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BY JASON McGAHAHAN
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EDITOR’S NOTE
In the Feb. 3-9 issue, the tribute band singers on our cover were not identified. They are, from left, Jesika Miller of Fleetwood Mac tribute Rumors as Stevie Nicks; Julian Shah-Tayler of David Bowie tribute The Band That Fell to Earth as David Bowie; and Gregory Finsley of Queen tribute Queen Nation as Freddie Mercury.
IS ERIC GARCETTI SOFT ON TRUMP?

Democratic politicians nationwide are eager to denounce President Trump. So why does the L.A. mayor sound so conciliatory?

BY HILLEL ARON

Democratic politicians around the country are tripping over themselves to denounce our new president and his executive order halting travel and refugees from seven majority-Muslim countries. The day after that order was given, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio unleashed a series of tweets calling the order “shameful” and “un-American,” and then added: “President Trump’s executive order erodes our constitutional rights. If this is where he’s starting, imagine where he’s going.”

Boston Mayor Marty Walsh, also on Twitter, announced that he was rushing off to Logan Airport to help those who had been detained, and said: “We’ll fight today, and we’ll fight tomorrow.” A bit later, in an opinion piece for CNN, Walsh pledged: “I will do everything lawful within my power to protect our immigrant neighbors, documented or not. If necessary, I will use City Hall itself to shelter and protect them from persecution.”

Mayor Eric Garcetti

Here in California, the state Senate passed a sharply worded resolution condemning the order, saying it “desecrates our American values and panders to fears and nativist instincts that have resulted in some of our nation’s most shameful acts.” The sharpest response, perhaps, came from Congressman Ted Lieu, who just hours after Trump’s executive order released a statement saying, “Trump’s action is not based on national security, it is based on bigotry. Lady Liberty is crying.”

L.A. Mayor Eric Garcetti’s comments were more temperate. His immediate statement said the order “unfairly targets refugees” and pointed out that “there is no evidence that this approach will improve national security.” When asked last week about Trump’s executive orders, Garcetti said, “I think on the face of them, [they] are unconstitutional and illegal.”

Earlier last week, Garcetti came across as far more conciliatory. Asked by National Public Radio if he embraced the narrative of California being ground zero for the Trump resistance, he replied: “I look forward to working with the White House in areas like infrastructure, where President Trump says he wants to spend a trillion dollars. Great, we’d love to start right here in Los Angeles.”

Garcetti went on to say that Trump “has been very supportive of our Olympic bid.”

But, he added, not everything is hunky dory: “We’re also going to stand up for our families not to be divided. We’re going to stand up for our economy, where 61 percent of our Main Street businesses are started by immigrants, and [for] making sure that we can continue to tell the human story of that history, to engage with it and, yes, to work with this administration on fixing what’s broken, an immigration system right now that works, really, for nobody.”

When asked about Trump’s threat to withdraw federal funding from so-called “sanctuary cities,” Garcetti replied: “We’ve never declared ourselves a sanctuary city; I’m still not sure what one is.”

So was Garcetti being soft on Trump?

“I think many of us would like to see him be a little more aggressive and a little more resistant to the Trump administration, especially given how Democratic the city is,” says Fernando Guerra, a professor of political science at Loyola Marymount University. “In terms of being the mayor of L.A., there is no cost to being the leader of resistance.”

“Having said that,” Guerra adds, “it’s not in his nature. And there’s nothing wrong with that. You just can’t have someone do something that’s not in their nature.”

Indeed, Garcetti is famously diplomatic, capable of charming different rooms of people on different days. His slogan when he was running for mayor, if you’ll recall, was “back to basics,” a pleasant-sounding phrase that could be interpreted any number of ways.

There’s another, more rational reason for Garcetti’s moderate tone. The L.A. mayor is all but assured of re-election, so he doesn’t have to worry about whipping the electorate into a Trump-hating frenzy, or about raising money—at least in the short term. His immediate priorities are getting things done. Garcetti hopes to expand L.A.’s rail network, turn the Los Angeles River into a giant urban park and bring the Olympics back to the city. All three require cooperation from Washington, D.C.

“I don’t know that Garcetti has said anything dramatically different from [state Senate president pro temp] Kevin de Leon or [State Assembly Speaker] Anthony Rendon,” says USC professor Dan Schnur.

“But it’s clear from his tone that he wants to find a way to stand up for the people of his city on the one hand but not forfeit the potential to move forward on large-scale infrastructure on the other.”

Trump has pledged to pass a major infrastructure bill. While it’s unclear what exactly that will look like, Garcetti and Gov. Jerry Brown have made it clear that they’d like their pet projects to be considered.

“Both Garcetti and Jerry Brown have been much more measured than other California politicians,” Schnur says.

Should Garcetti decide to run for governor in 2018, the calculus may change dramatically. L.A. Gov. Gavin Newsom, whom some consider the gubernatorial frontrunner, was quick to join protesters in San Francisco after Trump issued his executive order. If Trump continues on his current trajectory, the governor’s race may hinge upon who is the biggest Trump basher.
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On Jan. 30, three days after President Donald Trump banned travelers from seven mostly Muslim countries, a Turkish Airlines flight from Istanbul landed at Los Angeles International Airport carrying a 30-year-old Iraqi passenger named Alan Abdullah. Abdullah has a green card, which he was able to obtain after moving to the United States with his family last year. Prior to that, he had earned a special immigration visa in exchange for his service to the U.S. military. For seven years he was an interpreter for the Army in the northern region of Kirkuk, and he was wounded twice.

In 2006, at the age of 20, he was on foot patrol with an American GI in a restive and violent area of Kirkuk Province known as al-Rashid when the soldier stepped on a concealed explosive device. The detonation blew off both of the soldier’s legs. Abdullah was wounded by shrapnel from the explosion. A year later, in 2007, the Humvee in which he was patrolling struck a bomb, and he survived a second explosion.

Abdullah is trim and fit and wears his hair close-cropped like a military man. He speaks with admiration for the American soldiers he knew in Iraq, who he says helped him improve his English and became his friends.

When Abdullah’s daughter was born three years ago, medical tests revealed that she had a genetic heart abnormality called dilated cardiomyopathy, or DCM, which can lead to heart failure. He says that’s what led him to come to the United States. “There was no treatment for her in Iraq. I took her to many places without any responses.”

Abdullah says he waited two years in Iraq for his visa application to be approved. “Nobody can come to the U.S. easily — no one,” he says. “It doesn’t matter what your job was or what you did over there. That only gives you the right to apply.”

The family relocated to Seattle last year, where further testing revealed that Abdullah’s wife and
reach L.A. simply to allow the passengers a chance to orders issuing stays against the ban. This, assemble packets of news stories and court issues.” At JFK International Airport in the Eastern District of New York, told a federal Justice Department.

enforcing or defending it: most notably, the Miller, with only last-minute consultation rushed implementation. It reportedly was oral arguments on the earlier ruling. U.S. Court of Appeals in San Francisco held States. On Feb. 7, a three-judge panel of the barred from entry to come to the United turned away. On Feb. 3, a federal judge in day to day, who might be admitted or so-called Muslim ban that it’s hard to know, misleading travelers with passports from seven mostly Muslim countries: Iran, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan and Abdullah’s native Iraq.

Despite Abdullah’s service to the U.S. military and his green card, his admittance to the country was far from a sure thing. The decree from Trump had sown chaos at LAX, as it had at airports around the country: Both green card holders and residents of countries that weren’t on the list were being detained, and travelers were being denied legal counsel and threatened into signing paperwork that revoked their visas, according to legal volunteers. Dozens, perhaps hundreds — Customs and Border Protection won’t release the numbers — were sent back to their countries of origin, mistakenly believing they had lost their chance to enter the United States.

A spokesman for CBP did not respond to email and voicemail requests for comment from L.A. Weekly.

In recent days, there has been such swift legal back-and-forth over Trump’s so-called Muslim ban that it’s hard to know, day to day, who might be admitted or turned away. On Feb. 3, a federal judge in Seattle issued a ruling that blocked the key parts of the executive order and allowed immigrants and travelers who had been barred from entry to come to the United States. On Feb. 7, a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals in San Francisco held oral arguments on the earlier ruling.

Clearly, the order was exacerbated by its rushed implementation. It reportedly was written by Trump’s White House advisers, led by Stephen K. Bannon and Stephen Miller, with only last-minute consultation with the federal agencies charged with enforcing or defending it: most notably, the Department of Homeland Security and the Justice Department.

Susan Riley, the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, told a federal judge during a Jan. 28 emergency hearing on the ban: “This has unfolded with such speed that we haven’t had an opportunity to address the issues, the important legal issues.” At JFK International Airport in New York, a customs officer allegedly told a legal advocate demanding to know who’s in charge to “call Mr. Trump.”

Sarah Brunet, an immigration attorney in private practice, who was volunteering her time at LAX last week, called the ban “pure discrimination, pure profiling.” She and other legal volunteers had helped assemble packets of news stories and court orders issuing stays against the ban. This, simply to allow the passengers a chance to reach L.A.

Abdullah’s flight arrived at LAX at 4:09 p.m., and as the plane was taxiing to the arrivals gate he texted his attorney, Matthew Walter, to let him know he was here. Abdullah had never met or even spoken to Walter; after panic initially spread following news of the travel ban, Abdullah posted a query on Facebook to see if anyone knew a good lawyer in L.A.

Walter was waiting at LAX with his boss, attorney Gilhan Thomas, amid a crowd of desperate families and legal volunteers, length of the terminal holding up signs in English, Arabic and Persian offering free legal help.

“In 19 years, I’ve never seen anything like this,” Thomas said, glancing around at the personal crises unfolding around her. “This is totally unprecedented.”

Three days earlier, at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 27, an Iranian citizen named Ali Vayeghan was one of the first people detained at LAX under Trump’s order. Vayeghan, one of the first people detained at LAX under Trump’s order, was sent back to Iran but returned to the United States thanks to a court order.

Ali Vayeghan, one of the first people detained at LAX under Trump’s order, was sent back to Iran but returned to the United States thanks to a court order.

Alan Abdullah, a green card holder from Iraq, was trying to get back into the United States to be with his family, including his 3-year-old daughter, who has a heart condition.
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seven countries banned by Trump’s order, and the Abdullahs are not refugees. Peterson rattled off the names of a dozen or more nations from which World Relief welcomed refugees fleeing war and persecution, as part of the U.S. duties under the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention. “We have had phone calls from a lot of refugee clients since this started,” Peterson said. “They’re terrified that they’re next.”

Legal volunteers confirm that the immediate effect of the ban has extended beyond the seven countries on Trump’s list. On Jan. 30, a family from India was held for at least eight hours, and a physician from Jordan with a U.S. green card was held for more than four hours. Once released, the Jordanian told volunteers that “at least 100 people” were still being held.

Airport cops on mountain bikes were weaving in and out of the flow of LAX travelers pulling suitcases through the concourse. Peterson took a phone call and looked relieved. The Afghan family had been released.

Standing near the exit to the terminal, Attae Abdullah rested his hands on the shoulders of his sons Ahsan, 9, and Urfan, 7. The ordeal of the past seven hours was etched on his tired expression. He agreed to speak briefly while his 32-year-old wife, Fahima, sat in an airport chair, tending to the couple’s 2- and 3-year-old children, Ashegh and Somaya.

Abdullah answered questions in his native Dari, his responses translated by a volunteer interpreter. For eight years, he said, he had criss-crossed Afghanistan while employed as the chief mechanic in a civilian unit attached to the U.S. Army. He said the stern border patrol agents who detained him at LAX made a show of doubting his bona fides, and after six hours threatened to deport him. “I told him I have a visa, you can’t deport me,” he recalled.

Asked if he ever came under fire during his work for the military, Abdullah nodded and told of a surprise attack by the Taliban in the province of Maidan Wardak, and how a friend of his, a fellow mechanic, was shot and killed.

Abdullah said that after seven hours of detainment at LAX customs, the border patrol officer informed him that the U.S. Embassy in Kabul had confirmed his story. Peterson shook his head at Abdullah’s retelling. The chant from hundreds of protesters — “No hate, no fear, everyone is welcome here” — echoed around the concrete-and-glass exterior of the Tom Bradley International Terminal as the Abdullah family was helped into a waiting minivan. Back at the table of legal volunteers, exit interviews revealed that two more Afghan families with authorization to enter the United States were being held at the airport. One of the families, legal volunteers said, was detained for more than 12 hours.

