There are no easy solutions. Yet there are ideas out there that can make a sizable dent in L.A.'s problems. By Hillel Aron
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EAT & DRINK...15
Restaurants are one of the few meritocracies left in this country -- and ARI TAYMOR says chefs need to run them more compassionately.

GO LA...21
A lecture about the history of cats in L.A., a screening of Cindy Sherman’s weird thriller Office Killer, Fourth of July fireworks and parades and more fun stuff to do in L.A. this week.

CULTURE...24
A peek inside the Sunday night scene at Skateland in Northridge, where grown folks in toilet seats. In STAGE, the other "riskier" shows to the Company is bringing a couple and another finds inspiration a lighthouse in the desert, plus Oliver Hirschbiegel’s The Little Hours, plus Oliver Hirschbiegel’s 13 Minutes, Bong Joon-ho’s Okja and other movies OPENING THIS WEEK, and YOUR WEEKLY MOVIE TO-DO LIST.

MUSIC...35
Rapper Nocando tells JEFF WEISS why he had to cut a lot of old ties before making his latest album, Savored, and HENRY ROLLS examines the real politics behind the Trump circus. Plus: listings for ROCK & POP, JAZZ & CLASSICAL and more.

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INNOVATION at Work
Available Now
To look at the municipal election results earlier this year, you would think that things in Los Angeles were going just swimmingly. Not a single incumbent city councilmember was rejected by voters, and Mayor Eric Garcetti was reelected with an unheard-of 81 percent of the plebiscite. It's hard to recall a time when our city leaders were this popular.

Yet no one would deny that L.A. faces crises on multiple fronts. Foremost is the cost of housing, which has trudged upward all decade and has roiled the city. People are being evicted and are living in their cars and on the streets. Others are getting priced out of their apartments and moving to cheaper neighborhoods, setting off waves of gentrification. A new kind of neighborhood-based xenophobia has taken hold, fed by housing anxiety. People are forced to live farther and farther from where they work, exacerbating a traffic problem that already is the worst in the nation.

Housing is not the city's only problem. Los Angeles has had more fatal police shootings than any other city in the country for two years running — just one example of the growing divide between law enforcement and residents, particularly those in low-income areas. Many neighborhoods are desperately short on both park space and healthy food. Pension costs continue to hog the budget. Public schools are losing students, revenue and the faith of parents.

There are, of course, no easy so-

There are no easy solutions. Yet there are ideas out there that can make a sizable dent in L.A.'s problems

BY HILLEL ARON
Housing

1 & 2. Make it cheaper and easier to build housing.

During the first half of this decade, Los Angeles added more than 230,000 residents and 150,000 jobs. During that same time, it added just 40,000 housing units. What happened as a result is a simple matter of supply and demand: The average rent for an L.A. apartment has gone up $1,000 a month in the last six years, while the median home price has increased by nearly $200,000 since 2010.

Reforming two laws would go a long way toward increasing the housing supply in Los Angeles, which experts say could drive down housing costs — or at least halt their increase. In the next decade. Mayne’s plan extends the Purple Line to the beach and allows for the construction of very tall apartment buildings along the corridor. It also would add a ton of parks. Think of it as a long, slender stretch of Manhattan, embedded within the L.A. sprawl.

“We’re not going to address our affordable-housing crisis unless we preserve our existing affordable housing,” Gross says. One change, he says, would be to limit landlords to one Ellis Act usage a year. Another would be to limit Ellis Act evictions to properties where the owner has owned the building for more than five years. “But really,” he says, “the solution is to just get rid of the law.”

5. Build a million homes in the Wilshire Corridor.

The majority of environmentalists say the only way to make L.A. environmentally sustainable is to make it denser. That would reduce automobile trips, which are by far the single greatest source of greenhouse gas emissions. And the increase in supply would make housing across the city cheaper, some say.

To that end, renowned architect Thom Mayne has a bold idea. Instead of building taller buildings willy-nilly in different parts of the city, why not leave 99 percent of Los Angeles alone and focus densification efforts along one single stretch of roadway: the Wilshire Corridor.

