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HEALING THE WOUNDS OF WAR

Obama’s visit to Laos a watershed moment for L.A.’s Lao community

BY JASON MCGAHAN

Earlier this month, Barack Obama became the first sitting U.S. president to visit the nation of Laos in Southeast Asia when he attended an economic summit in the capital city of Vientiane.

But perhaps more important to the tens of thousands of Laotian Americans who live in Southern California and across the nation, Obama used the opportunity to break the official silence around the U.S.-sponsored secret war waged in Laos in the 1960s and ‘70s. He became the first American president or official to make public reference to the U.S.’ role in the war that was conducted without the knowledge of Congress or the American people.

“Even now, many Americans are not fully aware of this chapter in our history, and it’s important that we remember today,” Obama said in remarks at the Lao National Cultural Hall in Vientiane. “Over nine years — from 1964 to 1973 — the United States dropped more than 2 million tons of bombs here in Laos — more than we dropped on Germany and Japan combined of bombs here in Laos — more than we dropped since 1999; more than half of the victims are children.

“Hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people were killed during this war, thousands of others were wounded, and tens of millions of unexploded landmines were left behind, creating a human minefield that has continued to claim lives and limbs.”

Obama called the “unlikely bond” between the United States and Laos, formed by the hard journey of many Laotians from “the anguish of war” through refugee camps and relocation to build new lives in a new country, “And as a new generation has come of age,” Obama added, “more Laotian Americans have made the journey here to their ancestral homeland.”

Bryan Thao Worra, 43, of Pasadena, is one such Laotian American. Thao Worra was born in Vientiane and fled the war as a child after being adopted by an American civilian pilot who brought him to the U.S. He is the author of six books of poetry, a co-founder of the National Lao American Writers Summit, an editor for the blog Little Laos on the Prairie and the first Lao American to receive a Fellowship in Literature from the National Endowment for the Arts. He says Obama’s historic trip to Laos is cause for “guarded optimism.”

“Part of the challenge is this is a complicated story,” he says. “There’s several different communities we see whose stories are at risk of being lost in the narrative, even as we try to recover.”

Laos descended into civil war in the 1960s, as the U.S. military was escalating troop levels in Vietnam.

Thao Worra says President Obama’s call for reconciliation with Laos has caused a surge of optimism among Lao Americans. He says he hopes it leads to the declassification of documents about the war and the creation of a truth and reconciliation commission, like the one formed in South Africa in the 1990s.

“It’s been dubbed ‘the secret war,’ but it wasn’t a secret to us or to our supporters,” he says. “But when we came to the U.S., no one had ever heard of it. Today when I’m talking to veterans who were part of the war, it still hurts a lot of them that no one knows what they did to support the United States. Instead, it was like this yellow-horde fear, of being invaded by refugees, and no one knew where they came from.”

The war and aftermath of the U.S. military withdrawal from Vietnam in 1975 caused a violent disruption that is still felt by thousands of Californians today. California has the largest population of Laotian Americans of any state, 58,424, according to data from the 2010 U.S. Census. More than 7,000 Laotian Americans live in the Los Angeles area, with more than 4,000 in the Inland Empire. Also, 31,771 Hmong live in Fresno, the second-largest concentration of Hmong in the United States (Minneapolis is first).

Sayonsaid Syrasoeuth, 49, is a Lao American artist based in Long Beach’s Cambodia Town. He was born in Cambod, in rural Muanteysrey province, during the civil war and President Nixon’s secret carpet-bombing campaign of that country from 1969-73. “A lot of Lao friends are really happy and excited about the visit,” he said. “They feel inspired to have President Obama acknowledge the secret war, that it took place.”

Syrasoeuth was so young at the time that he consults an older sister to corroborate a memory. He has one very early memory of an explosion and the crackle of gunfire. He guesses he was about 3 or 4 years old.

He remembers a military march of teenage boys with rifles; his sister tells him those were soldiers with the Khmer Rouge, whose reign of terror was imminent.

He fled to a refugee camp in Thailand with his parents and seven brothers and sisters. A Lutheran church in Clayton County, Iowa, sponsored their application for asylum, and he remembers how on the night they landed, Syrasoeuth saw his first snowflakes and his first Christmas lights.

After so much crisis at such a young age, Syrasoeuth has stayed put in Cambodia Town. He sits on the board of directors for Arts Council for Long Beach and works as the program coordinator for Living Arts Long Beach, at the United Cambodian Community Center. The center sits on East Anaheim Street, near the apartment where he lived with his family when they arrived in the ‘80s.

Since 2013, Syrasoeuth and German artist Michael EB Detto have curated GHOSTS, an annual group art show that ponders the effects of war trauma on memory. They showed at Arena 1 Gallery in Santa Monica in 2013, at the Goethe-Institut Los Angeles in 2014 and at the Orange County Center for Contemporary Art in Santa Ana in 2015.

Syrasoeuth, thoughtful and soft-spoken, says the war in Laos remained a secret because for many years Laotians and Cambodians in the community didn’t allow themselves to grieve. The community elders had come to regard stoicism as a survival mechanism, and they were reluctant to give it up from the safe haven of the United States, for fear of seeming ungrateful. Their children tended to abide the silence, out of respect for the elders.

“It becomes a crippling thing on the new generation of kids that grows up here,” Syrasoeuth says. “But I’m optimistic because I see a lot of young people active and vocal. And there’s justic to be argued for, like, why did this happen?”
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orenza Arellano was wearing only undergarments when her body was found floating in Hollenbeck Lake.

When Raquel Román first heard that a body had been found, she had a terrible feeling that she knew who it was. She called around to neighbors in Boyle Heights, asking if they had seen Lorenza. She tried to get in touch with her oldest daughter, who lived nearby.

For six months, Arellano, 36, had been coming to eat dinner with her husband and baby at the Guadalupe Homeless Project, a shelter in Boyle Heights that serves mostly immigrants. When she became homeless, Arellano couldn’t stay at the shelter because it housed only men, so she asked relatives to take care of her baby and she and her husband ended up living at Boyle Heights’ Hollenbeck Park.

“She was a great mother,” says Román, the director of Guadalupe Homeless Project. “She did that with very little resources, and her child was flourishing.” Whenever Arellano came to the shelter, she would make people laugh and offer whatever she had — chips, Gatorade, soda — to the person sitting next to her.

When Arellano’s body was identified, initial media reports referred to her as a transient and circulated a photo of her that looked like a mug shot. Police determined that her death was drug-related, but Román says they never got a clear answer as to why she was wearing only undergarments and in the lake.

“She was a victim of street violence,” Román says, adding that one in four women living in the streets experiences sexual violence, and many women become homeless to escape domestic abuse.

“When people hear that drugs were involved, it’s easy to be like, ‘I knew it.’ But the reality is, she shouldn’t have been living in that park. She should have had a home. She should have been with her daughter,” Román says.

The Birth of the Eastside Mujeres Network

Arellano died in April 2014. Media coverage of her death sent shock waves through Boyle Heights, but it also brought together nearly a dozen organizations on the Eastside working to combat violence against women. The Eastside Mujeres Network is a collective of lawyers, social workers, church organizers, mothers, bike punks, artists, jiu-jitsu masters and filmmakers taking to the streets of L.A.’s eastern neighborhoods and flooding social media with the rallying cries “Where are our sisters?” and “All violence is public.” They demand compassion and answers for women who are assaulted in their homes or attacked in the street, for women who have disappeared, and for women who turn up dead.

In the past five years, there has been a surge in new women’s collectives in East L.A., says Felicia Montes, whose group, Mujeres de Maiz, since 1997 has been hosting wellness clinics in parks, holistic healing assemblies at high schools, and poetry readings at community centers. Some of the new groups are workers collectives, some are...
founded in the same way. Whether I’m a lawyer or you’re a 19-year-old kid, we have a common struggle,” says Laura Urias of Phillips & Urias.

Many social services agencies can be working in silos, Román explains, which is why it’s important to put a face to each group. A year after Arellano died, the Guadalupe Homeless Project opened a 15-bed shelter in Boyle Heights for elderly, undocumented women.

“Last Christmas, the Ovarian Psychos donated sweaters and jewelry to the women,” Román says, and if someone in the network ing for her got back to her or to her captor and she was able to get home.

The Roots of the Anti-Rape Movement in East L.A.

The rise in women’s organizing on the Eastside parallels a growth in popular feminism and a focus on violence against women in the media — with stories about rape cases, sexual assault on college campuses and domestic violence drawing the attention of the public and celebrities. But there have been many generations of Chicana feminist activism in Los Angeles, according to Blackwell.

“In the ’60s and ’70s, organizers faced a lot of barriers in Chicano and feminist movements, and pushed through them to do the work,” Montes says. “That paved the way for these new organizations.”

In fact, the nation’s first 24-hour bilingual rape crisis hotline was established 40 years ago right here in East L.A.

In 1975, if a Spanish-speaking rape survivor wanted to call a crisis hotline in Los Angeles County, there was only one person she could talk to: Irene Mendez-Banales.

In the early 1970s, an anti-rape movement was mobilizing around the nation, but it was largely a white women’s movement. That’s why members of L.A.’s first rape crisis hotline, the Los Angeles Commission on Assaults Against Women (LACAAW), reached out to Mendez-Banales, one of the founders of the Chicana feminist organization Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional, in hopes of expanding its services to L.A.’s Spanish-speaking communities. Even though she had a full-time job and was raising two kids, Mendez-Banales took the training and started filling shifts in the Westside office.

After a few months of working the hotline, she was swamped. Calls were pouring in every day, and Mendez-Banales couldn’t keep up. Meanwhile, on the Eastside, Connie Destito, an emergency room social worker, was establishing the first rape trauma center at L.A. County USC Women’s Hospital but had nobody to whom she could refer Spanish-speaking clients for follow-up care.

So, in 1976, Mendez-Banales and Destito started their own hotline — the East Los Angeles Women’s Center (then called the East Los Angeles Rape Hotline) — drawing on their network of comadres, friends and family. The 15 founding members met on Saturdays in one another’s homes, and each put in $25 to pay for the phone line. Mendez-Banales’ daughter-baby-sat Destito’s son as the women designed training modules, wrote schedules of shifts and did the paperwork to become a nonprofit.