For every refugee or “banned” immigrant guided through the barriers to entry at LAX, attorneys have found many more who weren’t permitted to board flights in cities like Doha, Qatar; Dubai, U.A.E.; Istanbul; and even Paris and Stockholm. Those travelers were stuck in interminable layovers, paying for hotels or sleeping at the airport, or simply returned home thinking that getting to the United States was a lost cause.

International airlines including KLM, Lufthansa and Scandinavian were refusing to board passengers from the countries targeted by the ban. One legal volunteer had a copy of a waiver that Turkish Airlines was issuing to travelers who were green card holders or dual citizens, asking them to assume the cost of a return flight in the event the border patrol barred their entry in the United States.

On signing the ban, Trump said it was intended “to keep radical Islamic terrorists out of the United States of America.” But at LAX on Jan. 30, the travelers who emerged after hours of detention at CBP appeared to be L.A. residents — predominantly Iranian-Americans — with family ties to the countries on Trump’s list.

Susan Taleban, 54, a Muslim woman born in Iran, described how she travels regularly from her home in L.A. to care for her elderly mother in Esfahan, about 250 miles south of Tehran. She said customs authorities at LAX held her for questioning for more than two hours. She credited a team of volunteer attorneys for securing her entry, saying that had they not intervened on her behalf, she fears she could have been sent back to Iran.

Vartan Mokhtarian, 68, waited
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The army of volunteer attorneys worked in groups — typically structured groups of legal volunteers for naturalization for people from the seven countries.”

Matthew Walter, the attorney at Thomas’s firm whom Abdullah had retained, went to customs and asked an officer for an update. He said an officer told him, “We can’t provide you any information about anyone in inspections.” Walter was given the card of a public affairs liaison at the airport for help. He told the volunteer that he was good to go, to grab his bags.

Alan Abdullah, more than three hours after he’d texted her, Thomas had retreated to a table at the Cantina Laredo, where she grew more agitated with every unrewarded glance at her cellphone. Many of her clients are from Syria and Iraq. The executive order has wreaked havoc on their lives.

“Asylees can’t petition to bring over family,” she said. “Work permits are halted. Applications for green cards are halted. They are canceling oath ceremonies for naturalization for people from the seven countries.”

“Do you know that you had a problem there? “I tell him, ‘This is a love story,’” he said.

On the evening of Jan. 30, Gihan Thomas, a well-dressed and plainspoken attorney of Egyptian descent, was still waiting at LAX for word from her client, Iraqi interpreter Artin Mokhtarian, 35, who had gone to Tehran to propose marriage to an Iranian woman, the daughter of a family friend. The traditional engagement ceremony in a church calls for relatives from both families to attend, which is why his mother had accompanied him on the journey.

As an Iranian Christian, Artin Mokhtarian had received political asylum in the United States years ago. When he emerged from customs after four hours, he said the officer had pressed him, repeating the same question: Why did you go back if you knew that you had a problem there? “He walked with me to the exit from the room,” Abdullah recalled, “and he said welcome back home.”

Abdullah stepped outside — in his rush to call his wife, he went out the wrong door and ended up on the upper level flanking the terminal. Alone and savoring the moment, he watched as hundreds of fresh arrivals from countries in the Far East — many of them green card holders like him — breezed through customs and filed quickly past the room where he and so many others were being detained.

He wasn’t allowed to text or talk with his wife, who was alone and 1,100 miles away at the apartment caring for the children. Finally, the customs officer returned to him and said he was good to go, to grab his bags. He’s going to get through this. This is my country.”
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PAYING IT FORWARD
The fraught path of restaurants trying to provide worker health care

BY RICK PAULAS

In July, Jerry Teigen, co-owner of WeHo Bistro in West Hollywood, was diagnosed with liver cancer. It was the first time Teigen and his husband/co-owner, Jeff Douek, had been forced to navigate the American health care system. “It’s hard enough to be sick, and hard enough trying to get better,” Douek says, “but we didn’t have to think much about it. We could do what we wanted because we had health insurance.”

This luxury — the emotional freedom that comes with being insured — got them thinking about the health care needs of their restaurant staff, which includes fewer than 20 employees. After speaking with their employees, they discovered that nobody working for them had health care. So what would happen to them if they got sick or hurt and couldn’t work, the couple wondered. “We saw how much this was costing and knew we had to explore options,” Douek says.

Douek and Teigen offered to bring the employees into a group plan they constructed with the help of their insurance company. To help defray the cost and get their employees covered, they offered to pay the first $100 monthly for those who bought into the plan; employees then would have to cover the rest on their own. But even after subtracting $100 each month, the health care bill was too large for almost everyone. “Only one [employee] was able to buy coverage,” Douek says. “Everyone else isn’t covered.”

Then, after a six-month fight with cancer, Teigen died this past December. Due to the frustration he felt during his last months as he tried, and failed, to bring health care coverage to his workers, Teigen decided to leave half of his ownership share in WeHo Bistro to his employees. In addition, he donated $10,000 that will be used for emergency health care for his employees; Douek is hopeful that donations from friends and family will further expand the fund. “At least our employees will know something is there for them,” he says.

For Los Angeles restaurants, the path of providing health care to employees can be fraught with confusion and exasperation. Even before the current presidential administration put health care in the political crosshairs, restaurants have faced difficulties providing insurance for their employees.

Sometimes these attempts are motivated by more than simple kindness or even the financial penalties associated with the Affordable Care Act’s coverage requirements — providing health care may be necessary to attract and retain quality employees.

“We wanted to have a grown-up business,” says Josh Loeb, co-owner of Rustic Canyon, Sweet Rose Creamery, Milo & Olive and Huckleberry Cafe. “People getting benefits, being paid well and, for us, providing health care.”

To get a sense of what premiums and benefits were needed for his workers to buy into group coverage, Loeb asked his employees. He soon realized that if the employees had to cover any of the costs, they’d mostly choose not to get health insurance. “A lot were hesitant to sign up, even with the penalties of Obamacare,” he says. Loeb then devised a way to offer fully paid premiums to employees by adding small surcharges to customer bills. “We wanted to make sure everyone knows the people working in the restaurant are fully covered.” On Sept. 1, 2014, a 3 percent surcharge began showing up on bills at Loeb’s restaurants. And for the most part, customers didn’t seem to mind, he says.

Other restaurants did the same. Bill Chait, co-owner of Republique and Bestia, implemented the same surcharge in his restaurants earlier in the year. In the Bay Area, many San Francisco restaurants have been adding a health care surcharge since 2008. Using those San Francisco locations as templates, other L.A. restaurants — including Melisse, Lucques and the Hungry Cat — began adding the same 3 percent surcharge to help cover health care costs for their employees. For many, this was the next logical step to account for the rising cost of coverage.

“We started doing insurance for the employees six or seven years ago,” says David Lentz, chef-owner of the Hungry Cat. “We made the decision because we were doing well and could afford it.”

Lentz instituted a tiered system, dependent on role. Managers got all their coverage paid for, while other staff were offered a 50/50 split. Things were going smoothly before passage of the Affordable Care Act forced Lentz to offer mandatory coverage, which raised prices.

THREE PERCENT DOES NOT COVER 100 PERCENT OF THE COST, BUT IT MITIGATES IT.”
— HUNGRY CAT’S DAVID LENZT ON SURCHARGES FOR EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE

“We were looking at costs out of the gate of $60,000 to $70,000,” Lentz says. “We can’t just find this extra money to put toward insurance.” So he decided to go with a surcharge as well. “Three percent does not cover 100 percent of the cost, but it mitigates it a little.”

It did for a while, at least. About a year after the surcharges were introduced, a class action lawsuit was filed against the restaurants, alleging they had conspired to violate price-fixing and collusion laws. “Under California law, competitors cannot get together and agree to increase the prices of the goods or services,” Daniel Sterrett, San Francisco attorney representing a plaintiff, told CBS2 in 2015. The lawsuit also named restaurants Animal and Son of a Gun, although neither has implemented a surcharge, because their owners, Jon Shook and Vinny Dotolo, allegedly encouraged other restaurants to implement the surcharge. Owners of the accused restaurants were unable to answer L.A. Weekly questions about the suit due to pending litigation.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, a bipartisan organization that promotes policy communication between state legislatures, incomes in the United States are not keeping up with the rise in health plan costs. This means a greater percentage of earnings is being taken by health care coverage. (In 2006, health care costs took up 6.5 percent of a person’s income, but by 2015, that number had risen to 10.1 percent.) The money’s going somewhere, and most of the time, it’s not going to those buying the plans.

“These insurance companies just continue to make money, because there’s no regulation,” Lentz says. “They’re the ones making the money, we’re the ones that have to pay it.”

In July 2016, Jerry Teigen, co-owner of West Hollywood’s WeHo Bistro, was diagnosed with liver cancer.
here’s no question that L.A.’s vibrant dining scene would not be what it is today without the diverse melting pot of immigrants who make up our city. For what we lack in high-end, white-tablecloth establishments, we make up for in immigrant-owned-and-operated restaurants. These are the true gems of the city, allowing us a direct portal into unique cultures outside our borders and personal bubbles.

The recent immigration ban by the Trump administration has left the Middle Eastern and North African community here in L.A. reeling. The presidential order (currently being battled in court) stops the admission of refugees from Syria indefinitely, and bars entry into the United States from seven predominantly Muslim countries linked to concerns about terrorism. Those seven countries are Syria, Iraq, Iran, Sudan, Yemen, Somalia and Libya.

If the ban had happened years or decades earlier, some of our greatest restaurants would not exist. From Persian sandwiches to Iraqi grilled fish, our selection of cuisine from the greater Middle East and Africa is some of the best in the nation. We have entire communities dedicated to food from predominately Muslim countries. The section of Westwood lovingly dubbed Tehrangeles has a handful of kabob restaurants within a couple of miles of one another and some of the best Persian pastries in the city. Elsewhere, there are many other international offerings, like a vegan food truck dedicated to falafels by way of Sudan; a bakery from Syria; and a Somali eatery that really knows its way around goat meat. While the historical origin of these dishes can be complex, they all share a common ancestry.

We are celebratory of our immigrant communities here in L.A.; they are what make us unique. As a sign of appreciation, here’s a list of where to eat dishes from the seven countries banned by Trump.

Iran: Persian sandwiches from Attari	
Attari specializes in Iranian sandwiches, featuring perfectly toasted bread stuffed with a meat of choice, such as tongue, brain or chicken. Tomatoes, lettuce and a smattering of pickles give it an extra layer of texture. Located in Tehrangeles, Attari is owned by the family that opened the first Persian convenience store in the area in the late 1980s. The food is made entirely from family recipes. Kabobs are plentiful here, served with Persian flatbread and greens. Don’t miss the ash, which is a thick, barley-based stew made with white and pinto beans drizzled with a bit of kashk, a zippy, yogurtlike cream.

Syria: Saj from Sarig’s Bakery
Owner Sako Dekirmanjian comes from Aleppo, Syria, where his grandfather ran a bakery. The saj, thin-crust bread baked on a convex metal grill, is a good way to start. It can be ordered with za’atar, an herb mixture of thyme, sesame seed and virgin olive oil, or paired with white cheese with homemade sausage. We like the laham b’ajin, which are Syrian open-faced meat pies stuffed with ground beef, pomegranate molasses and pine nuts. Don’t forgo the dessert menu, which pairs saj with Nutella, marshmallows and sliced almonds.

Somalia: Goat from Banadir Somali Restaurant
This halal mainstay specializes in goat meat, which permeates most of the menu. There’s goat soup, pressure-cooked goat and braised goat, usually accompanied by traditional Somali spices like cardamom, cloves, coriander, bay leaves, cinnamon and cumin. For breakfast, the anjera is the primary carb of choice. It’s a pancakelike bread similar to Ethiopia’s injera but smaller and thinner. It is served with savory toppings like goat, chicken or beef, or can be eaten as a dessert sprinkled with sugar or a bit of sesame oil and honey.

Yemen: Malawach from Toast Cafe
There aren’t any Yemeni-specific res-
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Libya: Tagine from Revolutionario

While restaurants dedicated to the food of Libya aren’t apparent in L.A., there is no shortage of places to get couscous, which is considered to be the national dish of Libya. There is it commonly prepared with slow-cooked beef, potatoes, carrots and garbanzo beans in a spicy tomato sauce. Tagine, another popular dish in Libya, can be found all over North Africa and, most commonly, in Morocco. We recommend the chickpea tagine tacos from Revolutionario near Exposition Park. It’s owned by Farid Zadi, who is considered Los Angeles’ foremost expert on North African cuisine. 1436 W. Jefferson Blvd., Exposition Park. (323) 223-3526. revolutionario.com.

