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One of the California Coast's protectors has been ousted. Will that clear the way for developers — and is that necessarily a bad thing? By Hillel Aron
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DWP DRAMA

DWP “reform” proposal would lead to higher rates — and would grant many union wishes

BY GENE MADDAUS

Councilman Felipe Fuentes unveiled a proposal in January that would bring major change to the Department of Water and Power. Angelenos love to hate the DWP. It’s big and bloated, and it’s always screwing something up, such as the recent fiasco over the new billing system.

Fuentes’ proposal, which would require voter approval, calls for DWP reform. Those two words have eye-glazing potential, but it’s worth digging into the details. In this case, Fuentes’ ideas mirror the wishes of the DWP union, IBEW Local 18.

For those who may need a refresher, IBEW Local 18 played a central role in the 2013 mayor’s race. The head of the union, Brian D’Arcy, led a $4 million effort to elect Wendy Greuel. In a bit of campaign jujitsu, Eric Garcetti used that against her, electing Wendy Greuel. In a bit of campaign hubris, Garcetti took aim at inflated salaries at the union, to be more of a partner and less of an adversary.

Fuentes’ proposal builds on the commission’s report. Under his plan, the DWP Commission would be replaced by a full-time board. The members would be experts in the field, and would serve staggered terms, insulating them from City Hall. The most critical provision — which has gotten zero attention so far — relates to rates:

“Board actions — including ratemaking — would no longer require City Council approval unless the City Council asserts jurisdiction.” (Emphasis added.)

It’s hard to overstate the importance of this provision. Under the current system — the product of more than 100 years of governance reform — the City Council must approve any rate increases. This exerts a downward pressure on rates. No politician wants to approve an increase and face the wrath of voters. (In his first State of the City address, Garcetti made a big deal of delaying any rate increases for a year.)

If you give ratemaking authority to an independent body, you remove that downward pressure. The result: Rates will go up. Fuentes, of course, has no incentive to spell this out, and neither does D’Arcy. (Both declined interview requests.) If you’re campaigning for a ballot measure, you wouldn’t want to tout the prospect of higher utility bills. It’s much better to say, as Fuentes does, that the measure will “take the politics out of the DWP.”

If you look at it from the union’s point of view, then maybe rates should be higher. The more money the DWP has, the more it can spend on its employees. This also explains why the proposal limits the amount of DWP money that is transferred to the city’s general fund each year. If you’re the union, then of course you want to keep that money at the DWP.

If you were the union, you’d probably also be upset about “political” mandates such as renewable power requirements. Why should the utility pay more for renewable energy contracts and have less to spend on its own employees? Just because some meddling politicians want to appear eco-friendly?

Fuentes’ proposal also would eliminate civil service rules at the DWP. According to Fred Pickel, the DWP ratepayer advocate, this change is also supported by D’Arcy.

Fuentes presented his reform proposal at a committee hearing on Feb. 19. The question of how the union felt about the various reforms was barely mentioned. The only time it came up was during the testimony of Andrew Rea, a consultant who noted, almost in a surprised way, that the union was very receptive to the proposal. The reforms, he said, had the potential to “change the relationship with the union, to be more of a partner and less of an adversary.”

The definition of “reform” has now been flipped on its head. It used to mean punching D’Arcy in the nose. Now it means giving him whatever he wants.
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or Charles Lester, it must have felt like a strange way to get fired.

The gym was packed on Feb. 10 with hundreds of people: environmentalists in Patagonia fleeces, surfers wearing flip-flops, aging hippies in flannel shirts—so many people that fire marshal Steve Knuckles had to make an announcement to clear the doorways.

They came from up and down the coast of California, wearing stickers and holding hand-painted signs: “Leave Lester Alone,” “I Support Dr. Lester,” “MORE LESTER.” Someone even brought a surfboard with carefully spray-painted lettering: “DON’T SELL OUT OUR COAST.”

Inside the gym, Lester, a bearded, mild-mannered Ph.D., was treated like a rock star. People asked him to autograph their signs. One rather nervous-looking woman in a Heal the Bay T-shirt asked, “Is there any way I can take a selfie? It’s OK if you say no.”

Lester reluctantly agreed. “People are asking me for autographs, selfies,” he laughed. “I’m the director of a government agency!”

Since 2011, Lester had been the executive director of the California Coastal Commission, a state agency charged with preserving and protecting access to California’s...
coastline. The executive director serves at the pleasure of the 12 commissioners, all political appointees.

That means the commissioners can fire the executive director anytime they want to. And that’s exactly what they told Lester they intended to do, in a letter they sent in mid-January. By law, that gave him two options: resign or have the matter debated at a public hearing. He chose the hearing.

And so it was that hundreds of activists (many of whom had their gas and hotel rooms paid for by the Surfrider Foundation) descended upon Morro Bay, one of those sleepy seaside towns filled with antique shops and saltwater taffy, for the Coastal Commission’s monthly meeting.

For those activists, the narrative was plain as day: There was a coup being driven by developers in an attempt to weaken the commission and make it more amenable to construction along the coast.

“The Coastal Act is the most protective law of any coast in the world,” Stefanie Sekich-Quinn, spokeswoman for the Surfrider Foundation, said before the hearing. “If they undermine Charles, they’ll continue to undermine the Coastal Act.”

“They’re not going to pave the coast by Thursday,” former coastal commissioner Steve Blank said. “But week by week, month by month, they will turn this into the Jersey Shore.”

Sekich-Quinn was among hundreds who spoke up for Lester at the meeting. Only one spoke against him. There were also nearly 30,000 letters and emails to the commission in advance of the meeting; all but six were in favor of Lester.

Despite the outpouring of support, the commission voted, after convening behind closed doors for more than an hour, to fire Lester, 7-5, the minimum margin needed.

Activists were dismayed. Some cried. Others shouted invectives at the seven commissioners, who were walked to their cars by sheriff’s deputies.

Mary Shallenberger, one of the five commissioners who voted to keep Lester, is seen by activists as the biggest foe of coastal development. She’s also one of the few commissioners who agreed to speak to L.A. Weekly after the controversial vote, and she was as dumbfounded as anyone at what her fellow commissioners had just done.

“I cannot explain it to you,” she said. “In the face of the public outcry in support of Charles, how public servants on a public agency charged by state law to protect public resources can so totally discount public outcry is just beyond me.

“I am very worried about the future,” she added. Asked if she thought the outcome would make the commission more friendly to development, she replied, “I fear that it will.”

Days after the meeting, Lester was reluctant to completely buy into the theory that he’d been taken down by a cabal of developers.

“I think it’s more nuanced, more complicated,” Lester says. “It is my feeling that this commission was, in terms of their priorities, more attuned to some of the complaints about the process that we might hear from the development community — it takes too long, there’s too many information requests, the staff is too demanding in how they apply the standards.”

Developers say it’s hard to predict what the commission will and won’t allow. That uncertainty, coupled with the additional red tape surrounding coastal development, has excluded all but the deepest-pocketed firms; only they can afford the time and lobbying it takes to get a project past the commission and over the other hurdles.

They’re not going to pave the coast by Thursday. But week by week, month by month, they will turn this into the Jersey Shore. —FORMER COASTAL COMMISSIONER STEVE BLANK

In the next year, the commission will consider a number of large projects that could significantly alter the landscape of the coast: a 900-home development in Newport Beach, a desalination plant in Huntington Beach and dozens of million-dollar mansions. Without Lester, conservationists are worried the commission will be more likely to bend to the will of developers, which will further decrease the amount of open space. That might not be as catastrophic as it sounds.

The commissioners who fired Lester argue that certain kinds of development might make the coast more accessible — not just to the rich but to everyone.

“The decline of low-cost accommodations is an access issue,” commissioner Mark Vargas, one of the more vocal anti-Lester commissioners, said at the meeting. “And it keeps a lot of minorities from inland communities away from the coast.”

There is no such thing as a private beach in California.

Unlike the East Coast or the French Riviera or other shorelines all over the world, the 1,100-mile California coast belongs to everyone.

The other unique thing about the California coast is that long stretches of it are almost eerily undeveloped. As Blank is fond of pointing out, you can drive up Highway 1 from Santa Barbara to Monterey — 230 gorgeous, winding miles — and encounter only a handful of traffic lights, in towns such as Cambria and Carmel-by-the-Sea, which like the first victory of a nascent environmental coalition that included such groups as the Sierra Club and the League of Women Voters. Celebrity endorsements like that of Charlton Heston helped, as did the recent memory of a 1989 oil spill off the coast of Santa Barbara, then the largest oil spill in U.S. history (later to be eclipsed by the Exxon Valdez spill and again by Deepwater Horizon in the Gulf of Mexico).

“After the initiative passed,” Douglas would later tell the Los Angeles Times, “speculative subdivisions came to a grinding halt — dozens of ranches like Sea Ranch had been bought up — you had a lot of wealthy speculators who’d invested in [land for] these second-home subdivisions and now realized we wouldn’t approve them. So they went to [then-Gov. Ronald] Reagan and said, ‘Help us sell them off.’ So there was a huge upswing in purchases of parks along the coast.”

Under Gov. Reagan, who’d been fiercely opposed to the Coastal Act, the state added around 145,000 acres of coastal land to its parks system.

The temporary law was made permanent four years later with the passage of the Coastal Act, signed into law by Gov. Jerry Brown in 1976. The act set up the Coastal Commission, a quasi-judicial body tasked with, among other things, determining whether the scale of proposed developments was appropriate for the coast. In doing so, the commission was ordered to take a number of factors into account: public access to the beach, environmental impact and “social and economic needs of the people of the state.”

The commission soon proved itself stubbornly independent. In 1978, Gov. Brown sought to intervene on behalf of his then-girlfriend, Linda Ronstadt, who, along with her fellow Malibu Colony residents, was trying to build a seawall to shield their homes from high storm tides. Brown tried to get them out of the normal permitting process, but he was rebuffed by the Coastal Commission.

Another time, after the commission suggested that Malibu residents could only rebuild their fire-ravaged homes if they made them more “fire resistant,” the community’s power broker, Gov. Brown called the commissioners “bureaucratic thugs.”

But the biggest bureaucratic thug of all turned out to be Peter Douglas, who became the commission’s executive director in 1985, the start of a remarkable 25-year reign.

“Peter Douglas was the anti—Rob Moses,” says former commissioner Blank, referring to the famous “master builder” of New York City immortalized in Robert Caro’s The Power Broker. “Moses built in concrete and steel. Peter built in open spaces. But he was exactly as Machiavellian as Moses.”

“He was an instinctive politician,” says Ralph Faust, the commission’s chief legal counsel for 20 years starting in 1986. “He understood the Sacramento pieces of the puzzle. He understood how to work with commissioners to get what he wanted. And he was always able to count to seven.”

Developers found Douglas stubborn, inflexible and lacking regard for the rights of property owners.

“It’s a mind-boggling bureaucracy,” says Fred Gaines, a land-use attorney who works for developers. “It’s purposefully designed that way — by making it very hard..."
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Republican Gov. Pete Wilson tried to oust Douglas in 1996, through the eight commissioners who’d been appointed by Republicans. Douglas exercised his right to a public hearing, and hundreds of activists packed a hotel conference room overlooking the Pacific Ocean in Huntington Beach. In the face of such hostility, the commissioners backed down.

Twenty years later, the events in Morro Bay were so eerily reminiscent of the failed 1996 coup that many advocates were convinced, up until the final minutes, that Lester would be similarly spared.

When Douglas stepped down in November 2011, in the face of a lung cancer diagnosis (he died five months later), Lester was his handpicked successor. Lester was quiet, withdrawn. His staff loved him. But he was not the forceful personality that Douglas had been.

“Peter was a bare-knuckles political fighter,” Faust says. “Charles is not that, was never that. Charles is really smart, really reflective, thoughtful. He didn’t have the political fighting instincts that Peter had.”

The worry is that Lester’s successor will be even weaker, and even more subject to the commissioners’ whims.

“Anyone that comes in without experience is going to be at a huge disadvantage,” Faust says. “They’ll have a choice — are they going to rely on their staff? Or rely on the people lobbying them?”

The staff has recommended limiting the number of large projects, all of which could have far-reaching consequences.

“Mitchell doesn’t honor the fundamental purposes of the Coastal Act,” Angel says. “It’s the fox in charge of the chicken coup.”

In the coming months, the commission will consider a number of large projects, perhaps the most controversial is Newport Banning Ranch, a proposed development on 401 acres of land in Newport Beach, at the mouth of the Santa Ana River. The proposal now calls for 895 homes, a 75-room boutique hotel and 45,000 square feet of retail space to sit on 61 acres of land, with the rest going to parkland and undeveloped coastal space.

“It’s taking some of the last public space in Orange County and putting [900] homes on it,” says Sekich-Quinn, the Surfrider spokes- woman. “It’s more unrestrained development.”

Sekich-Quinn and other Newport Banning Ranch opponents are unswayed by the fact that the project has been radically scaled back from 1,400 homes — and that the land being used is an aging oil field.

“It’s a mind-boggling bureaucracy. It’s purposefully designed that way — by making it very hard and confusing to people, it will at least slow if not stop development along the coastline.”

— FRED GAINES, A LAND-USE ATTORNEY
WHO WORKS FOR DEVELOPERS

On Friday, March 4, 2010, the Coastal Commission unanimously approved the project. The environmental community is split on just how big a betrayal this is. The Sierra Club is suing the commission, saying that the development, which includes a 2,000-foot access road and a 7,000-foot water line, will “disturb habitat.” Others say that the project was essentially a compromise and that even Douglas himself may have approved of it.

But it was some of the commissioners’ behavior before and after the vote that coastal activists were most upset about. One commissioner, Mark Vargas, met with The Edge and his wife, Morleigh Steinberg, in Ireland, the month before the vote (these meetings are legal, so long as they are disclosed). The meeting was set up by Susan McCabe, a former coastal commissioner who is now, by all accounts, the most powerful coastal development lobbyist in the state.

(McCabe, who declined to be interviewed, isn’t actually called a lobbyist, because California’s Fair Political Practices laws don’t apply to the Coastal Commission. Days after the firing of Charles Lester, two state assembly members introduced a bill to change that.)