Mendez-Banales and Destito were a rare thing in the ’70s — activists in both the Chicano movement and the women’s movement. Other than the Comisión Femenil, there was little overlap between the two at the time. “Chicanas who raised issues of poverty or race in the women’s movement were always told that gender was primary, and they had to leave race at the door. And women who were active in the Chicano movement and raised issues of gender were told they were dividing the movement. They were called agringada, or whitewasher, Destito explains. That’s why issues of violence against women of color were slipping through the cracks. The only option women had for addressing violence was to call the police, Blackwell says, something many Latina and immigrant women weren’t willing to do because there were few Spanish-language resources or because they didn’t trust authorities.

Destito and Mendez-Banales wanted to give these women other options. The East Los Angeles Women’s Center’s driving philosophy was hermanas por vida, or sisters for life. Drawing on the family-oriented, collectivist Chicana culture, the members became a family not only for one another but also for the many women who called the hotline or approached them at community forums.

In front of East L.A. Women’s Center are, from front left, Carol Marron, Nancy Sandovel, Angie Licea and Veva Lopez; middle row from left, Diane Romero, Erika Verduzco, Barbara Kapps, Rebecca Melendez and Alejandra Aguilar; back row from left, Luis Mendoza, Karla Morales, Sonia Rivera, Rosemarie Mollinedo, Carmen Lorenz and Ozzie Cruz.

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> 10) The Most Vulnerable Women

As ELAWC grew over the years, so did the understanding of how cycles of violence are connected, especially in poor and immigrant communities. In the ’70s, the movement was about sexual assault, and in the ’80s it expanded to include intimate-partner violence, explains Barbara Kappos, current executive director of ELAWC. Today, organizers are focusing on the connections between sexual assault, domestic violence, human trafficking and HIV.

“Most women we work with have gone through multiple traumas,” Kappos says. Sixty-five percent of clients who come in to report domestic violence have had a history of sexual assault, she says. Of the HIV-positive population the organization serves, the majority are immigrant women. Most are living with intimate-partner violence and were infected by their partner. Because women are excluded from much of the HIV funding and services, many don’t know they’re at risk. “They journeyed here and expected a better life. Then, this happens,” Kappos says.

She recalls one client who had been assaulted by her father as a child, was gang-raped, was in an abusive relationship and was living in extreme poverty with her four children. It wasn’t until three years after she first came to them that the woman was able to leave her violent relationship and get help to pay for an apartment of her own.

Urias, the lawyer, says many of the women she represents have criminal records that keep them from seeking legal support in domestic violence cases — like getting a restraining order or negotiating for custody of their children. They might have theft or burglary convictions because their abuser was the only one who worked and they needed to find a way to feed their kids, Urias says, or their abusers would force them to sell drugs.

“It’s not the ‘ideal victim,’ where they’re a perfect angel and suddenly something horrible happened to them,” Urias says. “We have clients with a more complicated past, and those tend to be the most vulnerable clients to see. Because of their past, they’re so afraid to come forward and ask for help.”

The Shift to Transformative Justice and Grassroots Organizing

“When we started the hotline, it was more about a need in the community,” says Diane Araujo, the first executive director of ELAWC. “As we got more involved, we realized there was a lot of political issues and unjust practices that women were facing.” For example, victims had to provide their full name and address in court, which would become public record and could put them in further danger.

“You don’t go out of the family to air your dirty laundry,” Araujo says. “There’s the fear that people will know about a sexual issue, a fear of being deported.”

So, in the ’70s, ELAWC began building coalitions with the authorities, such as Peggy York from LAPD and Sgt. Miriam Travis from the L.A. County Sheriff’s Department, to help survivors seek justice in the courts. Today, they hold 85-hour trainings twice a year for hotline volunteers, which include presentations from LAPD detectives and victim and witness representatives from the district attorney’s office, who help survivors navigate the courts. Today, the only survivor’s first name and last initial are recorded in court, and the DA will advocate for the use of “Jane Doe” in some cases.

In the ’70s, Blackwell explains, part of the Chicana feminist movement was this sort of institution-building. While that still exists today, some of the newer groups are looking for alternatives outside of the system.

“Many people don’t see the criminal justice system as reconciliation,” says Justice for My Sister’s Bautista. “It’s punitive in communities of color.”

Her group and other newer collectives are discussing what they call transformative justice — holding assailants accountable for assault through community channels, like putting out a public statement on social media. The most important part, Bautista says, is that survivors of assault or intimate partner violence be able to make their own choices about what actions to take, especially since they’ve often had so many other people making choices for them.

Even established nonprofits like ELAWC still use grassroots strategies. In the past decade, ELAWC and other service providers such as Planned Parenthood have rolled out programs in which community members go to parks, schools and churches to talk to peers about resources for survivors of assault. Most are not trained counselors but survivors themselves.

“The promotora model works because the chances of a survivor trusting them, as opposed to you or me, are better,” says Veva Lopez, who directs the programs at ELAWC. Promotoras have long been used in Latin America to bring health care resources to people who might not seek them out — providing information about vaccines, diabetes, or prenatal health — but using them for sexual assault prevention is fairly new.

“I started as a victim, then was invited to be a promotora,” says Myrna Medina, a former ELAWC staff member. “Most Latinas can associate with other Latinas in the community. It not only gives you a way to speak but, for some women, when they finish the training, it’s the only certificate they’ve ever gotten. It motivates them.”

Still, many promotoras would not consider themselves feminists in the way they...
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Chicano Men in the Women’s Movement

Woman aren’t the only ones organizing on the Eastside. There is a growing movement of men joining the fight to end violence against women, on both grassroots and institutional levels.

“We have to acknowledge that the issue of violence against women and girls, it’s a man’s issue,” says Osvaldo Cruz, who works as a prevention specialist at ELAWC’s Wellness Center at the Historic General Hospital. “Boys and men aren’t encouraged to talk about it. Part of engaging them is giving them practical tools to know what healthy relationships are about.”

While grants that fund men’s programs related to domestic violence and sexual assault are limited, according to Kappos, engaging men and families has been important historically in the Chicana women’s movement.

Most anti-rape movements in the ‘70s were adamant about not including men. But Destito says that while it was important that their movement be woman-led, she knew they needed to have men organizing, too.

“If you don’t transform the whole family, then you’re not going to get change for women,” Blackwell explains, emphasizing that separatism in women’s movements is historically a white strategy.

ELAWC was the first anti-rape hotline to have male board members. Later, in the 1980s, executive director Alva Moreno worked with Jerry Tello, the co-founder of the National Compadres Network, to create programming for Latino men and boys.

They produced a series of teatro about whole families talking about sexual assault and domestic violence.

Today, Luis Mendoza is one of a growing number of men to complete ELAWC’s 65-hour hotline training. A recent college graduate, he has an office at East L.A. College to educate bystanders and support survivors of assault. Cruz taught him to hold men’s healing circles. “I never saw myself being an advocate. I thought people needed resources, not support,” Mendoza says. “But trauma and healing affects students in classes. I wanted to give back to my community.”

Breaking the Silence

On a recent early summer afternoon, a dozen teenage girls sit in a circle of couches and folding chairs at the Boyle Heights Arts Conservatory.

Hilda Franco asks them to introduce themselves by completing the sentence: “I believe violence is …”

“I believe violence is … far too common,” says one of the young women, and the rest go around: “Violence is swept under the rug.” “Violence changes you forever.” “Violence can happen to anyone.” “Violence can be stopped.”

“Speaking about violence can change the chemistry of the brain,” Franco says. She is running a workshop for Justice for My Sister, and she explains to the girls that everyone in their collective is also a survivor of some kind.

Then she talks about what patriarchy means, and some of the ways it shows up in their lives — when their mothers tell them to serve their fathers, or let their sons go wherever they want but closely monitor their daughters’ movements.

The girls listen, rapt, nodding their heads and raising their hands to offer more examples. At the end of six weeks, they will have produced short films that challenge the cycles of violence they see in the media and their lives, films that will screen in Guatemala and Los Angeles.

Today, through the actions of Eastside Mujeres Network and the countless people fighting for a better life for women, there is strength in numbers. Forty years ago, Destito, the founder of ELAWC, had a dream that there would one day be a billboard in L.A. that said, “If this happens to you, call this number, you are not alone” — an invitation to speak for women who have been assaulted or abused. She never imagined that, one day, so many people would be listening.
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When does Koreatown not feel like Koreatown? When you're sitting near the window at Here's Looking at You, gazing at the towering limestone façade of the Wilshire Colonnade across the street. There's a Morrissey track playing, and a large framed poster of said British balladeer on the wall. He's sporting a tight Supreme tee and a concerned look — you shudder to imagine his reaction to the 80s- and foie gras-covered terrace on the menu, not to mention the twin oxyn heads mounted on a nearby wall.

Jars filled with mango-pickled limes and brined black walnut shells line a windowsill that looks into the open kitchen, and a hand-drawn sign of a cartoon pickle asks: “What's your dill? Please do not disturb our pickles.” At some point in the evening, you will be tempted by a $26 mai tai, or a pony bottle of Miller High Life paired with warm spices, but I would be seriously remiss if I didn’t mention her bar pie. Most Arithmetic hodgepodge? Sure, but it’s also effortlessly delicious enough to be consumed without context.

Grilled octopus rubbed with Old Bay seasoning, adrift on a bed of silky creamed potatoes and pickled celery, or roasted cubes of palm sugar–cured pork belly with sour lime paste, sliced chilies and a showering of raw herbs, strike the same sort of buffer between toasted bread and something that feels downright healthful — at least, until you brush on the accompanying Japanese mayo, which functions as a slather between toasted bread and soy-marinated beef.

Charred shishito peppers are a common sight at the tail end of summer, but my favorite version might be the way Here's Looking at You serves them, with a generous dollop of tomatillo, a lush Italian aioli flavored with poached tuna, and a sprinkle of Chinese sour plum powder, the kind you often see coating dried fruits and gummy candies in Asian supermarkets. The combination is as clever as it is head-slappingly simple. The same could be said for deep-fried prawns, head-on crustaceans prepared like the salt-and-pepper shrimp of so many Cantonese banquet menus, arranged over a pool of salsa diabla, the Tapatio-esque red sauce commonly paired with sauteed seafood at marruequeras, garnished with tiny dots of avocado mousse and peppery Vietnamese nori leaves.