Iraq: Kibbeh Mosul from Massif Mediterranean Grill

Massif has one of the most comprehensive Iraqi menus in the L.A. area. Owned and operated by Iraqis, it specializes in shawarma, which is significantly sweater than the more established versions out there. A dash of cinnamon and cardamom renders it as one of the most flavorful in town. Kibbeh Mosul is a must. Ground meat with bulgur (cracked wheat) laced with cinnamon, it’s a staple that originates from Mosul in northern Iraq. It comes out like a moist, meat-stuffed pancake; a side of hummus is highly recommended. For big parties, a whole lamb can be pre-ordered. Don’t miss the massaqut — a grilled carp with lemon and herb, often considered the national dish of Iraq. 902 E. Colorado St., Glendale. (818) 245-6863.

Chef Behind Mexico City’s Huset Is Bringing His Rustic Cuisine to Silver Lake

Chef Maycoll Calderón at first appears to radiate nonchalance as he nurses a cappuccino in the serene, sun-drenched patio of Huset, his restaurant in Mexico City. The tables are being set for the soon-to-arrive lunchtime crowd. But the Venezuelan-born chef is brimming with excitement and eager to share the news. He has taken on an unenviable challenge — to conquer the world’s second largest Mexican city, Los Angeles. Tintorera, Calderón’s third restaurant, is scheduled to open this spring in the heart of Silver Lake, making him one of the handful of Mexico City chefs who have chosen L.A. for their latest projects.

Huset, which opened in August 2015 in trendy Mexico City neighborhood Colonia Roma, is set in a restored early-20th century neoclassical residence. It is the acme of a revolutionary culinary scene that has been in the works for years, and began across town in the tony Polanco neighborhood. It’s there that now-star chef Enrique Olvera pioneered what would become Modern Mexican cooking at Pujol, one of the world’s most acclaimed restaurants, whose kitchen became a seedbed of creativity, spawning a generation of young chefs. These chefs would rethink Mexican traditions, turning them inside out. And, of course, they would highlight local, seasonal and sustainable ingredients. Calderón says that at Huset, now one of Mexico City’s most popular restaurants. He says he will continue that methodology when he launches Tintorera later this year in the former Cowboys & Turbans space.

Huset is set in a formal mansion, but the sensitive design by partner Walter Neyenberg brings the space up to date while evoking old-world grandeur. Smoke pervades almost every dish on the menu — Calderón’s technique is to grill, then sauce. Some dishes, such as ceviches and aguachilles refer directly to the Mexican lexicon, others are chef’s creation; all take advantage of what is local and seasonal. For example, gnocchi are bathed in lemon cream sauce and accompanied by wild mushrooms from nearby Mexican states. A large meatball arrives in a sauce tropicalized by a Caribbean-style sofrito and sprinkled with queso cotija from Michoacán. Calderón calls the style cocina de campo, where most rustic dishes are grilled over charcoal. At Tintorera, Calderón says the menu will continue that lineage of Modern Mexican cooking.

His newest outpost seems like a natural fit. After all, Colonia Roma has many cultural similarities to the enclaves of Northeast L.A., and it has undergone a rebirth in recent years. Roma was designed at the turn of the 20th century based on the urban ideal of Georges-Eugène Haussmann — the city planner responsible for Paris’ arboreal avenues — who created orderly middle- and upper-class housing. Single-family homes are interspersed with over-the-top mansions in every style, from art nouveau to deco. Until the 1940s, La Roma was the place to live. A cultural community thrived here well into the ’50s — William S. Burroughs famously shot his wife in a game of William Tell gone awry here.

After World War II, American suburban-style living supplanted the baronial, servant-heavy scene, and the wealthy moved north to Polanco, or to car–and swimming pool–friendly Lomas. Mansions were left to abandonment, pretty homes demolished to make way for parking lots. The devastating 1985 earthquake, which hit the area hard, put the nail in the coffin.

It would be another 20 years before Roma would come back. Its affordable rents became attractive to creative types, both foreign and national. Art galleries, design shops, cool late-night bars and innovative restaurants sprang up like mushrooms and continue to do so. It’s a story not unlike Silver Lake, which has seen a demographic shift in recent years. So it’s logical for chef Calderón to open his first L.A. venue in a neighborhood that...
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- BBQ Squid
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As we talk in the increasingly bustling patio, the chef’s calm shifts to spirited enthusiasm, as he reveals his plans to bring contemporary Mexico City flavors to L.A.

How did Huset come about?
First we found this beautiful house; it was a wreck so took a long time to renovate. The space was perfect for my dream restaurant, a cocina de campo — country kitchen — wood oven, hardly any gas, seasonal ingredients.

Why L.A. and Silver Lake?
I always had a dream to open a place in the U.S., because I lived there and was intrigued by the possibilities the ingredients would provide. You start with a dream, then you slowly build it.
I didn’t know L.A. very well, but my partner did and he introduced me to Silver Lake — I knew it was right. We see similarities to La Roma there — that hip, creative vibe, you feel it everywhere. Like, you go into a café and everybody’s talking about creating something. Here in Mexico, maybe it’s more about design, architecture projects, art; there, of course, it’s Hollywood so the subject is different, but the same exciting energy. We found a spot very similar to Huset, a simple, open space with lots of greenery. It’s going to be called Tintorera, which is a type of blue shark. We’re going to do a speakeasy, too.

What about the food?
I want to bring what’s happening in Mexico to California. In Huset we do cocina de campo — country cooking, everything charcoal. At Tintorera I’m going to take a similar approach, simple grilling and saucing, everything light, accessible. It will be all about seafood. I like fish, love ceviches. I want to explore that side of my personality. Fish tacos, done in a different way from Baja, more refined. The seafood in California is amazing, there’s much more variety than here. And there’s all the stuff from the East Coast, too: the clams, lobsters. It’s exciting, man.

What differences do you see between the chefs in the United States and Mexico?
I think in Mexico right now there’s more creative energy, people willing to take risks. In the U.S. it’s the business thing, which can impede cooks to really open up. So I want to bring our creativity to the States. Make things that are fun, not academic, take more chances. This even applies to service; I find it cold in the States. Service here is more attentive. I hate that there they just bring the check. We want people to chill out, feel that no one is kicking you out of the restaurant.

Do you think being in L.A. will change you as a chef?
Of course it’s going to change me. There will be so much more accessible, all the other cuisines like Thai, Korean, Japanese. I’m going to get into it. Managing three restaurants and living in two places is tight, but now’s the time. L.A. is waiting for us, no? —Nicolas Gilman
THEATER

I Believe I Can Fly
“Do you ever see a grown man naked?” No doubt you’re familiar with that and other memorable quotes from Airplane!, the hilarious, gag-heavy and mildly racist disaster-film parody about a traumatized former pilot who tries to reconnect with an ex-flight attendant on a troubled plane carrying an inflatable doll, pair of naked breasts, singing nun, Hare Krishnas, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and June Cleaver speaking jive. Directed by Tom O’Connor, Airplane! LIVE! at Flight Theater at the Complex lovingly re-Enacts the 1980 classic comedy, with some modern twists thrown in, including bonus character Samuel L. Jackson. Audience members are encouraged to yell out favorite one-liners. Surely they can’t be serious? They are serious. And don’t call them Shirley. Flight Theater at the Complex, 6476 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood; Fri., Feb. 10, 8 p.m. (runs Fri., 8 p.m., and Sat., 8 & 11 p.m., thru March 18); $20. airplanelivela.com. –Siran Babayan

DANCE

The Golden Rules
The photo of the man at the drum set could be an outtake from the film Whiplash, but it’s for Rules of the Game, choreographer Jonah Bokaer’s collaboration with scenographer/visual artist Daniel Arsham for eight dancers, with original music by composers Pharrell Williams and David Campbell. Inspired by Luigi Pirandello, ROTG is one of three scheduled works from Bokaer, a former Merce Cunningham dancer whose combination of dance with video and other elements seems to achieve an equilibrium where the ancillary elements enhance but don’t distract from the dancing. UCLA Royce Hall, 340 Royce Drive, Westwood; Fri., Feb. 10, 8 p.m.; $29-$49. (310) 825-2101, cap.ucla.edu. –Ann Haskins

OUTDOORS

Put a Bow on It
Los Angeles is a city where man-made development butts up against raw, wild nature. The Bowtie Project perfectly embodies this characterization, as the 18-acre postindustrial site along the concrete banks of the L.A. River has been repurposed as a public park. Organized by California State Parks, Clockshop and the National Park Service, Bowtie Field Day offers visitors of all ages the opportunity to take full advantage of this quintessentially L.A. environment. Start the afternoon with park ranger–led nature walks, catch-and-release fishing demos or a clay workshop with artist Julia Haft-Candell. As day turns to night, gather ‘round the campfire for an evening of stargazing and s’mores. Bowtie Project, 2780 W. Casitas Ave., Glassell Park; Sat., Feb. 11, 2-7 p.m.; free with RSVP. (323) 522-6014, clockshop.org/event/bowtie-field-day. –Matt Stromberg

MUSEUMS

To Be Frank
Show off your best vintage finds at Long Beach’s Museum of Latin American Art for the L.A. Retro Festival, a free, day-long event to celebrate the opening of “Dreamland: A Frank Romero Retrospective.” Romero, instantly recognizable for his mural of cars crawling alongside the 101, is a leading figure in Los Angeles’ homegrown Chicano art movement, and the exhibition will encompass works from his long and illustrious career. Similarly, the festival looks back at L.A. over the years with a mix of classic cars, fashion and music. Check out old-school rides before catching a fashion show from vintage menswear purveyor Barrio Dandy Vintage or a performance from Greg Esparza of Thee Midniters. The museum will be open for tours of “Dreamland,” which opens Feb. 11 and runs through May 21. Museum of Latin American Art, 628 Alamitos Ave., Long Beach; Sun., Feb. 12, 11 a.m.–5 p.m.; free. (562) 437-1689, molaa.org/events/l-retro-festival/. –Liz Ohanesian

FUNDRAISERS

Whip It Good
When skaters from the five roller derby teams in the local women’s league L.A. Derby Dolls sweep around their banked oval track at dangerous speeds, they look like comic book superheroes come to life, a fearsome combination of beauty and brawn rushing past in a blur of Span-
dex, fishnets, helmets and elbow pads. But even these fierce wonder women need help when battling the bureaucracy of the city of L.A., which has canceled the Derby Dolls’ current schedule of games until the league can raise funds for new permits. Tonight’s benefit screening of Drew Barrymore’s 2009 roller derby film, Whip It, features appearances by cast members Alia Shawkat and Landon Pigg. The Regent Theater, 448 S. Main St., downtown; Sun., Feb. 12, 7 p.m.; $25. (323) 934-2944, theregenttheater.com/events/14157901-derby-dolls-fundraiser-los-angeles.— Falling James

PORN

XXX Marks the Spot

The Golden Age of Adult Cinema is an increasingly rare chance to hear candid conversations about the semi-glorious olden days of adult film. Actors Christy Canyon, Nina Hartley, Porsche Lynn and Selks head up this edition; other speakers in the coming () weeks include Veronica Hart, Amber Lynn, and Annie Sprinkle. This evening’s symposium benefits the Komen Breast Cancer Fund, and is the final initiative of pornography historian and longtime L.A. X-Press film critic William Margold, who died of a heart attack during a broadcast on Jan. 18, talking about the dirty movies he so loved. Cupcake Theater, 11020 W. Magnolia Blvd., North Hollywood; Sun., Feb. 12, 6 p.m.; $25, 860 VIP. (323) 391-3416, thegoldenageofadultcinema.com.— David Cotner

COMEDY

Licensed to Iliza

Most people talk about physical comedy without acknowledging the pain and misery that goes into giving comics their unique type of physicality. Each comic moves through the space of a stage differently — and making her big move this time is Iliza Shlesinger on her Confirmed Kills tour. Telling jokes with seemingly every fiber of her being, Shlesinger has wrung big laughs out of everyone from hired killers to chairborne rangers, navigating her way through morasses of harassment, dating by gaslight, caustic commentary and other random indignities heaped upon her world — her lavish, prosperous, triumphal, Netflix-monied world. Wilshire Ebell Theater, 4401 W. Eighth St., Mid-Wilshire; Tue., Feb. 14, 6:30 p.m.; $30. (323) 939-1128, ebellla.org/theatre-events/iliza-confirmed-kills-tour.— David Cotner