McCabe’s website lists more than 200 clients, everyone from David Geffen and Nicholas Cage to the San Onofre nuclear power plant and, indeed, The Edge. In 2010, the Los Angeles Times obtained emails between McCabe and a client of hers, the Port of San Diego, in which she bragged of “spoon-feeding” information to then-commissioner Patrick Krueger. McCabe was fired but remains an ever-present fixture behind the scenes — stories abound of spotting “Suzie McCabe” having drinks with commissioners the night before a meeting.

She is said by many, including environmental attorney Frank Angel and activist Marcia Hanscom, to be especially close with commissioner Wendy Mitchell (who also declined to be interviewed), a consultant whose clients include Pacific Gas & Electric, which runs some power plants on the coast; and the engineering firm Carollo, which builds desalination plants on the coast, including one proposed for Huntington Beach (Mitchell recuses herself from matters involving her clients).

“McCabe represents everyone who wants to basically have a piece of the coast,” Angel says. “And Mitchell always votes in line with her clients.”

Shortly after the commission voted unanimously to support The Edge’s project, Mitchell posted a photo on Facebook of herself, beaming, arms around the musician and his wife, with the message: “At the Coastal Commission meeting today with The Edge and his wife, Morleigh Steinberg. They are both very nice people, I’m only sorry it took them 10 years to get approval on their home.” (Mitchell later deleted the post.)

To many, it was yet another sign that Mitchell and other commissioners had an unprofessional interest in developing the coast.

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regardless of their race, ethnicity or level of income, [should be] able to enjoy the benefits of our environmental protection programs.”

That was a significant policy change from the Douglas regime. “Mr. Douglas said the commission could not consider environmental justice in considering coastal matters,” says Robert Garcia, a civil rights attorney. “That position was wrong, it was indefensible.” Lester, he says, while not perfect, was a huge improvement.

It was curious, then, that the commission cited the lack of diversity on Lester’s staff, as well as the lack of diversity in the environmental movement as a whole, in its defense of firing him.

“We need to think about what the state of California is going to look like in the future,” commissioner Effie Turnbull Sanders, who is African-American, said at the hearing. “We need to have a vision that is more inclusive to all. I wish that more people in this room looked like me and had the opportunity to go to the coast.” Sanders voted to fire Lester.

It is a debate similar to the one that’s going on in cities all over California, a state that has made it increasingly difficult to build things — especially homes. The result is a housing shortage that has driven up real estate values and pushed low-income families out of certain areas.

In March of last year, the state’s Legislative Analyst’s Office published a report, “California’s High Housing Costs.” The No. 1 cause, it found, is that California is “building too little housing in coastal areas.”

That has more to do with big cities on the coast — Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Diego — than with sleepy beach towns.

A major reason for that lack of building, the report found, was the onerous approval process: “A project may require independent review by a building department, health department, fire department, planning commission and city council. Each layer of review can increase project approval time.”

The Coastal Commission, of course, is yet another layer of review.

The downside of charming towns such as Morro Bay, which appear frozen in time, is that living near or visiting the coast is expensive. A hotel wanting to expand has to jump through numerous hoops and even then is subject to the whims of the ever-shifting Coastal Commission.

At the Lester hearing, commissioner Vargas added that he has pushed for more freedom in how the commission is able to spend mitigation funds, money that developers pay, which is supposed to be set aside for environmental preservation. Then he attacked environmental groups, like Surfrider, for blocking this idea. Then he attacked Surfrider for having an all-white board of directors.

So maybe Vargas got a little carried away. But his point, that it’s hard for poor people to visit the coast, still stands. And it’s hard not to see a potential conflict between environmental preservation and access for everyone.

Whether this was actually a valid argument for getting rid of Lester is another issue. The point is that the debate over new development anywhere in the state is far more nuanced than some environmentalists make it out to be.

“There are some in the environmental community, they don’t like the public using the shore that much,” says Gaines, the land-use attorney. “You’ve ended up with a lot of big, very valuable private homes and properties. Whether that was the vision of the Coastal Act, I’m not sure.”

As of now, no one is getting much use out of Newport Banning Ranch: 400 acres of scarred land, ringed with barbed-wire fence, that for practical matters is a demilitarized zone. Yet some environmentalists would prefer it stay that way than to see even part of it colonized.

This, perhaps, is the fight that no one is talking about: Who owns the coast? What exactly are we preserving it for? For nature and animals? For people? Is there virtue in keeping something beautiful untouched, even if fewer people get to enjoy it?

How does society balance those two interests — the esoteric desire to preserve ecology and the tangible desire for more housing and more services for the affluent and less affluent alike?

The commission will have to try to find that balance, and it will do so without Charles Lester.
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They just happen to have been put there, swim across the back of the building. It is literally an art installation: A visage of a lion from above, hung on thin wires. The place is a breathtaking, chic restaurant that thrums with energy, that feels somehow like a living, breathing organism made up of art and food and beautiful people. The ceilings are impressively high, and panels of glass raindrops (teardrops?) cascade from above, hung on thin wires. The place is literally an art installation: A visage of a lion from above, hung on thin wires.

The kitchen was built to feel like the kitchen of someone’s home (a multimillion-dollar home, but still), one that you walk through to get to the bathroom, past an army of cooks on either side tending to food and flames and the place where they meet. There’s the requisite trendy restaurant soundtrack, vaguely electronic but also understated. It makes you feel as if you’re in a commercial for some kind of smooth, Italian liqueur and massive fish swim across the back of the building. They just happen to have been put there, swim across the back of the building. It is literally an art installation: A visage of a lion from above, hung on thin wires. The place is a breathtaking, chic restaurant that thrums with energy, that feels somehow like a living, breathing organism made up of art and food and beautiful people. The ceilings are impressively high, and panels of glass raindrops (teardrops?) cascade from above, hung on thin wires. The place is literally an art installation: A visage of a lion from above, hung on thin wires.

The two most obvious places from which Hollingsworth draws inspiration are the raw bar and the open flame, and both have prominent places in the physical restaurant, the raw bar taking up the space between the bar and the kitchen, and the kitchen itself gleaming with plenty of contraptions for flame cooking. The raw seafood dishes are some of the most reliably delicious items on the menu, whether it’s sweet scallops served on their own shells with a drizzle of citrus and sweet pepper or a plate of raw citrus and sweet pepper or a plate of raw amberjack beautifully kissed with yuzu and jumbled with smoked tangerine and crunchy nubs of chicarron. Cooked seafood, too, is a strong suit. Black cod served with sea beans and clams is meltingly delicious, and while the flavors on the blue prawns are familiar rather than inventive — chili, lime, peanut, curry — the prawns themselves pop with freshness.

It would be silly to suggest that there isn’t great talent in this kitchen, and that some of the dishes served here aren’t masterful. But not everything is given the attention it deserves, and I get the feeling that your experience at Otium can depend massively on who you are and possibly even on how you look. There aren’t that many restaurants left that have a kind of caste system, and while at any restaurant there will always be VIP guests who get treated better than the rest of us, the bad old days of wildly different kinds of hospitality and cooking, depending on how much you matter to the host or owner or chef, are gone. But the lack of care I experienced for such a high-reaching restaurant, both in service and on the plate, is otherwise inexplicable. I can’t imagine, for instance, that Hollingsworth would serve to someone he knows the steak that I got. Promised medium-rare, it was cooked to a decisive well-done, apart from one lone slice that was kind of rare-ish in two spots and well-done everywhere else (I have no idea how this was accomplished). What an utter waste of what was obviously once a beautiful piece of dry-aged meat. My crime, perhaps, was to have ordered the smaller portion, the one that costs $55 as opposed to the $85 version.

There’s a certain arrogance to the uncaring service, to the unacknowledged cooking mistakes and to the falafel dish, which consists of three modest balls over a smear of chopped veggies with puffy pita on the side, condiments and costs $16 and tastes like falafel. Not stunningly good falafel, not bad falafel, just falafel. Walking through the kitchen is nice, it’s fun, but it has the downside of allowing you to see that those falafel balls are cooked far ahead of time rather than to order and are sitting out beside the fryer. The same is true of the funnel cakes. Does this affect the flavor, the enjoyment? It would be hard to argue that it doesn’t — the very thing that makes a funnel cake so irresistible is its piping-hot, just-fried quality, that bright moment when oil and dough are still caught in the hot magic of fusion. I’d be lying if I said that I recognized this flaw in the funnel cake when I ate it, before I knew it had been sitting out. But it also might explain why I didn’t adore it a little more, why it failed to activate my childhood glee receptors.

Otium is engorged with sparkle and magnetism, and Hollingsworth is reaching further with this menu than many would dare. If you’re a known chef or celebrity, or if you’ve got a couple hundred extra bucks lying around and want an exhilarating night on the town with some exciting food thrown in, Otium is very nearly a don’t-miss experience. But I’d be remiss to send a regular diner here, one who might feel fleeced after spending $200 on two cocktails and five plates of food, being ignored by the staff and leaving hungry. If you fit more into that regular-schmoo category, my advice would be this: Stop by the bar and drink a cocktail — they’re delicious. Order that amberjack dish. Or hell, get the foie gras funnel cake, just for the pure fun of it. Take it all in — the beauty, the spectacle, that intangible feel of being at the very center of a scene at its most vibrant. Then take your awesome self and go eat dinner somewhere else.
LOCAL LANDMARK IS REVIVED
WITH CEVICHE AND TEQUILA

When a beloved 60-year-old neighborhood Mexican restaurant closes its doors, the standard reaction among locals is to irrationally hate on whatever opens in its place. But what if the thing that comes next is an honest revival of said establishment, a younger and fresher version of the original? Such is the case with El Chavo, which reopened in early January as a modern pop-up collaboration between Ceviche Project chef Octavio Olivas, Scarpetta chef Freddy Vargas and Cocktail Academy founder Brandyn Tepper. In the six months before the building’s new owner plans to tear down the landmark Spanish-style structure, Olivas, Vargas and Tepper are set on bringing new life to what was in some ways a very tired space.

“It was a little bit neglected in terms of the decor and cleaning,” explains Olivas, who arrives every night dressed sharply in a Cuban-style suit. He mentions having taken down dusty old pinatas and plastic garlic that had been dangling from the ceiling since what appeared to be the dawn of time. “We wanted to make it more relevant, younger for this area, a little bit more hip.”

“Hip” in this case doesn’t necessarily mean expensive. Beers are $3 during happy hour, while cocktails, “tinga” chicken wings and quesadillas go for $5 apiece. And “relevant” translates to a locally sourced ceviche bar that serves lime-tossed raw seafood in eye-catching vessels.

By “younger,” Olivas could be referring to the section of the complex that includes an enclosed outdoor area, which soon will house bocce courts for day drinkers.

Despite the playful vibe, the menu leans toward sophistication. Behind the bar, tequila gets infused with jalepeño, shaken with lime, celery and yellow chartreuse, then garnished with sea salt. The result is a spicy yet balanced tropical cocktail that’s refreshing enough to immediately consider a second round. The Puesta de Sol mixes smoky mezcal with pineapple, lime, ginger, Aperol, bitters and soda. Take a sip and suddenly you’re on a beach in Tulum. The fantasy continues when you look up from your drink to see Olivas standing inside a tiki hut tossing fresh yellowtail with crispy corn, jicama, carrots, pineapple and jalepeño. He serves his ceviche in a fresh young coconut, topped with bright purple borage flowers and a side of fried plantains. He hands you a spoon and reminds you to scoop the flesh from the coconut with every bite. Peruvian scallops come served on the half-shell, topped with sea urchin, pomegranate, serrano chile, lava salt, tangerine and micro-cilantro.

Though the cocktails and ceviche might remind you of a tropical vacation, there is heartier fare, too. Smoked short-rib tacos aren’t the most tender in town, but the toothsome meat lends a street-taco edge when paired with arbol chili salsa and thinly sliced radish.

Arroz con pato (duck with rice) consists of plump confit duck leg that falls off the bone onto a pile of rice topped with black beans, cherry tomatoes and pico de gallo.

For dessert, there are cinnamon-chile churros served with a side of Baja chocolate sauce, or ancho chile–dusted dona de chocolate (chocolate donuts) filled with molten dark chocolate that oozes into a pool of guava syrup.

Despite being home to the neighborhood’s most ambitious Latin-inspired menu, the new El Chavo is still wrestling with its past.

“You’ve got people who’ve been coming here for 27 years that are reluctant to change, and they don’t like it,” Olivas says. “Some people, they see the menu that’s not the same and they leave.”

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enthusiasm. The black paper that for decades covered the windows looking out onto Sunset Boulevard has been taken down, allowing diners to watch the sunset. The back half of the restaurant has been painted a clean white juxtaposed against a pink neon “Cheviote Bar” sign. The new proprietors of El Chavo are determined to wring the last bit of fun out of a space that could well have been shuttered and demolished with little fanfare.

When asked if there’s any chance the pop-up will last longer than six months, when the building is scheduled for tear-down, Olivas looks optimistic. “It depends on the landlord and what plans he has. An ideal scenario would be that we do so well that he decides, ‘OK, you guys can take over.’” —Heather Platt

El Chavo, 4443 Sunset Blvd., Los Feliz; (323) 664-0871, elchavorestaurant.com.

Moruno Wants to Get You Hooked on Vermouth

David Rosoff wants to change the way you think about vermouth (and, yes, he realizes that you might not currently think anything of it at all).

A bit of background: There probably is no bar beverage more misunderstood or underappreciated. By definition, vermouth is a slightly fortified wine that’s aromatized with various herbs and bittering agents, such as quinine bark and wormwood. Despite its crucial role in the most essential cocktails of cocktail culture — the Manhattan, martini and Martinez, to name a few — it has languished in America for decades as a bit player (and, in the case of the extra-dry martini, something to rinse a glass with and then pour down the sink).

Few spirits producers in America were actually making good vermouth, thus few bars were featuring it prominently in their drinks; as a result, there was little to no demand for the good stuff. A vicious cycle — until recently.

Modern bartenders have begun to embrace vermouth as the essential, wonderfully expressive cocktail ingredient it is (“50-50” martinis, made with equal portions of dry vermouth and gin, have popped up on bar menus at the likes of Terrine and Salt’s Cure), but a few bars or restaurants, if any, have gone so far as to showcase the beauty and charm of vermouth by itself. That’s where Rosoff comes in.