Is it a metaphor for the city’s cultural hodgepodge? Sure, but it’s also effortlessly delicious enough to be consumed without context. Grilled octopus rubbed with Old Bay seasoning, adrift on a bed of silky creamed potatoes and pickled celery, or roasted cubes of palm sugar–cured pork belly with sour lime paste, sliced chilies and a showering of raw herbs, strike the same sort of buffer between toasted bread and something that feels downright healthful — at least, until you brush on the accompanying Japanese mayo, which functions as a slather between toasted bread and soy-marinated beef.

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Caviar Every Day

WEXLER’S DELI ATTEMPTS TO MAKE CAVIAR BOTH SOULFUL AND SUSTAINABLE

Ever since Micah Wexler decided to leave world-famous L’Atelier de Joel Robuchon to build his tiny temple of smoked meat and fish at Wexler’s Deli, L.A. has been in love with the house-smoked salmon and home-brined pastrami of his modern homage to the classic deli. It’s familiar food through the lens of the fun, relaxed and very California #SmokeFish Everyday attitude that makes Wexler’s a successful and, dare we say, important example of modern West Coast-style deli.

You can get traditional pastrami on rye, rightfully referred to as the O.G., at Wexler’s, but it’s made with hormone- and antibiotic-free meat, sourced from environmentally conscious farms, cured in-house and cut in thick meaty slices atop locally made rye bread. The fish, from fishermen focusing on sustainability, gets smoked in-house, whether it’s the double smoked “pastrami lox” or the whitefish.

“We make everything in-house,” Wexler says. “We make our own pickles. We even make our own mayonnaise. If we can’t make something, then we try to work with small artisan producers to collaborate on a great product, like our rye bread. No other deli in L.A. takes that kind of approach.” (Though they do use Philadelphia brand cream cheese.)

Since Wexler’s has already made a name for itself in stepping up the quality, craftsmanship and sourcing behind many of the no-frills shops that preceded it, it should come as no surprise that the deli’s latest venture, a line of sustainably sourced caviar and fish roes, looks to reimagine the caviar experience of the delis of old.

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The new caviar selection is available in either Siberian or Osetra varieties in 30- and 100-gram tins inscribed with the Wexler’s blunt-smoking fish logo, making them look nothing like the fancier, old world tins of yester-delis. Wexler admitted part of his desire to branch out into caviar was his own personal love of the briny sturgeon eggs, “I have a bit of a caviar obsession,” he says, “I think it’s one of the greatest things to eat, both tastewise and texturally. I really fell in love with caviar when I was working for Joel Robuchon in New York — we used a lot! In New York all the old-school appetizing shops carry caviar, and so it was something that we have really wanted to do for a while. It’s obviously a very expensive habit, but we really think it completes the #SmokeFish Everyday lifestyle.”

Caviar itself has a pretty long history with delis, especially on the East Coast, where New York’s Russ & Daughters is truly an icon. But it still remains a delicious splurge that’s more evocative of midcentury glamour than anything contemporary. At Sadelle’s, a newer appetizing shop/restaurant, caviar is largely inaccessible: The smallest possible serving will run you $400 and caviar service is treated with pomp and circumstance befitting the Russian tsars.

That’s something Wexler hopes to change with the introduction of caviar to his deli. “Caviar has had its place in smoked fish shops for many years. We wanted to bring that sensibility to L.A. Caviar is certainly seen as something unapproachable and only for fine dining, but we’re really trying to change that. There’s no getting around the fact that top-quality caviar is expensive, but that doesn’t mean it can’t be enjoyed from time to time. Why can’t you be hip and approachable while indulging in some luxury? They’re not mutually exclusive. In this city no one has a problem spending $12 on juice twice a day, so to us it’s simply an icon. But it still remains a delicious splurge that’s more evocative of midcentury glamour than anything contemporary. At Sadelle’s, a newer appetizing shop/restaurant, caviar is largely inaccessible: The smallest possible serving will run you $400 and caviar service is treated with pomp and circumstance befitting the Russian tsars.

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In true Wexler’s fashion, the caviar is sourced with equal care for quality and environmental sustainability. Wexler’s private-label producer, Black River Caviar in Uruguay, is one of the top when it comes to sustainability and preservation of sturgeon species. It was the first to aquaculture sturgeon in the Southern Hemisphere, and uses technology such a free-flow water system fueled by gravity, placed in the Rio Negro, so the fish can have a life approximating that in the wild.

“We chose the sturgeon caviar from Uruguay simply because it’s the best,
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6 Best Charcuterie Plates in Los Angeles

Los Angeles is in the throes of charcuterie passion. It’s part of our evolution as a city of big eaters. As a city, we’re proud of our culinary bravery. Charcuterie is the French word that encompasses sausage-making as well as curing and smoking meats. In Italian, “salumi” covers the same ground.

Charcuterie involves mostly pork, but not as a rule — that’s circumstantial (there are a lot of wild pigs running around Western Europe). Dried, cured sausages are charcuterie, as are dried meats such as prosciutto and Iberico ham. Items in containers, such as pâté, terrine and mousse, fall under the umbrella. And bacon and pastrami count!

As you’ve probably guessed, charcuterie is just a collection of preservation methods. But it is difficult to master, and the animals used must be well-fed and gently taken care of in their lifetimes.

Los Angeles restaurants started touting their in-house salumi and charcuterie a few years ago. Now we’re seeing it all over the city in high-end restaurants, and we’re seeing it done well. Making charcuterie in-house requires a lot of space and energy, but these restaurants are dedicated to the craft.

Bestia

Downtown’s Bestia opened in 2012, and one could reasonably argue that this restaurant’s salumi (not charcuterie, since Bestia is Italian-leaning) really kicked off the craze. The open kitchen gives diners a view of all the action, from pasta making to steak searing, but the focal point is the salumi station. The options here tend away from pork; there is beef bresaola and various duck preparations, from prosciutto to mousse. 2121 Seventh Place, downtown; (213) 514-5724, bestiala.com.

Chi Spacca

Opened in 2013, Chi Spacca lays claim to being the first in the city to do its own dry curing. The salumi is made in-house, as befits a temple of flesh, and the year it opened Jonathan Gold called it “by far the most ambitious” salumi in the city. That may or may not still be the case, but only because the competition has gotten so much better. Chi Spacca’s is still excellent, featuring various salame among other delights. 6610 Melrose Ave., Hancock Park; (323) 297-1133, chipspacca.com.

Salt’s Cure

Salt’s Cure has always been known for its love of carnivorous eating. Remember when it first opened, how enthralled we all were with a breakfast plate that came standard with two kinds of meat? That doesn’t seem as wild now, but circa 2011 it certainly was. Salt’s Cure is still innovating, and its charcuterie — which started with the bacon from that breakfast platter — comes à la carte, each item with its own array of sauces and sides. 1155 N. Highland Ave., Hollywood; (323) 465-7258, saltscure.com.

Miro

Miro is one of the newer restaurants on this list, a big downtown space that will host its share of business lunches but is aiming for more soaring culinary heights. The chef’s main passion is charcuterie — he produces his own line — and Miro’s charcuterie plate reflects that. It’s a gorgeous, homemade work of art, dotted with colorful pickled vegetables. 888 Wilshire Blvd., downtown; (213) 988-8880, mirorestaurant.com.

The Cannibal

The Cannibal makes an interesting distinction in its charcuterie offerings. The “fresh” charcuterie — the terrines, pâtes and mousse, aka processed meats in jars — is made in-house. The cured stuff is brought in from vendors across the United States. Except, as Cannibal says, “for once in a while when we get some crazy Iberico ham in from Spain or maybe some other suitase salumi.” Which for food hobbyists is actually pretty exciting information. 850 Wellington Blvd., Culver City; (310) 838-2783, thecanniballa.com.

Cassia

We are not alone in extolling Cassia’s virtues. The restaurant’s charcuterie is all made in-house and is, in keeping with Cassia’s entire menu, at its core French-Vietnamese. If you’ve become immune to the charms of the standard charcuterie plate, try this one. It includes salted pork, served with grilled bread; smoked red sausage; Yunnan pork; Singaporean candied pork (it’s like bacon, but more); lamb ham (that’s lamb done in the style of ham); and smoked curried duck. 1314 Seventh St., Santa Monica; (310) 938-6699, cassiala.com. —Katherine Spiers
Sips:
The Roger Room
The Bar at Belcampo Santa Monica
E.P. & L.P.
Birch
House of Punch
The Lucques Group
Sassafras
Miro
Broken Spanish/BS Taqueria
Lost Property
Hinoki & the Bird
71ABOVE
Sonny’s Hideaway
Sotto
Otium
Chaya
1886 Bar at The Raymond
Guelaguetza
Lock & Key
Bar Toscana
The Lincoln

Sweets:
Crème Caramel LA
McConnell’s Fine Ice Creams
Copenhagen Pastry
WP24 by Wolfgang Puck
Bearclaw Kitchen
The Gourmandise School
Choctál Single-Origin Ice Cream
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the food is not represented here. The festival is free, but Italian restaurants and purveyors are well meant to honor the patron saint of Naples (a big San Gennaro booster.) The festival is last weekend of September in Hollywood, behind El Capitan Theatre. (That’s where Jimmy Kimmel shoots his show, and he’s a big San Gennaro booster.) The festival is meant to honor the patron saint of Naples and “propagate unity and cooperation among Italian-Americans.” There are live music performances, plus a lot of games and rides (it’s very kid-friendly), as well as a parade, but the main focus is on the food. Italian restaurants and purveyors are well represented here. The festival is free, but the food is not. Behind El Capitan Theatre, 6838 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood; Fri., Sept. 23, 5 p.m.-mid.; Sat., Sept. 24, 11 a.m.-mid., Sun., Sept. 25, 11 a.m.-10 p.m.; free. feastofla.org –Katherine Spiers

ART

The Getty Center exhibit “London Calling” features two paintings by Lucien Freud of Leigh Bowery, a performance artist and staple of the London club scene known for his flamboyant, avant-garde costumes. Before his death from AIDS in 1994, Bowery had an influence on everyone from Boy George to Alexander McQueen. In order to illuminate Freud’s work, the museum is screening video artist Charles Atlas’ 2002 biographical documentary The Legend of Leigh Bowery, as well as the short film Theatric, which features Bowery doing a performance to an Aretha Franklin song. Atlas himself hosts the whole thing. Harold M. Williams Auditorium, the Getty Center, 1200 Getty Center Drive, Brentwood; Fri., Sept. 23, 7:30 p.m.; free. getty.edu/museum/programs/services/london_calling_filmseries.html –Gwynedd Stuart

PETS

Down at Waggle Rock
One of the nicest things about the 18th annual Wiggle Waggle Walk is the flexibility. Included in the cost of registration is a one-mile or three-mile walk by the Rose Bowl and some dog-friendly swag. Those without four-legged friends are welcome to attend and support the Pasadena Humane Society & SPCA (PHS), which takes care of almost 12,000 animals annually with the help of this event. Pooches and their people can navigate various vendors and visit PHS’ booths to collect stamps for a fun parting gift. There’s a Canine Couture Costume Contest, Bow Wow Boot Camps, plus agility and K9 demos. Shelter dogs lead the walk to the tunes of the band Champagne. 

