s success much too quickly. Even the concert scenes lack texture, clarity or excitement, and some of the other sequences are so painfully staged and fake-feeling it’s difficult to penetrate the gloss for anything real or human. Though the film has received deserved kudos for being the first major studio venture to include gay male sex scenes, these are as empty as everything else. Egerton is quite good, but he’s left with the task of excavating a discernible persona from a script that simply doesn’t have one. First, John’s a vulnerable lad just trying to make it, then suddenly he’s a snarling, drug-addled rock star. Dropping some of the musical numbers and focusing on his transformation would have been more insightful and more enjoyable for everyone.

OK, but at least we get to hear Elton John’s amazing music, right? Well, sort of. The songs are peppered throughout the movie without a care for when they were actually recorded. And you hardly ever get to hear the real John’s voice. The actors belt out the classics throughout. I found this the biggest disappointment of all.

Music biopics tend to be predictable, but I love them, especially if I love the artist. Like many, I’m an Elton John fan who doesn’t know a lot about the man. I hoped this movie might enlighten me. But when I watch a 12-year-old actor try to sing a classic while the townfolk dance behind him like a rock & roll version of *Oliver*, I don’t leave the theater any wiser about one of our greatest music artists. Nobody does.

It’s obvious John and the director were trying for something different, and in that sense, they succeeded. But somehow this movie has no heart, even though the filmmakers go to incredible lengths to convince you it does. The subject comes off as more of a cartoon than a real person. Without a grasp of the protagonist, a film that could have soared is just a frustrating and flat portrait, with great looks but no soul, all glitter and no gold.
MUSCLES THEM WITH A CERTAIN POGUENT IMMEDIACY WITH SECURITY, BUT FONTAINÉ'S SONGS ARE ALL ORIGINAL.

CLAUDINE'S ORIGINS MAY BE MURKY, BUT HER MUSIC IS MESMERIZING AND COOLLY SEDUCTIVE IN A MUSIC SCENE IN WHICH EVERYONE WANTED TO BE A JAZZ SINGER, SO I STARTED WITH JAZZ.

IT'S HOW I'VE BEEN SINCE A CHILD, SINGING LIKE THAT. " FONTAINÉ SAYS ABOUT THE Singing Made Claude Fontaine One of the Better Experimenting with Different Genres."

THEY'RE ALL VERY TRUTHFUL SONGS ABOUT AFFAIRS OF THE HEART. "THEY'RE ALL VERY TRUTHFUL SONGS ABOUT AFFAIRS OF THE HEART."

AS POWERFUL AND ASSURED AS BOTH GROUPS WERE AS POWERFUL AND ASSURED AS BOTH GROUPS WERE, WHAT WERE THE NAMES OF HER PAST PROJECTS? "I'D RATHER NOT SAY, " FONTAINÉ SAYS POLITELY. "SORRY BUT I DON'T THINK HE'S REALLY PROUD OF THE RECORD."

I WAS ACCOMPANIED BY BRAZILIAN GUITARIST FABIO LIMA (ZIGGY MARLEY), BASSIST RONALD McQUEEN (STEEL PULSE), AND DRUMMER ROCK DEADRICK (ZIGGY MARLEY). DONNA), BASSIST RONALD McQUEEN (STEEL PULSE), AND DRUMMER ROCK DEADRICK (ZIGGY MARLEY).

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Claude Fontaine’s origins may be murky, but her music is mesmerizing and coolly seductive

BY FALLING JAMES

In a music scene in which everyone knows everybody and every musician seemingly has a well-known past, Claude Fontaine is a mystery.

The pop singer emerged from out of the blue in April with the release of her mesmerizing self-titled debut album on the local label Innovative Leisure. The record is neatly divided between lilting reggae and Brazilian-style pop, and while there is nothing new about a modern singer performing those styles individually, it is unusual to combine them in such a coolly seductive way.

The music and moods on Claude Fontaine evoke the classic eras of rocksteady and bossa nova. On initial listen, one assumes that the entrancing reggae idyll “Hot Tears” and the positively dreamy Brazilian fantasy “Pretending He Was You” must be covers of vintage romanticized past eras. One is in love with jazz as a teenager, but I found that singing standards was limiting because there was more that I wanted to express with this voice.

It took a chance visit to a record store for Fontaine to find a satisfying way to express herself vocally. “I was living in London on and off for about a year. I lived about a block away from Honest Jon’s. I was always passing it with my groceries,” she recalls, until she finally went in one day when her arms weren’t full. “I had never really listened to reggae and Brazilian music before. From the moment I walked in, I was literally intoxicated and captivated. It truly was a fairy tale to me. It was the kind of a moment where you were cast under a spell. I would go in every few days. I knew that this was music I had to try my hand at. … I came back to Los Angeles with a suitcase full of records and started working on the new record.”