Rosoff spent a decade as a general manager for the Mozza group and worked with Nancy Silverton at Campanile before that. He’s now managing partner at Moruno, the newly opened restaurant in the former Short Order space at the Original Farmers Market, as well as the soon-to-open Bar Vermut, located just upstairs, and another forthcoming location downtown’s Grand Central Market called Bar Moruno.

The food menu at Moruno, developed by chef Chris Feldmeier, takes loose inspiration from the pintxo bars of Spain. There are plates of marinated anchovies gilded with shaved French butter, artichokes a la plancha, grilled tripe with white beans, tortilla española and little skewers of grilled lamb or chicken called morunos.

But what Feldmeier and Rosoff sought to capture most with their menu of small plates was a seamless marriage between eating and drinking — or, to borrow a Spanish term, el aura del vermouth. “It’s a convivial, social way of consuming,” Rosoff says. “You’re pouring vermouth out of barrels and jugs and your table is covered in little plates.” The duo decided there was no better pairing for Moruno’s food than vermouth, which is served as a light aperitif in corner bars and bodegas throughout southern Europe.

The house vermouth at Moruno, called Vermina, comes on tap from biodegradable 5-gallon kegs beneath the bar. It’s crafted in collaboration between Rosoff and Steve Clifton, a brewer and winemaker at Palmina Wines in Lompoc. Clifton forages most of the herbs used in the vermouth from the hillsides around Santa Barbara County, using them to flavor a blend of pinot grigio and malvasia wines for the white vermouth, and a red vermouth, which gets its color from a slight addition of Sangiovese.

Vermina at Moruno arrives on the rocks in a glass tumbler, served with a skewer of green olives and a slice of orange. “You’re essentially drinking wine, but it feels more like a cocktail,” Rosoff says. The white variety is bright and lemony, with a gentle herbal bitterness at the finish. The red is slightly earthier. Each is the kind of drink that pairs well with the near-continual California sunshine.

At Moruno you’ll also find a short cocktail menu crafted by Dave Kupchinsky of the Fiscal Agent, which makes use of vermouth and sherry (and limited shelf space) in simple but brilliant ways, including an old-fashioned made with brandy aged in sherry barrels, a riff on a vermouth Collins called the Inigo Montoya, and a vermouth-heavy Negroni called the Vergoni. In addition, there’s an attractively priced wine list (most bottles are less than $50) that offers unheralded finds from across Spain, Languedoc and southern Italy.

At any other restaurant, the wine list or cocktails would be stars unto themselves, but at both Moruno and Bar Vermut, the vermouth undoubtedly and perhaps impossibly remains the star.

In two weeks of service, the popularity of vermouth at Moruno has surprised even Rosoff, its biggest booster. “Most of the customers have heard of vermouth, but they’ve never tried it on its own,” a server explained. “But they’re totally down to jump in and order it.” So far, it’s been the restaurant’s biggest seller, and Rosoff is already looking into bottling Vermina for take-away sales.

The success of vermouth at Moruno has emboldened Rosoff’s vision of Bar Vermut, which he hopes to open in the coming months. “My dream is to serve only vermouth, sherry and gin. And the food will just be things on toothpicks,” he says with a grin. “But we’ll have to see if L.A. is ready for that first.” —Garrett Snyder

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In Binge-Worthy Journalism: Backstage With the Creators of Serial, Sarah Koenig and Julie Snyder, the two women, who are also producers of public radio’s This American Life, give a behind-the-scenes look at how their podcast has become one of the most popular in the medium.

USC, Bovard Auditorium, 3551 Trousdale Pkwy., University Park; Fri., March 4, 7 p.m.; $20, $15 USC alumni. (213) 740-0483, visionsandvoices.usc.edu. Also at Valley Performing Arts Center, 18111 Nordhoff St., Northridge; Sat., March 5, 8 p.m.; $35-$65; valleyperformingartscenter.org. —Siran Babayan

DRAG
On Le Bal
Drag shows are glamorous affairs. I mean, where else are you going to find that many sequins and that much brilliant facial contouring? So often, though, they’re performed in divey gay bars and clubs, which have their charms but don’t have the grandeur to do the performances justice. For the second time since October, Le Bal Drag takes over the grandeur-plentiful Theatre at the Ace Hotel for a celebration of the evolution of the performance art, featuring Detox, Trixie Mattel and record producer will join members of New York’s Wordless Music Orchestra and L.A.’s wild Up, led by conductor Ryan McAdams and percussionists Yuri Yamashita-Morales and Wilson Torres. The Theatre at Ace Hotel, 929 S. Broadway, downtown; Fri., March 4, 8 p.m.; $39-$79. (213) 623-3233, acehotel.com/calendar/losangeles/punch-drunk-love. —Siran Babayan

DANCE
Thirst Place
As L.A. sizzles with record-breaking summer heat in February and El Niño offers uneven relief, choreographer Laurie Sefton’s newest work, desiccated earth/California, takes on a gnarly front-page issue. Under the banner “Aridity,” Sefton and her Cliaboobscur Dance Company consider drought in forms climactic, intellectual and emotional in this premiere, plus three other works. Sefton is a thoughtful, intelligent choreographer, and her strong dancers are unafraid of tough topics such as Alzheimer’s and the politics of water use. Expect insightful perspectives of light and shadow on the chosen topics, a hallmark of this troupe named for the 17th-century art form chiaroscuro, referring to light falling unevenly on an object. Nate Holden Performing Arts Center, 4719 W. Washington Blvd., West Adams; Sat., March 5, 8 p.m.; $25. (323) 964-9766, facebook.com/events/109712986079750. —Ann Haskins

SPoken word
Left Right Left
The Skirball Cultural Center’s recent “A Path Appears: Actions for a Better World” was both an art display and a community engagement project. Guest-curated by Neal Baer, a pediatrician and Emmy-nominated writer-producer of ER and Law & Order: Special Victims Unit, the exhibit looked at local and international organizations that are working toward solving various humanitarian issues, while encouraging visitors to make a difference. Inspired by the installation and Women’s History Month, the museum hosts the all-female March Forth: A Spoken-Word Celebration of Female Empowerment, featuring performances by Denice Frohman, Gina Loring, Arianna “Lady” Basco and Rhiannon McGavin, Marquesha Babers and Maia Mayor from the local nonprofit Get Lit Players, as well as new music by alt-jazz ensemble Arielle Deen Band. Skirball Cultural Center, 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., Brentwood; Fri., March 4, 8 p.m.; $15, $8 for students. (310) 440-4500, skirball.org. —Siran Babayan

movies and music
PTA Meeting
Before collaborating with Radiohead’s Jonny Greenwood, Paul Thomas Anderson employed Jon Brion to create the music for his early films, including 2002’s Punch-Drunk Love, the director’s romantic comedy about the oddball love affair between a socially awkward toilet-brush salesman (Adam Sandler) and his overbearing sister’s friend (Emily Watson). Wordless Music and SpaceLab also this screening of the movie with a live score, featuring Brion in person. The musician, composer and record producer will join members of New York’s Wordless Music Orchestra and L.A.’s wild Up, led by conductor Ryan McAdams and percussionists Yuri Yamashita-Morales and Wilson Torres. The Theatre at Ace Hotel, 929 S. Broadway, downtown; Sat., March 5, 8 p.m.; $39-$79. (213) 623-3233, acehotel.com/calendar/losangeles/punch-drunk-love. —Siran Babayan

Wiki Fix
Even in a vast, user-generated resource such as Wikipedia, gender imbalances exist. Two years ago, Art + Feminism emerged to correct that problem. The now-annual Art + Feminism Wikipedia
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Herbivore Clothing Company GoldenVoice LA Weekly
Edit-a-Thon brings together volunteer editors at locations across the globe to build and update entries related to female artists. In Los Angeles, collaborators will meet up at LACMA, where arts publication East of Borneo is leading a workshop. No previous Wikipedia editor experience is needed to participate, as there will be training sessions at noon and 2 p.m. You will need to bring a laptop. Editors can bring sources with them or use the Balch Art Research Library catalog for references. LACMA, 5905 Wilshire Blvd., Miracle Mile; Sun., March 6, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.; free (online registration required). (323) 857-6000, lacma.org/event/art-and-feminism-0. —Liz Ohanesian

ZINES

Fit to Print
At the fifth annual L.A. Zine Fest, printed matter still matters, especially if it’s self-printed. Here, you can swap or flip through stories, art, comics and all manner of periodicals by more than 200 national zine makers and small-press publishers with names like #SNATCH-POWER, ASSWIFE and Suicidal Goldfish. Better yet, you can take part in workshops and learn how to be a DIY publisher yourself. The schedule also offers panels on various topics and readings at the Last Bookstore featuring returning guests V. Vale, writer, publisher and former member of psych-hard rock band Blue Cheer; and Alice Bag, punk-rock singer and feminist activist. The Majestic Halls, 650 S. Spring St., downtown; Sun., March 6, 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; free. lazinefest.com. —Siran Babayan

MOVIES AND MUSIC

Southern Gothic
Cinefamily’s beloved series A Band & a Movie seeks to celebrate the web of inspiration between film and music. This month, Katie Crutchfield of Waxahatchee has chosen to screen Days of Heaven before she plays a live set. Terrence Malick’s 1978 film tells the story of two lovers traveling through the Texas Panhandle to trick a dying farmer with a vast fortune into a sham marriage. Waxahatchee is named for a creek in Alabama near Crutchfield’s parents’ house — the film’s Southern story fits nicely with the homely qualities of Crutchfield’s latest, endearingly quiet record, Ivy Tripp. The weekday show is after her Saturday night show at Hollywood Forever Cemetery; don’t miss the chance to see the indie darling in a more intimate setting.
Cinefamily, 611 N. Fairfax Ave., Beverly Grove; Mon., March 7, 7:30 p.m.; $20. (323) 655-2510, cinefamily.org. —Neha Talreja

MULTIMEDIA

Language Porn
Fall in love all over again with the beautyful weirdness of the English language at Strange Sounds From the Bookshelf, a multimedia live-action event that will leave you at a loss for words. The evening pairs Nico Muhly and Maira Kalman’s illustrated 2005 version of Strunk & White’s The Elements of Style with a special Oxford English Dictionary–inspired piece, “A-Zythum” (zythum being an ancient wheat-based Egyptian beer) from L.A. composers Anne LeBaron and Scott Worthington, as interpreted by new-music collective wasteland. Expect eggbeaters, typewriters and guests such as cinematic artist Tacita Dean, comedian Patton Oswalt and KCRW traffic reporter Kajon Cermak. Hammer Museum, 10899 Wilshire Blvd., Westwood; Tue., March 8, 7:30 p.m.; free. (310) 443-7000, hammer.ucla.edu. —David Cotner

BURLESQUE

Knockers on Heaven’s Door
In the 1940s and ’50s, Lili St. Cyr was one of the best-known striptease artists in the world, but it turns out that her life offstage was even more interesting than what she was doing on it. Last year Leslie Zemeckis — author, director and wife of filmmaker Robert Zemeckis — published the biography Goddess of Love Incarnate, which details St. Cyr’s tempestuous love life and many marriages. On Tuesday, Leslie Zemeckis hosts Boobs, Books & Burlesque, which features burlesque performers, including April Showers and Maxi Millions; a swing-era band; a book signing; and food and drinks — naturally, the boober-centric evening will raise money for breast cancer research.
Culver Hotel, 9400 Culver Blvd., Culver City; Tue., March 8, 7-10 p.m.; donations suggested. lesliezemeckis.com. —Gwynedd Stuart

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ics meet fine-dining pop-up dinners at All-Star Chef Classic, a four-day extravaganza that brings 45 top-name chefs from around the world to a converted parking lot at L.A. Live for multicourse meals, tasting sessions, cooking classes and more. Signature events — including Thursday’s NerdMelt Showroom dinner (featuring five Latin American chefs from Baja’s Diego Hernández to José Andrés) and Friday’s American Masters Dinner (spotlighting James Beard Award-winning chefs like Naomi Pomeroy, Sean Brock and Wylie Dufresne) — take over an in-the-round “restaurant stadium,” which includes a live host and kitchen-side seating for 250. Nearly 20 L.A. chefs are in on the food-centric party; catch names like Josiah Citrin, Jessica Koslow and Ludo Lefebvre at Friday’s Grand Global Tasting or Saturday’s Grill & Chill, the latter dedicated to showcasing the versatility of open-flame cooking. L.A. Live, 800 W. Olympic Blvd., downtown; Wed.-Sat., March 9-12, various times; $85-$350. allstarchefclassic.com.

—Sarah Bennett

COMEDY

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For one night only, iO West brings some of late-night TV’s best writers out of the writers room and into the spotlight for an evening of original stand-up at the Late-Night Writer Spectacular. The featured writers hail from talk shows past and present — Conan, Chelsea Lately, Late Late Show With Craig Ferguson, Pete Holmes Show and Arsenio — with a reputation for no-holds-barred raunch and absurdity. With a lineup that includes Primetime Emmy and WGA nominee Andres du Bouchet (Conan) and Chelsea Lately’s roundtable regular Annie Lederman (Chelsea Lately, We Have Issues), iO West, 6366 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood; Wed., March 9, 9-10 p.m.; $10. (323) 982-7560, ioomprov.com/west.

—Neha Talreja

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COMEDY

Doctor Love

Darryl Charles is a stand-up comedian. Dr. Timaree Schmit is a podcaster and columnist with a Ph.D. in human-sexuality education. Together, the two host DTF: Darryl & Timaree Fun Hour, a monthly comedy panel show in Philadelphia, where they invite guests to discuss dating, relationships and the latest in sex education, everything from oral sex to transgender issues. It’s also interactive. So if you have a burning question about hustling, feel free to ask. They’re not shy. For their first L.A. event, Charles and Schmit will join comedian Thomas Fowler and sex educator Sandra Daughtery, aka Sex Nerf Sandra. NerdMelt Showroom, 7522 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood; Thu., March 10, 7-8:30 p.m.; $8. nerdmelt.com.

—Siran Babayan

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD

FACT SHEET AND NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT

Environmental Investigation and Cleanup

Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board

FACT SHEET AND NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT

Environmental Investigation and Cleanup

Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board

State of California Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board

FACT SHEET AND NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT

Environmental Investigation and Cleanup

Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board

This fact sheet provides information on the environmental investigation and proposed cleanup activities directed by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) at the Former Continental Graphics Facility located on 151 North La Brea Avenue in the City of Los Angeles, California.