DANCE

In the Cards
Brian Eno and Peter Schmidt’s legendary Oblique Strategies (Over One Hundred Worthwhile Dilemmas), a deck of cards in which each contains a challenge meant to unlock creativity, inspired the latest from contemporary choreographer Jessica Kondrath and her company, The Movement. Known for combining modern dance and ballet idioms, Kondrath and her dancers employed the sapphire
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MUSEUMS

Dino-mite
Dinosaurs come alive again at the Natural History Museum’s inaugural Dino Fest, a weekend-long celebration of all things Jurassic with fun and educational activities organized into themed areas. Highlights include listening to paleontologists’ stories; discovering real fossils and using the tools that keep them clean; and touring the museum’s collections and Dinosaur Hall, where you’ll find the world’s only Tyrannosaurus rex growth series, which features baby, juvenile and sub-adult T. rexes, plus the current exhibit “Pterosaurs: Flight in the Age of Dinosaurs.” And if you like learning about dinosaurs from pop culture, meet Buddy the Dinosaur from PBS’ Dinosaur Train, as well as Jack Horner, a paleontologist and technical adviser on films, who discusses “The Making of Jurassic Park” and shows famous movie props. Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, 900 Exposition Blvd., Exposition Park; Sun., Sept. 25, 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. (also Sat., Sept. 24); $12, $9 seniors and students, $5 children, free under 2. (213) 763-3486, nhm.org/site/activities-programs/dino-fest. —Saran Babayan

COMEDY

The Witching Hour
While Jeopardy! isn’t, @midnight With Chris Hardwick’s seemingly off-the-cuff contestant responses actually emerge via collaborative writing, and the minds amassing those answers remain some of the quickest in comedy. Assorted staff writers, top winners and general favorites of the globally trending Comedy Central game show perform stand-up and more when @midnight @nerdmerge 8pm host Blaine Capatch welcomes Ron Funches, Allison Gortez, Calise Hawkins, Jesse Joyce, Jordan Morris, Ify Nwadiwe, Dan Telfer, Dave Thomsen and Brendon Walsh to Hardwick’s own Nerdist Showroom, Nerdist Showroom at Meltdown Comics, 7522 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood; Mon., Sept. 26, 9 p.m.; $3. nerdistla.com. —Julie Seabough

TELEVISION

Gimme Some Sugar
When Selma director Ava DuVernay signed on to direct the forthcoming adaptation of A Wrinkle in Time, she became the first black woman to helm a $100 million film. Her latest project, Queen Sugar, an original television series that premiered on Oprah’s OWN network earlier this month, is groundbreaking in its own right, as it is employing only female directors. The show follows the return of Dawn-Lyen Gardner’s character to her family’s sugarcane farm in Louisiana — and the inevitable shock to the system that follows. Join DuVernay, Gardner, executive producer Oprah Winfrey and actors Rutina Wesley and Kofi Siriboe for this special screening and Q&A co-presented by The New York Times Film Club. LACMA Bing Theater, 5905 Wilshire Blvd., Mid-Wilshire; Mon., Sept. 26, 7:30 p.m.; $20 for members, $25 general public. (323) 857-6000, lacma.org. —Neha Talreja

Books & Comedy

Strike Up the Banned
Perhaps the word “celebration” is a bit chipper when it comes to observing freedoms being trampled upon and artists being pilloried — then again, what else can you call the continued triumph of freedom of expression but a celebration? Tonight’s Night of Silenced Voices: A Banned Books Week Celebration sees Skylight partnering with other bookstores as they present such works as the Banned Books Week Open Mic, the Blind Date With a Banned Book sale and guests like Zero Fade author Chris L. Terry, L.A. Review of Books noir editor and author Steph Cha; and Grace author Natasha Deón. Skylight Books, 1818 N. Vermont Ave., Los Feliz; Tue., Sept. 27, 7:30 p.m.; free. (323) 660-1175, skylightbooks.com. —David Cotner

Books

The Seasoned Life
The Food Network star dishes up simple, creative recipes for delicious, family-friendly meals.

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Discussion / Book Signing
Wednesday, September 28th, 7PM

Cookie Johnson
Believing in Magic
Reading / Book Signing
Saturday, October 1st, 2PM

The philanthropist and wife of Magic Johnson reflects on their journey in the years following his HIV diagnosis.

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28

LA WEEKLY

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LA WEEKLY

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IT’S NOT ABOUT THE HIGHS OR LOWS...

It’s about balance.

Iranian-American female who holds a dual master’s degree in African-American studies and public policy. Tonight she’ll do stand-up and discuss her new memoir, How to Make White People Laugh, in which she draws on her childhood growing up with immigrant parents in Palm Springs, visiting her ancestral homeland, pursuing comedy and the challenges of online dating for women of color. “It’s hard to date when you’re an ethnic lady,” she writes. “Women of color are like day-old sandwiches — you pick one if all the fresh sandwiches are taken.” Farsad also has co-directed two documentaries, including 2008’s Nerdcore Rising, about the nerdcore genre of hip-hop, and 2013’s excellent The Muslims Are Coming! The Last Bookstore, 455 S. Spring St., downtown; Wed., Sept. 28, 7:30-9 p.m.; free. (213) 689-0599, lastbookstorela.com. ~Siran Babayan

COMEDY

Morgan Transplant

In his last Comedy Central stand-up special, 2014’s Bona Fide, Tracy Morgan riffed on everything from Paula Deen and partying at Prince’s house to his love of big women and even bigger love of oral sex.

“If eating vagina causes throat cancer, I’m...” he said. That same year, the former 30 Rock and Saturday Night Live star survived a car crash in New Jersey that left a fellow comedian dead in the backseat. “I survived that. I had a concussion the whole time. It’s about balance.”

Farsad also has co-directed two documentaries, including 2008’s Nerdcore Rising, about the nerdcore genre of hip-hop, and 2013’s excellent The Muslims Are Coming! The Last Bookstore, 455 S. Spring St., downtown; Wed., Sept. 28, 7:30-9 p.m.; free. (213) 689-0599, lastbookstorela.com. ~Siran Babayan

BOOKS

Graphic Memories

Cartoonist-filmmaker Riad Sattouf was born in Paris to French-Syrian parents. He contributed to the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo for 10 years (before its suicide attacks by Al-Qaeda in Paris on January 7, 2015), which killed 12 people, in 2015, and has directed two films, including 2012’s Jackie in Women’s Kingdom. Last year, he published The Arab of the Future A Childhood in the Middle East, 1978-1985, a graphic memoir translated into 15 languages, chronicling his early life, from his parents meeting at the Sorbonne University to the six years he spent as a child in Libya and Syria. As part of Central Library’s ALOUD series, Sattouf discusses with KCRR host Elvis Mitchell the sequel, The Arab of the Future 2: A Childhood in the Middle East, 1984-1985, which focuses on his youth and schooling in Syria under president Hafez al-Assad’s regime.

Los Angeles Central Library, Mark Taper Auditorium, 630 W. Fifth St., downtown; Thu., Sept. 29, 7:15 p.m.; free with reservation. (213) 228-7500, lfla.org. ~Siran Babayan
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PACIFICA GRADUATE INSTITUTE
BY CATHERINE WAGLEY

In this week, a master Viennese painter depicts herself as a rabbit downtown, and an artist from Amsterdam turns his Hollywood show into a well-sponsored ping-pong event.

Gnarly break-up
Alexei Pavlovich Solodovnikov’s 1955 painting The Divorce depicts a relatively well-dressed man sitting on a courtroom bench, staring ahead as his wife and child cry and huddle together in the background. Presumably, the man has just terminated his marriage. The painting hangs at the Wende Museum as part of the show “Questionable History,” curated by Joes Segal. Two labels on the wall flank the painting, each offering a different interpretation. The painting confronts the man’s “urban modernity” and suggests “progress comes with sacrifice,” explains one label. The other label declares that the painting “fundamentally criticizes the effects of so-called ‘progress’ and ‘modernization,’ ideological catch words in Soviet society.”

Similar dueling wall labels “explain” every work in the show, all of which were created during the Cold War; it’s an exercise that shows how slanted and loaded official interpretation can be. 5741 Buckingham Pkwy., Ladera Heights; through March 31. (310) 216-1600, wendemuseum.org.

Knives with names
Erika Vogt’s “Eros Island: Knives Please Rise,” at Overduin & Co., features larger-than-life weapons made of polyurethane. These colorful, unwieldy weapons lean against a gallery wall and Vogt, whose sculptures often double as props in performances that may or may not ever play out in real time, named them: Joan Knife, Astrid Knife, Richard Knife. Honeycomb-shaped sculptures reminiscent of brass knuckles appear in the show, too, although everything is cartoonish and exaggerated, making the objects more endearing than menacing. 6693 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood; through Oct. 22. (323) 609-3162, 356mission.com.

Ping-pong salesman
A ping-pong table stands right in the middle of the gallery in “Your Logo Here,” Jonas Lund’s show at Steve Turner. At the opening, people played against a ball-spitting machine while a gallery assistant picked up the stray white balls. Those who weren’t able to attend could watch the “game” live-streaming on Facebook (it’s always live-streaming, whether or not people are playing). A court made up of banners advertising art magazines, art fairs, galleries and beer brands surrounds the table. These businesses are sponsoring Lund’s show, having made some kind of economic exchange with the artist (not necessarily monetary). Jerseys on one wall are ads too, as are Plexiglas panels installed on the opposite wall. Everything is red, white, blue and purple, commercially upbeat and patriotic. 6830 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood; through Oct. 8. (323) 460-6830, steveturnerla.