Mayne and other urban planners say Wilshire is perfect for such radical densification. It runs from downtown to the beach, passes LACMA and UCLA, and is served by the Purple Line subway, which will run from downtown to Westwood by the middle of the next decade. Mayne’s plan extends the Purple Line to the beach and allows for the construction of very tall apartment buildings along the corridor. It also would add a park.

“Wilshire can already be seen as a city within a city,” Mayne says. “We’re only intensifying that condition.”

6. Build pods for the homeless.

Los Angeles has more people experiencing chronic homelessness than any other city in America. The city has taken some notable steps in the last year, such as passing a tax hike to pay for the construction of permanent supportive housing for the homeless. But those buildings will take several years to be constructed. There’s much that could be done to improve the lives of people living on the streets right now.

One idea comes from a grant-funded USC architecture class tasked with designing emergency housing for people living on the streets: 92-square-foot prefabricated pods that can be easily assembled, customized, stacked and transported by a flatbed truck or forklift. The units, dubbed Homes for Hope, would cost no more than $25,000 apiece, including construction.

The class worked with city officials to pre-certify the pods, which should expedite the approval process.

“The goal isn’t for this to be a forever home,” says one of the class’s teachers, Sofia Borges, a designer and director of Madworkshop. “The goal is for this to be a place for people to stabilize, catch their breath and move on.”

7. Reform rent-control laws.

“The housing crisis isn’t just a supply problem — an accelerated construction blitz would do nothing to help people being displaced from their homes today. That’s why housing advocates are calling on lawmakers to repeal and replace two state laws that limit local rent-control ordinances. Every rent-control tenant in the city,” says Larry Gross, who helped write L.A.’s rent-control law and who heads the Coalition for Economic Survival.

State Assemblyman Richard Bloom, who represents West Los Angeles, co-authored a bill to repeal Costa-Hawkins. But the proposal was delayed until next year.

The majority of environmentalists say the Ellis Act is an environmental disaster, allowing landlords to evict tenants under certain conditions. Since 2001, more than 22,000 rent-controlled units have been taken off the market by landlords using the Ellis Act. Every month, the city loses another 100 rent-controlled units.

“We’re not going to address our affordable-housing crisis unless we preserve our existing affordable housing,” Gross says. One change, he says, would be to limit landlords to one Ellis Act usage a year. Another would be to limit Ellis Act evictions to properties where the owner has owned the building for more than five years. “But really,” he says, “the solution is to just get rid of the law.”
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8. Put a toll lane on every freeway.

The county of Los Angeles is midway through an ambitious plan to build a light-rail system. It’s been slow going, but you can finally take the train from downtown to Santa Monica. Bus ridership, meanwhile, is shrinking at a faster rate than train rider-ship is growing. And traffic is worse than ever.

“I think the main goal should be to try to provide viable alternatives,” says Ethan Elkind, the director of the Climate Change and Business Research Initiative at both UC Berkeley and UCLA law schools, as well as the author of Railtown: The Fight for the Los Angeles Metro Rail and the Future of the City.

Elkind says one idea is to expand the county’s FasTrak program — paid toll lanes — to every freeway in the city (the lanes currently exist on the 110 south of downtown and the 10 east of downtown). This idea offers a number of positives: It gives paying customers an alternative to sitting in traffic, it gives people an incentive to carpool (since the price of riding in FasTrak lanes is cheaper with a passenger), and it provides a revenue stream to pay for better transit services. You could even let buses use the lanes. Imagine an express bus line going up and down the 405 freeway.

9. Make bike lanes safer (and therefore more popular).

Los Angeles is in the process of building more bike lanes. But most of these lanes are little more than stripes of paint on the pave-ment. Surveys show that many would-be cyclists don’t feel safe biking in these lanes in Los Angeles, between the cars whizzing by on the left and parked cars opening their doors on the right.