At this time the Regional Board is encouraging public review and comment on a cleanup plan called Revised Removal Action Workplan (Revised RAW), dated January 27, 2016. Information about the activities and cleanup methods proposed in the Revised RAW is outlined in this fact sheet.

Site Overview

The approximately 0.2-acre property is currently used as a paved parking lot. It is bounded by a commercial area to the north, North La Brea Avenue and commercial properties to the south, and an alley followed by a residential area to the west.

The property was developed as early as 1951 when a gasoline service station was located on the Site, and was later converted into a parking lot for the Continental Graphics Corporation facility located south of the Site (171-181 South La Brea Avenue).

Site Environmental Investigation

During lot grading in 2012, eight 50-gallon underground storage tanks (USTs) were discovered at the Site. During removal of the USTs (also in 2012) under the oversight of the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD), elevated concentrations of total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) and light non-aqueous phase liquids (LNAPLs) were documented in soil at the Site.

Groundwater investigation and monitoring conducted at the Site between 2013 and 2014 identified low concentrations of fuel-related compounds in groundwater located at approximately 16 feet below ground surface.

Cleanup Plan

A cleanup plan has been submitted to the Regional Board to address soil contamination documented in the area of the former USTs. This plan (referred to above) is called the Revised Removal Action Workplan (Revised RAW).

The Revised RAW proposes further characterization of UST-related contamination in soil, air, and groundwater to be followed by the removal of contaminated soil for disposal at a permitted waste disposal facility. The Site characterization and waste removal activities are being proposed for the protection of human health and groundwater quality in the Site area.

Opportunity For Public Comment

The proposed Revised RAW is now the subject of a 30-day public comment period to address any questions or comments the public may have. Your participation is encouraged. The Regional Board will not make a final decision to approve or implement the RAW until the public and interested parties have had a chance to review and comment.

The plan may be reviewed at the following link (under the Site Maps/Documents Tab):

http://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/profile_report.asp?global_id=T10000003894

Public comments must be postmarked or emailed by March 28, 2016 and sent to Regional Board Project Manager Jeff Brooks (contact information provided below).

Mr. Jeff Brooks, Project Manager
Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board
330 W. 4th Street, Suite #200
Los Angeles, CA 90013
jeff.brooks@waterboards.ca.gov

Information Repositories and Contacts

The Revised RAW, reports and additional information regarding the Site may be found on the California Water Quality Control Board’s interactive Geographic Information System (GIS) database at:

http://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/profile_report.asp?global_id=T10000003894

The administrative file for the Site is available to review in person at the Regional Board’s office:

Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board
330 W. 4th Street, Suite #200
Los Angeles, CA 90013

By appointment, please call (213) 576-6600.

If you have questions about this Site, please contact:
Jeff Brooks, Project Manager
susana.lagudis@waterboards.ca.gov

Si necesita información en español, comuníquese con Susana Lagudis, Participación Pública: 213.576.6694

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- You are on antiretroviral therapy (ART) for at least 6 months
- You have a CD4+ cell count at or above 100
- You are not currently using a statin drug
- You have no history of cardiovascular disease (heart attack, stroke, etc.)

Talk to your medical provider today about your cardiovascular risk and to see if you would qualify for this study.
Art About Alien Abductions
AND A NEW TAKE ON JOSEPH CONRAD’S KURTZ

BY CATHERINE WAGLEY

This week, an artist cuts a gaping new window into a museum lobby’s wall, and another artist lectures on the strange abductions of five Tujunga Canyon women.

Aliens in the Valley

Betty and Barney Hill reported their alien abduction to officials at Pearson Air Force Base in September 1961. They didn’t remember being abducted exactly, just seeing an object they believed to be a UFO coming closer and closer until their minds went numb, and beeping and buzzing sounds lollled them into an odd, otherworldly state. The next morning, they found inexplicable concentric circles etched into the trunk of their car. As part of “The Eyes Are Always There,” artist Joe Merrell will discuss the Hill abduction and show a 1972 made-for-TV movie about it at Machine Project this weekend. He’ll be joined by Winona Bechtel, who will tell the story of five Tujunga women who claim to have been abducted between 1950 and 1970. 1200-D N. Alvarado, Echo Park; Mon., March 6, 7 p.m. (213) 483-8761, machineproject.com.

Dreaming in public

Friendly Plastic and photograms made from dream images are among the materials Katie Grinnan used for her sculptural installation at LAXART. Enter-Face, the show’s centerpiece, is a bright assemblage of familiar and unfamiliar things that spreads out like a web across the main gallery. Video screens embedded in car headrests, propped up by steel stands, show “loose re-enactments” of Grinnan’s dreams (in one, she’s running along the beach). Odds and ends are scattered around the floor. The combination of things doesn’t look messy, though. It has its own internal logic, as so many dreams do. 7000 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood; through March 26. (323) 891-4140, laxart.org.

Lady Liberty might be dead

Pull Your Coat, the satirical game show Ed Bereal produced in the 1980s with his Bodacious TV collaborators, plays in the back corner of “Disturbing the Peace,” his show at Harmony Murphy Gallery. The contestants answer racially and politically charged questions, sometimes failing miserably. The whole thing has a shrill energy; it’s funny but also not. That energy carries through the rest of the show, where the artist’s recent work hangs on walls and extends across the floor. This work is louder, brighter and more plastic than the sculptural work for which the formerly L.A.-based artist became known in the 1960s. Condoleezza Rice has skeleton hands in one drawing. A ghoulish Lady Liberty, made of light-beige cloth, pushes a cart filled with a Teddy bear and African-American plush dolls, one of which has a rifle. 328 E. 2nd St., downtown; through April 2. (646) 288-5647, harmonymurphygallery.com.

High-class war zone

A black plastic bag hangs on the wall at London-based artist Fiona Banner’s current show at 1301PE. “Mistah Kurtz — he not dead,” it says in gold lettering. It’s a stylish-looking twist on the moment in Joseph Conrad’s novella Heart of Darkness, when a messenger boy in the Congo announces of the brutal colonist and ivory trader named Kurtz, “He dead.” On the wall adjacent to the bag, a slideshow offers glimpses of London’s financial world. Banner did not take these images herself. Instead, she commissioned photojournalist Paolo Pellegrin, who has done work in the Congo, to photograph London’s financial district as if it was a war zone. From the resulting images, Banner and Pellegrin also made a magazine with the gloss and weight of Vogue’s September issue, but with gloomy text sourced from Heart of Darkness. It’s anxiety-producing to see highly produced glamour butting up against a narrative about the terrors of colonization. 6150 Wilshire Blvd., Mid-Wilshire; through April 9. (323) 938-5822, 1301pe.com.

Hole in the wall

Sculptor Oscar Tuazon cut a hole through the wall in the Hammer Museum’s lobby gallery, and then attached a large aluminum pipe to it. The circular pipe, probably a little over six feet wide, extends out to the building’s glass exterior, so that you can walk right up to the outside and people outside can look in. It’s a gesture that required some dramatic maneuvering (sawing through wood and drywall), but it ultimately reads as simple. “A window that you can walk through” is what Tuazon calls it in a short video about the project. 10899 Wilshire Blvd., Westwood; through May 15. (310) 443-7000, hammer.ucla.edu.
DINNER AND A SHOW — OR DINNER IN A SHOW

In a nondescript Craftsman bungalow in Koreatown, performance poet Martha Marion is hosting an immersive play-cum-dinner party

BY BILL RADEN

It’s not easy to characterize And the Drum, the weird and whimsical but profoundly captivating site-specific stage hybrid from Capital W, the experimental-theater collective comprised of director-writer Lauren Ludwig and producer Monica Miklas.

On its website, the show is boldly described as “immersive dance theater fused with a dinner party.” But for those fortunate enough to have experienced Hamlet-Mobile, the duo’s acclaimed Shakespeare-in-a-van production at last summer’s Hollywood Fringe Festival, a better characterization of this sort of extreme, in-your-lap audience immersion and indelible imagism might be performing what poet Marianne Moore famously called “imaginary gardens with real toads in them.”

A less fanciful description: It’s a musical without music. Instead of song, the dance numbers feature conversationally pitched recitations from The Second Bush Administration, the collection of playfully expressive metaphysical verse about life, politics and the redemptive nature of love penned during the Dubya era by the evening’s star, L.A. performance poet Martha Marion.

The “book” tying it all together follows a dinner hosted by Marion from the arrival of the dozen audience members/guests at a nondescript three-bedroom Craftsman in Koreatown — Marion’s actual home — through introductory chitchat, interactive party games, an actual dinner (a bowl of udon noodles and wine), after-dinner dancing and more intimate tête-à-têtes with Marion and the ensemble (dancers Eli Weinberg, Cloie Wyatt Taylor, Tailor Lee and Nell Rutledge-Leverenz) throughout the house’s various rooms, stairways, cellar.

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Raymond Fox, left, Tricia Small and Stef Tovar in No Wake

Theater Review
No Wake For the Weary

The pivotal event in William Donnelly’s digressive, three-character one-act is the suicide of an angry young woman named Suki, long alienated from her middle-aged parents for reasons they’ve never understood. Set in a bar and a hotel room, No Wake takes place shortly after Suki’s funeral, focusing on the interchange among the now-divorced couple, Nolan (Stef Tovar) and Rebecca (Tricia Small), and Rebecca’s new husband, Padgett (Raymond Fox), a loquacious Brit if ever there was one.

I describe the play as digressive because, as it progresses, it becomes something entirely different from what one’s been led to expect. Instead of a drama about parental guilt and grief, or what makes a person intractably hostile regardless of what you do (a really interesting question, I think), its primary terrain is examining the ins and outs of a broken marriage and what happens to a new relationship when the ghost of an old one appears.

Some great plays have been written around these things, and No Wake offers textured dialogue and layered characters. But tracking these individuals when they abandon concern for the dead person to engage in bickering, flirting, reminiscing about the first date and what-not drops the ante quite a bit. We never do get much of a picture of what Suki was really like or the intimate workings of this family — only vague, inexplicit references. It’s a basic flaw in the play itself, one from which the production, an import from Chicago directed by Kimberly Senior, only fitfully distracts us. Besides Senior, the show utilizes two of the original cast members, Tovar and Fox, while Tricia Small replaces Lia Mortenson as Rebecca. Fox is spot on as a very proper British professional who is nonetheless primed to defend any real or imagined assault on his machismo. Tofar is wonderful to watch in the opening scenes as he listens with half-machismo. Tofar is wonderful to watch in the opening scenes as he listens with half-much interest to Padgett’s ramblings; when he starts his dialogue, though, it’s too evident he’s spoken these lines before. Small, however, is out of her depth in an underdeveloped portrayal that gives scant evidence of the character’s inner life.

—Deborah Klugman

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The title of Glenn Ficarra and John Requa’s strained dark comedy, in which the war in Afghanistan serves as the backdrop to an American woman’s self-actualizing journey, is the military phonetic-alphabet rendering of WTF. The mild Islamophobia and highly questionable casting choices in the film call to mind other texting abbreviations — namely, AYFKM-WTS and GTFOOH. In the end, though, it’s an armed-forces acronym dating back to World War II that best describes this dismal project: FUBAR.

Whiskey Tango Foxtrot is based on reporter Kim Barker’s 2011 memoir, The Taliban Shuffle: Strange Days in Afghanistan and Pakistan (which I haven’t read). In the big-screen adaptation, the first “r” — dropped from the author’s surname (as are her escapades in the second country of the title), and her character is slightly tweaked. Kim Baker (Tina Fey) is a writer for a cable news channel in New York, not a print journalist (Barker, formerly with the Chicago Tribune, is now on the Metro desk at The New York Times).

The film signals Kim’s sad-lady status with the bottle of over-40 multivitamins on her desk, the exercise bike she rides in a grim windowless room and the “mildly depressive” boyfriend (Josh Charles) who never seems to be in town. Kim signs up for a three-month assignment in Kabul in 2003, a post she stretches out to years. In the Afghan capital, the diffident jounro blooms: She becomes a confident on-air correspondent, pounds both scotch and a Scottish freelance photographer (Martin Freeman) and, in what has become a prerequisite for all Fey vehicles, cabbage-patches to ’90s old-school jams.

WTF is essentially Eat Pray Love for embeds, filled with jokes and sight gags that are repeated to ever-stonier spectator silence. The wearying, self-explanatory looko-inflation system known as “Kabul cute” — applicable to women only — is clarified to Kim in five minutes of screen time, first by a fellow reporter (Margot Robbie) and then by a Marine colonel (Billy Bob Thornton); though she picks up Pashto and Dari quickly, the new arrival to Afghanistan, it would seem, has trouble grasping the difference between the numbers 4 and 10.

Incessant shots of mongrel-humping typify WTF’s disregard for the battle-ravaged Asian nation — which is actually played by New Mexico. When Kim remarks to her fixer, “I know you like your women to be beautiful, mysterious IKEA bags” — a dig followed by an artlessly inserted sequence of a group of women in blue burkas walking in the square — we are meant not to be appalled by her bigotry but to chortle along with her forthrightness. More distressingly, the actor playing Kim’s intermediary is Connecticut native Christopher Abbott (best known for Girls and James White), who apparently possesses the lone qualifications Hollywood demands to portray an Afghan native: the ability to grow a thick beard and look good in a pakol. Abbott’s Fahim Ahmadzai, at least, is constructed as a noble if one-dimensional character. In contrast, Alfred Molina, as the corrupt, concupiscent attorney general, the other prominent “Afghan” in the film, has been instructed to play as broad as the Khyber Pass.

Ficarra and Requa’s directorial debut, the zippy same-sex romantic comedy I Love You Phillip Morris (2009), which they also wrote, provided lead Jim Carrey with one of his greatest roles; the actor’s manic energy, refocused in that film, was divided equally between id and libido. WTF, however, confirms what’s been obvious ever since 2004’s Mean Girls, Fey’s first major film outing: that the performer and writer, who’s done so many outstanding things on the small screen, has frequently been ill-served by the big one.