VALENTINE’S DAY

With This Rink …

Although it’s supposedly all about love, Valentine’s Day is filled with feelings of inadequacy for many, as those without partners suffer in solitude, while the happily coupled struggle to create that unattainably perfect romantic experience. Instead of the underwhelming but expensive dinner date, why not kick it down & Derby bring their mobile skate party to L.A. with the Rolling Hearts PopUp Roller Rink & Disco. The event features multiple DJs spinning a classic roll bounce soundtrack, as Trey Knight & the Knight Rollers dazzle the crowd with their fluid and acrobatic skating. Bringing your own wheels is encouraged, but there will be skates for rent until they run out. Union, 4067 Pico Blvd., Arlington Heights; Tue., Feb. 14, 8 p.m.-2 a.m.; $15-$20. restlessnites.com/rolling.— Matt Stromberg

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The Last Bookstore, 453 S. Spring St., downtown; Mon., Feb. 13, 7:30 p.m.; free. (213) 488-0599, thelastbookstorela.com.— Siran Babayan

VALENTINE’S DAY

Rabbit Run

Take a break from doing it like bunnies to visit the most hoppenin’ place in Pasadena this Valentine’s Day. The couple has been married since 1993, inviting Angelenos into their home for the last 22 years. Frazee a plush bunny for Valentine’s Day. The couple has been married since 1993, giving Angelinos into their home since 1998 to gawk at more than 33,000 bunny-related items inside. Take your sweetheart to this record-setting museum to learn more about the space’s history. This will be the last Valentine’s Day event at the original location, as the museum will be hoppin’ on over to Altadena in March. The Bunny Museum, 1933 Jefferson Drive, Pasadena; Tue., Feb. 14, 6-9 p.m.; $5. (626) 798-8848, thebunny museum.com.— Eva Recinos

comedy

Under Lock and Kiwi

One of New Zealand’s funniest cultural exports, Rhys Darby is perhaps best
UCLA Meth Clinical Trial

A New Year, A New Approach!

Are you using meth and looking to stop?

A UCLA meth clinical trial may be able to help. UCLA is conducting a clinical trial to find out if an anti-inflammatory medication can help patients to stop or reduce their meth use, and improve mental functioning, by reducing toxic brain inflammation caused by meth. Counseling, study medication, and compensation are included in this 18-week outpatient clinical trial.

If you are 18 years or older, using crystal meth, and looking to stop, call our research clinic in Hollywood (866) 449-UCLA or visit www.uclacbam.org/meth

UCLA IRB#12-000949. This UCLA research study is being conducted by the UCLA Dept of Family Medicine (PI: Keith Heinzerling MD). Funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

ULWS102-00646. The UCLA research study is being conducted by the UCLA Dept of Family Medicine (PI: Keith Heinzerling MD). Funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse.
Recognized for his role as a band manager on *Flight of the Conchords,* and most recently guest-starred in an episode of last year’s revival of *The X-Files.* But the foundation of his career is stand-up, which he started doing a couple of decades ago, long before relocating to the L.A. area. *Rhys Darby's Saying Funny Things Society* is a new monthly night of comedy curated by Darby and featuring material by a handful of funny people. As Darby himself quips, they also may be sleeping on his couch. *Largo at the Coronet, Beverly Grove; Wed., Feb. 15, doors 7 p.m., show 8:30 p.m.; $30. (310) 855-0350, largo-la.com.—Tanja M. Laden

**COMEDY**

**Original Skin**
Comedian, writer and director Jonathan Browning goes on a humorous journey of sexual discovery from adolescence through adulthood in his storytelling show *All This Over an Apple.* Browning, whose L.A.-based Screaming Frog Productions makes award-winning short films, recounts the myriad ways he learned about the birds and the bees: the Bible, talks with mom, the schoolyard, sex education and — like other cable watchers of a certain generation — those blocks of late-night, soft-core porn movies on Skinemax. Browning connects the dots between misinformation and shame at a young age, the breakup of his first marriage and how learning more about sex as he’s gotten older has made him a better lover and husband the second time around. *Comedy Central Stage at the Hudson, 6539 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood; Wed., Feb. 15, 8 p.m.; free with RSVP. comedycentralstage.com.—Siran Babayan

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For more information contact the UCLA CARE Center at careoutreach@mednet.ucla.edu or via phone 310-557-9062. There are limitations to the confidentiality of email communications. Do not include any sensitive health information if you choose to contact the study team via email.

**COMEDY**

**My Blue Kevin**
Kevin McDonald’s *Kevin McDonald Show* just might be the only place to see this many members of The Kids in the Hall. Launched in August, McDonald’s comedy-variety podcast features sketches, live music, interviews and stories about the famed Canadian comedy troupe. Past guests have included Kids’ Dave Foley, as well as Wallace Shawn, Bob Saget, Rachel Dratch, Michael Showalter, Crash Test Dummies’ Brad Roberts, Fruit Bats’ Eric D. Johnson, The Long Winters’ John Roderick and Ted Leo. (In the first episode’s skit, Shawn played Sherlock Holmes and talked about what it was like filming *My Dinner With Andre* and *The Princess Bride.*) For the show’s first live taping in L.A., McDonald hosts another fellow alum, Scott Thompson, in addition to Dana Gould and Gin Blossoms’ Jesse Valenzuela. *Nerdist Showroom at Meltdown Comics, 7224 Sunset Blvd, Hollywood; Thu., Feb. 16, 7-8:30 p.m.; $10. (323) 851-7223, nerdmeltdown.com.—Siran Babayan

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LIPSTICK JUNGLE
IN RACHEL LACHOWICZ’S SHOW, A MASCUlINE WILD WEST TOWN GETS A FEMALE MAKEOVER

BY CATHERINE WAGLEY

This week, an artist takes down a vintage Clint Eastwood flick, and a longtime L.A. painter animates reproductive organs in the classiest possible way.

Woman’s Wild West

The smell of lipstick — chalky, faintly chemical and, for some, nostalgic — fills Shoshana Wayne Gallery in a subtly aggressive way, since Rachel Lachowicz has covered the facades of two life-size buildings with melted red lipstick. The House of Worship and The Sheriff/Barbershop, buildings modeled after the set of Clint Eastwood’s High Plains Drifter, embodying the stereotype of the lawless Western conqueror. Now, a marker of old-school femininity has taken over. 2525 Michigan Ave, Santa Monica; through April 1. (310) 453-7535, shoshanawayne.com.

Byed ladies

Linda Stark’s painting Fixed Wave depicts a woman’s crotch, but it’s so much more than that. The oscillating, thin lines of green that make up the skin are curved just right to suggest volume. The blue bush is wave-shaped, and 3-D silver teardrops fall down from below the not-shown belly button. The only truly smooth, flat part of the painting is the outline of uterus and ovaries emerging out of the blue. This is the only work on canvas in “Painted Ladies,” Stark’s show at Jenny’s. The works on paper are just as precise, and their perfection makes them funnier than they otherwise would be. Her Bearded Lady paintings show gold uteruses against blood-red backgrounds. The ovaries are eyes, and pharaoh’s beards hang down, perfectly shaped, reproductive organs virtuosically turned into a regal caricature. 4220 Sunset Blvd, Silver Lake; through Feb. 25. (323) 741-8237, jennys.us.

Beautiful Homo-Homeboys

When artist Joey Terrill launched his mail-art magazine, Homeboy Beautiful, in 1979, he meant to satirize ladies magazines (Ladies Home Journal, House Beautiful) and pick apart stereotypes. In one issue, a reporter attends a Homo-Homeboys party, to discover the hungry, alluring reproductions of an era. This is the only truly smooth, flat part of the painting, but it’s so much more than that. The oscillating, thin lines of green that make up the skin are curved just right to suggest volume. The blue bush is wave-shaped, and 3-D silver teardrops fall down from below the not-shown belly button. The only truly smooth, flat part of the painting is the outline of uterus and ovaries emerging out of the blue. This is the only work on canvas in “Painted Ladies,” Stark’s show at Jenny’s. The works on paper are just as precise, and their perfection makes them funnier than they otherwise would be. Her Bearded Lady paintings show gold uteruses against blood-red backgrounds. The ovaries are eyes, and pharaoh’s beards hang down, perfectly shaped, reproductive organs virtuosically turned into a regal caricature. 4220 Sunset Blvd, Silver Lake; through Feb. 25. (323) 741-8237, jennys.us.

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Dreamland: A Frank Romero Retrospective

FEBRUARY 12 – MAY 21, 2017

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A research study is currently enrolling patients diagnosed with COPD.
(sometimes referred to as Emphysema or Chronic Bronchitis)

Going to the Olympics (detail), 2011, oil on canvas, Collection of James and Rachel Garrison

A research study is currently enrolling patients diagnosed with COPD.
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BLESS THIS MESS
Kirsten Vangsness’ one-woman show is an appropriately untidy jaunt through the psyche

BY DEBORAH KLUGMAN

It would be an overstatement if I said that Mess was a completely accurate title for Kirsten Vangsness’ one-woman show at Theatre of Note. Yes, Mess is a bit untidy. And, frankly, it doesn’t pack the punch of her earlier work, Potential Space, a hilariously bawdy venture into the ruminations of an earthy gal looking for love in mostly the wrong places. The current show is considerably more cerebral, though it does touch on the adolescent awakenings of the first-person narrator (how literally autobiographical this is, I couldn’t say).

In general, Mess is concerned with conveying the ambiguities within one person’s inner sense of self, as opposed to telling a story involving people and relationships in the shared reality most of us ascribe to. Central to the narrative is a nonlinear concept of time, the idea (with a nod to quantum theory) that moments in your life — yourself at 4 and yourself at 44, for example — can be unfolding simultaneously rather than in sequence.

An hourlong meander into an individual’s psyche, the play, by design, at times unwinds as if beneath the threshold of consciousness, emerging in sentence fragments and with odd references to furry little creatures operating within the mind, although for what purpose is never clear (except to existence itself, perhaps). This sort of dialogue can be difficult to follow, rather like the communications of a friend who’s smoked a lot of weed when you haven’t.

On the other hand, Vangsness seems perfectly aware of the fuzzy nature of the feelings and impressions she’s trying to relate; she sings a recurring song, and encourages the audience to join in the refrain: “For we all are a mess, I guess/And we act like we’re totally cool.” One can easily get with that.

Eventually the focus of the play grows sharper; Vangsness delivers first-person recollections of childhood and adolescence, the most developed one being her experience as a 14-year-old in Christian camp, with the stirrings of infatuation for a charismatic counselor. Although you wish there were more anecdotes like this to engage you, in the end it’s sufficient to watch this performer cavort about the stage with that tremendously buoyant energy and disingenuousness that is her gift.

MESS | Theatre of Note, 1517 N. Cahuenga Blvd., Hollywood | Through Feb. 26 | theatreofnote.com

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WICK'S STILL LIT

John Wick: Chapter 2 keeps the brilliant beatdowns at the expense of feeling

BY BILGE EBIRI

First, the good news: The dog doesn't die in John Wick: Chapter 2. This will come as a relief to some of us who adored the original, an action masterpiece about a retired hitman taking unholy revenge on the Russian scumbags who killed his pup and stole his car. The unbearable death of John Wick's pooch — and yes, I know I'm being hypocritical about this, since the film also featured scads of humans being killed — was one reason why I could never recommend the first film to certain people in my life. Animal lovers could see this new one.

Now, the bad news: The dog doesn't die in John Wick: Chapter 2. The thirst for bloody vengeance that fueled the original — that made us cheer our stone-faced hero on as he shot, strangled, sliced, stabbed, battered and blew up his way through armies of men — is less powerful this time. We knew very little about John Wick in the first movie, but he became real through his loss and his ensuing righteous bloodlust. Here, we care about him simply because we saw the first movie.

Without that crucial emotional element, John Wick: Chapter 2 is a somewhat more distanced affair. But it's still an impressively dizzying symphony of carnage. Our hero (again played with stoic angst by Keanu Reeves) finds himself a pawn in the middle of a Mafia family rivalry, as he's forced — thanks to an ironclad but somewhat awkwardly explained blood oath — by Camorra leader Santino D'Antonio (Riccardo Scamarcio) to assassinate the man's own sister, Gianna (Claudia Gerini). Wick still wants out of this life and is reluctant to take the job, but a couple of missiles aimed directly at his house convince him otherwise, so off to Rome he goes. The hit, however, makes him a target for fellow killer and old friend Cassian (Common), who runs Gianna's massive security operation. What's worse, Santino himself puts out a bounty on Wick, too — yes, the very man he hired — because he doesn't want any loose ends.

