Boldly Bodacious
L.A.'s Burlesque Scene Is Thriving
BY LINA LECARO & NIKKI KREUZER
BIKE, BEERS & GOOD TIMES
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**CONTENTS**

**GO LA...7**
A chance to eat your way through Little Tokyo, a salute to independent radio renegades and an artistic survey of the master of three mediums, Rembrandt, and more to do and see in L.A. this week.

**FEATURE...11**
L.A. Weekly explores the history of L.A.’s resilient burlesque scene and its women-empowering pioneers, as well rounds up the the best burlesque troupes at present. **BY LINA LECARO AND NIKKI KREUZER.**

**EAT & DRINK...17**
With another edition of dineL.A. upon us, here are the restaurants you need to add to your itinerary. **BY MICHELE STUEVEN.**

**ARTS...19**
Multimedia artist and Ai Weiwei protege Zhao Zhao explores themes of societal domination in new show. **BY WYATT CLOSS.**

**FILM...20**
**NATHANIEL BELL** explores the movies opening this week, including the nostalgia-inducing reimagined *Lion King.**

**MUSIC...25**
The Weekly follows up with breakout punks Potty Mouth as they discuss their label’s unique focus on social justice. **BY BRETT CALLWOOD.**

**ADVERTISING**
**CLASSIFIED...30**
**EDUCATION/EMPLOYMENT...31**
**REAL ESTATE RENTALS...31**
**BULLETIN BOARD...31**

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Women’s voices take center stage at Chapman University’s College of Performing Arts

THEATRE
Department of Theatre’s upcoming season entitled “#HERSTORIES: A Celebration of Women’s Voices and Women’s Stories.”

DANCE & MUSIC
Department of Dance and the Hall-Musco Conservatory of Music will be highlighting works composed and choreographed by women throughout the 2019-20 concert season.

CHAPMAN CELEBRATES SCHOLARSHIP GALA
Chapman’s scholarship gala will be “Celebrating the Female Voice” in November as proud Chapman parent, Vanessa Williams, receives the Lifetime Achievement in the Arts Award.

For details, visit Chapman.edu/voices or contact the box office at (714) 997-6624.
Eat Little Tokyo

Previously, only giant monsters were able to say that Tokyo was a delicious little place — but now we humans can take part in all the consumption and contentment involved in Delicious Little Tokyo 2019. You’ll get two days of gustatory delights, including but not limited to free stuff, cooking demonstrations and workshops. From the 13th Annual Sake and Food Tasting Extravaganza to the Little Tokyo Society’s Food Walking Tour to Miso Ball Making 101, you’ll be sure to come away with a greater appreciation of this constantly unfolding culinary blossom prospering in the heart of the city. Little Tokyo; Fri., July 19, 7 p.m. & Sat., July 20, 9 a.m.; prices vary. (213) 663-6927, golittletokyo.com/delicious. —DAVID COTNER

Independent Radio Renegades

Modern mainstream radio is a vast wasteland of corporate music programming and empty-headed talk-radio partisans preaching to the converted, but there’s a secret universe of local underground radio stations that supply the actual soundtracks to our lives. At Zebulon’s Open Transmission, the focus is on four independent radio stations — KXLU, Dublab, KCHUNG and Orange Radio — that champion “the most unique, obscure, diverse and at-times bizarre artists [who] shift the cultural landscape of the city.” Turn on, tune in and drop out as DJs, musicians and artists TBA celebrate college station KXLU, the sampling experimentalists at Dublab, arty Chinatown radio station KCHUNG and rap-minded Orange Radio. Zebulon, 2478 Fletcher Drive, Elysian Valley; Sat., July 20, 7 p.m.; free. (323) 663-6927, zebulonla.com. —FALLING JAMES

Setting the Score

The L.A. Live Score Film Festival is an annual event that aims to pair short films with original music scores, which are performed live during screenings by Helix Collective, which presents the fest with the Academy of Scoring Arts. This year, Jon Legard’s film about free diving, A Deep Breath, is matched with music by Cali Wang. Director Vaibhav Arora’s Enigma (which involves a man “suffering from the illusion that he transcends space and time”) is soundtracked by composer Philip Timofeyev. Other directors include Meaghan Hellmers, Marco Martinez, Devaughn Hooper, Jonathan Samukange and Vionna Lam, with music by such composers as Lasse Elliger, Sergei Stern, and Isabelle Engman & Gerardo Garcia Jr. Barnsdall Gallery Theatre, 4800 Hollywood Blvd., East Hollywood; Sat., July 20, 6 p.m.; $25. eventbrite.com/e/los-angeles-live-score-film-festival-2019-tickets-61911072685. —FALLING JAMES

Spiritual Connection

Rob Zabrecky’s new memoir Strange Cures, explores a life full of miraculous situations and eccentric role models, starting with a delusional uncle who almost almost killed him as a youngster and later, delving into his life as musician surrounded by the colorful characters of the L.A. alternative music scene (centered around the legendary coffeehouse and music hub called Jabberjaw). Though his band Possum Dixon was a fave in rock circles, Zabrecky is best known today as a magician and web host. Other Side With Zabrecky features one-on-one sessions with famous figures and the spirit of their choice. For this book event moderated by L.A. historian Chris Nichols, “a unique presentation” is promised. With Zabrecky (who grew up in the San Fernando Valley before succumbing to Hollywood and Silver Lake’s subversive charms) and Nichols coming together at a venue like the Valley Relics Museum, expect history, hilarity and maybe a ‘lil hocus pocus too. Valley Relics Museum, 7900 Balboa Blvd., Hangar C3 & C4, Van Nuys; Sun., July 21, 5-7 p.m. $12. (818) 616-4083, valleyrelicsmuseum.org. —LINA LECARO

Explore L.A.’s Literary Landscape

Los Angeles remains well-known as a constantly amazing haven for independent bookstores, and now the independent booksellers and publishers that fill those bookstores have an event that joins all literary forces. Hosted by the Los Angeles Review of Books, LitLit: The Little Literary Fair gathers booksellers and publishers in one place so that the literary landscape of Los Angeles unveils itself like never before. You’ll also see authors and art book makers in conversation with local publishers such as Angel City Press, LARB/USC Publishing Workshop, Not A Cult, Red Hen Press, Tia Chucha, and many, many others. Hauser & Wirth, 901-909 E. 3rd St., downtown; Sat.-Sun., July 20-21, 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; free. (213) 943-1620, hauserwirth.com/events/25139-litlit-little-literary-fair. —DAVID COTNER

Creative Cash and Carry

Part open studio, part fine art and artisanal design market, painter Renee Fox’s Hot Shop series turns your Sunday afternoon into an art acquisition adventure and creative patio party. The curated offerings include small-scale, affordable, original works ranging from wearables to wood sculpture, drawings, prints, miniature paintings, mixed media and plush sculptures, functional design and mural maquettes, collage, and jewelry by a panoply of local favorites like China Adams, Doug Harvey, Kent Twitchell and Fox
BOOKS
The Never-Ending Story
Unheard L.A. is a peripatetic story hour featuring a rotating extended family of local writers who periodically gather at locations around town to explore and illuminate the experience of being alive in Los Angeles. Tonight, Unheard L.A. presents “Letters to Our City,” a special all-stars type thing in which beloved poet, tour guide, city historian and author Mike Sonksen, whose new book of the same name collects his own insights on the metropolis. “We all belong to the city,” he writes. “The dialogue is a never-ending story…the city is ours.” With that spirit in mind, the night includes the work of more than a dozen poets, essayists, journalists, and storytellers including Lee Boek, Sara Borjas, Rocio Carlos and Natasha Deón — and of course, Sonksen himself, who will share his writings even as he acts as host for the evening. The Crawford Family Forum, 474 S. Raymond Ave., Pasadena; Wed., July 24, 7:30-9 p.m.; $12. scpr.org/events. —SHANA NYS DAMBROT