Fey’s movies, WTF especially, not only reveal how limited her acting range is but also lead to extreme cognitive dissonance, as they’re often the kinds of pandering cultural products her TV shows would skewer. Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt, like 30 Rock before it, brilliantly calls attention to the pathologies and absurdities of white privilege (the earlier show giving us the immortal phrase “white nonsense,” delivered by Sherri Shepherd’s Angie Jordan). WTF, which was produced by Fey (along with Lorne Michaels and others) and written by Robert Carlock, a chief collaborator on Kimmy Schmidt and 30 Rock, only lightly jabs at its heroine. “That is officially the most American-white-lady story I’ve ever heard,” a Lebanese colleague (Sheila Vand) tells Kim after she constructs a dopey metaphor involving that stationary bike seen in WTF’s opening minutes to explain why she’s in Kabul. But the American white lady’s story is the official one here, the horrors she is surrounded by mere backdrop to her self-improvement.

The first, worst and most profitable of competing presidential-assault thrillers from 2013, Olympus Has Fallen treated a terrorist attack on 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue with the utmost seriousness, like a scenario that had been gamed out on Fox News. In essence, it was another “Die Hard in a [blank]” shoot-em-up, but because it was about totally plausible matters of national security, the only fun it offered was whatever one-liners Gerard Butler squeezed out. At the time, it felt like a Bush Administration relic that had slipped into Obama’s second term, a chest-thumping affirmation of American might against all threats foreign and domestic.

Yet here is London Has Fallen, which moves the action to a monument-rich European capital but is otherwise the same generic, po-faced bore as the original. To a score flooded with choral wailings — this selection must be labeled “scary brown people” on the Hollywood soundtrack — leaders from around the world arrive in London for a funeral, including U.S. President Benjamin Asher (Aaron Eckhart), accompanied by Mike Banning (Butler), who leads his Secret Service detail. It turns out to be an elaborate trap, with traitors working together to knock off heads of state. Banning and President Kick-Ass seem to not only anticipate such catastrophes but actively train for them in competitive morning jogs and boxing sessions.

Taking over for Antoine Fuqua, Swedish director Babak Najafi dutifully lays waste to the city, lopping the towers off Westminster Abbey and ensuring that at least one London bridge is falling down. The action never stops once the first car bomb is triggered, but the second half of London Has Fallen takes place mostly in the dark, where nobody can see the budget. — Scott Tobias

London Has Fallen | Directed by Babak Najafi | Written by Creighton Rothenberger, Katrin Benedikt, Christian Gudegast and Chad St. John | Gramercy Pictures | Citywide

Film

OPERATION UNENDURABLE

Whiskey Tango Foxtrot confirms that the movies don’t get Tina Fey

BY MELISSA ANDERSON

In the opening minutes to explain why she’s officially the most American-white-lady story she’s ever heard, a Lebanese colleague (Sheila Vand) tells Kim after she constructs a dopey metaphor involving that stationary bike seen in WTF’s opening minutes to explain why she’s in Kabul. But the American white lady’s story is the official one here, the horrors she is surrounded by mere backdrop to her self-improvement.

WHISKEY TANGO FOXTROT | Directed by Glenn Ficarra and John Requa | Written by Robert Carlock | Paramount Pictures | Citywide

IT’S THE STUDIO SYSTEM, NOT LONDON, THAT HAS FALLEN IN THIS GRIM SEQUEL

The first, worst and most profitable of competing presidential-assault thrillers from 2013, Olympus Has Fallen treated a terrorist attack on 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue with the utmost seriousness, like a scenario that had been gamed out on Fox News. In essence, it was another “Die Hard in a [blank]” shoot-em-up, but because it was about totally plausible matters of national security, the only fun it offered was whatever one-liners Gerard Butler squeezed out. At the time, it felt like a Bush Administration relic that had slipped into Obama’s second term, a chest-thumping affirmation of American might against all threats foreign and domestic.

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**Film**

**GAZE OF HEAVEN**

**TERRENCE MALICK GOES L.A. IN SUMPTUOUS KNIGHT OF CUPS**

*By Bilge Ebiri*

What if Terrence Malick directed an episode of *Entourage*? Well, we’re about to find out, sort of. In *Knight of Cups*, the director of *Days of Heaven*, *The Thin Red Line* and *The Tree of Life* turns his roaming camera and ruminating voice-overs toward Los Angeles and the movie business, where the excesses of money and sex and success and ego run rampant. It’s a hell of a thing, watching a filmmaker known for his dreamy shots of nature tackle the surreal, frenzied bustle of modern lust and glitz. He films L.A. and Las Vegas like some strange, distant planet filled with magnificent, unnatural creatures. 

*Knight of Cups* might be the most intoxicating film he’s ever made — a deluge of gorgeous, kinetic images and sounds — and, in some ways, the most perplexing.

There is a whisper of a plot: Christian Bale plays Rick, a successful screenwriter (at least, we think he’s a screenwriter) who drifts through a world of freewheeling parties, beautiful women, barely audible negotiations and family strife. The film is divided into loose chapters, each centering not around incidents so much as figures: an impulsive but melancholy actress (Imogen Poots); a model (Freida Pinto) who refuses Rick’s advances; his father (Brian Dennehy), gruff and deeply religious; a brother (Wes Bentley), an addict filled with rage; his estranged wife (Cate Blanchett), a physician who’s reflective about their failed marriage; a married woman (Natalie Portman) with whom he briefly seems to find true love.

These feel more like symbols, observations, than characters. But then again, so does Rick. As Bale plays him, he alternates between hedonistic abandon and forlorn wandering; we get little insight into his specific needs or worries. More than ever, Malick shrugs off the demands of narrative. Someone might start to think he only gets drawn to a film by a bit of voice-over, or a shot of someone else leaning in a telling way, or a particular pattern of buildings, or a pan up to the sky. That’s nothing new for Malick; he’s been headed in this direction for a long time.

His previous film, the much-maligned but mesmerizingly desolate *To the Wonder*, was best understood as a dance performance — one in which the silent characters’ ceaseless, stylized movements said more about what was happening than any dialogue or plot point ever could. *Knight of Cups* continues in that vein.

Malick shoots and cuts with an intoxicating grace; a Lothario dancing it up at a Hollywood party, or a particular pattern of buildings, or a pan up to the sky. That’s nothing new for Malick; he’s been headed in this direction for a long time.

On Rick wakes up to a brief earth-shaking revelation: his wife has left him. Early on Rick wakes up to a brief earthquake, and in some ways its aftershocks never cease as the film continues. Malick’s camera never lets up, whipping, tilting, panning, shaking, crawling, hurtling; this might be the most unhinged his frame has ever been.

Like Bunyan’s and Suhrawardi’s allegorical pilgrims, Malick’s Christian/Rick finds himself prodded and prodded by the people he meets. Everyone seems to provide some sign, some brief moment of clarity that helps him along. Poots’ vivacious actress gestures out a message: “I … think … you’re … weak.” Antonio Banderas, briefly stealing the movie as a Lothario dancing it up at a Hollywood dog party, murmurs, “Treat this world as it deserves.” There are no principles, just circumstances. Nobody’s home.

Rick’s brother keeps punching him, fake-jabbing forks at him, throwing balls at him, just to get him to feel something. Author Peter Matthiessen shows up, tending a Zen garden and singing the virtues of monasticism. All this probably makes *Knight of Cups* seem like work. In fact, it might be the least “difficult” film Malick has made; it plays as a dream, and it plays like a dream. Sure, it takes its anti-narrative impulses further than ever before, but it’s a film that exists very much on the surface — in the wild colors and movements on the screen. We can’t really understand Rick’s intoxication and gradual revulsion if the movie doesn’t seduce us; we have to lose ourselves a little in its rhythms and sensuality. You don’t reason your way through a film like this; you let it wash over you.

Or you reject it. Many will run screaming from *Knight of Cups*, even as some of us are enraptured. At times, Malick almost seems to welcome this polarized response. Though the filmmaker is nothing if not sincere, he’s also slyly self-aware. Consider the vaguely ridiculous moment when Rick looks up at a scantily clad dancer gyrating on the ceiling of a Vegas club and earnestly murmurs, in voice-over, “How do I reach you?” This is a guy who will find transcendence — or at least a yearning for it — everywhere.

How do you make a film about that state of mind, that longing? Well, maybe like this.

*Knight of Cups* | Written and directed by Terrence Malick | Broad Green Pictures | Landmark
In Zootopia, animals do a lot of the things that animals in Disney movies usually do: They speak, to begin with; they walk upright and wear funny clothes; they exhibit attitudes that align or ironically misalign with their species’ appearance and reputation; they hold jobs; they experience outsize emotion and moral doubt. Which is to say that, in Disney’s almost-audacious new animated feature, the animals behave less like actual humans and more like humans found in movies. What sets Zootopia apart is the way it uses the terms of anthropomorphism to emphasize its central questions: What does it mean to be civilized — i.e., to be human — what does it mean to be an animal, and is it possible to be both?

If that sounds heavy, never fear: Zootopia also features a lion named Mayor Lionheart (J.K. Simmons), a bunny named Judy Hopps (Ginnifer Goodwin) and an anthropomorphizing gazelle (named Gazelle) voiced by Shakira. A biblical variety and number of God’s adorably stylish creatures populate this allegory of discrimination and tribalism. Boroughs like “Little Rodentia” and “Tundratown” separate the mice from the polar bears; despite its claim of harmony between species, Zootopia’s animals self-segregate, something the film suggests is inevitable within even the most inclusive society.

In case we miss the analogies for sexism, racism and bigotry that run somewhat rampant in Zootopia, the screenwriters use language borrowed from debates on diversity and civil rights as well as the realm of micro-aggressions. Zootopia’s mission gets clouded in scenes where the DMV is staffed entirely by sloths that behave extremely like sloths. It’s an easy laugh, but one that cuts against the movie’s diligent parsing of how insidious a silly stereotype can be. —Michelle Orange

**Zootopia** | Directed by Byron Howard and Rich Moore
Written by Jared Bush and Phil Johnston
*Disney* | Citywide

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**A WA’S POSSESSIONS** We’ve seen it dozens of times: a snarling victim tied to a bed, a priest intoning prayers in Latin, a worried family hovering at what they hope is a safe distance. But how often has it come before the opening titles? Jordan Galland’s *Aw’s Possessions* begins where most demonic-possession movies end. After a successful exorcism, Ava (Louisa Krause, likable in the role) is left with a life in shambles, a lengthy list of criminal offenses and a weeks-long gap in her memory. (How did that bloodstain get on her floor?) That setup kicks off an absurd memory. (How did that bloodstain get on her floor?) That setup kicks off an absurdly absurdness is ultimately engaging to watch. If only the end credits could roll to a better world.

**THE BOY AND THE BEAST** Mamoru Hosoda’s *The Boy and the Beast* works with many common anime tropes but doesn’t find anything new to say about them. On the streets of Shibuya, a 9-year-old runaway Ren (Aoi Miyazaki) discovers a portal to a world populated by anthropomorphic animals. There, he grows up in an uneasy apprenticeship with the gruff, bearlike Kumatetsu (Kôji Yakusho) — a mother’s relationship with her child Ichirohiko (Haru Kuroki) is indeed adorable, to be quite that dumb. (Sherrilyn Connelly)

**GOD’S DILEMMA** "Little Rodentia" and "Tundratown" separate the mice from the polar bears; despite its claim of harmony between species, Zootopia’s animals self-segregate, something the film suggests is inevitable within even the most inclusive society.

**EMELIE** Emelie, the feature debut of concert-film director Michael Thelin, offers a clever take on classic babysitter-in-peril horror. Thelin packs the not-quite-80-minute runtime with tense, creepy set pieces, and it’s the babysitter who’s evil. Anna (Sarah Bolger) is a last-minute substitute caretaker for the Thompson family’s three cute children, Jacob (Joshua Rush), Sally (Carly Adams) and Christopher (Thomas Bar). Early on, she calls Jacob into the bathroom and asks him to bring her a tampon — it’s the first of many cringe-inducing moments, and Bolger, with her round blue eyes and calm, purposeful delivery, manages to sell it without the scene coming off as too postpropositional.

Things only get worse from there; a scene in which Anna calls the kids down for a movie and puts on their parents’ sex tape practically merits a trigger warning. The majority of the action takes place in the house, with periodic cross-cutting to the parents enjoying a fancy meal, oblivious to the horrors at home. Thelin relies too heavily on a gloomy palette as a means of generating scares, with the dark interiors straddling the line between spookyness and frustrating disorientation. Psychological thinness aside — Anna is a disturbed woman, but we get little of her psychology beyond some flashbacks of her with an ill-fated baby and a mysterious man — Emelie does create a menacing atmosphere and provide an interesting response to the “Final Girl” model that has long been the horror standard. Though fierce and uncomfortable, Anna’s determined creepiness is ultimately engaging to watch. If only the end credits could roll to a better song than a turgid cover of Blondie’s " Hearts on Fire."
The shaky camerawork that plagues found-footage horror movies has been known to make people queasy, but dodgy sound design may be even worse. Sure, it’s annoying that the wobbly hand-helds of Taylor Ricard’s The Final Project never keep anyone in frame, but it’s downright infuriating that you can also barely make heads or tails of who’s saying what — that is, until you piece together enough to realize you’re not missing much. The plot fits comfortably in this nutshell: A handful of college kids go to a supposedly haunted Louisiana plantation to film a documentary for extra credit (they all seem to be failing their film class; given the results, it’s no mystery why). They’re killed off one by one by a vengeful ghost — but not before they put on their head-mounted action cams to catch every moment of their demise before they put on their head-mounted action cams to catch every moment of their demise.Donzelli, who adapted Jean Gruault’s original screenplay with partner and collaborator Jérémie Elkaïm, presents sibling incest as the taboo amour fou scandalous tale of 15th-century French nobility with a transgressive romanticism and historical anachronisms more akin to Derek Jarman (Caravaggio). The shaky camera-work is reined in by Donzelli’s tone of studied seriousness — the flush of a rain-soaked cheek — humanizes Donzelli’s grand folly and the movie’s believability.Donzelli’s tone of studied seriousness — the flush of a rain-soaked cheek — humanizes Donzelli’s grand folly and the movie’s believability.