Was it intimidating working with such musicians as Tony Chinn and Airto Moreira? “I was so honored that they even wanted to play on the record,” Fontaine says about the album, which was recorded at Sage and Sound in Hollywood and Kingsize Soundlabs in northeast L.A. “I thought it was a pipe dream to send them my demos.”

Whether she’s cooing Latin pop or pumping out reggae, the singer is always lyrically focused on affairs of the heart. “They’re all very truthful love songs about themes that I’ve experienced through my relationships,” she says. “‘Hot Tears’ is about feeling like a lifetime of a [lover’s] lifestyle of drugs and alcohol has been prioritized over love. ‘Cry for Another’ was the first song I recorded, before I had a label. That was about someone slipping through my fingers. I knew that person wasn’t in any shape or form the right person, but I still felt a longing for that person.”

I wrote [“Pretending He Was You”] almost as a projection of the future — if I wasn’t with that person anymore, how I’d feel. … Most of the songs are about one particular relationship. I think he’s really proud of the record.”

Claude Fontaine appears at the Natural History Museum, 900 Exposition Blvd., Exposition Park; Fri., June 7, 5 p.m.; $20. (213) 763-3466, nhm.org.
MUSIC

GO HEAR

FRI 6/7

French Vanilla
@ ZEBULON
A lot of dance-music performers insist that they want to make you think, but French Vanilla are one of the few bands whose lyrics really will get your brain to do the twist while you’re in a glittery daze out on the dance floor. On their new album, How Am I Not Myself?, the L.A. quartet pump up their compelling post-punk grooves with subversive sociopolitical intentions. In director P.J. Charles’ video for the pulsing disco track “Suddenly,” the band members camp it up as boorish royalty before their oppressed servants finally rebel. And yet the song is also about the bittersweet paradox of how “going out in itself can feel like a performance, accompanied by the feeling of emptiness after it’s over.” “All the Time” is another slinky, sax-driven dance workout, whereas “Lost Power” soars with a more Joy Division/Cure-style exhilaration. —FALLING JAMES

Cherry Glazerr
@ FIGAT7H
After wowing at Coachella last year and then a few months later opening for old school punk supergroup Generation Sex at the Roxy, it’s clear that Cherry Glazerr and mainwoman Clementine Creevy are now in the enviable position of being able to play just anywhere to just about anyone, and lighting the place up. “I just feel like we have the best fans ever — everyone is so awesome, and I love our fans,” Creevy recently told this writer, and her gush is understandable. The third studio album, Stuffed and Ready, was released in February, and it brought with it lineup changes as every album does. But the quality never drops, and the fanbase looks to be in it for the long haul. This will be an odd little gig at the FIGat7H mall, but worth a look. —BRETT CALLWOOD

SAT 6/8

Playboy Jazz Festival
@ HOLLYWOOD BOWL
The litany of deaths in the world of jazz in 1979 — bassist Charles Mingus, pianist Stan Kenton and Greek singer Demetrio Stratos, to name a precious few — imbued the revival year of Hugh Hefner’s Playboy Jazz Festival with a sense of purposeful urgency. It was as though something rare and brilliant was saved by gathering all those players — as much as any given lightning can be captured in any common bottle. This year is the 41st Annual Playboy Jazz Festival, and some of the stellar and skyclad performances you’ll experience there happen courtesy of — among others — Béla Fleck & the Flecktones, Benny Golson’s 90th Birthday Quartet (Golson turned 90 back in January), Terence Blanchard, the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, Sheila E., The Family Stone, Kool & the Gang, Quiana Lynell, and Maceo Parker. Also Sunday, June 9. —DAVID COTNER

SUN 6/9

Kari Faux
@ MOROCCAN LOUNGE
Singer-songwriter Kari Faux hails from Little Rock, Arkansas, but traveled to Los Angeles to pursue her dreams. Aside from the sonically-appealing soundscapes she creates, it’s her lyrical content that fans can appreciate most. Kari makes it a point to be 100 percent real in all that she does, including singing about personal experiences and the most relatable situations. Her Cry 4 Help EP is a journal of experiences in mental health and the importance of keeping your sanity in this fucked-up world. Songs like “Medicated” and “Leave Me Alone” speak for themselves. —SHIRLEY IU

MON 6/10

Lucy & La Mer
@ QUE SERA
“I’m a rebel babe/I ain’t gonna break,” Lucy LaForge declares on her band Lucy & La Mer’s swinging song “Rebel Babe,” which features a pointedly feminist rap break by Bugsy. Unlike this year’s The Holy Spell, and while he’s not the first name you think of when considering the Ramones, he’s always done the band proud. —BRETT CALLWOOD
CATCH.ONE