DANCE
Experience the Vanguard of Art
A known incubator for cutting edge dance and other performing arts, REDCAT’s New Original Works (NOW) Festival opens the first of three weekends, each offering an early look at three artists or groups. This initial week includes performance art from Sola Bamis considering skincare routines and “womanist” survival, zakh dorn and Danielle Dahl manipulating table top dioramas and a train set, and choreographer Katherine Helen Fisher and artist Andrew Ondrejcek celebrating the divine feminine. Week 2 finds Paul Outlaw’s horror movie nod to Franz Kafka, while choreographer Kate Watson-Walace, composer Hprizm and visual artist Verónica Casado Hernandez collab on a live collage, plus interdisciplinary artists Alexandre Segaé and Amy Ruhl demonstrate their “socialism app.” Week 3 concludes the fest with a musical theater work from Source Material, Austyn Rich considers front-line black and brown troops, and Poor Dog Group’s co-founder Jesse Bonnell goes solo. REDCAT, 631 W. 2nd St., downtown; Thu., Sat., 8:30 p.m., through Aug. 10; $20/$16 students. redcat.org/now19. —ANN HASKINS
SUMMER JAZZ NIGHTS

TUESDAYS 7PM
CENTRAL COURT/YARD

7/23
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7/30
José Rizo’s Mongorama

8/6
Marquis Hill Blacktet

Nominal donation for wine, beer, and cheese selection with 100% of proceeds benefitting Project Angel Food. Schedule subject to change.

Produced by KJAZZ 88.1 FM RADIO.
Women continue to fight for equal pay and the right to make choices about our bodies, the art form of burlesque boldly spotlights self-expression, providing a forum for owning and celebrating sexuality on our own terms. It did so centuries ago as performers incorporated striptease into a myriad of theatrical presentations, and of course, during its heyday in the '40s and '50s, when pin-ups and movie stars were celebrated for their unbridled sensuality and presence, and the cabaret and vaudeville worlds exposed a slightly naughtier kind of stage seduction.

But when it comes to true empowerment, we must point to the '90s and the "neo-burlesque" movement in L.A., which reclaimed the "stripper" motif, shattered stereotypes about what kinds of women might want to do it (and what kinds of women audiences would like to see do it) and provided a feminist subtext and punk rock spirit to the proceedings. Having covered this world pretty much since it started, I still marvel at burlesque's enduring popularity and feel grateful for its continued passion and sense of community.

From bad movies to those seeking to police women's bodies, the art form has survived it all to keep empowering and pleasing women audiences would like to see do it) and what kinds of women might want to do it (and what kinds of women audiences would like to see do it) and provided a feminist subtext and punk rock spirit to the proceedings. Having covered this world pretty much since it started, I still marvel at burlesque's enduring popularity and feel grateful for its continued passion and sense of community.

The movement in L.A. was at Little Pedro's (now gone) on Vermont Avenue in Los Feliz, but it went on to take over several venues across L.A. Lasting about 10 years, the Hammer inspired a documentary, a book and arguably every burlesque gal in L.A. who followed. Many ladies who were part of the group went on to produce and co-produce other shows too, some still doing it to this day, including Rita D'Albert (Lucha Va Voom) and Pleasant Gehman (Belle Book & Candle), as well as Annie Sperling (Rock & Roll Strip Show).

Here, I take a look at the people, places and groups that have made it happen and those still doing it to this day.

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Selene Luna (Dog & Pony Show) and actress Margaret Cho (Sensuous Woman), to name a few.

A little after V.H. staked its sexy claim, dancer Bella Beretta started doing burlesque shows at the Derby, with the swing scene and fashion flair of the moment (Bettie Page—red lipstick, etc.) providing a fitting old school backdrop. L.A. burlesque was exploding and the ladies making their mark (Carr, Kitten DeVille, Penny Starr Jr., Kari French and a little lady from Orange County by the name of Dita Von Teese) were starting to get noticed by the mainstream and music worlds, garnering parts in music videos and TV. The Miss Exotic World Pageant curated by the legendary Dixie Evans was created in 1990, but it really started to build steam thanks to burlesque's growth in L.A. and New York in the mid- and late-'90s, bringing dancers from across the country and the globe together in Las Vegas, including big names like NYC's Dirty Martini and Catherine D'Lish (who trained Dita).

Speaking of “training” and teaching, burlesque is a lot like drag in this regard — most every performer has a “burlesque mama” who showed them the ropes in terms of stage moves, costume and themes. There is an unspoken rule about acts and music and not using another gal’s idea, but, of course, these have been broken. (Yes, this has led to drama among some performers.) Healthy competition fuels the camaraderie and sense of community that women who do burlesque share. In fact, most of the dancers mentioned here and in our “Hottest Tasseled Troupes” list have shared bills at some point. Burlesque in L.A. is incestuous in the best possible way.

Gatherings such as Vaginal Davis’ Bricktops in West Hollywood, The Toledo Show (which featured incredible live jazz music embellished with burlesque and still does in Santa Monica), Kitty Diggins’ Dandy, Penny Starr Jr.’s Victory Variety Hour, Lili Von Schtup’s Monday Night Tease at Three Clubs and Courtney Cruz’s Devil’s Playground at Dragonfly, took the spectacle and attitude of Velvet Hammer and
infused their own unique ideas into the mix in the 2000s, adding modern touches like diverse music styles and niche themes — shows devoted to *Star Wars*, glam rock or horror, for example.

The phenom went truly mainstream with Robin Antin’s Pussy Cat Dolls shows at the Viper Room (pre-pop group) making the gossip columns thanks to celebrity guest spots, which in turn saw burlesque hit the big screen via Drew Barrymore’s *Charlie’s Angels* movie and later, the *Cher* and *Christina Aguilera* flick *Burlesque*, a movie that couldn’t have misrepresented the real scene worse if it tried. The homogenization of burlesque by Hollywood might have killed a lesser movement, but there was still plenty of skin to bare and creativity to share in this city.

Glitter, glamour and moxie made burlesque a force in L.A. clubs but as it grew, new ideas came into play too. From choreography and story-telling to fetishism and comedy, burlesque could not (and still can’t) be pigeon-holed. Dita became a superstar (even making the cover of *Playboy*) while similarly beguiling models like Mosh won hearts and continued to book appearances in L.A. and around the world. From choreography and story-telling to fetishism and comedy, burlesque could not (and still can’t) be pigeon-holed. Dita became a superstar (even making the cover of *Playboy*) while similarly beguiling models like Mosh won hearts and continued to book appearances in L.A. and around the world. From choreography and story-telling to fetishism and comedy, burlesque could not (and still can’t) be pigeon-holed. Dita became a superstar (even making the cover of *Playboy*) while similarly beguiling models like Mosh won hearts and continued to book appearances in L.A. and around the world. 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driving south on La Brea near the intersection of Romaine, you might notice the street sparkle with neon colors as the sunlight reflects off of L.A.'s dankest destination, Herbarium, the newest dispensary on the block, whose colorful interior and friendly budtenders create a unique space to serve the needs of both recreational and medicinal consumers. From rose-petal blunts to THC-infused topical cream, Herbarium's shelves host a variety of unique products to suit every need. Herbarium caters to every type of cannabis consumer, from seasoned smokers to the canna-curious, and all of their budtenders are passionate about educating customers on the best ways to fit cannabis into their lifestyles.