So basically, everybody wants to kill John Wick. And they all try. The film has some fun with the sheer volume of these attacks: Its most striking sequence involves intercutting between three separate attempts on Wick's life, each with its own rhythm and each requiring its own share of elaborate ass-kicking. By removing the least interesting element from these scenes — the question of whether John Wick will survive, because duh — director Chad Stahelski (who co-directed the original with David Leitch) turns them into pure studies in motion.

That actually holds true for most of the film. The first movie had an impressively formalist bent: Wick's movement through different, seemingly color-coded spaces highlighted the fact that he was turning on the world that created him — he was breaking its boundaries. Besides taking on qualities of dance, Wick fighting and shooting his way through rampaging, anonymous henchmen in long takes suggested that this man, for all his attempts at a new life, was most in his element while killing. The long takes are still there; if anything, they're even more protracted and impressively choreographed than before.

The intense stylization now seems to contrast the clean, angular world of the proper and powerful with the subterranean world of the transgressor. Wick uses the catacombs beneath Rome to get around, and later turns to the highly organized beggar army of an underworld leader called the Bowery King (Laurence Fishburne) to go into hiding in New York. Stahelski makes the most of the diversity of this palette, from ancient tunnels and crowded rooftops to futuristic train stations, from elegant Baroque waiting rooms to vast gallery spaces filled with neoclassical sculptures. The John Wick movies are the coffee-table books of action cinema.

ANIMAL LOVERS CAN ACTUALLY WATCH THIS SEQUEL. THAT'S NOT NECESSARILY A GOOD THING.

The film is at its least interesting when it tries to make sense. There's a greater focus this time on fleshing out the details of Wick's weird, fairy-tale world of assassins. In the original, the setting of the Continental Hotel — an all-powerful, seemingly ancient institution for hired killers run via an elaborate honor system — was treated not as universe-building mythology but as a fascinating grace note, a sign that none of this was meant to be taken very seriously. Here, we see a lot more of the Continental, as well as its counterpart in Rome. We also see more of its inner workings: When Santino puts his hit out on Wick, it goes through a switchboard in a massive office where tattooed women in business attire professionally type up the orders on a variety of outdated machines and then send them out in pneumatic tubes. It's as if they got J.K. Rowling to do a rewrite.

These scenes are amusing, but they also create a disconnect: The more details we get, the more questions we ask, and I'm not sure any of it really stands up to that sort of scrutiny. In the end, this much plot detail and world-building feels like a distraction from the cleverly coordinated scenes of slaughter. This new film doesn't have the emotional grounding of the original, and it probably dwells too long explaining things we never cared about. But it's still a visceral, cathartic and — most important — gorgeous two hours of kinetic, poetic bloodshed.

BATMAN GETS A LAUGH GOING LEGO, BUT THIS DARK KNIGHT SERVES HIS BRAND FIRST

The LEGO Movie was a big studio hit that did well with kids and adults alike, but it also poked real fun at itself. Its LEGO World was one of stultifying conformity, and the fact that everybody ate the same food, did the same jobs and lived in the same spaces warned against the repetitive monotony of a prefab plastic reality. The film was good-natured, but its humor was so self-aware that you got the sense that any joke was possible, that nothing was off-limits — and its nonstop critique of all the common tropes of blockbuster movies seemed like an arrow aimed directly at its own corporate heart. The LEGO Batman Movie has some of that same spirit, but it never goes far enough. Early on, someone suggests that Batman (Will Arnett) enlist a group of imprisoned villains in the fight against the Jocker (Zach Galifianakis), to which he replies, “What am I going to do, get a bunch of bad guys to fight bad guys? That’s stupid.” Yes, it’s the mildest of digs at Suicide Squad, Warner/DC’s notoriously loathed superhero hit from last year. But guess what Batman winds up doing late in the film? It all feels so predictable ... so conformist. The LEGO Batman Movie is entertaining, but it also sometimes feels less like a spinoff of The LEGO Movie and more like one of its targets.

Still, given that it’s a sequel/spinoff built around a mostly throwaway gag, The LEGO Batman Movie is funnier than you might think it has any right to be. But those of us who were expecting something more can’t help but feel a twinge of disappointment. — Bilge Ebiri

THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE | Directed by Chris McKay | Written by Seth Grahame-Smith, Chris McKenna & Erik Sommers and Jared Stern & John Whittington | Warner Bros. | Citywide
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Films

A Kingdom Shortchanged
A REAL-LIFE STORY OF LOVE, RACE AND ROYALTY GETS CRAMMED INTO A MOVIE

By April Wolfe

In director Amma Asante's epic political romance A United Kingdom, David Oyelowo and Rosamund Pike star as Seretse and Ruth Khama, the interracial royal couple who stunned the world when they fought to rule the country that would become the Republic of Botswana. The story's a wildly interesting history lesson on African poverty, the rise of apartheid in the late 1940s and Britain's passive role in separating Botswana's blacks from whites. But here all that complexity plays more Disney than drama, with a script from Guy Hibbert (Eye in the Sky) that turns love into a montage and politics into a trite cartoon of good vs. evil.

The couple lindy-hops through courtship and right into an engagement in the early scenes, which are set to an American jazz soundtrack. They first lock eyes at a dance in London, where he's a law student and she's an office worker. In real life, the two met secretly for a year before Seretse even got the nerve to ask, "Do you think you could love me?" "But the script ramming right through the early romance and into the marriage leaves so many open questions about the characters' love; as portrayed in the film, they barely know one another when Ruth decides she's going to move to Africa to be Seretse's queen. Against the wishes of their families — and the British and South African governments — Seretse and Ruth marry and travel to Bechuanaland so that he can ascend the throne and use his education to help his people. Soon after their arrival comes one of the film's most poignant moments: Seretse's aunt Ella (Abena Ayivor), who's the current queen, drills right into the thin white woman before her to ask if Ruth knows what it would mean to be a mother to the nation and its predominantly black citizens. Ella has a good point: At a time when white people are swarming into Bechuanaland to turn black citizens into servants, how good an idea is a white queen? Later, Ruth sits in her room, practicing British queen skills such as waving and smiling, while the tribe's women break their backs outside to get food to their families. But A United Kingdom doesn't fully explore this cultural distance; the film's structure requires that Ruth be quickly accepted into the tribe, so the story can move on to Britain's treachery.

Soon, Seretse's tricked into coming to London and slapped with a five-year exile from his home country, ostensibly to make the South African apartheid people happy — mixed-race royalty right next door doesn't bolster their separatist policies. But we find it's really the British — including a comically stereotypical mustachioed villain — who are mostly opposed to the marriage. Unfortunately, when Seretse and Ruth are apart, there's a dearth of scenes in which we can see the couple developing their own authentic language of love. Oyelowo and Pike are certainly world-class actors, both exhibiting flashes of their capabilities with a misty eye or shaking hand here and there, but the scope of the politics in this story is too wide to make room for an in-depth portrayal of Seretse and Ruth's relationship — and I haven't even covered the diamond-mining subplot.

In some spots, exquisite performances are cut short by overzealous editing in service of covering narrative ground: When he's at his wit's end stuck in London away from his wife and new baby, Seretse madly sweeps into Bechuanaland with his new baby, Sereste, and roams into the thick of the story is too wide to make room for an in-depth portrayal of Seretse and Ruth's relationship — and I haven't even covered the diamond-mining subplot.

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EX-NAZIS DIG EXPLOSIVES FROM THE BEACH IN THE SUSPENSEFUL LAND OF MINE

Don’t hold it against writer-director Martin Zandvliet’s landmine drama that its English title is the dopiest movie-title pun since John Singleton’s Poetic Justice. That film concerned a poet named Justice; Land of Mine is a land of mines.

Called Under Sandet in the original Danish — roughly Under the Sand — Zandvliet’s tense, prickly third feature finds a squad of pusheen German soldiers enlisted after their führer’s death to help clean up his mess. In this case, that means a slow, terrifying sweep of the beaches of Denmark, where the Nazis had buried tens of thousands of land mines. The boys face decades and island. But Sternberg’s eye for sensuality, and Island, is undiminished, particularly in his ripely erotic treatment of Keiko War II and beyond, re-creating the setting for seven years at the tail end of World soldiers stuck on the eponymous island that clashes with the stylization. The result gives the film a documentary-like flavor

tors — untranslated. But the director’s wholly Japanese dialogue — delivered in the original Danish — roughly Under Sandet. That film concerned

DINAH

OPENING THIS WEEK

L Land of Mine | Written and directed by Martin Zandvliet
Sony Pictures Classics | Royal

CHAPTER & VERSE: Chapter & Verse shows how difficult it can be for a dude from the streets to stay away from the streets. For the first half, Daniel Beaty walks the streets of Harlem like a brooding, hulking, blank slate. As fresh-outta-jail ex-con S. Lance Ingram (the “S” stands for Sir), Beaty keeps his head down, his mouth shut, and mostly does a lot of chin-ups. He’s so intent on staying out of trouble that he comes off as socially awkward, like he’s afraid anything he says or does could send him right back. But that dead-eyed icieness begins to thaw when he finds Ingram trying to be an honest man — to fear for their lives and uploading videos of the shnooks on the other end of the line. At first it seems like an elaborate ruse set up to teach these punks a lesson. But once blood enters the picture, shit looks like it could get gravely real. Clocking in at just 83 minutes, this flick cuts all kinds of corners in its basic plot. (The gotcha ending raises questions the movie could’ve easily answered.) It all plays more like a demo reel that directors/visual effects artists

Turkmenistan. But Anatahan’s tense, prickly first feature, is undiminished, particularly in his ripely erotic treatment of Keiko Johnston, who has cerebral palsy. That residence has been furnished with creepy dolls and butcher tools, its windows boarded up with planks featuring strange inscriptions, its walls and floors covered in satanic symbols — all of which slow the morons off to the fact that things are about to get unhy. Per convention, it’s not long before the dark-skinned sexpot (Bobby T) is being butched, the blond-haired prude (Judson’s Johnston), who has cerebral palsy. That captured, inexplicably, so she can bet Ingram trying to be an honest man —

Barad Laemmle

SPIRITED AWAY

ACADEMY AWARD® WINNER

ASGHAR FARHADI

BY ASGHAR FARHADI

ANATAHAN Long celebrated but too often difficult to see, Anatahan is Josef von Sternberg’s final film, re-emerges in a new 2K restoration from Kino Lorber — and what a strange and still-radical swan song it remains. Sternberg dramatizes a real-life incident that found a band of Japanese soldiers stuck on the eponymous island for seven years at the tail end of World War II and beyond, re-creating the setting in a Japanese studio without bothering to cloak its artificiality. Further adding to the alienation is Sternberg’s decision to leave the wholly Japanese dialogue — delivered by Kurosawa-trained native Japanese actors — untranslated. But the director’s own English language voice-over narration gives the film a documentary-like flavor that clashes with the stylization. The result is a film full of fascinating contradictions. Anatahan plays as a near-anthropological study of humanity pushed to the brink, with the soldiers slowly succumbing to power plays, petty jealousies and sexual rivalries the longer they’re trapped on this island. But Sternberg’s eye for sensuality, familiar from his many collaborations with Marlene Dietrich, is undiminished, especially in his ripey erotic treatment of Keiko Nakagawa (Keiko Negishi), the lone female character. Somber, howeworth all this abstraction, the feeling of bearing sobering witness to the breakdown of civilization comes through vividly. Though some of these people are rescued in the end, the final sequence suggests that their newfound understanding of the depths of human cruelty within ourselves will haunt them for the rest of their lives. (Keri Fujishima)

BORNLESS ONES Every generation gets its own signature demonic possession film. Bornless Ones, regrettably, is not that horror classic for millennials. Riffling on Sam Raimi’s The Evil Dead, albeit without any of Raimi’s goofy humor or aesthetic deliriousness, writer-director Alexander Babae’s rote genre exercise follows five 20-somethings to a remote woodland cabin that Emily (Margaret Judson) has purchased, inexplicably, so she can bet Ingram trying to be an honest man —