Self-portrait as rabbit and razor
Maria Lassnig painted herself as an amoeba floating inside a TV screen, as a rabbit-nosed, froglike thing and as a headless being with a figure that looked like a chair. She would abstract her body — and bodies in general — in seemingly grotesque ways, but the results would somehow be charming. One painting in the survey of the late Viennese painter’s work at Hauser Wirth & Schimmel, called Naval Boat, is a particularly weird, virtuosic gem. Two gray legs hold up a belly and a boat-shaped torso, with a pink open mouth at top but no face. Instead of a head, Lassnig has painted a pink and purple object that resembles a multiblade Gillette razor. 901 E. Third St., downtown; through Dec. 31. (213) 943-1620, hauserwirthschimmel.com.
mSTUDY

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TEAR DOWN THAT WALL!

In the hugely ambitious *A Mexican Trilogy: An American Story*, Evelina Fernández follows a family from the Mexican Revolution to the Iraq War

BY BILL RADEN

There is a sense both of sumptuous grandeur and of the epic in *A Mexican Trilogy: An American Story*. The former is due entirely to José Luis Valenzuela’s handsome and masterful production, while the latter can be chalked up to playwright Evelina Fernández’s big ambitions. Her quasi-musical chronicle of three generations of the fictional Garcia family strives to do for the country’s 34 million Mexican-Americans what August Wilson’s monumental *Pittsburgh Cycle* did for African-Americans — namely, represent a century of the Mexican-American experience in a mythic work of enduring literary significance.

The good news is that Fernández often comes tantalizingly close to achieving her high aims. Her matrilineal tale of immigrant aspiration, set against the cataclysms of 20th-century Mexican and American history, plays as equal parts sentimental comedy, dark psychological melodrama and magical-realist jukebox musical.

The narrative opens with the play *Faith*, in which the aged Garcia matriarch and narrator, Esperanza (Lucy Rodríguez), introduces her younger self (Olivia Cristina Delgado) on the occasion of her Náhuatl quinceañera at the midpoint of the Mexican Revolution. “The women in this family cannot lie,” her Grandmother (Fernández) tells her. “The women in this family cannot lie.”

Rodriguez shines as a now-cantankerous and geriatric matriarch, engaged in a running dialogue both with her dead husband and the martyred Emiliano, and Lopez is particularly moving as Gina’s emotionally crippled, Vietnam-scarred brother Silvestre. But the play’s lapses into preachy indignation over the foreign-policy transgressions of the George W. Bush years rarely feel organic to the action, and its over-insistent tone of redemption is more forced than convincing.

Still, a uniformly effective ensemble under Valenzuela’s crisp and seamless direction serves to elevate Fernández’s lyricism into something that is poignant and, abetted by Pablo Santiago’s dynamic lights, John Zalewski’s lush sound design and Carlos Brown’s understated period costuming, finally powerful and persuasive. Whether or not *A Mexican Trilogy* successfully achieves the literary and cultural import of, say, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the Gabriel García Márquez novel whose theme of characters controlled by the past Fernández most seems to be echoing, it is undeniably the finest work the Latino Theater Company has mounted in years.

*THROW ME ON THE BURNPILE AND LIGHT ME UP* | Los Angeles Theatre Center, 514 Spring St., downtown | Through Oct. 9 | (213) 628-2772 | centertheatregroup.org

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NOT MAGNIFICENT, BUT NOT BAD

Do not underestimate the power of Denzel on a horse

BY ALAN SCHERSCHTL

Look, if you’re not stirred by the sight of Denzel Washington, clad in head-to-toe black, riding a black stallion over dunes and cliffs and right up to the saloon of some two-bit frontier town — well, then maybe the movies just aren’t for you. Washington, of course, strides right into the joint, right up to the bar, and orders a whiskey, knowing full well the white surnitch back there’s not going to treat him fairly. I say “Washington” rather than the character’s name because at this point the movie hasn’t gotten around to divulging it, and the director — Washington’s frequent collaborator Antoine Fuqua — knows that, above all else, we’re watching this greatest of African-American movie stars claim that bar, that town, this film genre. For about 30 seconds, characters in this brutal, occasionally stirring Magnificent Seven remake squawk about its central badass being black. Then out come the guns, and they don’t squawk no more, and the movie presses on.

Culturally this is important — the movie is a straight-up Hollywood Western, only revisionist in the diversity of its leads and the wearying slaughter of its final third. For fans of the star, though, it’s also a simple relief. Washington’s last film with Fuqua, The Equalizer, cast him as a badass drip, the Jason Voorhees of the Home Depot, a schlubby murderbot eviscerating local hoods with power tools. If the best thing Hollywood has for Denzel Goddum Washington to do is to play-act killing sprees, at least now he’s getting to do it in a 10-gallon hat.

Fuqua (Training Day, Southpaw) has always favored a loner’s sour, bummed-out masculinity, exhibiting a suspicion of leaders that might seem at odds with the ethos of The Magnificent Seven. John Sturges’ original film, from 1960, is — like Seven Samurai before it — a team-building adventure, a study in motivation and friendship, an epic in which the camaraderie proves as memorable as the killing. Fuqua’s Seven eventually gets around to the bonding, although it opens with the kind of grim scene he has long specialized in: one big-talking bastard monologuing daftly at the weak and scared, ruling through threat of violence.

The villain is robber-baron Bartholomew Bogue (Peter Sarsgaard), whose introductory speech invokes God and capitalism and democracy, so we know this pastiche is serious. (Nic “True Detective” Pizzolatto and Richard Wenk share screenplay credit, but the good news is that the dialogue, after this, is mostly crisp and aphoristic, stripped of pretension, the speech of folk heroes who live closer than we do to the phrasing of King James.) Bad Bogue seizes a town, kills some innocents and torches a church. It’s a scary and effective sequence, but it’s trumped immediately by Washington’s entrance, a hard man crossing a hard land, that smile of his coming easier after this, is mostly crisp and aphoristic, being so serious. (Nic “True Detective” Pizzolatto and Richard Wenk share screenplay credit, but the good news is that the dialogue, after this, is mostly crisp and aphoristic, stripped of pretension, the speech of folk heroes who live closer than we do to the phrasing of King James.) Bad Bogue seizes a town, kills some innocents and torches a church. It’s a scary and effective sequence, but it’s trumped immediately by Washington’s entrance, a hard man crossing a hard land, that smile of his coming easier than in The Equalizer — and framed by a marvelous stretch of mustache.

Somewhere in there we learn his character’s name: Chisolm. It’s the Yul Brynner role, the leader who assembles a seven-man band to take back a town. This time, it’s more of a seven-person band, and even that “seven” is pretty fluid, with Haley Bennett (as the widow who talks Chisolm into saving her town) at least a charter member.

The first half is a series of tense introductions and showdowns, as Chisolm gathers his men (and the widow tags along). Chris Pratt is the first aboard, playing a quick-draw cardsharp so prickly he even turns the gang’s campfire colloquies into near-shootouts. Pratt gets the best lines — “That Bill is pretty nifty with those pig-stickers” — and he hammers each square on the nail. Here he’s the funny pulp-fiction tough his Jurassic World dope wanted to be.

The rest of the seven are one-note characters, but stick a couple together and you get something like a chord. There’s a Comanche brave (Martin Sensmeier), a knife-expert assassin (Byung-hun Lee), a Santa- stocky Indian hunter (Vincent D’Onofrio), a laconic outlaw from south of the border (Manuel Garcia-Rulfo) and a Confederate sharpshooter turning yellow with age (Ethan Hawke). “Maybe my grandfather killed your grandfather,” Garcia-Rulfo’s character cracks, and it doesn’t get more American than that.

Once they’re pledged to the cause, and once they’ve won their cakewalk first battle, Fuqua relaxes, letting them joke and hang out as they prepare a small town for a final showdown with what they expect will be an army. Against the great history of film, or even just of Westerns, these scenes are merely good, maybe even rushed, but against the chaotic banalities of recent studio fare, they play like Turner Classic Movies — you get to know these guys, and worry over them, and enjoy how their individual dramas and friendships play out.

Too bad the extended action finale is unmistakably 2016, a battle in which it seems like hundreds die. After much too much of that, Fuqua elects to remake The Wild Bunch for a while instead, borrowing that bloody classic’s signature weapon for some bloodless PG-13 killing.

By then it’s clear that, as in The Equalizer, Fuqua has nothing to say about all this violence — just that he’s got lots to show us.

THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN | Directed by Antoine Fuqua | Written by Richard Wenk and Nick Pizzolatto | Columbia Pictures | Citywide

THE LOVERS AND THE DESPOT | Directed by Robert Cannan and Ross Adam | Magnolia Pictures | Royal, NoHo, Playhouse & on-demand

THE LOVERS AND THE DESPOT DIGS INTO KIM JONG-IL’S PLOT TO RULE CINEMA: KIDNAPPING

In 1978, North Korea kidnapped the South Korean film star Choi Eun-hee and, separately, the director Shin Sang-ok, her ex-husband and longtime collaborator. Shin directed with Kim Jong-il as a producer — his captor/benefactor and still be eager to escape. Cannan and Adam’s interviewees — Choi, intelligence agents, film critics — tell the story with more suspense than talking heads usually muster. In later life, after their escape from North Korea, Shin would be accused of having been a willing participant in the dictator’s dream. The Lovers and the Despot emphasizes his suffering, his escape attempts and then — in the years that Shin directed with Kim Jong-il as a producer — his public statements of pride in his work. It’s not at all unreasonable to believe that the director, who had so often struggled to secure financial backing in South Korea, could simultaneously exhibit pleasure in the resources given to him by his captor/benefactor and still be eager to escape.

The film is brisk and fascinating, ultimately moving, but less rich than it might’ve been, skipping over pertinent questions: What films did Kim Jong-il demand? And within those dictates, under that pressure, did Shin and Choi — now remarried — still achieve artistry? — Alan Scherschtl
A SMALL BREAKTHROUGH
COMEDY MY BLIND BROTHER ADMITS THE DISABLED CAN BE AWFUL BROS, TOO

BY PETE VONDER HAAR

The road to equal treatment has been a long and difficult one for the disabled community, and littered with setbacks and defeats. Occasionally lost in that quest for accessibility legislation and insurance mandates has been the subordinate struggle to recognize the fact that, yes, the disabled can be assholes, too.