The Herbarium name is familiar to those that have been a part of L.A.'s medicinal cannabis community for the past decade, but with recreational cannabis becoming legal in 2018, owner Adie Meiri has been able to turn the space into a colorful and inviting cannabis mecca. Perhaps the most exciting and unique feature of Herbarium is its flower-grown in house by one of the most prodigious growers of his generation, Herbarium is quickly becoming known for its potent in-house strains such as Runtz, Garlic Cookies, and Wedding Crashers #9. Adie's vision for a new type of cannabis experience doesn't end with an otherworldly interior and fantastic flower. “I want to turn Herbarium into the Willy Wonka Factory of cannabis.” With a new renovation in the works, customers will be able to experience aspects of the cannabis industry that, until now, have remained a mystery to most consumers. “Customers will be able to see a grow room, learn how cannabis is processed, and even watch edibles being made.” And this vision doesn't stop in L.A. Adie plans to spread his unique idea for cannabis experiences across California. This year, Herbarium's second location opened in Needles, CA, aptly named Herbarium 66, and promises to be a warm welcome to those traveling into the state. Visit www.herbarium.la to order delivery directly from our shop (L.A and surrounding areas) or follow us @theherb.la, and next time you’re looking for cannabis guidance or just a really good smoke, stop by the shop and let us show you a truly unique customer experience in a one of a kind dispensary. We'll be waiting for you.
L.A.’S BEST TASSEL-TWIRLING TROUPES

Whether you have a predilection for the macabre or just plain bizarre, the nerdy or the classy, the city’s burlesque scene has something for you

BY NIKKI KREUZER

Each Wednesday, as the clock strikes midnight, these L.A. Bombshells ready their fishnets and fringe, taking over the basement of the Townhouse in Venice, a spot haunted by a Prohibition-era speakeasy past. Eclectic and diverse, this troupe delivers a wide range of burlesque styles, from aerial, pole and contortionist acrobatics to traditional cabaret. Founded in 2013 by dancer Lulu Mon Dieu, the show varies weekly with a rotating number of guest artists, but the core cast consists of Lulu, “Femcee” Lux LaCroix, pole dancer Danielle G and performance artist Coco Ono. The Bootleg Bombshells have created unique shows based around such themes as religion, goth and the 1980s, as well as shows inspired by music artists Prince and Rob Zombie. bootlegbombshells.com.

Cherry Boom Boom

As American as hot apple pie (or cherry), this magical monthly show led by “Femcee” Lux LaCroix, pole dancer Danielle G and performance artist Coco Ono. The Bootleg Bombshells have created unique shows based around such themes as religion, goth and the 1980s, as well as shows inspired by music artists Prince and Rob Zombie. bootlegbombshells.com.

Belle, Book & Candle

Stirring up a spellbinding cauldron of witch’s brew, this magical monthly show led by Pleasant “Princess Farhana” Gehman and Shana Leilani incorporates sorcery, hoo doo and the occult into their burlesque revue held the third Wednesday of each month at the historic El Cid in Silver Lake. With a bevy of provocative dancers, the troupe explores the dark arts in a seductive way, entrancing the audience with magical themes as well as tarot readings, divinations, energy healings, rituals and supernaturally inspired music (L.A. Weekly's culture editor Lina Lecaro is the DJ). The night intentionally shares a name with the 1958 Kim Novak film centered around a sexy enchantress who casts a love spell. facebook.com/pg/bellebookandcandle/.

WTF-lesque

For a walk on the weirder side, here’s a monthly show that might even make John Waters roll his eyes and appreciatively grin. Every first Thursday of the month, shock value comes out to play in a revue featuring drag, comedy and sideshow, upholding its claim to be the messiest burlesque in the universe. In fact, ponchos and tarps are distributed to those in the “splash zone” at the Canby, a Reseda dive bar where WTF-lesque performs. Produced by the aptly named Brandy Sniffer and Tiffy Twister, some of the troupe’s recent burlesque themes revolved around serial killers, Tim Curry, Monty Python and Danny DeVito. facebook.com/wtflesque.

Babylon Cabaret

With lots of sizzling, steamy imagery, Babylon Cabaret takes its inspiration from the red-hot jazz days of the 1920s to 1940s, gin-soaked gangsters, bee-stung lips and smoky red-light bordellos from New Orleans to Berlin. With original live music performed by Cathouse Red’s jazz combo, the troupe also highlights comedians, magicians, singers and a topless tap dancer. Swanky and sassy, the performances are produced by Miss Spent Youth and Cathouse Red, taking place at El Cid in Silver Lake. Audience members are encouraged to dress in period styles. babyloncabaret.com.

Peepshow Menagerie

From B-movies to comic books to monsters, Peepshow performs edgy, nerdy burlesque aimed at freaks, geeks and those with eclectic tastes. Now in its 11th year, the troupe’s campy variety-style show is the longest running monthly burlesque production in Los Angeles. peepshoemenagerie.com.

Hells Belles

It’s no mere coincidence that this hot as Hades burlesque troupe shares a name (sort of) with a notable song by guitar-driven rockers AC/DC. Dressed in leather and lace, these badass chicks are serious about rock & roll, integrating it into their suggestive choreography. Combining cabaret stripes with a hard rock sensibility, this group brings the hits, hard and hot. hellsbellesburlesque.com.

Dirty Little Secrets

Sort of like an all-you-can-eat buffet, DLS brings a lot of choices to the table. Comprised of more than 20 performers — both girls and guys — they are the area’s largest burlesque troupe, serving up an extensive array of dance styles set to themes such as Game of Thrones, Harry Potter and “Nightmare Before Stripping.” diryllittlelescretsburlesque.com.

Lucha VaVoom

Exploding with gusto, guts and spectacle, Lucha VaVoom raises pulses with a uniquely exuberant combination of burlesque, comedy and lucha libre masked wrestling. Now in its 17th year, this troupe vivaciously teases the audience from the wrestling ring, anchoring a dynamic extravaganza with sass and sex appeal. luchavavoom.com.

The Dollface Dames

Cheeky and spirited, this old school style troupe possess an endearing seductiveness, charming with time-honored cabaret and fan dances, audacious fire dances, aerial work and even a balloon-popping number. Their theme shows include Bill & Ted’s Burlesque Adventure, Geek to Chic and a vintage-styled WWII Pin-up Revue. thedollface dames.com.

Quintessential Wonder Nasty (QWN)

Pushing boundaries, questioning sexual stereotypes and opening eyes and minds in the name of freedom, the gender fluid performers of Quintessential Wonder Nasty categorize their cabaret style as “queerlesque.” In sassy rainbow wigs, fishnets and teasing lingerie, their act incorporates old school burlesque, drag, aerial work, fire dancing, magic and more. wonder-nasty.com.

The Damn Devillez

Tantalizing with diabolic intent, these impish vixens bring unpredictability and dangerous eroticism to their burlesque. Whether wrestling in fake blood or teasing with knives, the mood is dark, edgy and powerful. Founded in 2016 by Harley Harpur, this horror-inspired troupe is adept at straddling the fine line between fear and sexuality. thedamnde villez.com.

Sultry Sweet Burlesque

As their name implies, the sirens behind Sultry Sweet tempt with a certain degree of joie de vivre and verve. Now in its eighth year, the show features touring burlesque artists as well as local performers who shimmy to a live band between comedy and magic acts. sultrysweetburlesque.com.

Cherry Boom Boom

As American as hot apple pie (or cherry), speedway shows and fringed cowgirl boots, this grinding galleon brings an alluring desirability to our country’s down-home stereotypes, from the flag to motocross. Set to rawk hits, the dancers flirtatiously work the room, exhibiting a come-hither pride for the good of U.S.A. cherryboomboom.com.
TEASE, If You Please
BY NIKKI KREUZER

Whether you have a predilection for the macabre or just plain love to have a little fun, there's no shortage of twisted entertainment in Los Angeles. The Bootleg Bombshells are a burlesque troupe that meets this dual mandate, making nightly appearances downtown and at the Black Rabbit in Silver Lake. With a bevy of provocative dancers, the ladies of Luxe present a highly energetic show that might even make John Waters roll in his grave.