The Large

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# The Essentials

**Last Chance Before Prices Increase 2/13**

**The 99 Essentials Confirmed Restaurants:**

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Alexis Wajsbrot and Damien Méade are throwing out there so major studios might give them blockbuster work. The pair pull off some impressive visual trickery — like threading together scenes to look like one continuous shot as the camera snakes in and out of a house — that’ll have you thinking they’ve seen Picnic Room a bunch of times. Basically, Don’t Hang Up is a hire-me sign masquerading as a slasher

EAGLES OF DEATH METAL: NOS AMIS
(OUT FEBRUARY 10) EODM’s Eagles of Death Metal: Nos Amis (Our Friends) revisits the tragic night that gunmen opened fire during a concert at the Bataclan — and, later, shifts its focus to the band’s eventual return to Paris. In his second documentary, actor/director Colin Hanks showcases a rockermanbore for the ages with band members Jesse Hughes and Joshua Homme at the film’s heart. During their decades-long war, Homme has helped him out of difficulties, whether at high school bullies, a broken marriage or, now, facing this unthinkable tragedy. He also doesn’t spotlight Hughes’ politics or controversial theories (like suggesting the venue’s security team may have known about the attacks in advance), save for a particularly uncomfortable interview with French media before the band’s return show. Instead, Nos Amis focuses on healing and moving forward. (Tatiana Cranje)

EAGLES OF DEATH METAL: NOS AMIS (OUR FRIENDS)

The final American premiere of The Elephant Man / Thursday, Feb. 16

When Chantal Akerman died last fall, she left behind one of the most revered bodies of work in modern world cinema. If you’re a first-timer, there’s no better place to start than with the Belgian filmmaker’s debut, the massively ambitious La Jetée, 23 quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles. The 3½-hour-long domestic drama consists almost entirely of a widowed single mother (Delphine Seyrig, luminous as ever) going about her daily tasks in almost entirely of a widowed single mother (Delphine Seyrig, luminous as ever) going about her daily tasks in Bruxelles, a city so disturbing it’s impossible not to gaze upon the glory that is their newly purchased paintball gun. In his feature-length debut as a writer-director, actual 16-year-old Jack Fessenden (who also stars as Connor) captures that feeling, so familiar to kids but forgotten by adults, of mundane tasks being drawn out to the point of adventure — a feeling that fades once Stray Bullets takes a dark turn. The two friends quote Scarface and Apocalypse Now as they head to the trailer they’ve been working with cleaning, distancing themselves from the reality of their situation. In these early scenes the film seems on the verge of making cogent points about how young minds process violence, whether real or fictional, but then the necessities of plot intervene.

An initially separate narrative thread finds three criminals on the lam after a job gone wrong. The film doesn’t fare as well once this trio (including Fessenden’s father, Larry, a longtime actor-director) takes over, as the young filmmaker almost does too good a job of making the thugs seem two-bit and inept. (Watching one slowly bleed out in the back of a getaway vehicle, Reservoir Dogs-style, is somehow more reminiscent of the Wet Bandits from Home Alone, which is oddly appropriate.) If we’re grading on a curve, though — and seriously, it bears repeating: Fessenden is literally 16 years old — it’s impossible not to give the film kudos for being a not-bad genre exercise that shows promise for its teen director. (Michael Nordine)
IN HIS OWN LANE

A night out bowling with Gallant, whose intense performances and otherworldly falsetto have made him one of R&B’s fastest-rising stars

BY REBECCA HAITHCOAT

Gallant stands still as a pointer, his gaze steady. Under a velvet button-up the color of midnight, his shoulders are squared off and hunched close to his ears. Naked lightbulbs wink, and squeals from every direction attempt to lure his attention, but he’s zeroed in. This is some serious shit, man. It’s Thursday night at Pickwick Bowl.

“I’m not a huge club guy. Not a huge partier. I’m pretty boring,” the 25-year-old singer says, tipping a $2 pitcher of Bud Light into his plastic cup. “I need to stay grounded. Still need people around you to make you feel like you’re 11 years old, riding your bike to your best friend’s house.”

Staying grounded might be a challenge in the wake of the rise Gallant just had. In 2015, Zane Lowe bestowed his first “Hottest Record in the World” title on Gallant’s “Weight in Gold,” and a year later, the singer was performing it with Sir Elton John. Billboard proclaimed his 2016 Coachella performance, during which he brought out a fan (Seal), the best of the weekend.

Last April, he released his slow-burning debut album, Ology. And this Sunday, he’ll attend the 2017 Grammy Awards as a nominee for Best Urban Contemporary Album, where his competition includes Rihanna and Beyoncé. Nobody would begrudge Gallant a bit of cork-popping. But he’s just not that guy. “I was really shocked [about the Grammy nomination]. That was the first time in a long time I was physically excited,” he says. But that was the extent of his celebration. “Being nominated, I won. Just being mentioned.”

At the moment, he’d rather be here with his three roommates (who also all work for Th3rd Brain, Gallant’s management company) for dollar bowl night, dipping his hot dog into a side of gloopy “cheese.” He’s so very… normal that he almost seems to be hiding something. Which, in a way, he is.

“We met and he was kind of awkward. I didn’t know if he was an indie kid or an R&B kid. Didn’t know what his vibe was,” says David Dann, founder of Mind of a Genius, the label that signed Gallant. “I went to his show at the Bootleg Theater and there was nobody in the room except the people working there. Lights go down and he starts singing and I was having a religious breakdown. I was like, holy shit, this is an unearthly artist.”

Many artists have personas that perform for them — Beyoncé’s Sasha Fierce, Prince’s Camille. But the contrast between Gallant’s Clark Kent, whose vices are “isolation and watching too much news,” and his Superman is riveting. He sings deeply personal lyrics in a gorgeous, airy falsetto that rivals D’Angelo’s. Onstage, he stomps, shimmies and straight-up spazzes, leaping onto risers or kicking over his mic stand. He borrows from both James Brown and Pentecostal preachers, his body shaking as if electric currents are shooting through him. It’s no wonder Dann caught religion 

“Weird, right? I wish I could say I didn’t know it was going to happen,” Dann says, not just of Gallant’s Grammy nomination but about his career. “But it did.”

Growing up in the bedroom suburb of Columbia, Maryland, Christopher Gallant’s childhood was “storybook, cul-de-sacs, lots of kids.” One of his early jobs was bagging groceries. He describes his parents, who are still married, as “blindly” supportive. Mild-mannered, he played sports (“not willfully”) and the cello for 12 years. He began writing as a teenager, and by his senior year of high school was spending a lot of time in recording studios.

“When I reveal to other people, I’m revealing a piece of my mind.”

“It’s a tangle-up way to say he prizes vulnerability in his writing. And he’s right: When he shines a light into his dark recesses, it’s exciting. His sedate personality belies the psychological warfare beneath, which manifests itself in tortured lyrics and an onstage battle. Any artist can withhold interviews and manufacture mystery, but Gallant is an enigma without even trying.

The bowling’s moving at a clip, and it has caught Gallant in a reverie. Slipping his fingers into the ball, his mind seems elsewhere.

Suddenly, he pounces, lightly skipping forward before flinging his arm backward and forward again in a single, swift motion. For one long beat, there’s silence — then a loud thwack, and the sound of pins toppling. He spins on his heel, and smiles.
PRODUCER RICKY REED COULD WIN A GRAMMY THIS WEEKEND — BUT JUST A FEW YEARS AGO, HE WAS SURFING COUCHES

BY JEFF WEISS

This Sunday, Ricky Reed will wake up, put on a tuxedo, maybe stuff a couple airplane-sized bottles of Don Julio in his pockets, and head down to Staples Center to discover whether the Grammys named him Producer of the Year.

“It feels a little weird, honestly,” Reed says when asked how it feels to be nominated alongside Greg Kurstin (Adele), Nineteen85 (Drake) and Max Martin (every indelible pop song ever). “I started off making music that made fun of pop; now I’m nominated for helping produce pop songs that aim to be as honest as possible.”

It’s not that Reed doesn’t belong. The 34-year-old, Bay Area–bred multi-instrumentalist and producer born Eric Frederic has accrued an enviable résumé in the last three years. He’s operated as the hidden hand behind Twenty One Pilots and Meghan Trainor, and produced smash for Pitbull, Fifth Harmony and Jason DeRulo. On the short list of in-demand industry hitmakers, Ricky Reed is near the top. But the sudden velocity of his ascent, after nearly a decade of coming extremely close but falling short, makes the Grammy recognition feel a little bizarre.

Raised on Gilman Street punk and E-40, Reed taught himself Pro Tools and record engineering to make extra cash in high school. After graduation he enrolled at UC Berkeley, but dropped out after two years to tour nationally with his “pimp rock” band Locale A.M. and wait for a major recording contract that never came.

His next swing was a prog-indie band, which scored minor underground notoriety but ultimately disbanded. The future Reed returned to college, studied music and formed Wallpaper, his closest attempt to realizing pop stardom.

“When hyphy hit its peak, I realized how much I loved that, and started incorporating that into Wallpaper,” Reed says. “Gradually, everything became less satirical.”

Wallpaper became as big as a local band could get in the Bay Area, which meant that Reed made the cover of SF Weekly but was still broke. Gradually, he began coming down to L.A. to do songwriting and production gigs. The odds seemed bleak until the famed producer and record executive Tricky Stewart discovered Wallpaper and brought them to Epic Records head L.A. Reid, who fell in love with the project and immediately offered a deal. Fame, fortune and Grammys beckoned — until they didn’t. Wallpaper’s 2013 major-label debut, Ricky Reed Is Real, bombed. The bottom fell out: Reed’s manager died, he and his then-girlfriend broke up, his house was broken into, and he was reduced to couch surfing. Then, almost miraculously, one song changed his life.

That song was Jason DeRulo’s “Talk Dirty,” a quadruple-platinum smash that started with Reed flipping a Balkan Beat Box sample that no one else could figure out how to properly chop. Seizing his opportunity, Reed unleashed a trail of hits that made him one of the most sought-after purveyors of left-center pop. He’s even restarted his solo career with a new single, “Be the 1.” Few have earned the right to be at Staples Center more than Reed.

“I’m really interested in delivering honest stories from myself and the artists that I work with,” Reed says. “I truly believe that you can do that and still have fun, and be fucked up, and be as guilty-pleasure pop as anything else.”

An L.A. native, Jeff Weiss edits Passion of the Weiss and hosts the Bizarre Ride show on RBMA Radio. Follow him on Twitter @passionweiss.
Sleep is currently one of its difficult periods. Ah, regression pains. At least comrade Trump is keeping things lively. Must be frustrating for him when so many people pack the airports and streets in shows of resistance.

Watching Kellyanne rock the Sunday shows has become the weekly Orwell Good-time Disinformation Hour. KellCon’s got a lot to offer citizens from. Seany Spice takes over on Monday and the Elections Have Consequences Express keeps rattling down the tracks. It probably doesn’t help that Stephen Bannon always looks as if he sleeps in his car, wakes up to a bag of whiskey and spends the rest of the day showing his dick to little kids, but we’re all getting used to it. Everything is so different now! Easily the most interesting time in the last several years.

So interesting, in fact, that the littlest dab o’ news will do ya for a good while and perhaps send you off in search of more serene and sublime altitudes. All the reality you can handle will be waiting for you upon return, so if you choose to leave for a little while, who could blame you? Temporary departures from the breathtaking wretchedness of this administration are mandatory for mental health.

While at this moment, I don’t feel the desire to consume cannabis products, I am a stoner at heart, a pseudo wasteoid, blazing desire to consume cannabis products, I am a stoner at heart, a pseudo wasteoid, blazing up in my mind on a regular basis. That is to say, I listen to a lot of music that gets filed in the “stoner” section.

Also, while I don’t worry about the world coming to an end anytime soon, I dig a lot of bands that lurk under the umbrella of “doom.” Also, while I don’t worry about the world coming to an end anytime soon, I dig a lot of bands that lurk under the umbrella of “doom.”

The two shows were what it’s all about. With The Melvins opening, it was a perfect double bill. Both shows were great, but for me at least, it was the second night that caused the serious tectonic plate shifting. After the first song, the familiar opening chords of “Dopesmoker” made the building shudder. The audience roared with approval. How many shows have you been to where people are happy about a song that might take the rest of the night to perform? Sleep have a great 25-or-so-minute version of “Dopesmoker” that they do in concert, which works perfectly. Going from that to a new track, “The Clarity,” clocking in at nearly 10 minutes, was epic.