Joe Linton, a bicycle activist and editor of StreetsblogLA, says one cheap and easy thing that could increase bicycle ridership would be to protect bike lanes with cones embedded in the street. Los Angeles already has a few such lanes; one example can be seen on Van Nuys Boulevard in Pacoima. Not every bike lane could be protected without reconfiguring the street in some way. But several streets do have the space. “The city should be able to squeeze this in in at least a dozen places without removing car lanes,” Linton says. “In theory, that can be done dirt-cheap without the city having to apply for grants. The city can just do it.”

10. Ban truck deliveries during peak hours.

In the months leading up to the 1984 Summer Olympics, Angelenos were in a state of near panic. Would the influx of tourists clog the streets, bringing traffic to a standstill?

The traffic apocalypse never happened. That’s because lawmakers passed a number of temporary measures in anticipation of it. Some streets were made one-way. People were urged to work from home. Perhaps most important, delivery trucks were encouraged to make their drop-offs at night. As a result, traffic fell rather dramatically in the summer of 1984.

In the wake of that apparent miracle, a number of politicians including then-Mayor Tom Bradley tried to make the night-time delivery rules permanent. But the idea failed to gain traction and was largely forgotten — though not by former Riverside City Councilman Steve Adams, who flogs the proposal every chance he gets.

Forcing trucks to make their deliveries between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m. “would immediately eliminate 45 percent of prime drive-time traffic,” Adams says. “It doubles our freeway capacity and does not cost a penny. It also cleans our air up.” (Less congestion means fewer vehicles idling, which means lower emissions.)

Adams says truckers are fine with the proposal, since it would allow them to make more deliveries per shift. Store owners and employees, who’d have to add night shifts, are the biggest opponents to the idea. Says Adams: “It’s a small price to pay for the quality of air, the quality of life that would be restored.”

12. Exhume our creeks.

Little-known fact: Los Angeles has dozens of creeks. Many are buried under-ground, often encased inside pipes that carry stormwater out to the ocean, where it’s lost forever. If you were looking to add a bit of nature to L.A. but didn’t have $850 million lying around, you could do a lot worse than to start “daylighting” these creeks — getting them back above ground, where they belong, where they create habi-tat and cool the atmosphere.

Best of all, creeks replenish our aquifers, helping to make L.A. less dependent on outside sources of water.

“You would be bringing back habitat, you’d see an increase in birds and frogs,” says Jessica Hall, a landscape architect. The unearthed creeks “would become a place for people to find peace of mind and recreation. And they would provide some cooling to the environment.”

13. Make Silver Lake Reservoir a park with a swimmable lake.

This idea first surfaced in 2014, as the city prepared to empty the 776 million-gallon Silver Lake Reservoir. Since it was decommissioned in 2008, the reservoir has been a useless if somewhat scenic body of water trapped behind a chain-link fence (in essence, a prison for water no one is using). Instead of merely refilling it, why not turn it into something better, something everyone could use: a park, perhaps, or a swimmable lake?
Some nearby residents went ballistic at the prospect of a lake attracting tourists, traffic, noise and disturbances. And they got their way. The reservoir has been refilled but is still off-limits, and the group that first proposed the idea of a swimmable lake, Silver Lake Forward, has scaled back its proposal, at least publicly.

But others still like the idea of beach access for people who can’t always get to the beach. More important, they say the body of water shouldn’t exist simply as eye candy for well-to-do homeowners. It’s public land and should be treated like public space.

14. Legalize street vending.

Earlier this year, the L.A. City Council voted to decriminalize street vending. It was a good first step, but street vendors can still be fined and even have their food carts confiscated. Clare Fox, executive director of Los Angeles Food Policy Council, says the city should go further and legalize selling food on sidewalks.

“L.A. is the only large city that doesn’t have a sidewalk food-vending program,” Fox says. “It’s a part of our urban life. But it’s completely in the shadows.”

She says the city should set up a permitting process for street vendors, as well as a healthy-food cart program to incentivize selling fresh produce in areas where residents don’t have easy access to fruits and vegetables.

“That’s a very simple thing the city can do to address the issue of food deserts,” Fox says.