STIRLING TROUPES
L.A.'S BEST TASSEL-TEASE

The Damn Devillez is a horror-inspired troupe that is dark, edgy and powerful. Founded in 2016 by Harley Harpurr, this gender fluid performance ensemble is serious about rock & roll, integrating it into their suggestive choreography. Combining cabaret style as “queerlesque,” Lucha VaVoom is the perfect touch of burlesque with a Latin twist. The Damn Devillez is a come-hither pride for the good ol’ U.S.A. and lucha libre masked wrestling. Now in its 11th year, the troupe’s campy show features touring burlesque artists as well as a rotating number of local performers. Lucha VaVoom is dark, edgy and powerful, and they serve up an extensive array of dance styles set to themes such as Game of Thrones, Bill & Ted’s Burlesque Adventure, and TV industry, where they all strut the hustle.

The Bootleg Bombshells deliver a wide range of styles set to themes such as Victorian burlesque, '80s and '90s goth sounds, and the throbbing music and the dark decadence of the ‘50s, ‘60s and ‘70s. They are different each night, becoming the perfect “Princess Farhana” Gehman and Shana Prince and Rob Zombie. The Damn Devillez is dark, edgy and powerful, and they serve up an extensive array of dance styles set to themes such as Game of Thrones, Bill & Ted’s Burlesque Adventure, and TV industry, where they all strut the hustle. Lucha VaVoom is dark, edgy and powerful, and they serve up an extensive array of dance styles set to themes such as Game of Thrones, Bill & Ted’s Burlesque Adventure, and TV industry, where they all strut the hustle.
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KOREA
DINE L.A.: FROM THE MOUNTAINS TO THE SEA

No matter what corner of the Los Angeles region you look in or what fare you’re in the mood for, the annual event has something to offer at an affordable price.

BY MICHELE STUVEEN

Whether it's an intimate poolside dinner in a cabana, a traditional Oaxacan lunch in Torrance or an evening overlooking the San Fernando Valley from the top of the Verdugo Hills, here’s a taste of the lineup of the San Fernando Valley from the top of the San Fernando Valley.

Jaffa | Beverly Grove & Palms
The pair of Michelin Bib Gourmand restaurants will offer a $39 three-course dinner for dineL.A. Menu highlights include a salatim sampler, lamb couscous with Moroccan spices, dried figs and cilantro; market vegetables served over freekeh, harissa and avocado hummus; and baklava with farmers market fruit. Dinner: $39.

District | Downtown
The new American eatery at The Bloc will offer lunch and dinner dineL.A. menus; lunch highlights include an heirloom tomato salad and curried cauliflower steak, and dinner will include a glass of wine and three-course meal, with options including jalapeno cornbread, house-smoked BBQ prime beef brisket and a summer berry pavlova. Lunch: $20. Dinner: $29 (without wine)/$39 (with wine).

Blackship | West Hollywood
The Japanese-Italian restaurant in West Hollywood will offer a three-course meal with options including Hamachi crudo with daikon and coriander, hamachi bolognese, and a Mi-so-butterscotch budino. Dinner: $49.

Meat On Ocean | Santa Monica
High-end steakhouse Meat On Ocean will offer a dinner menu priced at $59 per person that includes an appetizer, entrée selection and hearty sides. For those partaking alone, entrées include an 8-oz. filet mignon with chimichurri, frites with their 28-day dry aged ribeye, garlic fries, salsa verde, and sticky toffee pudding with medjool dates and Tahitian vanilla bean ice cream. Dinner: $59.

The Odyssey | Granada Hills
Menu highlights include mango habanero shrimp with jumbo shrimp, mango habanero sauce, bleu cheese dressing, cilantro, celery and organic jidori chicken with pan roasted, caramelized onions, au gratin potatoes, seasonal vegetables and chicken jus. Lunch: $25. Dinner: $39.

The Reef | Long Beach
Grilled shrimp and scallops are featured with Hawaiian bacon fried rice inside a pineapple as well as herb roasted prime rib with garlic mashed potatoes and seasonal vegetables. Lunch: $25. Dinner: $39.

Madre | Torrance
New York strip steak with bordelaise sauce and wild Alaskan halibut with grilled cauliflower, tomato coulis and basil oil. Parties of two can indulge in Meat On Ocean’s shareable steak program with a choice of a bone-in ribeye ranging anywhere from 27 to 29 oz. or a 26- to 28-oz. porterhouse from Double R Ranch.

Water Grill | Downtown & Santa Monica
Seafood institution Water Grill will be serving up dineL.A. lunch menus ($35) at two locations — downtown L.A. and Santa Monica. Entrée options include favorites such as the wild Alaskan halibut with maque choux and sorrel pesto, wild mahi mahi caponata with sherry gastrique and wild California white sea bass with rustic ratatouille, garlic emulsion and basil oil.

Castaway | Burbank
Take in the sweeping valley views while dining on grilled octopus with charred piquillo, 24-hour tomato, squid ink vinaigrette, steak and goats barbacoa. Lunch: $20. Dinner: $29

Viviane | Beverly Hills
The intimate poolside gem at the Avalon Beverly Hills will offer dinner for $49 during dineL.A., featuring exclusive items from chef Michael Reed. Menu highlights include heirloom tomatoes and burrata with peach, pickle onion, quinoa and herbs, jumbo lump crab and uni with squid-ink spaghetti, lemon, jalapeno salsa verde and herbs or pan-seared branzino filet with summer vegetable carpaccio, roasted cherry tomato, smoked eggplant puree and roasted garlic yogurt puree. Dinner comes with a choice of either Eton mess or a chocolate mousse for dessert.

H Café | Koreatown
This restaurant is serving dinner for $29 in the 50-seat restaurant which blends minimalist art deco and classic prohibitionist décor. Menu items include heirloom tomato and peach Salad with basil cashew pesto, aged balsamic or pan-seared salmon with summer vegetable succotash plus a wild mushroom and summer vegetable risotto.

Chao Krung Thai | Beverly Grove
L.A.’s Thai institution has super deals with lunch at $15 and dinner for $29. Lunch will include a glass of Thai iced tea or a Thai pancake with condensed milk, and dinner will offer a choice of either a glass of red or white wine or a Thai beer.

Dinner menu highlights include Ken- om Jeeb: shrimp and ground pork marinated with garlic, coriander, black pepper, thin soy sauce, water chestnuts, wrapped in wonton topped with fried garlic. Served with spicy soy vinaigrette.

Dinner menu highlights include Tom Kha Chicken: warm coconut milk with lemongrass, kaffir lime, galangal, combined with fresh lime juice, fish sauce, mushrooms, cilantro, and Thai chilies. There’s also Khao Soi Beef: stewed egg noodles in homemade curry both simmered in coconut milk, fish sauce, soy sauce, palm sugar, and topped with fried noodles. Served with fish sauce, palm sugar and kaffir lime leaves.

Same Same | Silver Lake
Same Same will be offering dinner for $29 during dineL.A., that includes a glass of either sparkling or red wine. The menu is based on co-owners Annie Daniel and Katy Noochlaor’s family recipes, featuring authentic Thai street food, market-driven specials and bar snacks. Dinner includes Som tum Thai (Bird’s eye chili, garlic, dried shrimp, peanuts, fish sauce, lime, tamarind, snake bean, cabbage, tomato) and Panang curry with shrimp in coconut cream.
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Zhao Zhao’s “Control” maps fissures in the fabric of consciousness and examines domination in society with a new show at Roberts Projects Los Angeles

BY WYATT CLOSS

Zhao - Control (installation view) Courtesy of the artist and Roberts Projects

True to the gospel of minimalism, the simplicity of presentation obscures the complexity of process, tradition and all manner of existential questions in the work of Zhao Zhao. Step back from these large-scale, finely detailed works; crook your head if need be and then zoom all the way in. In the spareness of that moment, you will find the connections.