There’s a soothing quality to Una Vida — its crisp editing, measured pace and tender score — that acts as a palliative coating for its layered and intersecting, emotion-driven stories. Director Richie Adams, working from a screenplay he co-wrote with Nicolas Bazan, juggles Alzheimer’s disease, drug addiction, legacies of familial emotional trauma and the dynamics of improvised family in the film. Alvaro Cruz (Joaquim De Almeida), a neuroscientist grieving the death of his mother from Alzheimer’s, takes solace in the bustling New Orleans neighborhood and home she shares with his wife, Angela (Sharon Lawrence). A chance encounter with singer Una Vida (Aunjanue Ellis) and her accompanist, Stomp Leg (Bill Cobbs), as the elderly duo busks on a street corner evolves into a friendship. After Cruz recognizes the symptoms of Alzheimer’s in Una Vida, he also notes how her music runs interference against the illness’s erosive effects — a fortuitous observation that neatly dovetails with his professional interests. Crisscrossing subplots threaten to get unwieldy (both Cruz’s and Una Vida’s storylines come complete with numerous flashbacks) as Una Vida’s past unfolds, sketching in the pain behind her lucid moments. The whole thing is held together by performances that are superb across the board, Adams’ assured direction and delicate, beautiful work by both director of photography Tom Lembcke and composer Carlos José Alvarez.

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THE WAVE (BOLGEN) The Wave posts the inevitability of the natural disaster of its title — that, as with Californians and “the Big One,” every Norwegian in the wave’s floodpath is living on borrowed GMT+1 time. Our hero is an anxious geologist at an early-warning center named Kristian (Kristoffer Joner). If his calculations are correct (spoiler: they are), only he knows that a rockslide-triggered tsunami soon will ravage the Åkneset mountainside. Roar Uthaug’s film is more of a slow burn than its Hollywood counterparts, devoting its entire first half to Kristian’s vain attempts at preventing the waters from rising. His inevitable failure is signaled by a siren that echoes through the mountains so ominously you’ll think Ragnarök has come. The Wave is less a conventional disaster movie than a movie that happens to be about a disaster, a small distinction that makes a world of difference when it comes time to care what happens to any of these people. This is one of few films of its kind in which you’re in no rush to see the full force of nature’s wrath. (Even if you are, the event is so localized that there are no obligatory shots of iconic landmarks being washed away.) It’s all about the before and after, both of which prove more riveting than the 85-meter-high wave itself — not that it isn’t a sight to behold. (Michael Nordine)

GODS OF EGYPT Let’s give Gods of Egypt this much: An hour in, a giant crab crashes and explodes like a bad guy’s car in a dumb movie from the ’70s. That snake, one of two in Alex Proyas’ film, is wide as a locomotive and long as a parade. It’s also straddled by a divine she-warrior who sends it crashing through a dead desert city in pursuit of a surfer-boy thief (Brenton Thwaites) and a giant blond god (Nikolaj Coster-Waldau, embiggened by CGI). It’s dumb as hell, but at least it’s an impassioned, sumptuous dumbness. The best moments play as if the creators, in their cracked way, fully believe all this is awesome and can’t wait to make you gasp at it. This is Clash of the Titans—style adventure hokum, spiked with the pantheon of Ra and the director’s bold interest in cleavage. As they strive to reclaim Egypt from the evil of Set (Gerard Butler), Coster-Waldau’s Horus and Thwaites’ Bek road-trip through a universe as deep-dish geeky as the Asgard of that first Thor movie. We meet Ra himself, played by Geoffrey Rush for some reason, piloting a skiff far above the flat disc of Earth with the sun towed behind him, and we plunge into the maw of the billion-toothed space-worm that picks its one-a-night fight with him. We get some elaborate pyramid-raiding, with too-busy death traps that suggest the filmmakers haven’t seen Raiders of the Lost Ark but have played Lego Indiana Jones. The lighting, while never distinguished, is all reasonably legible to the eye; perhaps the workaday plot and inane battles are the cost of all that sustained, playful splendor. (Alan Scherstuhl)

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GET HER TO THE GREEK

Can North Carolina transplant Becky Colwell revitalize the Greek Theatre while keeping the neighbors happy?

BY HAYLEY FOX

B ecky Colwell, the new general manager of the Greek Theatre, sits on the floor of her still-unfurnished office, bathed in sunlight and surrounded by the foliage of Griffith Park. Outside, the tranquility of the Greek is broken only by the sounds of construction. Workers are busy reinforcing corroded portions of the terraced seating, giving dressing rooms a makeover and peeling layers of paint off the venue’s exterior to reveal portions of the more than 80-year-old original façade.

These upgrades come at the behest of the City of L.A.’s Department of Recreation and Parks, which has taken over management of the historic Greek. Although the city has owned the property, Nederland Concerts had been managing and booking the 6,000-seat venue for almost 40 years. But no longer.

“You can’t just keep extending a contract,” says Mike Shull, general manager of the Department of Recreation and Parks. “Those contracts are old. What was good 15 years ago is not the same value today.”

So in 2014, a year before Nederland’s contract was set to expire, a bidding war began. Nederland partnered with AEG, the entertainment conglomerate behind Goldenvoice, to compete against Live Nation for control of the Greek. City Council members, Los Feliz advocacy groups and music lovers at large battled over a changing of the guard at one of L.A.’s most beloved venues.

Ultimately, however, neither Live Nation nor Nederland landed the job. Instead, the city decided to take over management and outsource day-to-day operations to a venue management specialist. Enter Colwell, the theater’s new general manager under the international entertainment group SMG.

Nearly 40 years old, with corporate headquarters in suburban Philadelphia, SMG manages about 230 theaters, stadiums and other venues around the world, including convention centers in Long Beach, Ontario and Palm Springs. The Greek Theatre is SMG’s first venue in Southern California dedicated to live music (the Long Beach Arena, part of the Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center, occasionally hosts concerts but is primarily a sports facility).

Colwell, 43, speaks with a subtle Carolina lilt. She’s bubbly, easy with a laugh and seems energized about her takeover of the iconic Greek. “The biggest decision was, ‘Do I want to move to L.A.? It really wasn’t, ‘Do I want to be a part of the Greek Theatre?’” she says. “That was the easy part.”

She has worked for SMG for nearly 18 years, including 13 in her most recent role as general manager of the 7,000-seat Koka Booth Amphitheatre in North Carolina. Born in South Carolina and raised in its northern counterpart, Colwell was a social worker for Craven County when, at the age of 25, she accepted a “summer job” at Raleigh’s Walnut Creek Amphitheatre. What was supposed to be a temporary gig turned into a career, as she was eventually promoted to director of sales.

Colwell, who now lives in Los Feliz with her husband, young daughter and dog, thinks she’s a good fit for the job at the Greek because she knows how to operate on a “lean budget” and is well versed in working with municipalities. In fact, SMG claims that more than 92 percent of its clients are municipal agencies.

The new Greek is using an “open booking” model implemented by the city, which means anyone, not just one specific promoter, can hold a date on the calendar with an approved user agreement and a $25,000 deposit. The system seems to be off to a good start, as there are already about 40 shows booked for the 2016 season, ranging from Mexican mariachi star Pepe Aguilar to recent Grammy winners Chris Stapleton and Alabama Shakes to big names like Iggy Pop, Ringo Starr and Bonnie Raitt. (Among the promoters booking shows is a familiar name: Nederland Concerts.)

The only things lacking from the calendar are a few genres of music, including hip-hop, EDM and metal.

There are no hard-and-fast rules prohibiting certain music types, Colwell says, but artists must be a “good fit” for the venue. In determining this, Colwell says she considers the type of show, whether the promoter has done business in L.A. before and what other types of performances it has produced. Many requirements are set in advance by the Greek’s user agreement, which dictates everything from the percentage of merchandise sales allotted to the city to maximum sound levels at any performance.

“I mean, you may see some EDM on the calendar,” Colwell says. “It just depends … if they feel their band can live within those parameters.”

In short, just because a promoter has the money to play the Greek doesn’t mean it will be able to, Colwell and Shull agree. “If there’s ever a question, Colwell defers to the city for approval. “On everything that happens there, we have veto power,” Shull says.

It’s been a tumultuous two years getting to this point. In 2014, the Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners recommended that Live Nation take over management of the Greek, but just a few months later, the L.A. City Council rejected this decision, citing concerns from neighborhood groups. The parks board then decided the city could run the venue itself and issued a request for proposals from outside firms to manage operations. Applicants were required to have a minimum of 20 years of experience in the field and to have managed at least 25 concert venues of 4,000 seats or more. Two competitive bids emerged, but it was SMG’s proposed fees, qualifications and overall vision for the future of the Greek that compelled Shull to recommend it for the job, he says.

“When you put all that together, we thought they had the best proposal,” Shull says. On his recommendation, the parks board voted to approve a one-year contract, with two additional one-year options.

Los Feliz Improvement Association president Chris Laib was skeptical of the city’s takeover but feels the choice of operator was a good one. “Most of us do feel better that SMG is going to be actual manager of the venue,” he says.

The Greek is an open-air theater located next to affluent residential neighborhoods, so there are a variety of noise restrictions as well as a curfew. These rules alone, however, aren’t always enough for the more than 900 households within earshot, Lab says. It was just a few years ago that Snoop Dogg played the venue and a deluge of complaints poured into then-Councilman Tom LaBonge’s office from parents upset that their kids heard Snoop’s profanity-laced lyrics.

SMG and the city have “expressed their sensitivity to this issue,” Laib says. He’s now most concerned with how a drive for profits and densely packed shows may affect traffic on the residential streets surrounding the theater. “Regardless of whether Mary Poppins music is being played … the real issue is how many cars the neighborhood can handle.”

Even with these hurdles, the city’s takeover of the Greek is worth the risk, Shull says. If they can make the venue more profitable, these funds can be pumped back into the parks system to bankroll additional park rangers, new shuttle services and other improvements. A new concessions contract alone stands to earn the city at least $1 million a year in additional profit. “It’s just raw money back to the department,” he says.

Shull is holding himself accountable for the Greek’s success and says SMG’s performance will be reviewed at the end of this year, when he will provide the City Council, the mayor and the public with a progress report.

“We owe an explanation at the end of the season: ‘How did it go? How did it work? Is this the right way to go?’” Shull says. “And we’ll make that decision toward the end of this year, about what the ultimate future of the Greek Theatre is.”
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What we recognize as modern market- ing 101 was once a radical innovation. As a teenager, Soulja Boy intuitively un- derstood what major labels pay millions to decipher. Even if some critics initially dismissed him, his peers immediately recognized the achievement.

That’s partly why he was an ideal choice to headline last weekend’s Nature World Night Out Fest at Union, alongside Antwon, Trash Talk, the Wedidit crew and other celebrated DIY rap, punk and beat producers. Even though Soulja Boy spent years on a major label, he always moved like an independent artist — albeit one with the opulent tastes of a Moscow oligarch.

When Lil B and Riff Raff were still semi-obscure, Soulja Boy was one of the first to reach out to collaborate. Drake paid homage by transforming a late 2013 Soulja Boy mixtape cut into the anthem “We Made It.” Nicki Minaj and Lil Wayne rapped over Soulja Boy beats, too. More recently, he’s recorded with Migos and Lil Yachty, one of Atlanta’s fastest-rising rappers, who personally reached out.

“I don’t really care about the credit — the credit was the money,” Soulja Boy says. “If I didn’t get paid I’d be bitter, but they gave me millions. Whether people admit it or I get awards, the fans know... the new artists know.”

Most recently, he dropped his latest mixtape, King Soulja 5, and he plans an official album later this year. He mentions that his most recent spark came from watching the movie Steve Jobs — specifically how Apple’s founder constantly reinvented himself, beat Bill Gates and made billions using technology to shape the world.

“It’s all about being creative. Anyone can do anything now,” Soulja Boy says. “All you have to do is go to your computer, Google ‘FL Studio’ and download it. Even if you’re a 9- or 10-year-old, you can do anything now,” Soulja Boy says. “All you have to do is go to your computer, Google ‘FL Studio’ and download it. Even if you’re a 9- or 10-year-old, you can make a dope-ass beat. All you need to do is put time into it. That’s what inspires me — those tools that help you get to the next level.”

An L.A. native, Jeff Weiss edits Passion of the Weiss and hosts the Shots Fired podcast. Find him online at passionweiss.com.
PROTECT YOUR PSYCHE WITH MUSIC

My workspace is wherever I find it. Currently it’s one of the stage-left dressing rooms of the 9:30 Club in Washington, D.C. I am on a break from a shoot day for the Live at 9:30 show that the venue is making with PBS. The last time I was in this small space was visiting with the Bad Brains preshow, the night before Barack Obama became the first African-American president.

Earlier today, I was part of a roundtable discussion with Ian MacKaye, Neil Fallon of Clutch and Eric Hilton of Thievery Corporation. We were fed some questions, but for the most part we talked among ourselves about the D.C. music scene and our experiences in it. These are very interesting people. Eric has not only done a ton of music but owns and operates numerous bars and restaurants in the D.C. area. Neil is a lifelong music fan and the singer in Clutch, one of the best live bands anywhere. Ian, a fifth-generation D.C. resident, has seen and done quite a bit, to say the least.

Now that we are a little more than two weeks away from the official start of spring, which will be on March 20, it is time to put away the winter albums and break out some warmer-weather fare.

2016 will be a freaky year for politics and a great year for records. Here is a brief glimpse of what is and what is to be.

Ty Segall, Emotional Muggers. The recent L.A. Weekly cover-gracer drops yet another great record. The Ennio Mug LP is out, has been out and needs to be spinning on your turntable as soon as can be. The man is on tour and, while the records are fantastic, live the songs are even better. Not to be missed on vinyl or onstage.

Frequent Segall bandmate and blazing guitarist Charles Moothart releases the fantastic Still Life of Citrus and Shime album on April 8. Coming to you from your very good (and local) pals at In the Red Records. I was given a copy weeks ago with permission to start playing it on my radio show and have been jamming tracks from it almost weekly.

Iggy Pop’s collaboration with Josh Homme, Post Pop Depression, is really great and the fact that they will be touring this material makes it even more exciting. Be looking to get some danger from these two on April 28 at the Greek Theatre.

One of my favorite bands, Lorelle Meets the Obsolete, release a new album called Balance in early June on the great Captcha label. I am on my second listen as I write this. Guess who was asked to write the press release? If you have not heard them, please go online and search out some of their music. Not a bad song in the bunch.

Another artist who is always a worthwhile listen is Steven R. Smith. He records under different handles and configurations including but not limited to Ulaan Khol, Ulaan Markhor and Ulaan Passerine. Smith’s new double-cassette package as Ulaan Passerine, The Great Unwinding, is 68 minutes of requisite soundscape. Truly, he is a tremendous talent.