Job Creation and Protection

15. Peg Hollywood tax credits to diversity.

Los Angeles is about 70 percent non-white. But the vast majority of “below-the-line” employees (the non-famous people) in Hollywood is white. While much attention has been given to the lack of onscreen diversity, the lack of women and people of color directing major feature films, the lack of diversity among the Hollywood proletariat is a bigger problem that affects a greater number of people.

The state of California doles out hundreds of millions of dollars in tax credits to film and television productions in order to keep entertainment jobs from leaving the state.

As long as we’re doing that, shouldn’t we make sure they’re hiring a diverse set of employees?

“Underrepresentation of women and people of color persists at all levels in the film and television industry,” State Assemblyman Sebastian Ridley-Thomas says.

“Tax credits must promote equality, not heighten inequity.”

Tax credits are handed out based on a complex formula that ranks productions according to how many jobs they create, plus special “bonus points” for certain types of jobs. It would be relatively easy to add into this equation another set of bonus points for women and people of color employed by the production.

16. Give independent contractors more protections.

A recent study by the UC Berkeley Labor Center estimated that as many as 8.5 percent of workers in California rely on independent contracting gigs as their primary source of income.

“For well-to-do homeowners. It’s public land and should be treated like public space.

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17. To reform pensions, ax the California Rule.

The city’s ability to fund any new idea is severely hampered by its obligation to retire old teachers, whose pensions eat up more than 20 percent of its operating revenue every year — a percentage that’s expected to grow.

“Los Angeles is in danger of becoming a zombie city,” says former San Jose mayor Chuck Reed, who has been leading an effort to reform the state’s pension laws. “You just keep putting more and more resources into retirement benefits, and less money into serving its residents.”

The city has signed contracts to address the pensions of newly hired teachers, but that can’t do anything about current employees’ pensions (if it even wanted to, which is far from certain) because of the “California Rule,” which limits local governments’ ability to adjust the way their employees’ retirement benefits and pensions increase over time. A number of recent court cases have challenged that interpretation of the rule, and the state Supreme Court is expected to make a decision this year that may clarify or even strike down the California Rule.

“If it is struck down, then you can go to the bargaining table with public employee unions and say, ‘We have a problem, and everything is on the table,’” Reed says. “If not, then the state could pass a constitutional amendment allowing cities to change the way worker benefits get ratcheted up. This would by no means solve L.A.’s pension woes, but it would be a start.

18. Decentralize LAUSD.

Lots of parents go to great lengths to avoid schooling their children in Los Angeles Unified, the nation’s second largest district. Opinions about what should be done to fix LAUSD are deeply polarized. School reformers argue for more charter schools and for making it easier to fire bad teachers. The teachers union argues for fewer charter schools and more money for the district.

A common thing that everyone agrees on, more or less, is the need to decentralize LAUSD — that is, to give schools more freedom to make their own decisions on whom to hire, how big their classes should be, how many administrators they need, and so on.

Decentralization has long been the goal of many superintendents and school board members. But whereas charters have spawned at an astonishing rate, the process of giving district-run schools the same autonomy has proceeded at a crawl.

At a certain point, however, this plan will get resistance from teachers, who currently enjoy job protections that would be in jeopardy if every school in the district were allowed to control whom it hires.

19. Make police officer discipline more transparent.

In the last two years, Los Angeles Police Department officers killed more people than any other police force in the country. Under current state law, records of police discipline are confidential — which means that in most cases it’s nearly impossible to find out whether an officer has been disciplined. That’s true even if you’re the alleged victim. Changing the law would give some much-needed transparency to the discipline process and would be the first step to reforming the system, according to ACLU attorney Melanie Ochoa.

Ochoa says the discipline process also lacks consistency. It’s up to the chief of police to recommend what punishment, if any, an officer is given. Then it’s up to the Board of Rights to accept that recommendation or make the punishment more lenient (the board doesn’t have the power to make it more severe). Ochoa says one solution would be to limit the chief’s discretion and create a “discipline matrix,” a sort of formula that takes into account a number of circumstances and then determines a range of punishments.

“The public sees little discipline being levied, and from the officers’ perspective, there’s so much inconsistency,” Ochoa says. “A disciplinary matrix would address both concerns.”