Sleep don’t play songs so much as build them with a deliberate patience that seems like meditation. Intros go for minutes on end, picking up momentum and power almost imperceptibly until, like storm clouds unable to bear their own weight, they finally unleash their awesome power. All the while, Al and Matt are at the front of the stage, seemingly hypnotized by the magnitude of what they are creating, as if they had no idea it was going to result in that big a boom. Behind them, Jason drives it with an energy that loses no intensity through a set that clocks in at well over 100 minutes.

Sleep’s music isn’t for everyone. Unless you like to ride the big waves of sonic attack, you might want to listen elsewhere. However, if you want jams that make a lot of what you’ve heard before seem completely casual, check out Dopesmoker immediately. Make room for OM and High on Fire, too. Ultimate.
Music Picks

**2/10**

**Tove Lo, Phoebe Ryan**

@ THE NOVO

The video for Tove Lo’s “Habits (Stay High)” — during which she carouses with various beautiful dum-dums even as her private sadness blossoms like fireworks exploded too close to the ground — is so necessary to tell the story of that song that experiencing one without the other leaves the art incomplete. Hotly sought after as a songwriter, especially since co-writing Ellie Goulding’s “Love Me Like You Do,” Tove Lo now embarks on her tour supporting Lady Wood, the sophomore record that sees the Swede playing her psyche open for all to autopsy. She’s been called “weird” and “sad,” but she’s just honest, and honesty tends to weird people out. Sad. In the plump spot of the opening slot, Phoebe Ryan, the electro-pop-puss Western singer-songwriter lately of collaborations with The Chainsmokers and intense adoration from Radio Disney.

—David Cotner

**Robert Glasper Experiment**

@ THE MINT

Every couple of years there emerges a jazz musician who’s supposed to make jazz music “relevant and cool again.” Recently that figure was saxophonist Kamasi Washington, but before Washington there was pianist Robert Glasper. Released on the legendary Blue Note Records, Glasper’s 2012 album, Black Radio, presented a sound that lived between the soulful late-night jazz of Donald Byrd’s later albums, D’Angelo’s Voodoo and the off-kilter drum grooves of J Dilla. Since then Glasper has done an immense amount of work with other jazz, soul and hip-hop musicians, including playing on Kendrick Lamar’s To Pimp a Butterfly. Glasper has swayed to the lighter, funkier, jazz-soul of latter-day Herbie Hancock with his most recent album, ArtScience, which finds him singing to his own compositions. Also Saturday, Feb. 11. —Sam Ribakoff

**Los Rakas**

@ LOS GLOBOS

Oakland hip-hop duo Los Rakas are in town for the Grammys, hoping to score their first golden Gramophone for their self-titled 2016 album, which is nominated for Best Latin Rock, Urban or Alternative Album. Chunky though that category name may be, it’s an apt description for Los Rakas’ polyglot sound, which mixes reggaeton, pop, hip-hop and rock elements to party-starting effect. Los Rakas seamlessly folds into the mix guests as diverse as rapper Scoop DeVille and legendary jazz/funk percussionist Sheila E., as Panamanian-American duo Raka Rich and Raka Dun ride the pan-Latin beats with their nimble Spanish-language rhymes. Win or lose at the Grammys, expect them to celebrate their nomination tonight with sweaty abandon, aided by DJs from co-presenters Subsuelo and Late Night Laggers. —Andy Hermann

**2/11**

**The Knocks**

@ THE FONDA THEATRE

You can’t help but get caught up in the sentiments of “Feel Good Feel Great,” The Knocks’ slogan of the moment and title of the NYC dance-pop duo’s current tour. It has only been a couple of months since The Knocks completed 42 dates supporting Justin Bieber on his European tour. They kicked off their own North American headlining tour the same day (Feb. 3) that they released a six-song EP, Testify, which itself comes barely a year after the duo’s neatly executed debut full-length, 55. Testify leans noticeably toward the pop side of The Knocks and matches some stellar voices to the duo’s increasingly chart-friendly productions, including MNEK on “Worship” and Sam Nelson Harris on “Heat.” If we’re lucky, perhaps Los Angeles’ Powers, who put The Knocks on the public’s radar with their unforgettable song, “Classic,” will make a guest appearance. —Lily Moayeri

**The Living Sisters**

@ MCCABE’S GUITAR SHOP

The Living Sisters aren’t actually related to one another, but the local quartet’s close harmonies evoke the seamless tone and simpatico spirit of sibling singers who’ve spent their entire lives together. Considering that each “sister” belts out unexpected tunes such as Funkadelic’s “Can You Get to That?” —Falling James

**2/12**

**The Tribe Presents**

**Goodbye Yellow Brick Road**

@ BOGIES

Elton John spent the early 1970s exploring and expanding the singer-songwriter genre while introducing American themes, symphonic accompaniment and “album-oriented rock” influences. John and co-writer Bernie Taupin did this while composing an unparalleled collection of songs that were as catchy as
more than provide a safe environment for women who need abortions. The organization offers an array of other health services, including pregnancy tests, counseling, cancer screenings and sex education for its clients, most of whom are poor. With Planned Parenthood's funding and even existence threatened in the current retrogressive political climate, tonight's benefit serves as a reminder that many musicians also rely on its services. Tonight, numerous performers show their support with a Valentine's Day concert in which they'll cover their favorite love songs. The lineup includes ubiquitous garage-punk warrior Ty Segall, as well as his frequent collaborator Mikal Cronin, sister act Jennifer and Jessie Clavin from Bleached, Kevin Morby, King Tuff, Entrance, La Luz's Shana Cleveland and Feels' Shannon Lay. —Falling James

mon 2/13

A Night for Oakland @ RESIDENT
While DIY venues continued to come under intense scrutiny following the Oakland Ghost Ship fire, local DJ collective Homicide: Life on the Streets—who are also performing—have organized this event, proceeds from which will go to support victims of that fire. Featuring a talented music lineup including short sets from such local standbys as Xavier Singh, Alina Bea, Steady Holiday, Greg Alsop (Tokyo Police Club), Ian Hultquist and more, the night also will feature comedians George Chen, Frankie Quiñones and Matt Lieb. Originally billed as a surprise mystery guest, Daedelus is the final addition to the lineup; his roots as a producer are in DIY culture. In addition to benefiting the Oakland Immediate Relief Fund, this night will continue to ensure that the memory of December's tragedy doesn't fade away anytime soon. —Daniel Kohn

Bobby Rush @ MAUI SUGAR MILL SALOON
The center of the blues universe will be located in funky Tarzana at the unpretentious Maui Sugar Mill Saloon, at least for this one notable blue Monday. The great blues singer Bobby Rush is in town for the Grammys because his 2016 album, Porcupine Meat, has been nominated for Best Traditional Blues Album. For tonight's stripped-down set, Rush won't be cavorting with his usual traveling crew of sassy female dancers. Instead, he'll be backed by a band of local soul and blues musicians. Even without some of his trademark lascivious onstage distractions, Rush will draw upon his mix of Deep South inspiration and Chicago-style blues as he laments about those mysteriously elusive women who've put a whammy on him and bares his soul movingly on such slow ballads as “Got Me Accused,” from Porcupine Meat. —Falling James

wed 2/15

The Crazy World of Arthur Brown @ THE REGEN
“I am the god of hellfire, and I bring you fire,” a face-painted madman announced on The Crazy World of Arthur Brown’s self-titled 1968 debut album. Even at the height of the psychedelic ’60s, singer Arthur Brown stood out as, well, kind of crazy. He took the primitive horror-rock shtick of fellow Brit Screaming Lord Sutch and vamped it up into a hard-rock spectacle by lighting himself on fire, getting naked and slathering on garish makeup that anticipated groups such as Alice Cooper and Kiss. Brown often is credited with inspiring heavy metal’s operatic vocal style and theatrical delivery, and he later worked with The Who and Frank Zappa drummer JimmyCarl Black. In recent years, he’s put together a new version of TCWOAB, which is finally touring the United States again for the first time since 1969. —Falling James

Big Jay McNeely @ JOE’S GREAT AMERICAN BAR
Thanks to a horde of brilliant transplants — T-Bone Walker, Willie Mae Thornton, Joe Turner, Esther Phillips, Charles Brown — Los Angeles was the epicenter of an explosive postwar R&B renaissance. But one of the most artistically significant, successful and influential of them all was a native son, Watts-born sax cat Big Jay McNeely. McNeely was a groundbreaking stylist whose volcanic 1949 chart-topper “Deacon’s Hop” both ignited the primitive, squealing, downright irresistible honking sax craze and created the mixed-race audience and social context that allowed rock & roll’s subsequent rise. Almost 70 years later, McNeely’s wild, hot sound rages unabated, and this still lethally capable, energetic titan (he’ll blow that mad tenor sax for hours) must be seen to be believed. Don’t blow it, kiddies. Be there. —Jonny Whiteside

tue 2/14

Valentine’s Day Planned Parenthood Benefit @ TERAGRAM BALLROOM
Planned Parenthood’s critics sometimes forget that the national nonprofit does...
**CLUES**

AKAR: 4236 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles. Glenn Meadmore & His Kuntty Band, Tramp for the Lord, Sat., Feb. 11, 8 p.m., free.


BARDOOT HOLLYWOOD: 1777 N. Vine St., Los Angeles. A Prince Tribute, with Alex Isley, Tamar Davis, DJ Rashida, Siblde, Sat., Feb. 11, 2 p.m., $40. Sibi Sirani, Haux, Mon., Feb. 13, 8 p.m., free.

BLACKLIGHT DISTRICT: 2500 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach. Cardinal, Ronan, Soulera, Gravity Lane, Mon., Feb. 13, 8 p.m., $5.

BOOGIE’S: 3201 Agoora Road, Westlake Village. The Tribe, Sun., Feb. 12, 7 p.m., $25 & $35. (See Music Pick.) Anna Myjol, The Ladd McIntosh Big Band, Tue., Feb. 14, 7:30 p.m., $20.


LÖT A’ CAFE: 1533 W. Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles. Madame Headdress, Circus of Books, Ryan Fuller, Deenah Vollmar, Fri., Feb. 9, 10 p.m., $5.


**THE VIPER ROOM:**

- **TRIP:**
  - **TIMEWARP RECORDS:**
    - Sat., Feb. 11, 9 p.m., TBA
    - Wed., Feb. 15, 8 p.m., $25
    - TBA
  - **NOW COFFEE:**
    - Sat., Feb. 11, 7 p.m., $20
  - **BLUEWHALE:**
    - Fri., Feb. 10, 9 p.m., $20

**THE TERAGRAM BALLROOM:**

- **THE ROXY:**
  - Sat., Feb. 11, 9 p.m., $20
  - San, Feb. 12, 9 p.m., $20
  - TBA
  - **THE SATELLITE:**
    - Wed., Feb. 15, 8 p.m., $30
  - **SAINT ROCKE:**
    - Sun., Feb. 12, 6 p.m., $25
  - **THE ROSE:**
    - Sat., Feb. 11, 9 p.m., $20

**JOE'S GREAT AMERICAN BAR & GRILL:**

- **THE COFFEE GALLERY BACKSTAGE:**
  - Wed., Feb. 15, 8 p.m., $25
  - **GIOVANNI'S:**
    - Fri., Feb. 10, 9 p.m., $25
    - **THE COFFEE GALLERY BACKSTAGE:**
      - Sun., Feb. 12, 8 p.m., $30
    - **BLUEWHALE:**
      - Mon., Feb. 13, 9 p.m., $15

**THE SMOKEHOUSE RESTAURANT:**

- **COCOPALM RESTAURANT:**
  - Mon., Feb. 13, 9 p.m., $10
  - Wed., Feb. 15, 6-9 p.m., free

**NOHO ARTS DISTRICT:**

- **THE LITTLE TIKES:**
  - Sat., Feb. 11, 9 p.m., $10
  - Sun., Feb. 12, 8 p.m., $15

- **THE ROXY:**
  - Sat., Feb. 11, 9 p.m., $20
  - San, Feb. 12, 9 p.m., $20
  - TBA
  - **THE SATELLITE:**
    - Wed., Feb. 15, 8 p.m., $30
  - **SAINT ROCKE:**
    - Sun., Feb. 12, 6 p.m., $25
  - **THE ROSE:**
    - Sat., Feb. 11, 9 p.m., $20

**FIRST COFFEE:**

- **THE LITTLE TIKES:**
  - Sat., Feb. 11, 9 p.m., $10
  - Sun., Feb. 12, 8 p.m., $15
  - **THE COFFEE GALLERY BACKSTAGE:**
    - Sun., Feb. 12, 8 p.m., $30
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  - **THE SATELLITE:**
    - Wed., Feb. 15, 8 p.m., $30
  - **SAINT ROCKE:**
    - Sun., Feb. 12, 6 d.m., $25
  - **THE ROSE:**
    - Sat., Feb. 11, 9 p.m., $20
**Los Globos:**

La cita:

- The Echo: 14642 N. Las Palmas Ave., Los Angeles. 40oz Vanz, Kool John, Dre Sinatra, Orange CaLdorner, Marcus Shadden, Fri., Feb. 10, 9:30 p.m., free-$20. Brownies & Lemonade, Sat., Feb. 11, 9 p.m., $15-

**The Echo:**

- Los Angeles: Seven Lions, Fri., Feb. 10, 10 p.m., $45-$125; Awakening, Fridays, 10 p.m. Inception, Saturdays, 10 p.m. Ardanil, Christian Martin, J. Philip, Kill Frenzy, Sat., Feb. 11, 10 p.m., $30 & $90. See Music Pick.