One of the smokin’-est bands anywhere is Guerilla Toss. Smart, intense and bruising. I have been slinging them onto the airwaves for weeks ago with permission to start playing it on my radio show and have been jamming tracks from it almost weekly.

We advance-order types got a few tracks and I have not heard them, please go online and search out some of their music. Not a bad song in the bunch.

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**fri**

Johnny Marr
@ GLASS HOUSE
Johnny Marr had left the West Coast hanging since the unavoidable cancellation of his dates here in December 2014. In the meantime, the revered guitarist released a live album, *Adrenalin Baby,* which draws from his two solo albums as well as his former groups, The Smiths and Electronic. Recorded, for the most part, at the Brixton Academy and Manchester Apollo in the United Kingdom (Marr’s homeland), the 17-track collection captures the taut energy of his masterful live performances. Marr’s interpretations of such Smiths perennials as “How Soon Is Now?” and “Bigmouth Strikes Again,” as well as “I Fought the Law” and Electronica’s “Getting Away With It,” don’t attempt to compete with those classics but bring experimental ambient music. He released his dates here in December 2014. Johnny Marr

Anthony Child aka Surgeon
@ MASONIC LODGE AT HOLLYWOOD FOREVER
Anthony Child is best known as Surgeon, one of techno’s finest DJs and most important producers. Along with Regis and Female of Downwards Records, he forged the industrial-tinged Birmingham sound in the early 1990s, a style that remains hugely influential. Under his real name, Child works with modular synthesizers to create richly textured, experimental ambient music. He released his first Anthony Child album, the lush, spacey *Electronic Recordings From Maui Jungle, Vol. 1,* last November. Making his North American debut under his own name, Child is joined by Drew McDowall (ex-Coil), Alessandro Cortini (Nine Inch Nails) and a collaboration between Pete Swanson and Greh Holger, all as part of a Mount Analog-curated evening of live hardware performances at Hollywood Forever’s incomparable Masonic Lodge. —Matt Miner

Unloved
@ THE VIRGIL
DJ/producer David Holmes, composer/producer Keefus Ciancia and vocalist Jade Vincent create a flawless equilateral musical triangle. With Holmes’ expansive taste, Ciancia’s flexible abilities and Vincent’s emotional range, the trio’s Unloved project hits many marks. The core of their sound, as heard on just-released debut album *Guilt of Love,* evokes 1960s girl groups, classic French chanteuses and film noir soundtracks. But the album also extends to a widescreen, cinematic space while maintaining a lo-fi hiss and crackle that keeps it grounded. Vincent’s seductive growl is the connection between the ferocious drums and tumbling organ pattern of “This Is the Time,” while her husky tones amplify the effect of the jangly mono guitar on “When a Woman Is Around.” The album bookends its extremes with swagger on one side and eeriness on the other. —Lily Moayeri

Anthony Child aka Surgeon

**sat**

Waddy Wachtel Band
@ PICKWICK GARDENS
For more than a decade, acclaimed rock & roll guitarslinger Waddy Wachtel’s “Big Monday” jams at the now-defunct Joint on Pico were some of the most action-packed events occurring within our chronically overstimulated music scene. The revered sideman, who has enjoyed long and fruitful associations with everyone from Linda Ronstadt to Keith Richards to Stevie Nicks, always put together a first-rate band and ran a dizzyingly high-quality revue, one that pulled in major-league guest performers (among them, the aforementioned Keef, along with Bobby Womack, Robert Plant and Neil Young). Now, Wachtel has resurrected his killer combo for another stand at a new venue, Burbank’s Pickwick Gardens, and it’s a safe bet that history will repeat itself with a steady dose of weekly, world-class, rock & roll merrymaking. —Jonny Whiteside

**sun**

Los Angeles Is Berning
@ THE SMELL
Bernie Sanders is pretty much running a DIY presidential campaign, so here comes a DIY benefit to help him out. Behold Los Angeles Is Berning, headlined most appropriately by L.A.’s No Age, put together a first-rate band and ran a dizzyingly high-quality revue, one that pulled in major-league guest performers (among them, the aforementioned Keef, along with Bobby Womack, Robert Plant and Neil Young). Now, Wachtel has resurrected his killer combo for another stand at a new venue, Burbank’s Pickwick Gardens, and it’s a safe bet that history will repeat itself with a steady dose of weekly, world-class, rock & roll merrymaking. —Jonny Whiteside
Apparition”) with dream-pop grandeur alternates punk broadsides (“Lapdog” recent album lodic vocals. On the Long Beach group’s tars leavened by Kizzy Kirk’s darkly me-

Animal Collective’s just-out 10th full-length album, Painting With (Domino), finds the ever-morphing band masterfully zeroing in on a resonant interface of modern pop music and the contemporary visual-art aesthetics that have given the group its shape and scope. Supposedly, the now pared-down lineup of Dave Portner (Avey Tare), Noah Lennox (Panda Bear) and Brian Weitz (Geologist) aimed to be concise and pop-songcrafty with this album. But the sheerly cubistic results — a mad mash of head-spinning polyrhythms, burpy-bleepy analog synth and vocal/choral rag rugs — are anything but. Each tune is a distillation and deconstruction of,1000 art concepts that, owing to the strength of the songwriting, invites the listener to pay attention and have fun doing so. That’s quite an art in itself. Also Wednesday, March 9. —John Payne

Gurrionic Orchestra @ BLUEWHALE
Those who know him call him Gurri, a pet name matching his gregarious nature and life-affirming soul. Yet having the same moniker as the male fawn born to Bambi might cause one to discount his oeuvre expanded to reflect influences from Ellington and Mingus to Berio and Ligeti. Gurria-Cardenas’ comprehensive study has culminated in the debut album of his 22-piece ensemble, the Gurrionic Orchestra, featuring original works beautifully orchestrated for brass, woodwinds, strings and rhythm section in a hybrid of jazz band and classical sinfonietta. Extreme in ambition, expansive in vision and expressive in emotion, the album is a sonic boom, its forceful reverberations announcing an important new voice in jazz composition. —Gary Fukushima

Pennywise @ HOLLYWOOD PALLADIUM
Hermosa punk-rock heroes Pennywise are celebrating 25 years since the release of their debut album with three nights in a row at the Hollywood Palladium. On the first night, they’ll be performing their 1991 album, Pennywise theatrical with a “Free Health Care” shirt whose guitarist Randy Randall was on national TV with a “Free Health Care” shirt way back in 2008. (After CBS refused to let him wear an Obama shirt, by the way.) Support includes supercharged pop band So Many Wizards, the revered-to-infinity L.A. Witch and fellow psychadelicists Jjuujjuu, an unexpected reunion by cult favorites Blue Jungle, ‘76-style punk rockers C.G. Roxanne and the Nightmares, heroic locals Moaning (the next generation of Moses Campbell) and many more. Think of it as a coming together, just like Bernie is always talking about. All proceeds go to the campaign, of course. —Falling James

THE FEDERAL VINE: 102 Pine Ave., Long Beach, 562-435-2000. Chill 2na, DJ Icy Ice, Thu., March 10, 8:30 p.m., TBA.

4TH STREET VINE: 2142 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, 562-343-5463. FYP, DFL, Assquatch, Sat., March 5, 7 p.m., free.

THE FOX & HOUNDS PUB: 3109 Colorado Ave., Los Angeles, 310-639-8389. King Chris & the Groove Thang, Wednesdays, 9 p.m., free.


BOOTLEG THEATER: 2200 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles, 213-899-3856. Emmy the Great, Grace & Rachel, Sat., March 5, 8:30 p.m., $12 (See Music Pick).

CURE: 3109 Colorado Ave., Los Angeles, 310-639-8389. Easy, Joey Dosik, Golden Daze, Mon., March 7, 8:30 p.m., free. High Hils, Mothlight, Tue., March 8, 8:30 p.m., free.

THE COACH HOUSE: 704 E. Eight St., Santa Ana, 714-955-8020. Fell Runner, 213-389-3856. Emmy the Great, Gracie & Rachel, Sat., March 10, 8 p.m., TBA.

THE CAFE: 1905 Cypress Ave., Los Angeles, Biblical Proof of UFOs, Electric Children, It's Ok, Fri., March 4, 8:30 p.m., $5. Mr. Me, The Skylarks, Sweet & Cruel, Baiza Crane, Sat., March 5, 8:30 p.m., $5. The Sylvia Juncosa Band, The Black Widows, Sonos Mysteriosos, Motorcycle Black Madonnas, Sun., March 6, 6 p.m., $5. Pedal Strike, White Fuzzy Bloodbath, Periscope, Death Cat, Thu., March 10, 9 p.m., $5.


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THE COACH HOUSE: 33157 Camino Capistrano, San Juan Capistrano, 949-496-8930. Citizen Cope, Thu., March 10, 8 p.m., TBA.

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SUN, APRIL 17, 2016

1822 West Sunset Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90026
(213) 413-8200
www.theecho.com

TUE.

THE BAKED POTATO:
310-278-8465. The World, Fri., March 4, 8 p.m. $10. Level Se7en, The Dirty MacHine, A

THE VIPER ROOM:
8852 Sunset Blvd., West Hollywood, 310-359-1881. Paradise Kitty, Fri., March 4, 8 p.m., TBA. Level Se7en, The Dirty Machine, A

THE VIRGIL:
4519 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, 323-660-5450. Unloved, with Jade Valentine, Keefus Ciancia & DJ David Holmes, Fri., March 4, 7 p.m., free. (See Music Pick.)

THE SMELL:
245 N. Main St., Los Angeles. 323-656-4325. Guantanambo Baywatch, The Gooch Pools, Tongues, Janelene, Fri., March 4, 9 p.m., TBA. Bestial Mouths, Ghost Noise, Sextile, Berut, Sat., March 5, 9 p.m., $5. No Age, So Many Wizards, L.A. Glass, Witch, JUUUUUUU, Blue Jungle, CX Roxanne & the Nightmares, Moaning, Howler, Big Sis, Channel, Anus Kings, Sun., March 6, 2 p.m., $10. (See Music Pick) Treasure Mammal, Eric Schlegel, Joe Wright, Mon., March 7, 7 p.m., $5. Rudy De Anda, Friendly Males,very trendy, Fri., March 4, 8 p.m., $8. The Wrecks, Swedish Born of Osiris, Erra, After the Burial, Veil of Maya, Bad Omens, Wed., March 9, 7 p.m., $20. Dreamers, Arcellis, Thu., March 10, 8 p.m., $15.

ST. JUDE'S CAFE & CAFETERIA:
2010 Lincoln Blvd., Santa Monica, 310-396-5910. The Julian Coryell Trio, Tuesdays, 9 p.m., free. Trippeete Burlesque, Wednesdays, 10 p.m., free.

UNION NIGHTCLUB:
4067 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles. La Banda Salakera, Cafe Con Tequila, D'Karloatos, Bianco y Negro, East Side Agents, Fri., March 4, 7 p.m., TBA. 8Kalicats, Mafia Rusa, Los Arambulis, Sat., March 5, 7 p.m., $7. The Body, HHL, Chainfight, Seamstress, Sun., March 6, 8 p.m., $8; TBA; The Body, HHL, Chain Fight, Seamstress, Down, Sun, Sat, March 5, 8 p.m., TBA, $8; Hudson River, Sun, Sat, March 5, 8 p.m., TBA, $8; Hudson River, Sat, March 5, 8 p.m., TBA, $8; Hudson River, Fri, March 4, 8 p.m., TBA. Level Se7en, The Dirty MacHine, A

2906 Sunset Blvd., L.A., 323-663-9636. Crashing Hotels, The Night of the Sun, Dana Rey, Byrdogs, Fri., March 4, 8 p.m, $8. The Wrecks, Disco Shrine, Ryan Holmberg, Mon., March 7, 8 p.m, $8. Do or Die, Lidor Sait, Osarais, Tue., March 8, 8 p.m., TBA; Mr. Knife, Sat, Jaceo Achilles Meiclis, Alexia Merritt, Luke Janela, Wed., March 9, 8 p.m., $9; Rod Melancon, Sam Marine, Kat Myers & the Buzzards, Caitlin Anne Webster, Thu, March 10, 8 p.m, $8.

THE REBEL:

THE LOST ROOM:
1534 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles. Dirty Dishes, Gnarvana, Dabble, Fri., March 4, 8 p.m., $10. Cassandra Violet, Tuesdays, 9 p.m., TBA. Langosta Blanca, Wednesdays, 8:30 p.m. Thu, March 9, free.

SOL VENUE:
313 E. Carson St., Carson, 310-518-0177. Ikaiba Beamer, Fri., March 4, 7:30 p.m., $5-$10. TAIF HUNGRY RESTAURANT: 111 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, 213-484-1265. Alas Means, Loud Motor, Fri., March 4, 10:30 p.m., free.

TIMELESS PINTS:
3671 Industry Ave., Lakewood, 562-490-0099. Sugar Still, Sun., March 6, 3 p.m., free. TIMEWARP RECORDS: 1204 Venice Blvd, Los Angeles, 310-636-8360. Sister Crowley, Egrets on Fire, Order of the Fly, Scurvy Kids, Sun., March 6, 7 p.m., $7. The Body, HHL, Chainfight, Seamstress, Sun., March 6, 8 p.m., $8; TBA; The Body, HHL, Chain Fight, Seamstress, Down, Sun, Sat, March 5, 8 p.m., TBA, $8; Hudson River, Sun, Sat, March 5, 8 p.m., TBA, $8; Hudson River, Fri, March 4, 8 p.m., TBA. Level Se7en, The Dirty MacHine, A

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THE VIRGIL:
4519 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, 323-660-5450. Unloved, with Jade Valentine, Keefus Ciancia & DJ David Holmes, Fri., March 4, 7 p.m., free. (See Music Pick.)

WHISKY & A GO-GO:
8901 Sunset Blvd., West Hollywood, 310-662-2422. The Other, B Movie Monsters, The Order of the Fly, Scary Kids, Sun., March 6, 7 p.m., TBA. 12 The Breather, Forevermore, My Enemies & I, Mon., March 7, 7 p.m, TBA; I see Stars, Chunk No Captain Chunk, Get Scared, Tue, March 8, 6 p.m., $20. (See Music Pick.)