Thirtysomething slacker Bill, played by Nick Kroll (The League, Parks and Recreation), possesses the hopes and dreams typical of his demographic: meeting the right girl, taking naps and fantasizing about being paralyzed so he can be pushed around by others and watch TV all day. This is both a generational aspiration and a poignancy and understated pathos. Because when you get down to it, these aren’t bad people — à la It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia — they’re just not particularly good, either. They’re not especially attentive to other people’s feelings, specifically those of Rose’s roommate, Francie (Zoe Kazan), and both seem like they’re liable to throw in the towel on life at any moment.

My Blind Brother takes an unfortunate swerve into traditional rom-com cliché at the end, but Goodhart has a capable enough handle on things to keep it from derailing the movie. It’s often uncomfortable, but also shrewdly hilarious. Goodhart and company encourage us to look at both our attitudes toward the less fortunate and accept that sometimes good things happen to bad people.

MY BLIND BROTHER | Directed and written by Sophie Goodhart | Starz Digital Media | Sundance Sunset, Monica Film Center, Playhouse, Town Center
THE DRESSMAKER

These are the images that have marked me and leave me wondering still.” That’s how Kirsten Johnson prefaces Cameraperson, made up of footage she has collected over 25 years working as a camera operator, cinematographer and director on dozens of different documentaries — films such as Laura Poitras’ The Oath (2010) and Citizenfour (2014) and Michael Moore’s Fahrenheit 9/11 (2004). “Leave me wondering still!”

Words evoke a sense of mystery, of incompleteness, which is exactly the right frame of mind in which to watch Johnson’s mesmerizing film. The director has set herself a near-impossible task: to craft a cinematic memoir through snippets of other people’s stories and lives. While often lovely, a lot of this material looks like discards: an empty patch of road, a field of flowers, a camera quaking while the operator adjusts the tripod. Other times, we get something more involved: a midwife in a Nigerian clinic attempting to keep fragile newborn twins alive. A Golden Gloves boxer in Brooklyn preparing for a fight. Two Balkan activists talking about their own PTSD, the byproduct of hearing the constant strain of mortar fire. But Johnson guides us into her footage in a way that celebrates female rites of passage and the hallucinatory power of memory. Those words evoke a sense of mystery, and work through increasingly convoluted flashbacks that she is not in fact a murderer, but the film revels in misfortune, deflates overblown characters (especially her gaudy parents). Girl Asleep is steeped in the deadpan whimsy of comedies from Down Under, but the filmmakers seriously address adolescent anxiety. Their coming-of-age tale captures the heady, frightening sensation of life slipping into another chapter without making the transition feel like it’s closing the book on further change. (Serena Donadoni)

GOAT

Pasolini’s Salò meets red Solo cups in Goat, Andrew Neel’s deep, dark dive into the depravities of frat pledging, which operates as its own kind of hazing ritual. Points are made and lessons imparted.

RECOMMENDED
YOUR WEEKLY MOVIE TO-DO LIST

Akira, Kwaidan and Time Bandits
Friday, Sept. 23
The New Beverly is giving away Time Maps to the first 100 attendees of Time Bandits. One of Terryl Gilliam’s more light-hearted works, the fantasy film has been described by the Monty Python mainstay as one of three in a trilogy about the “craziness of our awkwardly ordered society and the desire to escape it through whatever means possible,” the other two being Brazil and The Adventures of Baron Munchausen, New Beverly Cinema, 7165 Beverly Blvd., Fairfield; Sat., Sept. 24, 2 p.m.; $6. (323) 938-4036, thenewbev.com.

The Interrupters, a look at ground-level attempts to curb violence in Chicago. The Hoop Dreams director focuses on three members of the CeaseFire movement whose efforts are a means of reckoning with their own violent past. UCLA’s Billy Wilder Theater, 10899 Wilshire Blvd., Westwood; Mon., Sept. 26, 7:30 p.m.; $10. (310) 206-8013, cinema.ucla.edu.

Tuesday, Sept. 27
An anthology film that apparently frightened a young Guillermo del Toro enough to include it in his Fuel for Nightmares series, Kwaidan has always been especially acclaimed. Bresson’s adaptation of French Resistance fighter André Devigny’s memoirs begins inside Montuc prison, from which our hero is (you guessed it) trying to escape. As ever with Bresson, though, a plot synopsis can’t hope to fully convey the experience of watching A Man Escaped — his films are all about the grace in small moments. CSUN, 18111 Nordhoff St., Northridge; Thu., Sept. 29, 7 p.m.; free. (818) 677-1200, csun.edu. —Michael Nordine

THE CORK JUSTIFIES THE MEANS
Daily at 12:50 pm Sept. 23-29, 2016

- Peter Travers, ROLLING STONE

I.T.
Wednesday, Sept. 28
It’s I.T., and it’s every bit as unpleasant as its key title character. Wealthy industrialist Mike Regan (Pierce Brosnan) is about to launch an Uber-type app for private jets (our hero, folks!) when psychotic I.T. guy Ed (James Frecheville) uses Mike’s high-tech, screens-everything app for something normal and not even the naked leading lady and his worst when it comes to making privacy gets lost in the formulaic ugliness, and not even the constant stream of face-palm moments makes it entertaining or watchable. On the plus side, the Google-proof title and upcoming feature adaptation of Stephen King’s it should keep this I.T. languishing in the obscurity it deserves. (And come back, Firewall. All is forgiven.) (Sheryl Connelly)

LANDFILL HARMONIC
Drum heads from discarded Xrays, violins from paint cans, cello pegs made from wooden sponges and repurposed heels from ladies’ shoes — homegrown ingenuity is an irresistible thing, as evinced by the upcycled instruments, and students who play them in a documentary about a “recycled orchestra” in Paraguay’s capital, Asunción. The instruments are salvaged from the Caterva landfill — the remarkable work of local worker-turned-craftsmen Cola — and the youths playing them are the kids of the landfill’s gancheros, day workers who earn their livelihood picking through the refuse and obtained footage, but one hesitates to call them filmmakers when this ultra-low-budget conspiracy drama is to cinema what an Alex Jones radio broadcast is to the truth. You could criticize the movie for its anti-Semitism, but there’s little need when all the other aspects of the production are so, so bad. With every shot louder than it needs to be, an infuriatingly sluggish runtime of 118 minutes and an ending that doesn’t even allow the bugfuck insanity of the third act to have an impact, New World Order stars one of those co-directing brothers (Marco) as a police commissioner who stumbles onto a government conspiracy. Beardy, stocky and inconsistent in the same scene, Ferraro offers up his best “acting” when he beds the naked leading lady and his worst when he screams after she’s been shot dead unnecessarily by overly conspicuous government thugs. I wish I could recommend this as so-bad-it’s-good viewing, but it is all in Italian, and the monumentally stupid subtitles aren’t worth the effort it takes to read
A GRANDMASTER EMERGES IN UGANDA IN MIRA NAIR’S DISNEY CHARMER

Mira Nair’s Queen of Katwe is a true-life tale transformed into an inspirational fable. That’s not novel for the movies, but in this director’s hands, the results are mostly enchanting. The film follows Phiona Mutesi (Madina Nalwanga), an impoverished Ugandan girl who became a chess champion at the age of 10, and the part-time soccer coach who helped her get there. You don’t come to a movie like this expecting complexity, depth or even subtlety. But Nair brings both simplicity and verve in relating this charming story.

Phiona lives with her mother, Harriet (Lupita Nyong’o), and siblings in a crowded, dimly lit home. Nair’s gaze is drawn to the many posters and trinkets that cover the walls of the family’s home. Amid the clutter, there is a sense of the family’s love and support for each other.

Nair’s direction is marked by a clear understanding of the characters’ emotions and motivations. Nyong’o delivers a nuanced performance as Harriet, a woman who is deeply committed to her family and the community she serves. Her portrayal is a testament to Nair’s ability to bring out the best in her actors.

The film’s setting is the rural village of Katwe, where the family lives. Nair’s camera work is fluid and engaging, immersing the viewer in the daily life of the characters. The attention to detail in the costumes and sets is impressive, bringing the world of the film to life.

Queen of Katwe is a celebration of the power of education and the human spirit. It is a film that will inspire viewers of all ages to pursue their dreams and never give up on their goals. Nair’s direction is masterful, and Nyong’o’s performance is a joy to watch. Queen of Katwe is a must-see film that will leave you feeling uplifted and inspired.
**BLANCO GENERATION**

Can Mykki Blanco’s excellent debut album finally bring the genderqueer hip-hop artist the mainstream attention she deserves?

**BY KATIE BAIN**

Michael Quattlebaum Jr. isn’t happy. It’s three days after his Labor Day weekend set at Union, where he performed as his alter ego, fierce female rapper Mykki Blanco. By Quattlebaum’s account, it did not go well.

Security was rude. The show was under-promoted and booked by a group of “clueless straight guys” who didn’t understand Blanco’s persona and billed him among acts with whom she did not belong. While the audience was great, Quattlebaum says, he should have gotten “someone queer, or someone of color, or a woman” to handle his business.

“For me now,” he says, “I can’t have these straight guys booking my shows in key cities and fucking it up.”

At this crucial moment in the trajectory of Mykki Blanco, Quattlebaum’s frustration feels warranted. On Sept. 16, Blanco’s debut studio album, *Mykki*, was released by the venerable Berlin-based electronic label !K7. A culmination of several years’ worth of well-received EPs and mixtapes, the new full-length fuses Blanco’s brooding, romantic punk sensibilities with beats both ominously sparse and lushly woozy. Simultaneously confessional and tongue-in-cheek, *Mykki* is Blanco’s best and most accessible work to date.

Quattlebaum just hopes it brings him the cultural ubiquity he believes is inevitable.

Lounging at the Wi Spa in Koreatown, Quattlebaum talks in elliptical rapid-fire, leaping from topics including the hip-hop subgenre in which he has often been lumped (“I think the term ‘queer rap’ is silly and homophobic”), the art of aging gracefully (“Stay cute as long as you can”) and his evolution from a gay black man raised in North Carolina and the Bay Area, to a bi-coastal, genderqueer, HIV-positive rapper/poet/performance artist who is only now entering the prime of her career.