20. Create a team of mental health first responders.

According to an LAPD report published last year, more than a third of people shot by police in 2015 had documented signs of mental illness. Some advocates say police officers aren’t the best people to be dealing with the mentally ill — that when someone calls 911 to report a person clearly suffering from mental illness, dispatch shouldn’t send someone carrying a gun, at least in instances where no violence is being reported.

“LAPD shouldn’t be responding to a mental health crisis,” says Melina Abdullah, a Cal State L.A. professor and Black Lives Matter organizer. “Mental health interventionists should be.”

These same mental health interventionists also could be doing outreach work for the homeless, trying to get them off the streets and into supportive services.

It’s an example of how many of these problems are connected — policing affects mental health, mental health affects homelessness, homelessness affects housing, housing affects transportation, transportation affects public space, and public space affects mental health. It’s enough to make you think the solutions to the city’s problems are trapped in a morass of fatigue and red tape.

But problems do get solved. Los Angeles was once shrouded by a thick cloud of smog 200 days of the year. The 1970 Clean Air Act began to change that. In 1993, there were more than 1,000 murders in the city of L.A. In 2016, there were fewer than 300. In the 1980s, the only way to get around the city was by car or bus. Now you can ride the Expo Line from downtown to the sandy beaches of Santa Monica.

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A few weeks ago, I walked away from opening a new restaurant. Everything about it was perfect. The location was dreamy: beautiful, quiet, not close to everything. The investors were young, creative and enthusiastic. The creative team was incredible: designers, builders and craftspeople who have inspired me for a long time. The problem was me.

As young cooks, we want to make our impact fast. The media spur this on — best new chef, best new restaurant, rising star. We feel a pressure to compete, to be the youngest and the first. We push ourselves through 90-hour weeks, we leave loved ones behind for unpaid stages in far-flung corners of the world. We push our bodies and our minds as far as they can go. We sacrifice. We’re so focused and single-minded that anyone who doesn’t share that passion seems like an alien. We grocery shop, drive and talk the way we cook: fast and efficient, a mantra propelling us forward. If we’re lucky, this leads to a chef position, to a platform from which to make a name.

But life often has other plans for us. There will be situations, relationships and circumstances that talent cannot fix. I pushed myself and my career to heights I only dreamed of. I didn’t allow for distraction or for anything to get in my way. But there was so much collateral damage.

My business partner, Ashleigh Parsons, and I opened Alma in 2012. It was a tiny storefront in downtown Los Angeles, sandwiched between a marijuana dispensary and a hostess club. We had no investors; everything was done on a shoestring. Because of this, there was no margin for error. I was the first one there and the last one out every day. I wasn’t around for my family and was barely present as a close friend slowly succumbed to cancer. My stress and anxiety, my lack of balance, created an ulcer that sent me to the emergency room at 26 years old with massive internal bleeding and an ulcer. A massive internal bleed on the stomach that sent me to the emergency room at 26 years old with massive internal bleeding and an ulcer that sent me to the emergency room. We pushed ourselves to the top. But we must teach them how to cope with stress and depression and support them when they need to prioritize their lives at the cost of our menus and our legacies.

There are chefs who have been doing this, mostly silently, for a long time. My hope is that as our industry grows and evolves, the media and diners will realize that these leaders are as worthy of our praise and adoration as those who trail-blaze with their cuisine — and that we are able to create an army of men and women who are talented and driven but also compassionate and balanced.
We all know that, generally speaking, L.A.’s best restaurants are in strip malls. It comes as a surprise to visitors and new arrivals, but natives and old-timers know that the most interesting food is usually hidden in plain sight here. But sometimes — very rarely, but it happens — a restaurant owner will find an even more unlikely location for a project. Like, say, an old house, practically under the 134, blocked from street view by a dentist’s office.

Cascabel, in the Toluca Lake/North Hollywood area, is that restaurant. Most people approach it — via said dentist’s office’s driveway and parking lot — with some trepidation. But then you walk through the arched entryway and realize that, if nothing else, you’ll be spending the evening in beautiful surroundings.