**The Echoplex:**


**Create Nightclub:**

- Los Angeles: Club Underground, 21+, Fridays, 9 p.m., free; DJ Paw, 21+, Sundays, 9 p.m.-2 a.m., free.

**The Great Star Jazz Club:**

- Los Angeles: Club Underground, 21+, Fridays, 9 p.m., $8. 177 Winston St., Los Angeles. Southern Rockwell, Daniel T, Stacy Christine, Restless Nites, 12 p.m., $65 & up. Queen Mary Events Park, next to the Queen Mary, 1126 Queens Hwy., Long Beach.

**Riviera 31:**


**The Soiree Red Carpet Gala:**

- Los Angeles: The Forum, 7 p.m., $50-$100. El Rey Theatre, 5515 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles.

**Go Love:**

- Los Angeles: With Phoebie Ryan, 8:30 p.m., $29.50. The Novo by Microsoft, 800 W. Olympic Blvd., Los Angeles. See Music Pick.

**Uncle Kracker:**

- Los Angeles: Morongo Casino Resort & Spa, 43500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon. With Tia & Ton, 8 p.m., $69-$199. The Forum, 3900 W. Manchester Blvd., Inglewood.

**The Jazz Bakery Performance Fund Benefit:**

- The Crafternoon in the '20s, Sun., Feb. 12 & 19, 2 p.m.; The Crazy World of Arthur Brown: With Electric Citizen, White Hills, 8 p.m., $27.50-$56.50. The Regent Theater, 448 S. Main St., Los Angeles. See Music Pick.

**Twenty One Pilots:**


**Saturday, Feb. 11**


- Sound Nightclub: 7 p.m., $50-$100. El Rey Theatre, 5515 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles.

**Creative Nightclub:**

- Los Angeles: Anjeloz, DJ Whitney Fierce, waxing disco, Wednesdays, 10 p.m., free.


**The Exchange:**

- Los Angeles: 6185 Spring St., Los Angeles. Seven Lions, Fri., Feb. 10, 10 p.m., $45-$125; Awakening, Fridays, 10 p.m. Inception, Saturdays, 10 p.m. Ardanil, Christian Martin, J. Philip, Kill Frenzy, Sat., Feb. 11, 10 p.m., $30 & $90. See Music Pick.

**Honeycut:**

- Los Angeles: Lady Monix, DJ Whitney Fierce, waxing disco, Wednesdays, 10 p.m., free.


**The Exchange:**

- Los Angeles: Seven Lions, Fri., Feb. 10, 10 p.m., $45-$125; Awakening, Fridays, 10 p.m. Inception, Saturdays, 10 p.m. Ardanil, Christian Martin, J. Philip, Kill Frenzy, Sat., Feb. 11, 10 p.m., $30 & $90. See Music Pick.

**Honeycut:**

- Los Angeles: Lady Monix, DJ Whitney Fierce, waxing disco, Wednesdays, 10 p.m., free.

**Los Globos:**

- Los Angeles: Club Underground, 21+, Fridays, 9 p.m., $8. Barrio Funky, second Saturdays, 9 p.m., $5-$10.

**Honeycut:**

- Los Angeles: Lady Monix, DJ Whitney Fierce, waxing disco, Wednesdays, 10 p.m., free.

**The Exchange:**

- Los Angeles: Seven Lions, Fri., Feb. 10, 10 p.m., $45-$125; Awakening, Fridays, 10 p.m. Inception, Saturdays, 10 p.m. Ardanil, Christian Martin, J. Philip, Kill Frenzy, Sat., Feb. 11, 10 p.m., $30 & $90. See Music Pick.
FUND KOREA DREAM ORCHESTRA: Conductor David Benoit welcomes vocalist Kelly Che, Thu., Feb. 16, 7:30 p.m., $25-$75, Wilshire Ebell Theatre, 4401 W. Eighth St., Los Angeles.


THE COLBURN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA: The string band ties together Mozart’s Divertimento in F major, K. 138; Ticheli’s Rest; Bartók’s Romanian Dances, and Tchaikovsky’s Serenade for Strings, Op. 48, Sun., Feb. 12, 6 p.m., free. LACMA, Bing Theater, 5905 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles.

THE ELIXIR OF LOVE: Pacific Opera Project presents its irreverent remake of Gaetano Donizetti’s opera L’elisir d’amore, relocated to a 1950s soda shop, Feb. 10-11, 14-17, 23-25, 3 p.m., $20-$120. Highland Park Ebell Club, 131 S. Avenue 57, Highland Park.

L.A. PHILHARMONIC: Composer-conductor Thomas Adès ushers in a program of death-themed music that culminates in the West Coast premiere of his Totentanz and the U.S. premiere of Linux Introspectives, following shorter pieces by Jean Sibelius (Totentanz), and Camille Saint-Saëns (Danse macabre). Fri., Feb. 10, 8 p.m.; Sat., Feb. 11, 8 p.m., $20-$158. Walt Disney Concert Hall, 111 S. Grand Ave., Los Angeles.


MOZART MAGIC: Victor Vener leads the California Philharmonic in a program of music by Mozart, Sun., Feb. 12, 1:30 p.m., $46-$46-$84.37. Noor, 300 E. Colorado Blvd., #200, Pasadena.

MUSE/JOIE: The focus is on lyricists as Rachael Meroby “Heads a symphony of feeling somnets and stanzas,” Sun., Feb. 12, 7 p.m., $5, Pasadena Central Library, 285 E. Walnut St., Pasadena.

THE MUSICAL OFFERING: Harpsichordist Kathleen Mahnloch and a small string-winds ensemble perform J.S. Bach’s The Musical Offering, Sun., Feb. 12, 5 p.m., $20 donation. All Saints Episcopal Church, 504 N. Camden Drive, Beverly Hills.

ORCHESTRA SANTA MONICA: Allen Robert Gross conducts two of The Four Seasons arioso by Vivaldi and Piazzolla, and closes with a pair of Bach’s The Four Seasons arioso by Vivaldi and Piazzolla, and closes with a pair of Bach’s Topical works. Fri., Feb. 10, 8 p.m.; Sat., Feb. 11, 8 p.m., $20-$150. Walt Disney Concert Hall, 111 S. Grand Ave., Los Angeles.


STARS OF TOMORROW: Members of the USC Thornton School of Music unwind Johannes Brahms’ Quintet for Clarinet & String Quartet, Sun., Feb. 12, 12 p.m., free. Rolling Hills United Methodist Church, 26438 Crenshaw Blvd., Palos Verdes Peninsula.

FALL WILD: Christopher Rountree conducts John Adams’ Hamekujah, Sun., Feb. 12, 1:30 p.m., $40. Parish Hall, Pasadena Conservatory of Music, 100 N. Hill Ave., Pasadena.


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Fictitious Business Statement 2017030147
The following person is doing business as: J&J Locksmith Mobile Service 1181 York Ave Ab, Hawthorne, CA 90250. This business is conducted by an individual. The registrant has not commenced to transact business yet. Signed: Victor Jonathan Rios-Ortiz. Notice: In accordance with subdivision (a) of Section 17919, a fictitious name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk, except as provided in subdivision (b) of Section 17919, where it expires 40 days after any change in the facts set forth in the statement pursuant to Section 17915, other than a change in residence, successor of a registered owner, a new fictitious business name statement must be filed before the expiration, effective January 1, 2014. The fictitious business name statement must be accompanied by the affidavit of identity form. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14411 et seq., Business and Professions Code 17920, where it expires 40 days after any change in the facts set forth in the statement pursuant to Section 17915, other than a change in residence, successor of a registered owner, a new fictitious business name statement must be filed before the expiration).

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ENGINEERING

Ecosene Lighting, Inc., has a Mechanical Engineer opportunity in Los Angeles, CA. Work on a team that drives the concept of traditional design & development of next generation LED lighting products & applications. -20% travel required. Mail resume to Ecosene Lighting: Inc., Keri Ohrich, 857 North Spring Street #135, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Must REF: MME-SA.

Eos Lighting, Inc., is hiring a Software Engineer. This position requires a Bachelor’s degree in Engineering or its foreign equivalent with 1 year of experience in software engineering. Must have knowledge of Object-Oriented Programming and experience with the development of projects involving embedded systems. Send resume to Ken Sato, at mlt-trade-international.com.

FIRMWARE

RED Digital Cinema Co. jobs@red.com at RED dba RED Digital Cinema, sand Oaks, CA. E-mail resumes to Greg Harney at gharney@red.com. RED Digital Cinema Co. is seeking a Senior Firmware Engineer in Burbank, CA. "Design firmware for professional digital film cameras. Manage team of firmware engineers, and managing project development. Lead design development and testing of new projects while leading a team to ensure specifications are met. Follow up with team members regarding task allocation and code review. Identify and implement fixes to ensure specific design within time and cost constraints. Interact with vendors, documentation, دمشق troubleshooting & ops. As a team lead, will accept 2 add'l yrs. exp. in embed. embed. understanding, design, design, دمشق troubleshooting & operations. 25% Travel req. Please apply to: Softchoice, c/o Talent Acquisition, 860 Engin. Drive, Suite 100, Norcross, GA, USA 30092. Reference: SE035CI.

LABOR RELATIONS

HR Manager for a local manufacturing company. Bachelor’s degree in Labor Relations or related field required. 4 years of experience in labor relations is necessary. Send resume to: Pink Sheet, 101 N. Alameda St., Comp-ton CA 90222.

CFO

Frontier Logistics Services Resume: FRT Int’l Inc. dba Frontier Logistics Services, 1700 N. Alameda St., Compton CA 90222.

Senior Financial Analyst

Coordinate software system installation and monitoring of equipment with team engineers to ensure specifications are met. Follow up with team members regarding task allocation and code reviews. Analyze user needs and software requirements to determine feasibility of design within time and cost constraints. Interact with vendors, documentation, دمشق troubleshooting & ops. As a team lead, will accept 2 add'l yrs. exp. in embed. embed. understanding, design, design, دمشق troubleshooting & operations. 25% Travel req. Please apply to: Softchoice, c/o Talent Acquisition, 860 Engin. Drive, Suite 100, Norcross, GA, USA 30092. Reference: SE035CI.

SOFTWARE ENGINEER

Software Engineer III

Software engineer III, seek for professional with 2 years experience in software development in a Unix environment. Bachelor’s degree in Computer Science or related field required. Send resume to Brian Hendricks, RED Digital Cinema Co.

SOFTWARE ENGINEER

RED Digital Cinema Co. jobs@red.com at RED dba RED Digital Cinema, sand Oaks, CA. E-mail resumes to Greg Harney at gharney@red.com. RED Digital Cinema Co. is seeking a Senior Firmware Engineer in Burbank, CA. "Design firmware for professional digital film cameras. Manage team of firmware engineers, and managing project development. Lead design development and testing of new projects while leading a team to ensure specifications are met. Follow up with team members regarding task allocation and code review. Identify and implement fixes to ensure specific design within time and cost constraints. Interact with vendors, documentation, دمشق troubleshooting & ops. As a team lead, will accept 2 add'l yrs. exp. in embed. embed. understanding, design, design, دمشق troubleshooting & operations. 25% Travel req. Please apply to: Softchoice, c/o Talent Acquisition, 860 Engin. Drive, Suite 100, Norcross, GA, USA 30092. Reference: SE035CI.

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