The foundation of this new era is *Mykki*. Produced by Woodkid and Jeremiah Meece, the album features 13 tracks including two interludes of Blanco reciting Meece, the album features 13 tracks including two interludes of Blanco reciting

Mykki. He went out constantly, interned at *V Magazine* and, during this period, began identifying as trans and presenting himself as a woman. He considered gender reassignment surgery but ultimately decided against it.

“Sometimes it can be really hard for me because — and this is going to sound really arrogant, but it’s just how I feel — I know I’m very talented,” he says. “I know I have really good ideas. I know that if a straight male artist had come out with some of the singles and videos that I have, [the media] would have heralded them.”

He wonders about his creative direction now that he’s 30 and his musicianship is getting stronger as his personal life becomes less messy. “A lot of what I talk about in my music — taking molly and running in a field at 6 a.m. with a bunch of people — that part of my life isn’t over, but that’s not what it’s about for me anymore.”

One gets the sense that continued self-actualization is on the horizon. Quattlebaum mentions the importance of spirituality and healthy living several times. He loves being outside. Over the summer, he visited a secret southern United States commune for queer and transgender people, an experience that left him in tears.

“I felt like I was L.T. some lost alien who rejoined this rainbow underground network of the real-deal gay, trans-fam, queer and genderqueer, nonbinary people living in America. It made me realize that all the friends I had in nightlife, even though that’s the world Mykki Blanco came up in, that’s not really reflective of the world of Michael. I’m kind of a big, crusty hippie.”

While Quattlebaum now more than ever yearns for the “patriarchal dream” of monogamy and family and aspires to start an organic farm, he loves the jet-set lifestyle — swimming in the Mediterranean, buying expensive motorcycles, drinking good wine — that his hard work has earned him. For him these are not just luxuries but political statements.

“That glamorous side of Mykki Blanco, it’s not all me wanting to be this capitalist imperialist, but it’s that I deserve to be here, and people like me deserve to be here. I didn’t think it would be possible to be an HIV-positive drag-rap showgirl and actually have a fan base and do the damn thing and be part of these celebrity circles and have people in the industry respect me.”

Quattlebaum’s hope now is to become as ubiquitous as hip-hop’s marquee names, and there’s a chance he might. Pop culture has never been better primed to celebrate Mykki Blanco. If Quattlebaum has never been as emotionally and artistically well-equipped to be her.

“I am in the first phase of what would be considered the mainstreaming of Mykki Blanco. I know this,” Quattlebaum declares, almost as though he’s attempting to convince himself. “I know it. I feel it.”
The Gaslamp Killer’s latest album started when he was supine, full of stitches and freshly missing his spleen. This was three years ago, when the Gustavo Dudamel of beat music suffered a near-fatal motor scooter accident in Mount Washington.

“I visited him then, and it was particularly tough to watch. The musician born William Bensussen has more natural energy than Motörhead on methamphetamines. If you’ve ever watched him DJ at Low End Theory, his corkscrew curtain of hair shaking, unleashing raw voltage and undulating waves of bass, you understand that conventional weapons and motorized vehicles can’t kill him. In spite of his savage wounds, he continued to create as part compulsion, part catharsis,” GLK says, referring to “Haleva” and “Shred You to Bits,” the first two tracks he created for Instrumentalepathy, released last week on his new imprint, Cuss Records.

“IT started with me high as fuck on the pain medication, meditating with fucking crystals,” GLK says. “I had just gotten [my cat] Charlie. All these beautiful things were happening and my clarity was filling up. It was an incredible moment.”

Shortly after getting well enough to leave the house, GLK visited a Chinese healer who took his hands, gauged his well-being and refused to believe that he’d recently incurred such traumas. He had to display his centipedelike scar to prove it.

“She said, ‘You’re on fire right now, and I’m not blowing hot air. I’d tell you if you were weak because I would want to help.’”

The mostly instrumental album chronicles GLK’s recovery from that near-death experience. The first song, “Pathetic Dreams,” starts with whistles and hums (the first time his voice has appeared on record), and the shaking of his morphine pills. Oscillators create a screeching synth that melts into the voice of his mother saying “I love you” — the first thing he heard when he woke up from his surgery.

“I realized that I wanted to make uplifting music,” GLK says. “I played dark music, and there’s always going to be a level of depth and emotion in the music, but it doesn’t need to be the same evil-sounding thriller music all the time.”

He has evolved from DJ-as-human-dynamite into a dynamic composer, enlisting a regular troupe of players that includes Miguel Atwood-Ferguson, The Heliocentrics, Gonjasufi, guitarist Amir Yaghmai and Daedelus. They’ve forged a Northwest Passage between bone-crushing bass music and soothing, psychedelic classical.

“The accident was one of the most important things that ever happened to me,” GLK says. “It wasn’t a curse; it was a blessing and a gift from God and the universe. I feel truly honored I was able to come out alive and make this record. It’s like this is why I survived. Maybe I’ll die next month, but the record came out. I needed one more shot.”

An L.A. native, Jeff Weiss edits Passion of the Weiss and hosts the Shots Fired podcast. Find him online at passionweiss.com.
The entire world watches USA's every move. From how it impacts global economies and ecosystems, to its celebrities and political machinations, USA is infinitely consumable and reality-show riveting. It's like the O.J. Simpson trial gave birth to thousands of spinoffs. So many choices!

Though I am a longtime taxpayer and resident, I find myself reading about the travails of USA from outside its borders as if I am a spectator. Watching the ramp-up to the presidential election from afar, it plays like a perfect directed by David Fincher with an Aaron Sorkin script of brilliantly written cal machinations, USA is infinitely consumable and reality-show riveting. It's like the O.J. Simpson trial gave birth to thousands of spinoffs. So many choices!

From a great distance, it appears that USA is in a time of almost total transparency. That is to say, no one is holding back. Things once whispered in backrooms are now prime time talking points.

USA has millions of racists, homophobes and misogynists, many of whom characterize these self-customized ticcs as something akin to integrity, or “keeping it real.” Instead of evolving, many are just not keeping up appearances anymore and letting it all hang out. To call them on their bigotry would be to body-shame their intellect.

They want USA to be great again. It’s been bugging them for a long time now. It’s not a difficult fix, really. Only 11 million illegal people need to be sent back to whatever crime-ridden country they came from, so fast their heels will spin. Then there’s the wall, which according to Bernstein Research as quoted in The Economist last July will cost between $15 billion and $25 billion. But hey, since Mexico is paying, USA has it made in the shade.

A few other small details need to be addressed. You know, there’s all those homosexuals and the blacks with their black-on-black crime, women who think their body belongs to them, Muslims, scientists, global climate change believers, etc. But a few tips on how to make these people disappear from KGbro Vladimir, and USA will be great once again, like the early days of the War on Drugs.

You might not be around to bask in the glory, but you knew you couldn’t hide forever. On the other hand, you can be the head of a major news outlet, harass women and get paid 40 million bucks to leave the building.

Keeping USA together, a historically bloody and relentlessly complicated bit of business, is proving to be too heavy a can to keep kicking down the road. It was one hell of a high-minded idea, but at this point you would have to be high to believe it can sustain without a major, top-to-bottom, bipartisan overhaul, which you can put on that long list of jobs that “Americans don’t want to do.”

(Many of those employment opportunities, by the way, are currently filled by those 11 million lazy scoundrels who will soon be being left. No doubt all the “real Americans,” who have been thus far deprived, are going to run at those back-breaking, low-paying jobs with all speed. No, really, they will. Greatness is just around the corner.)

USA isn’t the only amazing patch of land flummoxed by curb-high impediments to forward movement. Here in beautiful Australia, there is talk of conducting a plebiscite (basically, what USA would call a referendum vote) on the issue of marriage equality. To ask this ridiculous question could cost upward of A$160 million. It was surprising to learn about this when I got here two weeks ago. Australia doesn’t seem like the kind of place to get bogged down in something so mean-spirited and small-minded.

This new century isn’t as new as it used to be, and dragging the bigotry of previous times with us doesn’t always serve us well. Standing your ground as technological innovation and science continue to go from strength to strength, as natural resources continue to become more scarce, all on a planet that is rapidly changing due to human existence, is just stupid. It’s time to get going. It always is.
MUSIC WE LIKE

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Music Tastes Good  
@ DOWNTOWN LONG BEACH
Music Tastes Good might not be the cleverest name for a food-and-music festival, but the musical lineup is nonetheless fairly impressive. The three-day fest starts Friday with ever-personable hard rockers Living Colour and LBC heroes Rival Sons, who are opening on Black Sabbath’s final tour, as well as the melodically propulsive grunge of fellow locals Spare Parts for Broken Hearts. The street party blows up on Saturday with four stages encompassing everything from high-stepping British ska rejuvenators The Specials to the introspective folk of Iron & Wine, as well as arch popsters Squeeze, the ever-amiable Dr. Dog, dream waver My Bloody Valentine’s self-project Deltron 3030, slyly subversive duo Girlpool, wordy soothsayer Open Mike Eagle, and rootsy soul diva Jessica Hernandez & the Deltas. Sunday winds down with De La Soul, Sylvan Esso and Las Cafeteras. Also Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 24-25. —Falling James

Jack’s 11th Show with Jane’s Addiction, Garbage, The Cult  
@ IRVINE MEADOWS
The playlists of Jack FM, the titular sponsor of the annual Jack Show, can sometimes feel like a seemingly random assortment of songs that don’t really cohere, but the lineup at this year’s concert makes some sense. Jane’s Addiction, The Cult and Garbage might come from different places and even eras, but they each revel in the power of hard-rock guitars and should complement one another back to back. Violent Femmes’ disarming and should complement one another rear a jumping jolt of energy from L.A. rapper Everlast with House of Pain. Most of these acts are content to coast on past glories, but Garbage sound like a band with something to prove on their latest collection of glittery reveries, Strange Little Birds, while The Cult rediscovered their ancient power on the recent Hidden City. —Falling James

Inger Lorre  
@ MAUI SUGAR MILL SALOON
Inger Lorre has entered into rock & roll folklore for peering on them—Geffen Records &R man Tom Zutaut’s desk, but she’s also responsible for two of the most under-heard slices of beautiful fury ever recorded, The Nymphs’ 1991 self-titled debut album and her ’99 solo full-length, Transcendental Medication. The latter-dubbed “Thief Without the Take,” a duet with Jeff Buckley. Lorre has hardly been prolific, but those two albums and a handful of singles and EPs are all magnificent. She’s always had a gift for balancing precariously on a tightrope of delicate alt-rock sweet- ness over a pit of fire and demonic fury. She’ll coo enough to melt your heart, but there’s always a nagging feeling that, any second, she’ll unleash holy hell. —Brett Callwood