The converted house was built in or around the 1920s, in the classic Spanish style of the era: exposed beams, lushly painted tiles, white walls and wood floors. The decor has been chosen to match the style of the house in a self-aware, rustic way, with leather and velvet and wicker.

The little patio is a great choice for eating outside (use the old Valley trick of pretending the sound of the freeway traffic is actually the ocean).

As a city we’re still struggling with some deeply held, and incorrect, notions about what kinds of food are “allowed” to be expensive. Generally, we think Mexican cuisine is supposed to be cheap. If I tell you right now to stop thinking that way, will you?

The surroundings at Cascabel should be your first clue that this is not a combo-platter restaurant. The enchiladas are served singly. The cocktails are more likely to be made with small-batch mezcal than with tequila. On the other hand, chips and salsa are set on every table. When asked via email if that was his personal preference, or if the market demands chips and salsa, chef Alex Eusebio answered, “Honestly, a little bit of both. People love chips and salsa, myself included.”

In a way, that pairing of chips and (very above-average) salsa with dishes such as “Mazatlan bouillabaise” and duck confit with tarragon salsa verde is exactly in line with what Eusebio wants to accomplish. “I call it ‘L.A.-based Mexican’ because while it is Mexican-inspired, it’s not ‘traditional’ Mexican. Everything we serve is influenced in some way from Mexico, and interpreted through the lens of Los Angeles. L.A. is very Mexican, and Cascabel is an extension of that. We are Mexican-inspired but not bound exactly within the ‘traditional,’” he says.

There are homemade “choco tacos” on the dessert menu, showing there’s room for whimsy in a kitchen that’s doing thoughtful work. You might be too full to try them, though, after indulging in the brightly colored drinks and a few snapper or lamb tacos. Cascabel seems to do its very best work with starches, such as the plaintain and sweet potato enchilada with goat cheese, a real lick-the-plate situation.

Or since, everything’s à la carte, make a night of it, ordering just a few things at a time, maybe deciding to go for that bacon guacamole after all, after starting with
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Hong Kong–Style Embassy Kitchen Serves Complex and Home-Style Dishes

When people talk about L.A.’s best Chinese restaurant, the same names come up time and again: Sea Harbour in Rosemead, Chengdu Taste, Lunasia, King Hua and Szechuan Impression in Alhambra, Newport Seafood and Mian in San Gabriel, and Din Tai Fung in various mall locations. (Or if you’re Yelp, then it’s Americanized restaurants such as Sea Dragon, Yang Chow and Wah’s Golden Hen.)

But what if we throw another contender into the mix: Embassy Kitchen in San Gabriel, located directly in front of the Embassy Billiards pool hall, whence it derives its name.

Given its location, this is equivalent to bowling alley dining, in a sense. And it’s been around for 20 years, making it senior to all the other top non-Yelp contenders except Newport Seafood, which opened in San Gabriel a year earlier in 1996. Embassy Kitchen started as a small adjunct restaurant to the billiard parlor around 1997, even using the Embassy Billiards moniker. It then moved to the large restaurant space in front of the pool hall around 1999.

Like other top Chinese restaurants Sea Harbour, Lunasia and King Hua, as well as most all of the other banquet-sized Chinese restaurants in the San Gabriel Valley, Embassy Kitchen serves Hong Kong–style cuisine. But Embassy Kitchen diverges from these other restaurants in many ways. There are no tanks full of live seafood, nor is the dining room huge, loud or boisterous. There is not a gaudy liards moniker. It then moved to the large restaurant space in front of the pool hall around 1999.

But what really distinguishes Embassy Kitchen from the pack is the food selection. Yes, you will find Cantonese favorites such as rock cod in corn sauce, walnut shrimp, fish maw crab meat soup, e-fu noodles and steamed chicken with ginger and scallions. But what you also find at Embassy Kitchen are two extremes not typically seen at most Hong Kong–style restaurants in Los Angeles — complex dishes that require ordering in advance, and wonderful home-style dishes.