As humans, we are all fractured in some way. We’ve all had times of resistance or resilience, bending or breaking. It is a connection point of humanity, but one we may not always want to realize. In two sets of works at Roberts Projects — fabric panels and gourd-shaped marble sculptures — Zhao Zhao surfaces these themes with a guided curiosity of his own circumstances, ancestors and mentors.

One of those mentors was noted Chinese artist and social activist Ai Weiwei, who showed all over L.A. last fall himself and who once functioned like Obi-Wan Kenobi to exhibit at PACE, one can only imagine the response to Zhao Zhao’s darker work by the authorities. We suspect the word “crackdown” was taken quite literally.

At Roberts Projects through August 10, the artist’s fabric works — all embroidery on silk and titled “Constellation 5-8” — continue his experimentation and fascination with the piercing of violence and the healing of resistance. One notable previous mounting, “Constellations” was shown at Art Basel Hong Kong in 2013, where the artist experimented with taking gunshots to glass, a feat hard to pull off under Chinese law.

This series was predated by an earlier work “Fragments,” inspired by patterns formed in glass when Zhao Zhao’s head crashed into a windshield during a car accident. These fractures, these holes, these wounds if you will, are interconnected via hairline threads — as if jumping from one hub of sorrow to another. Consider this: one of the reasons why glass breaks the way it does is the loose arrangement of its molecules. The random arrangement of these molecules makes glass brittle when stress is applied. According to the American Physical Society, cracks grow because that applied pressure causes atomic bonds to stretch at the entry points. This makes the meticulous, painstaking needlepoint work of Zhao Zhao (which by the way, is made in collaboration with his mother) as he captures the fractal, organic patterns of the fissures all the more revealing, impressive and oddly soothing.

With a little spatial imagination, it becomes possible to perceive the sculptural work shown in relationship to the textile pieces in a parallax view. If the holes that make up the embroidered wall-based constellations are laid flat, their array becomes a bird’s-eye view map for the layout of gourd-shaped marble sculptures. Titled “Control,” these are set in the center of the room, surrounded by the fabrics, and the objects are arranged as constellations themselves. Except in their case, we are inside the patterns, around them, right up on them, connecting with our bodies as well as eyes as we walk among them.

Across the two series, these multiple connection points show strength, resilience and an ability to withstand the test of time. In Chinese culture, gourds go beyond the traditional function of vessel to also symbolize sky and earth, or rather, the symmetry of the universe. In black and white marble, these iterations appear like so many obtuse pawns on a modern art chess board. And yet each shape made is distinct in shape and veining, crafted from an intense molding process Zhao Zhao employs, which is shown on an accompanying video in the gallery’s back room.

In a statement the gallery notes that, “the prevalence of human interference to create powerful forms of symmetry, beauty and control, is an easy metaphor for how people — both individually and collectively — comply to another’s domination.” That’s a heavy way to think about control, even heavier than these exquisite marble gourds. But it’s about right — and easier to wrap your mind around in the presence of these idea-driven but assertively materialized objects.

Roberts Projects Los Angeles; 5801 Washington Blvd., Culver City; Tue.-Sat., 11 a.m.-6 p.m., through Aug. 10; free. (323) 549-0223, robertsprojectsla.com.
FILM

WHERE’S HELEN?
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THE CIRCLE OF LIFE
Disney’s latest live-action remake and rock star ruminations
BY NATHANIEL BELL

Welcome to L.A. Weekly’s Movie Guide, your look at the hottest films this week — from indie art house gems and classics to popcorn-perfect blockbusters and new movies garnering buzz. Check here every week before you make your big screen plans.

Opening wide:
Friday, July 19

A whole six weeks have elapsed since Disney’s last-live action remake of a revered animated classic. But fret not, The Lion King has come roaring in to fill the void. All the characters are here: Simba (Donald Glover), Nala (Beyoncé), Scar (Chiwetel Ejiofor), Timon (Billy Eichner), Pumba (Seth Rogen) — everybody. Even James Earl Jones has returned to reprise his role as Mufasa, the wise-meined king. Director Jon Favreau (The Jungle Book) told the computers what to do; cinematographer Caleb Deschanel (The Black Stallion) made sure they did it. In a few more months, we get Lady and the Tramp. The circle of life goes on.

Limited/art-house:
Friday, July 19

Into the Ashes is a lean, brooding indie about a young ex-con (Luke Grimes) whose attempts to settle down into a quiet life are interrupted by the arrival of his former partners-in-crime. As any fan of noir can guess, things get bloody as the past comes back to bite the protagonist. Aaron Harvey wrote and directed on location in rural Alabama with a good eye for nocturnal detail. Monica Film Center, 1332 2nd St., Santa Monica, Fri., July 19, various showtimes; $9-$12. (310) 478-3836, laemmle.com.

David Crosby: Remember My Name centers on the legendary singer-songwriter and founding member of Crosby Stills & Nash. Now 77, the silver-haired, mustachioed rocker ruefully recalls his triumphs and mistakes — mostly his mistakes — in a sometimes painfully candid, consistently engrossing series of interviews. These are intercut by director A.J. Eaton with a young ex-con (Luke Grimes) whose attempts to settle down into a quiet life are interrupted by the arrival of his former partners-in-crime. As any fan of noir can guess, things get bloody as the past comes back to bite the protagonist. Aaron Harvey wrote and directed on location in rural Alabama with a good eye for nocturnal detail. Monica Film Center, 1332 2nd St., Santa Monica, Fri., July 19, various showtimes; $9-$12. (310) 478-3836, laemmle.com.

Directed by fellow band members and admirers. Laemmle Playhouse (also playing at the Town Center 5), 673 East Colorado Blvd., Pasadena, Fri., March 22, various showtimes; $9-$12. (310) 478-3836, laemmle.com.

Luz is a throwback to 1980s body horror, and it’s shot on 16mm to prove it. The director, Travis Wilkerson, relates a dark incident from his family’s past — the murder of a black man by one of Wilkerson’s white ancestors — in a public display of corporate guilt and public penance. Wilkerson’s performance at LA Filmforum marks the film’s Los Angeles premiere, and possibly the final live version of the film before it finds a permanent home on disc and online. Velaslavasay Panorama, 1122 W 24th St., downtown; Tue., July 23, 8 p.m.; $12. (323) 466-3456, lafilmforum.org.

Tuesday, July 23

Did You Wonder Who Fired the Gun? is a documentary and multimedia performance originally screened/performd at Sundance in 2017. The director, Travis Wilkerson, relates a dark incident from his family’s past — the murder of a black man by one of Wilkerson’s white ancestors — in a public display of corporate guilt and public penance. Wilkerson’s performance at LA Filmforum marks the film’s Los Angeles premiere, and possibly the final live version of the film before it finds a permanent home on disc and online. Velaslavasay Panorama, 1122 W 24th St., downtown; Tue., July 23, 8 p.m.; $12. (323) 466-3456, lafilmforum.org.

Wednesday, July 24

The Great Hack is a compelling documentary about the wide, wonderful world of data exploitation, a concept crystallized by the infamous Cambridge Analytica scandal. Directors Karim Amer and Jehane Noujaim (The Square) organize the bits and pieces into a pressingly urgent narrative. Monica Film Center, 1332 2nd St., Santa Monica, Wed., July 24, various showtimes; $9-$12. (310) 478-3836, laemmle.com.