JAZZ & BLUES

ALVAS SHOWROOM:
1417 W. Eighth St., San Pedro, 310-833-3281, Thrillhaus, Sat., March 5, 7 p.m., $20.

ARCADIA BLUES CLUB: 16 E. Huntington Drive, Arcadia, 626-647-9349. Rod Piazza, Billy Watson, Jacob Wolters, Sat., March 5, 7 p.m., $20.

AU LAC:
710 W. First St., Los Angeles, 213-617-2533. Nolan Shaheed, Sat., March 5, 7:30 p.m., $20-$100. THE BAKED POTATO: 3878 Cahuenga Blvd. W., Studio
THE FEVER / VASOLINE TUNER
LUKE SWEENY / BIG SEARCH
ELECTRIC MIND MACHINE
VALDUR / MUTILACION
323-428-4492
SUN 3/6
BLITZKATZ
THU 3/3
SAT 3/5
FRI 3/4
WIN 2 WEEKEND PASSES TO San Antonio Recreation Area in Bradley, CA laweekly.com/free/LIB2016

EB'S BEER & WINE BAR, FARMERS MARKET:
For more listings, please go to laweekly.com.

SHENANIGANS IRISH PUB & GRILLE:
MAUI SUGAR MILL SALOON:
THE LIGHTHOUSE CAFE:
GRIFFINS OF KINSALE:
CATALINA BAR & GRILL:
BLUE WHALE:
COUNTRY & FOLK
310-376-9833. The Tony Jones Quartet, Sat., March 8
1818-352-6020. Blues Jam, Wednesdays, 7 p.m.
ERS, Thu., March 10, 9 p.m., TBA.
Elevate: Spoken Word Set to Jazz, with music from
Wed., March 9, 9 p.m., TBA. (See Music Pick.)
March 5, 9 p.m., TBA. The Sal Lozano Group, Mon,
March 4, 9 p.m., TBA. The Helen Sung Quartet, Sat,
Angeles, 213-620-0908. Marquis Hill's Black-tet, Fri,
March 4, 8:30 & 10:30 p.m.; Sat., March 5, 8:30 & 10:30 p.m.; Sun., March 6, 7:30 p.m., TBA. Roberta Gambarini, Chuck Berghofer & Joe La Barbera, Thu., March 10, 8:30 p.m.; Fri., March 11, 8:30 p.m.; Sat., March 12, 8:30 p.m., TBA.

TUNING FORK:
12051 Ventura Place, Studio City, 818-625-0734. Barry “Big B” Brenner, Thursdays, 8 p.m., free.

VIBRATO GRILL & JAZZ:
2930 Beverly Glen Circle, Los Angeles, 323-660-4540. Planet Rock, with DJs Chuck Wild & DJ Fonzi, Saturdays, 10 p.m., free.

LA CITA:
336 S. Hill St., Los Angeles, 213-687-7111. Punky Reggie Party, with DJ Michael Stock & DJ Boss Harmony, Fridays, 9 p.m., $5. Doble Poder, with cumbia and norteno bands TBA, Sundays, 2-9 p.m., free. DJ Paw, 21 & over, Sundays, 9-2 a.m., free. Soul Patch Sundays, Saturdays, 9 p.m., free. Moost Mondays, 9-3 p.m., free. Devotion, with DJ Insomniac, Wednesdays, 9-3 p.m., free.

LOS GLOBOS: 3040 W. Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, 323-666-6669. A Club called Rhonda, Fri., March 4, 9 p.m., $20. Blood on the Dance Floor, Sat., March 5, 4:30 p.m., TBA. Hang Time, with Hoodboo, Sodapop, Them Jeans, Low Limit, Sat., March 5, 10 p.m., free. Banjee Ball, Thu., March 8, 10 p.m., 5-510. Aura, Thu., March 10, 9 p.m., $5.

THE MAYAN: 1038 S. Hill St., Los Angeles, 213-746-4674. Electric Mass Fridays, 21 & over, Fridays, 9 p.m.-2 a.m., $12. Saturday Nightclubs, with DJs serving Top 40, salsa, house, pop, hip-hop and more, 21 & over, Saturdays, 9 p.m.-2 a.m., $20.

THE REGENCY THEATER: 448 S. Main St., Los Angeles, 323-934-2944. Soulection’s Five-Year Anniversary, Fri., March 4, 9 p.m., TBA. Bootee LA, 21 & over, Every other Saturday, 9 p.m., $15.

RIVIERA 31: Hotel Sofitel, 8555 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles, 310-278-5444. HDG, a house, garage and disco night with DJ Garth Trinidad & DJ Mateo Senora, Fridays, 9:30 p.m., $8. Boombox, first Saturday of every month, 9 p.m.

THE PLAYHOUSE: 1735 Vine St., L.A, 323-462-5858. Tigertail, a night of pop with go-go dancers and special guests, 18 & over, Thursdays, 9:30 p.m.


BOARDNER’S: 1052 N. Cherokee Ave., Los Angeles, 323-462-9621. Bar Sinister, Hollywood’s dark-waves and gath dungeons, with resident DJs Smurf, Craig Xe, Thu., March 10, 9 p.m., $20.

CANA RUM BAR:
1050 S. Hill St., Los Angeles, 213-747-7036. DJ Canyon Cody, dropping in with global soul, reggae, salsa and funk, Fridays, 10 p.m., free. DJ Joe Galvin, spining Caribbean and Funky Latin sounds, Saturdays, 10 p.m., free.

CREATE NIGHTCLUB: 6021 Hollywood Blvd., Los Angeles, 323-626-2285. Club Underground, with DJs Gary L & Diana Meehan spinning Britpop, post-punk and new wave. 21 & over, Fridays, 9 p.m.-2 a.m., $25. Boomblox, first Saturday of every month, 9 p.m.

HONEYCUT: 819 S. Flower St., Los Angeles, 323-688-0688. DJ Ladymonix, DJ Whitney Fierce, waxing disco, Wednesdays, 10 p.m., free.

GENERAL LEE’S BAR: 475 Gin Ling Way, Los Angeles. DJ Joe Atrudo’s Shagga Noir, Wednesdays, 9 p.m., free.

GRAND STAR JAZZ CLUB: 943 N. Broadway, Los Angeles, 323-626-2285. Arcade Saturdays, Saturdays, 10 p.m. Bob Parins & His Pint-Size Stars, Fri., March 4, 8:30 p.m., $10. RJ Mischo, Sun., March 6, 3 p.m., $15; Tremoloco, Sun., March 6, 3 p.m., $15; The 7/10 Splits, Thu., March 10, 9 p.m., free.

THE VIRGIL: 4519 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, 323-660-4540. Planet Rock, with DJs Chuck Wild & Canyon Cody flipping hip-hop, funk, Latin, reggae, disco and house, Saturdays, 9 p.m.-2 a.m., free.

DANCE CLUBS

AVALON HOLLYWOOD: 1735 Vine St., LA, 323-462-8900. Gladiator, DJ Slink, Brennan, Aazar, Fri., March 4, 9:30 p.m., $20. Josh O’Connell, DJ Aazar, Sat., March 5, 9:30 p.m., more and 19 & over, Fridays, 9:30 p.m., Avalon, where DJs are in the house with techno, trance, etc., 21 & over, Saturdays, 9:30 p.m.; Wolfgang Gartner, Wuki, Penthouse Penthouse, Sat., March 5, 10 p.m., TBA. Tigerlighter, a night of pop with go-go dancers and special guests, 18 & over, Thursdays, 9:30 p.m.


BREAKDANCE top 40, salsa, house, pop, hip-hop and more, 21 & over, Fridays, 9 p.m.-2 a.m., $20.


CONCERTS
FRIDAY, MARCH 4


The Vonn Traps: 2 p.m., $34. Haugh Performing Arts Center, Citrus College, 1000 W. Foothill Blvd., Glendora.

Monday, March 7


Helloween: 8 p.m., TBA. Avalon Hollywood, 1735 Vine St., Los Angeles.

Mummy Trolls: 8 p.m., $25. Rey Theatre, 5515 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles. See Music Pick.

Tuesday, March 8

Animal Collective: With Ratking, 9 p.m., $35. The Fonda Theatre, 1214 State St., Santa Barbara.

Cannibal Corpse: With Oblivity, Cryptopsy, Abysmal Dawn, 6:30 p.m. $27. The Mayan, 1038 S. Hill St., Los Angeles.

ANIMAL COLLECTIVE: With Ratking, 9 p.m., $35. The Fonda Theatre, 1214 State St., Santa Barbara.

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Natalie Merchant: 8 p.m., $45-$59.50. The Orpheum Theatre, 842 S. Broadway, Los Angeles.

Pusha T: With Lil Bibby, G Herbo, 9 p.m., TBA. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana.

Shinedown: With The Virginmarys, 8:30 p.m., TBA. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana.

Classical & New Music

Academy of St. Martin in the Fields: Joshua Bell solos on Tchaikovsky’s Violin Concerto, Op. 35, and conducts the British orchestra in works by Prokofiev, Beethoven and Schumann, Wed., March 9, 8 p.m., $45-$99. Valley Performing Arts Center, 18111 Nordhoff St., Northridge.

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The Bang on a Can All-Stars, L.A. Master Chorale: The groups present the West Coast premiere of Julia Wolfe’s mining-themed Anthracite Fields, Sun., March 6, 7:30 p.m., $29-$125. Walt Disney Concert Hall, 111 S. Grand Ave., Los Angeles.

The Capitol Ensemble: The group pairs together Antonin Dvorak’s String Sextet in A major, Op. 48, Sun., March 6, 6 p.m., free. LACMA, 5905 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles.

The Coburn Orchestra: Veludgia Gillad conducts the student orchestra, Sun., March 6, 2 p.m., $39. Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills.

The CSUN Symphony: Thu., March 10, 7:30 p.m., $15. Valley Performing Arts Center, 18111 Nordhoff St., Northridge.

Dale Henderson: The New York cellist surveys Bach’s complete Cello Suites, Sun., March 6, 4 p.m., $40. Pico Union Project, 1153 Valencia St., Los Angeles.

The Eclipse Quartet: The ensemble shines a light on the sounds of Schumann, Schuhhoff and Amy Beach, Tue., March 8, 8 p.m., $30. St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church, 1031 Benvenuto Ave., Pacific Palisades.

The Emeritus College Concert Band: Sun., March 6, 3 p.m., free. The Broad Stage, Santa Monica College Performing Arts Center, 1310 11th St., Santa Monica.

Eve Edyan: The pianist performs a multimedia event titled Earwitness, Thu., March 10, 8:30 p.m, REDCAT. Roy & Edna Davis/CalArts Theatre, 631 W. Second St., Los Angeles. See GOLA.

Jasha Nettles: The pianist resurfaces the music of Torn, with guest performer Vaezold Zaderatsky at a recital, Tue., March 8, 11 a.m., free. Edye Second Space, 1310 11th St., Santa Monica.

L.A. Philharmonic: Conductor Gustavo Dudamel conducts an all-American celebration with composer Gustav Mahler with a performance of the expansive Third Symphony, augmented by mezzo-soprano Tamara Mumford, women singers from the L.A. Master Chorale and L.A. Children’s Chorus, starting March 5-3, 8 p.m., Sun., March 6, $20-$196. Walt Disney Concert Hall, 111 S. Grand Ave., L.A.

Le Salon de Musiques: Violinists Jessaca Guidetti and Erik Avindor, violista Anna Kolotyina, cellist Timothy Landauer and pianist Kevin Fitzgerald uncover chamber music selections by Rebecca Clarke, York Bowen, Arnold Bax and Ernst Von Dohnanyi, Sun., March 6, 4:30 p.m., $75. The Music Center, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 N. Grand Ave., Los Angeles.

Long Beach Symphony: Soprano Elissa Johnston invokes Samuel Barber’s Knoxville: Summer of 1915, and Gemma New conducts J.S. Bach’s Overture to Orchestral Suite No. 4, and Gustav Mahler’s Fourth Symphony, Sat., March 5, 8 p.m., $49-$585. Long Beach Performing Arts Center, 300 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach.

The Magic Flute: A Love Story: Based on director Barrie Kosky and theater group 1927’s visually imaginative production of Mozart’s opera. Sun., March 6, 2 p.m., $20-$359. The Music Center, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 N. Grand Ave., L.A.

The Merry Widow: The ever-irreverent Pacific Opera Project presents Franz Lehár’s opetta with new lyrics by POP artistic director Josh Shaw and arrangements by POP composer Sean Patriarco, shifting original librettists Viktor Léon and Leo Stein’s courtly shenanigans to Gold Rush California. March 5 & 11-12, 8 p.m., $15-$312. Highland Park Ebell Club, 131 S. Avenue 67, Highland Park.

Opera on Tap: Singers TBA belt it out as part of the “Classical Revolution: L.A.” series, Sat., March 5, 6 p.m., $10. Silverlake Lounge, 2906 Sunset Blvd., L.A.

Riverside County Philharmonic: Sat., March 5, 7:30 p.m., TBA, Fox Performing Arts Center, 3801 Mission Inn Ave., Riverside.

The SMC Art Song Project: Mezzo-soprano Janelle Dee Thomas, guitarist William Roll and dancer Wendy Castellanos stomp their heels for a set of flamenco and other Spanish music. Thu., March 10, 11 a.m., free. Edge Second Space, 1310 11th St., Santa Monica.

The UCLA Choral Union: Thu., March 8, 8 p.m., $25. UCLA, Royce Hall, 340 Royce Drive, Westwood.

West Coast Composers: Musicians TBA perform unpublished music for the “Being Emin Shackleton” exhibition, Sun., March 5, 8 p.m., free. AWOL, 4937 Alhambra Ave., Los Angeles.

For more listings, please go to laweekly.com.
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Doctors are seeking participants for a clinical study testing a novel approach for the treatment of Crohn’s disease: treating the bacteria which may be a cause of Crohn’s disease.

The study medication is in pill form and is a combination of three antibiotics: clarithromycin, rifabutin, and clofazimine. Permission at week 26 is the primary objective of the study; however, the study duration is approximately 62 weeks.

In order to participate, you must be diagnosed with Crohn’s disease for longer than six months and be 18 to 75 years old.

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Study participants will receive study-related exams, lab tests, and study medication at no charge. Compensation is available.

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