Fri. June 7

Los Angeles Pride: Official After Party

Fri. June 7

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Sat. June 8

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other riot-grrl anthems such as Bikini Kill’s “Rebel Girl,” LaFarge doesn’t use punk-rock vitriol to announce her identity and celebrate the blurring of boundaries between gay and straight, feminine and masculine. Instead, the local singer relies on her unabashed pop instincts to forthrightly revel in her “right to misbehave.” Even when she’s standing up for herself, LaForge can’t help challenging listeners with her sunny, poppy melodies and hopeful messages of inclusiveness and tolerance. As part of Lucy & La Mer’s Love Is Gay tour, the local indie-pop band is joined by likeminded allies WASI and Polartropica.

---BRETT CALLWOOD---

Alexisonfire

@ THE WILTERN

Canadian post-hardcore band Alexisonfire have been around since 2001, although they took a three year break between 2012 and 2015. They went out on a farewell tour and everything, only to change their minds. Oh well. The most recent album predates all that — 2009’s Old Crows/Young Cardinals — but this year they’ve dropped their first new material since then. February saw the release of the song “Familiar Drugs” (with a video following in April), and then “Complicit” was released in May. It’s typically brilliant, noise Alexisonfire post-hardcore intensity, and hints at great things for the forthcoming album. Drug Church also plays these two shows, on Wednesday and Thursday.

---BRETT CALLWOOD---

Patty Griffin

@ THE THEATRE AT ACE HOTEL

“Mama’s worried all the time/She tells everyone she’s fine,” Patty Griffin discloses somberly on “Mama’s Worried,” the opening ballad from her self-titled new album. “People in their stylish clothes/They look at us and turn up their noses/A hunger deep inside me grows.” Griffin’s lyrics speak to a lot of the anxieties that people are sharing during these uncertain, politically divisive times, and yet they also might allude to her own personal vulnerability after battling against and defeating cancer over the past several years. “Where I Come From,” “Luminous Places” and other songs of home, identity and longing are characterized by Griffin’s delicate but determined vocals and spare acoustic-guitar settings. The record represents a triumphant return from silence after Griffin dealt with breast cancer following the release of her 2015 album, Servant of Love.

---FALLING JAMES---

Zoë Keating

@ LARGO AT THE CORONET

In many ways, the low tones of the cello are more visceral and deeply convulsive than the high-flying melodic sorties of a violin. In Zoë Keating’s hands, the cello becomes an even more expressive instrument that’s capable of expansive grandeur on her 2018 EP Snowmelt. These “four songs from the end of a long winter” include the aptly titled “Icefloe,” a slow-moving soundscape that’s distinguished by Keating’s mournful streaks of cello, which move majestically across the ice like heavy, looming, slowly twisting clouds. “Possible” is another instrumental passage that’s propelled by quivering shivers of cello that unwind and unfurl like flags in a cold, austere wind. Keating is a former member of Rasputina and has recorded with Amanda Palmer, but she reveals more of her range in her own engrossing compositions.

---FALLING JAMES---

Imogen Heap

@ THE GREEK THEATRE

Imogen Heap has been working behind the curtain for the past few years. She hasn’t toured the United States since 2000, and the English singer’s most recent full-length album is Sparks, which was released in 2014. Heap composed the music for the 2016 play Harry Potter and the Cursed Child, which was released as an album last year. The gauzy Harry Potter score revealed intermittently intriguing glimpses of the singer’s prowess at creating electronic passages, but Sparks was a better and more satisfying work that was highlighted by Heap’s inventive vocal shadings on such tracks as “Entanglement” and the breezy choral exhalations of “The Listening Chair.” She’s accompanied by Guy Sigsworth, her longtime collaborator in the electronic duo Frou Frou, on her current tour.

---FALLING JAMES---

My Life With the Thrill Kill Kult

@ 1720

Windy City outfit MLWTTKK formed in 1987 when core duo Buzz McCoy and Groovie Mann endeavored to make an art film called My Life With the Thrill Kill Kult. Tragically, the movie was never completed, but the soundtrack that the pair prepared was released that same year on Wax Trax! They clearly had a good time making it, because they adopted the name for an ongoing project and, the following year, put out the debut full-length, I See Good Spirits and I See Bad Spirits. The rest is history — the band is a Wax Trax! favorite, alongside the likes of Ministry and Revolting Cocks, though with a sleazy disco sound that sets them apart. This year’s In the House of Strange Affairs album sees the band on typically shit-kicking form.

---BRETT CALLWOOD---
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