Eat Drink Man Woman, Ang Lee’s incisive drama about three sisters trying to make a life for themselves in modern Taipei, earned an Oscar nomination for Best Foreign Language Film in 1995. Lee juxtaposes scenes of domestic strife with sharp comedic intrusions and luscious close-ups featuring traditional Chinese delicacies. Laemmle Royal (also playing at the Playhouse 7 and Glendale), 11523 Santa Monica Blvd., Sawtelle, Wed., July 24, 7 p.m.; $13. (310) 478-3836, laemmle.com.
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A LOOK AT OUTFEST 2019

A behind-the-scenes preview of this year’s edition of the venerable LGBTQ film festival

BY MICHAEL COOPER

Strange Angel

FILM & TV / TIME FOR TEA

LGBTQ representation on screen has come a long way throughout the history of cinema. We’ve been portrayed in theaters as the sissy, the villain, the perverted or the murdered for years, as studios made movies geared toward white, cisgender, heterosexual 18- to 34-year-olds. Then, in 1982, two UCLA students who were looking to see themselves on screen started a three-day media conference that has in the years since become what we now know as Outfest Los Angeles. Every summer, Los Angeles is home to the organization, whose mission is to promote equality by creating, sharing and protecting LGBTQ stories on the screen. For one believe we’re lucky to have it, and this year’s festival seems to be bigger than ever.

“We broke our record by nearly 40 percent on the amount of submissions that came in this year,” says director of festival programming Mike Dougherty. “We program according to the emerging themes that we see throughout the year and want to highlight every facet of the LGBTQ community, so everyone can see themselves represented in the stories we’re sharing on screen.”

Deputy director Kerri Stoughton-Jackson, who has been with the organization since 2000 (first as a contractor), and Dougherty attribute the increase in submissions to both the absence of the Los Angeles Film Festival as well as the fact that Outfest is a qualifying festival for the Academy Awards. “I also think that digital filmmaking, even film filmmaking, has really democratized the process and opened it up to a larger pool,” says Stoughton-Jackson.

In terms of this year’s titles, Outfest really tried to find content that thematically fit into the festival. “One thing that we did want to be mindful of is the 50th anniversary of Stonewall was this year and we have this completely wild connection,” says Dougherty. “And a lot of people want to move beyond the coming out narrative, which is, especially in mainstream queer films, where the story’s often lie. Not that coming out narratives do not play a crucial role in queer storytelling still, but we’re moving to a point where queer identity is crucial to the story but not the only driving force in it.”

So, what are some of the highlights for this year’s festival?

Event Films

This year, Outfest will be holding four events at the John Anson Ford Theatres in Hollywood. The first film shown here on July 24 will be Trixie Mattel: Moving Parts. “Trixie Mattel is probably one of the most famous drag queens to come out of the RuPaul’s Drag Race circuit and the doc is about her story coming from nothing and becoming this superstar,” says Dougherty. “Trixie Mattel will appear live to perform both music and standup prior to the film screening.”

Another famous funny lady appearing live to promote her film is Kathy Griffin, whose film Kathy Griffin: A Hell of a Story premieres at Outfest the following night. (It previously premiered at the South by Southwest Film Festival.) “We are actually going to have kind of an updated version of it where she added some behind-the-scenes moments into it, but it is a standup special about her and the aftermath of her Trump photo shoot that got her into a lot of hot water,” says Dougherty. “And Kathy will appear prior to that screening for an onstage conversation, which is going to be moderated by Louis Virtel, [writer of Throwing Shade].”

The third night finds a touching documentary called Gay Chorus Deep South, which previously won the Audience Award at the Tribeca Film Festival. “[The film] is about the San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus [when they] toured the Deep South following the Trump election, when anti-LGBTQ legislation was kind of popping up in those red states,” says Dougherty. “They teamed up with the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir and did a tour of those states to bring a message of visibility and love and acceptance to the queer communities in those states. A large portion of them are coming down for this screening and will perform at the venue after that screening.”

The final night is a unique documentary about LGBTQ icon Judy Garland called Sid & Judy. “It’s about the life and career of Judy Garland, told through the lens of her third husband Sid Luft,” says Dougherty.

Outside of the Ford screenings, there’s another special event documentary called Queering the Script, which is about queer female representation on television and will feature a conversation with Angelica Ross (Pose), Amber Benson (Buffy the Vampire Slayer), Isabella Gomez (One Day at a Time) and Marja-Lewis Ryan (The L Word).

The other special event documentary is called Scream Queen! My Nightmare on Elm Street. It’s about A Nightmare on Elm Street 2: Freddy’s Revenge. “It focuses on the lead actor, Mark Patton, who was a closeted gay man in Hollywood in the ’80s and that film kind of outed him in a way and kind of made his career go away,” says Dougherty. “And we’re going to have basically the entire cast of that original film... coming. So that’s going to be completely unique and fun night.”

Previous Festival Winners

Although some of the films at the Ford have won awards at previous festivals, there are more Outfest films being screened that did so as well. Before You Know It, the closing gala screening, was a Sundance Film Festival selection about sisters living a dysfunctional life in New York City. Another Sundance premiere was To the Stars, a coming-of-age story in the 1950s Oklahoma starring Malin Akerman, Shea Whigham and Tony Hale. The last film to highlight from Sundance is Adam, Transparent producer and Outfest alum Rhys Ernst’s feature debut about the lives of young lesbian and trans New Yorkers in 2006.

Outfest also has a few titles that won awards at the Berlin International Film Festival. Brief Story From the Green Planet won the Teddy Award in Berlin, their official queer award. The film is about a young trans woman who is tasked with caring for her recently deceased grandmother’s closest companion, an alien whom she and her friends must safely return to its origins. Similarly, A Dog Barking at the Moon won a Teddy Jury Award in Berlin as well. The movie follows an expectant mother who gets embroiled in her family’s ongoing feud on her return to China, triggered by her father’s gay affairs and her mother’s entry into a predatory cult.

Moving from Berlin to Austin, Outfest also features some titles that won audience awards at South By Southwest. The Garden Left Behind is about a young trans Latino woman in New York City, and Saint Frances is a comedy from a first-time writer-director team about an unplanned pregnancy for the nanny of an affluent lesbian couple’s 6-year-old daughter. Finally, from the Tribeca Film Festival is Changing the Game. “It’s our documentary centerpiece about some incredible high school trans athletes, including Mack Beggs, who was in a national news story,” says Dougherty. “Mack is looking to join us, so that’s going to be a great screening as well.”

And lastly, also from the Tribeca Film Festival is the film featured in the Opening Night Gala: Circus of Books, which is a documentary about Los Angeles queer landmark Circus of Books, the “gay erotica emporium, cruising hotspot haven and unofficial community center on West Hollywood’s Santa Monica Boulevard and on Sunset in Silver Lake.”

Outfest Premieres

While Outfest is featuring some great contenders from previous festivals, it also has its fair share of films making their premiere at the festival this year. “One world premier that we have that I’m very excited about as a documentary called Pier Kids,” says Dougherty. “It was directed by Elegance Bratton, who is a fantastic filmmaker. He lived in and around the Christopher Street Pier for many years of his life as a homeless youth. And now he has made a film about the queer and trans youth living in the Christopher Street Pier in these days.”

Another world premiere is Tu Me Manques, which is a U.S.-Bolivia coproduction based on a play that was a smash hit in Bolivia. “It’s about a father coming to terms with his son’s life as a gay man and his son’s boyfriend,” says Dougherty. “It’s not unlike a Tony Kushner kind of play. It’s really cool movie there.” And finally, we go from Bolivia to Japan for the international premiere of a documentary called Queer Japan, which highlights the diversity of queer personalities in the country.