Saturday

Ozzfest Meets Knotfest  
@ SAN MANUEL AMPHITHEATER
Two popular festivals merge into one joint effort for the largest heavy metal event of the year. Black Sabbath often cited as patient zero for the genre of heavy metal, and their headlining performance on Saturday will be looking to the vast array of artists, a side stage featuring heavier thrash and death metal acts such as Municipal Waste and Brujeria. Sunday’s Knotfest lineup is headlined by the masked fan favorites Slipknot, whose nine members make for a frenetic stage presence and one of the more entertaining shows in metal. Slayer and Anthrax will represent the old-school, but mostly Sunday’s lineup is aimed at younger fans, with metalcore acts such as Whitechapel and Motionless in White. Also Sunday, Sept. 25. —Jason Roche

Sunday

Fool’s Gold Day Off  
@ THE SHRINE
Since 2010, A-Trak’s Fool’s Gold Records has hosted extravaganzas across the nation, which showcase artists from his label alongside his many friends sprinkled on majors. The Brooklyn-based indie label is enlisting Mac Miller and Pusha T to be the mainstream hip-hop attractions, while A-Trak himself will perform with a select group of “friends.” Compared with past years, this is a trimmed-down event, but don’t let that fool you. As its history in the city has shown, Fool’s Gold Day Off will bring out top-notch performances from the headliners and introduce fans to a slew of new artists who could be next year’s big names. —Daniel Kohn
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HONORING ROCK AND ROLL LEGEND MIKE NESS
**Delta Rae**

Delta Rae are several bands in one. The Durham, North Carolina, sextet features four separate singers — including three siblings — who can segue easily from pop and country to bluesy folk and classic rock. But Delta Rae are inevitably at their most interesting when they veer away from their mainstream instincts and dig deeper into the muddier waters of their Americana influences. Brothers Eric Hölljes and Ian Hölljes write the songs, and such tracks as “Chasing Twisters” and “Outlaws” have soaring choruses and rousing production, but the group is more compelling when Brittany Hölljes intones the more haunting, blues-steeped incantations, such as “I Will Never Die,” which starts like a prayer before the rest of the band kicks in and Elizabeth Hopkins adds ghostly harmonies. -Falling James

**Los Angeles Jazz Collective**

Representing the praiseworthy LAJC tonight are two superbly progressive musicians performing works commissioned by the Los Angeles Jazz Society and originally presented at Angel City Jazz Festivals in recent years. L.A.-based pianist-composer Richard Sears' deeply textured, free-swinging Altadena suite was inspired by iconic jazz drummer Albert “Tootie” Heath, who also was involved in the recording of Sears’ recent album of the same title, out on the essential Ropeadope label. Heath joins Sears’ quartet for tonight’s set, and sparks shall fire. A CalArts grad, pianist-composer-teacher Cathlene Pineda performs her LAJS-commissioned work Passing: A California Suite, inspired by the writings of L.A.’s first poet laureate Eloise Klein Healy; she’ll be joined by drummer Tina Raymond, trumpetist Kris Tiner and bassist David Tranchina. -John Payne

**Foals**

Foals are the soundtrack to life’s extremes. Particularly over the course of their two more recent albums, the garage-rock What Went Down (2015) and art-pop Holy Fire (2013), the British group’s forceful emotional heights can take the listener over the edge. This is all the more pronounced during Foals’ live performances, which have hit arena status in their home country and very respectably sized venues in North America. Despite the group's growing popularity, Foals are still about substance over flash. Their sound, possibly rarer and stronger with time, their confidence visible, their connection with the audience palpable. Vocalist Yannis Philippakis has no qualms about leaping into the crowd, safe in its protective intensity. At this stage of their career, these Foals have become stallions. -Lily Moayeri

**Stand-Up & Scream Screening and Q&A**

As punk spun up on the West Coast at the end of the ’70s, Bay Area sculptor Joe Rees built the documentary outft Target Video, and now he’s touring this 90-minute sizzle reel. It’s called Stand-Up & Scream, but if you’ve seen any of Target Video’s eye-popping, right-place-right-time first-wave punk videography, you can’t help but think of Screamers singer Tomata Du Plenty exploding through the screen as he shouts, “You better shut up and listen!” Target’s camera crews followed-song banter better translates. Their trademark shutdowns are suited to theaters, where their trademark staples and mega-show openers for the likes of Katy Perry and Lady Gaga. Yet Warner has been relentlessly pushing their records, through its affiliated Vapor and Sire labels, for much of the millennium, even after the duo themselves suggested moving to a smaller label a while back. In a way, Tegan and Sara’s perpetual “major underdog” status serves their songwriting, which, while Taylor Swift–level poppy ‘n’ glossy for the past two albums, retains a confessional, journal-entry indie intimacy well suited to theaters, where their trademark between-song banter better translates. Also at the Observatory on Wednesday, Sept. 28, and the Orpheum on Friday, Sept. 30. -Paul Rogers
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DUSTIN LOVELIS • RUDY DE ANDA • LEMOLO • MACHINEHEART • SPIDER
LP3 & THE TRAGEDY • NEIGHBORS TO THE NORTH • THE MEAT FLOWERS • GOLDEN DRUGS
SPECIAL C • MC IMPRINT • THE LOST WEEKEND • SISTER CROWLEY
► DJS: DENNIS OWENS • TAPES • DESIREABLE D • JACK PHAROAH • JUDITH CHRIST • BIX

SEPT 25
SYLVAN ESSE • DE LA SOUL • GALLANT • LAS CAFETERAS
CHRISTIAN SCOTT • EAGLE ROCK GOSPEL SINGERS
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**AU LAIC**: 710 W. First St., L.A. Yu Ooka, Sat., Sept. 24, 7:30 p.m., $10-$25.

**BLUE WHALE**: 2134 Santa Monica Blvd., L.A. Geoff Kleeve & Joe Locke, Fri., Sept. 23, 9 p.m., TBA.

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**BOARDERS**: 1652 N. Cherokee Ave., L.A. Bar Sinister, Saturdays, 10 p.m., $10-$15.

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**9AM weekdays**

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**Band of Horses**

**Sofi Tukker**

**Corinne Bailey Rae**

**Marlon Williams**

**Brett Dennen**

**Jazz & Blues**

**AU LAIC**: 710 W. First St., L.A. Yu Ooka, Sat., Sept. 24, 7:30 p.m., $10-$25.

**BLUE WHALE**: 2134 Santa Monica Blvd., L.A. Geoff Kleeve & Joe Locke, Fri., Sept. 23, 9 p.m., TBA.

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N. Vermont Ave., L.A.

BILLY CURRINGTON, LEANN RIMES: 7:30 p.m., $44-$515. Pomona Fairplex, 1101 W. McKinley Ave.

DUKE DUMONT: 9 p.m., TBA. The Novo by Microsoft, 725 S. Spring St., Los Angeles.

ELEKTRA: 8 p.m., free. Levitt Pavilion Pasadena, 85 E. Holly St., Pasadena.

THE HEIRS: With Kaya Stewart, 8:30 p.m. El Rey Theatre, 5515 Wilshire Blvd., L.A.

KEAOUHU: With Robert Cazimero, 2 p.m., $47. The Ruth B. Shعنman Center for the Performing Arts, 6760 Painter Ave., Whittier.

THE L.A. INTERNATIONAL UKULELE FESTIVAL: 9:30 a.m., $45. Torrance Cultural Arts Center, 3330 Civic Center Drive, Torrance.


LUKE BRYAN, DUSTIN LYNCH, LITTLE BIG TOWN: With Dustin Lynch, Little Big Town, Big Time 7 p.m. Irvine Meadows Amphitheatre, 8800 Irvine Center Drive, Irvine.

LUSH: With Tamaryn, 8 p.m., $35. The Fonda Theatre, 6126 Hollywood Blvd., L.A.

MANÁ: 8 p.m., $46-$299. The Forum, 3900 W. Manchester Blvd., Inglewood.

MUSIC TASTES GOOD: With The Specials, Iron & Wine, Squeeze, Dr. Dog, Warpaint, Deltron 3030, Melvins, Twin Peaks, Vintage Trouble, Girlpool, P.O.S., The Easy Star All-Stars, Metz, Kate Tempest, Nick Waterhouse, Cody Chesnutt, Leffy, Pokey LaFarge, Hippo Campus, Open Mike Eagle, Skinny Lister, Los Master Plus, Jessica Hernandez & the Deltas, Rudy De Anda, Neighbors to the North, Sister Crowley and others, 12 p.m., $75-$240. Downtown Long Beach, 200 Pine Ave., Long Beach. See Music Pick.

O.A.R.: With The Hunts, 6:30 p.m., $34.25. The Belasco Theatre, 1050 S. Hill St., L.A.


TARGET VIDEO: STAND-UP & SCREAM

THURSDAY, SEPT. 29

BLINK-182: With A Day to Remember, All Time Low, 7 p.m. TBA, Irvine Meadows Amphitheatre, 8800 Irvine Center Drive, Irvine.

DRAKE, FUTURE: 6:30 p.m., $49-$50-$179. The Forum, 3900 W. Manchester Blvd., Inglewood.

THE HEART: With Ramona Flowers, 9 p.m., TBA. The Fonda Theatre, 6126 Hollywood Blvd., L.A.

NAD: 9 p.m., TBA. El Rey Theatre, 5515 Wilshire Blvd., L.A.

OH WONDER: 7:30 p.m., $25. The Wiltern, 3790 Wilshire Blvd., L.A.

TARGET VIDEO: STAND-UP & SCREAM

SCREENING & Q&A: With V. Vale, Alice Bag, Chip Kinman, Henry Peck, Bruce Mooreland, Joe Rees, DJ Don Bolex, 7:30 p.m., $12-$18. The Regent Theater, 1233 S. Main St., L.A. See Music Pick.

SKYLER GREY: With Morgan, 8 p.m., $15. The Regent Theater, 448 S. Main St., L.A.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 28

DRAKE, FUTURE: 6:30 p.m., $49-$50-$179. The Forum, 3900 W. Manchester Blvd., Inglewood.

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