Finally, there are 17 shorts programs that feature some titles that won audience awards at previous festivals, there are more Outfest films being screened that did so as well. Before You Know It, the closing gala screening, was a Sundance Film Festival selection about sisters living a dysfunctional life in New York City. Another Sundance premiere was To the Stars, a coming-of-age story in the 1950s Oklahoma starring Malin Akerman, Shea Whigham and Tony Hale. The last film to highlight from Sundance is Adam, Transparent producer and Outfest alum Rhys Ernst’s feature debut about the lives of young lesbian and trans New Yorkers in 2006.

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Finally, there are 17 shorts programs that highlight a broad range of the LGBTQ community. And I can’t recommend enough taking the time to see the Outfest shorts. Whether they’re American or foreign language, these unique queer stories are truly worth viewing.

Outfest Los Angeles is July 18-28. For tickets and more information, festival.outfest.org/2019.
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POTTY MOUTH CONTINUE TO GET BETTER

The band discusses their impending L.A. shows and their label's dedication to giving voice to the voiceless

BY BRETT CALLWOOD

For the queers by the queers — no sexist, racist, transphobic, homophobic, apologist bullshit will be tolerated," reads the Bandcamp page of Get Better Records, an independent label that was founded by Alex Licktentour in 2010 as a means to, in their words, "reverse the constant underrepresentation of the city's Queer arts community, with a specific focus on punk, hardcore, and alternative rock music.

The Philadelphia-based Get Better is fast developing a reputation as one of the more important indie labels in the country. They won't release music by bands solely consisting of straight, white men, as they strive to give a voice to those whose voices have been silenced. It's a valiant endeavor, and Licktentour's partner is Ally Einbinder, bassist with Massachusetts' pop-punk band Potty Mouth.

"Get Better Records is a DIY, independently run label with political ideals that match our own," says Einbinder. "That is part of it — further aligning ourselves with our ideals. And then having a maximum amount of freedom or creative control as far as the release goes. I talk to Alex every single day as it is, so to be releasing this record as a team effort — it doesn't feel like work when you are involved in the process and the output at some point."

Licktentour, Einbinder says, works on the label all the hours god sends, with Potty Mouth's sophomore SNAFU, the follow up to 2013's Hell Bent, released on the label in March.

"We're just really proud of it, and I'm really proud that we are releasing it through Get Better Records," says Einbinder. "Independent labels are playing a bigger role and a different kind of role than they did even six years ago when our first album came out. I think that there are so many bands out there and so few of them get signed to a major label or even a bigger indie label, and yet there are all these people with music that they want to share with the world."

SNAFU is a tremendous piece of work; back in March when it was released, L.A. Weekly's Falling James described the song "Smash Hit" as "another song from the new album that has an infectious melody, but it's charged with more of a punk-rock drive," and that about nails the vibe. There's tons of punk rock 'tude, derived from the aforementioned frustrations. Under the current administration, those have been amplified. At the same time though, the hooks are undeniable. There's as much pop as punk in this pop-punk, and that's ultimately to the benefit of the music.

The album came to the attention of John Hill, guitarist with Denver indie rockers Dressy Bessy, which led to the two bands embarking on a tour together. It's a perfect match too; Dressy Bessy had been on a hiatus for a number of years before the results of the 2016 presidential election prompted them to get back to work.

"The political climate as it is, it's just the right time to do this again now. I've been home for a month or so, and with the current state of the world, I've become inspired again, and there's another album on the way," singer Tammy Ealom told this writer in 2017, a year after the KINGSIZED record. "I personally love [Obama] as our president, and I did feel comfortable living life. Isn't that something? It felt wonderful to live under his administration. Phew, we can breathe a little bit here. I'm not one to sit down and say, OK, we need to write songs now. I let it come to me. When it comes, then it's a big relief. If I have some sort of turmoil, whether it's personal, political or whatever, it just needs to come."

So politically, it's clear that Potty Mouth and Dressy Bessy are coming from the same side of the aisle. The Denver band has about a decade and a half of experience over Potty Mouth, though their collective fingers are very much on the pulse.

"We were excited because we knew of them from the songs on the But I'm a Cheerleader soundtrack," says guitarist and singer Abby Weems. "It's great when older bands, who have been around a while, are still in touch with what younger bands are doing. Because it's so easy to slip out of that."

This tour, which hits the Moroccan Lounge this week, is Potty Mouth's first major run of shows since we spoke to them in March, and Weems says that the response to the record has been gratifying. "People really seemed to connect with it," she says. "We're so excited to finally bring the songs from our new record SNAFU on the road and play them live for people!" Weems wrote in a statement. "This tour is going to be especially fun because we already love Dressy Bessy and Colleen Green. Plus, Colleen is going to be riding with us in our van! Look out for the party bus coming through your town this summer!"

Yep, L.A.-based indie-punk singer/songwriter Colleen Green is opening for Potty Mouth and Dressy Bessy on the tour, a third reason to get there. And Potty Mouth will get to L.A. on the back of a new single, "I Wanna," which isn't on SNAFU. To old heads, that seems like a strange approach given that they're still promoting that record.

"That's just because of the way streaming is now," Weems says. "It made sense to put that track out."

Meanwhile, they recently put out a video for the song "Plastic Paradise," which sees director Will Duncan cutting up plastic shopping bags, receipts, etc., scanning them using a standard scanner and green-screening them.

"That's because the video is about mall culture in the U.S.," adds Weems.

According to Weems, Potty Mouth will be fully warmed up and tight by the time they reach Los Angeles, having played so many shows prior to that. After that, they'll be touring pretty much constantly right up until the holidays. Meanwhile, Get Better will be releasing material from an L.A. band soon, The Groans. That's a lot of great, important music to look forward to.

Potty Mouth plays with Dressy Bessy and Colleen Green at 8 p.m. on Friday, July 19 at the Moroccan Lounge.
**MUSIC**

**GO HEAR**

**FRI 7/19**

**Sapphic Musk**

*THE VIPER ROOM*

People tend to generally take themselves pretty seriously when it comes to their heavy metal—but Sapphic Musk is that special band that overcomes the burden of the heavy and the coldness of the metal to give you something to bang your head to, not against. Blessed with insistently entertaining theatricality and an inflation purple dragon named Wanda, the band—guitarist Mia Ferraro, drummer Freddie McCullough, bassist Christina Ownby, singer Sarah T. Russell—may be best-known for beating out a solo album. He’s psyched for this show too, telling us in a recent interview that, “I want it to feel like a simulator ride, and I’m going all out for the visuals with that. When I was a kid I wanted to be an Imagineer actually—I remember that I figured out the email address of a guy who did that for a living, and I emailed him, but I never heard back, so now I’m doing music, I guess.” It feels like it’s been too long since the Fontaines left us, so it’s great to have Hank back. Cheridomingo, Joseph Luca and Serena Foster also play. —**DAVID COTTER**

**Dressy Bessy, Potty Mouth, Colleen Green**

*@ MORGAN LOUNGE*

There aren’t many indie-rock groups as smart, sassy, playful and colorful as Dressy Bessy. The Denver band’s latest album, *Fast Faster*, is cram-packed with catchy anthems that are powered with punk-rock drive and adorned with clever art-pop twists. Exuberant pop-punk tracks (“Fearless,” “Sweet Medicine”) alternate with stranger interludes, such as the-funky exhortation “Freedoms” and the breezy pop dream “Mon Chéri,” before culminating with a perfectly zippy and exhilaratingly fuzzy remake of Buzzcocks’ “What Do I Get?” The bill is further stacked with a culminating with a perfectly zippy and exhilaratingly fuzzy remake of Buzzcocks’ “What Do I Get?”

**Hank Fontaine**

*THE TROUBADOR*

Close to a year after The Fontaines played their final show, half of the brother/sister duo, Hank Fontaine, is back with a show at the Troubadour and a handful of new singles ahead of a solo album. He’s psyched for this show too, telling us in a recent interview that, “I want it to feel like a simulator ride, and I’m going all out for the visuals with that. When I was a kid I wanted to be an Imagineer actually—I remember that I figured out the email address of a guy who did that for a living, and I emailed him, but I never heard back, so now I’m doing music, I guess.” It feels like it’s been too long since The Fontaines left us, so it’s great to have Hank back. Cheridomingo, Joseph Luca and Serena Foster also play. —**BRETT CALLWOOD**

**Rosegarden Funeral Party**

*@ ROANOKE’S *

“Well, people, run from your holy temple/I used to be one of you,” Leah Lane bespeaks with urgent, searing vocals on the incendiary punk anthem “Blitzkrieg in Holland,” from Rosegarden Funeral Party’s 2018 EP, *The Chopping Block*. “I was indoctrinated … I watched the blindfold come down.” With a name like Rosegarden Funeral Party, it’s no surprise that the Dallas quartet manufacture a dark combination of goth and post-punk on such shadowy passages as “Follow” and “Horror Music.” Mikka Vanya Brightheart layers atmospheric waves of keyboards and samples over Lane’s churning guitar on dreamier tunes such as “Eden” and the jangling, Smiths-like “Ill and Getting Worse.” Whether she’s igniting a firestorm with punk anger or subsiding for more contemplative reveries, Lane sings with a ferocious and inspiring charisma. Plus, Spirit in the Room and Violator. —**BRETT CALLWOOD**

**MON 7/22**

**Sun Ra Arkestra**

*ZEBULON*

Space is the place, so get on board! Tonight, the Sun Ra Arkestra—under the direction of noted saxophonist Marshall Allen—will perform the otherworldly music of the late avant-garde jazz composer, bandleader and legend, Sun Ra. Allen played and recorded with Ra regularly from the 1950s until his death in 1993, and he has led the Arkestra since that time. For the uninitiated, the best primer to the Arkestra is perhaps 1980’s *Sunrise in Different Dimensions*, one of the best live recordings of Ra’s late-period band (the late ’50s albums *Sound of Joy and Jazz in Silhouettes* are also essential listening). Tonight’s concert will be the first of two performances at Zebulon. —**MATT MINER**

**Mekons**

*LODGE ROOM*

Although members of Mekons— particularly singer-guitarist Jon Langford—occasionally come through town with various projects, it’s rare that the entire English collective assemble locally for a proper show. Recorded
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in Yucca Valley, Deserted, the group’s new album on Bloodshot Records, is a typically eclectic compendium of restrained alt-rock musings, laid-back balladry, violin-streaked country waltzes and Mojave-stranded sea chanteys. There are few hints of Mekons’ early punk roots, and references to Tony Blair and George Bush on the somnolent soundscape “In the Desert” feel more curiously quaint than timely or radical, but sun-baked oddities “Mirage” and “Weimar Vending Machine” have their demented moments. The group are at their most endearing on “After the Rain,” a seemingly straightforward country-pop idyll that expands into new-music experimentation via Susie Honeymoon’s languorously unfolding tendrils of violin. — FALLING JAMES

TUE 7/23
Rodrigo y Gabriela
@ THE GREEK THEATRE
Rodrigo Sánchez and Gabriela Quintero can do more with two acoustic guitars than many bands can manage with full instrumentation and a fortress of amplifiers. The Mexican guitarist’s approach is anything but old fashioned as their music draws just as much from heavy metal as it does from traditional flamenco influences. While their new album, Mettavolution, might not initially seem as radical as Rodrigo y Gabriela’s early recordings such as 2002’s Re-Foc, 2014’s 9 Dead Alive and 2012’s Cuban-themed Area 52, it includes deft rhythmic interplay between the two guitarists as well as more overtly dazzling soloing by Sánchez. Tangled, fast-moving workouts like “Terracentric” and “Krotona Days” eventually culminate in a stylized, nearly 19-minute re-make of Pink Floyd’s “Echoes.” — FALLING JAMES

Chai
@ TROUBADOUR
On their Facebook profile, Japanese alt-punks Chai profess their love for the color pink, gyoza dumplings and lyrics that seek to empower while also redefining the word “kawaii,” which translates as “cute.” That all makes sense (kinda — the dumpling thing is a bit random). But these songs have the vibe of cheerleader-esque chants in that “Hey Mickey” sort of way. Multi-vocals, super-catchy and simply tunes and high energy. It all makes for a fascinating band and, by all accounts, their live set is well worth catching. Also on the bill is Kingsbury, aka Caroline Kingsbury, a singer/songwriter from Florida who grew up in a conservative religious home but found escape through music. — BRET CALLWOOD

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THU 7/25
Static X
@ THE OBSERVATORY
What the holy hell is going on here? Industrial-tinged nu-metal band Static-X’s frontman Wayne Static died in 2014 and everybody pretty much assumed that was that for the band. But the surviving members have resurfaced with a mystery singer who is performing in a zombified Wayne Static mask, crazy hair and all. Some people think it’s a fitting tribute, others are saying that it’s twisted and exploitative. Maybe it’s a bit of both, but the band members are some of the people who knew Wayne best, so it’s their call. Should be a fun, weird night anyway. It’s a good bill too, with Dez Fafara’s DevilDriver and fellow industrial-metal band Dope also playing. — BRET CALLWOOD
influenced by early Motley Crue, also has a welcome throwback. The sound, while clearly King-inspired (aka Caroline Kingsbury, a singer/songwriter), Salem's Lott are a band and, by all accounts, their live set is well-received for its multi-vocals, super-catchy tunes, and high energy. It all makes for a fascinating performance.

Chai profess their love for the color pink, gyoza dumplings and lyrics that seek to empower women. On their Facebook profile, Japanese alt-punks Chai make of Pink Floyd's "Echoes." "Terracentric" and "Krotona Days" eventually culminate in a stylized, nearly 19-minute re-work of "Future Me Hates Me" by Tony Sanchez. Tangled, fast-moving workouts like "Madre Tierra" and "Vida" also play.

Starr, Black Market Theory and The Geckoz Two coasts, and a ton of makeup. Wikkid kings of New York City rock & roll, Wildstreet. The new stars of Hollywood sleaze are the new brew of trashy glam metal glory. Alongside Earth and Gamma Ray. It all makes for a heady mix of seemingly joyous music belies Stokes' lamentation: "'Cause you're in my brain, taking up space I need for delivering lies and suppressing the sighs. "

The Beths' emotional dichotomies can be summed up by "Happy Unhappy," whose seemingly straightforward country-pop idyll is pushed along madly by a at-out punk-trio, while also redeﬁning the word "kawaii," which translates as "cute. " That all makes sense (kinda anyway. It's a good bill too, with Dez Fafara's DevilDriver and fellow industrial-metal band The Smithereens also playing. What the holy hell is going on here? Industrial-metal's top guns are playing alongside glammy and hook-laden power pop, and it all seems to be a harmless and amusing party, with a mystery singer who is performing in a zombi/fied Wayne Static mask, crazy hair and much assumed that was that for the band.

Wayne Static died in 2014 and everybody pretends it never happened. Maybe it's a bit of both, but the band members are saying that it's twisted and exploitative. What the holy hell is going on here? Industrial-metal's top guns are playing alongside glammy and hook-laden power pop, and it all seems to be a harmless and amusing party, with a mystery singer who is performing in a zombi/fied Wayne Static mask, crazy hair and much assumed that was that for the band.

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