Most of these dishes are obscure on the Embassy Kitchen menu, as they are only found on Chinese-language paper inserts on the inside cover of the permanent menu. On the other hand, that might not make much of a difference, since non-Chinese faces are rare at this restaurant. There is no nefarious intent in relegating these dishes to a Chinese-language supplement — the owners indicate that they just weren’t sure how to accurately describe these dishes in English.

Perhaps the best exemplar of the complex advance-order dishes is the boneless chicken stuffed with shrimp paste. The chicken skin is light and crispy and the shrimp paste provides a savory contrast.

Then there are the tilapia rolls with whole carcass, one of the most visually interesting dishes you will find at a Los Angeles–area Chinese restaurant, though from a taste point of view the re-stuffed fish (where the bones are removed and the fish is filled back up with fish and ground pork) might be a better choice.

One of the special items that does not necessarily require an advance order is the “eight treasures” stuffed duck.

Other signature dishes include the chicken stuffed with sticky rice (a traditional Cantonese dish still popular in the San Francisco area but difficult to find in Los Angeles) and the fried rice with whole Dungeness crab or lobster. Note that all of these dishes are large and cost around $50, and hence are more suited to large parties. Indeed, Embassy Kitchen has a larger quotient of large-size tables than is typical for many uncommon home-style dishes on Embassy Kitchen’s menu. However, be aware that these dishes are not inexpensive, as there are few items on the Embassy Kitchen menu that are less than $15, and many are $20 or more. But these dishes contain expensive ingredients. For example, our party was stumped by the steamed egg with tofu and seafood topping, so we had to ask what was in it. The answer: “shrimp roe.” Such ingredients also explain the higher price point.

Try the steamed eggplant with dried scallop and ground pork; the clear rice noodles with cabbage, egg and dried scallops; stir-fried beef; and French-style beef stew (which comes with noodles at lunchtime but not at dinner).

When the kitchen is in top form, this is the closest thing to artisan Chinese cooking that you will find in L.A. —Katherine Spiers

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To Market, to Market

626 Night Market was created seven years ago as an homage to the nighttime food markets of East and Southeast Asia. And it’s still going strong, as Angelenos get ever more into the idea of food markets that sell a high-quality product, consistently. The Night Market is now spread over a number of weekends all summer, in two locations. This is the L.A. County kickoff. Expect a huge array of grilled meats, takoyaki, seafood in pineapples, bento boxes, burgers and a bunch of novelty desserts. Plus, it goes until well after dark, which is a pleasant change, and welcome in this heat. Santa Anita Park, 285 W. Huntington Drive, Arcadia; Fri-Sat., June 30-July 1, 4 p.m.-1 a.m.; Sun., July 2, 4-11 p.m.; $3 Fri. & Sun., $5 Sat. 626nightmarket.com. –Katherine Spiers

A More Perfect Union

Drink up and brush up on your knowledge of a great American founding document at the last installment of the Hammer’s Constitution Happy Hour series. The guided conversations are the brainchild of artist Linda Pollack, who believes, “The U.S. Constitution is a living document, part of our quotidian life, influencing us in both large and small ways daily.” Previous conversations have addressed gender-based rights, immigration rights and voting rights. Tonight’s topic: “Is Hate Speech Protected Under the Constitution?” Damon Huss, senior editor and curriculum specialist at the Constitution Rights Foundation, will expound on the topic. Getting drunk and telling off-color jokes is not recommended. Hammer Museum, 10899 Wilshire Blvd., Westwood; Fri., June 30, 6 p.m.; free. (310) 443-7000, hammer.ucla.edu. –David Cotner

Bodily Function

In conjunction with the exhibit “Body Worlds: Pulse,” the California Science Center screens The Human Body, which shows the inner workings of the human body, from conception and birth to puberty and adulthood, all blown up in IMAX format. Based on a BBC documentary series, the movie uses scanning electron microscopes, thermal imaging, medical computer graphics and other technologies to follow the routine bodily functions of one family — 8-year-old Zannah, teenage Luke, Uncle Buster and pregnant Aunt Heather — for a single day. You’ll see how hair grows, how a tomato travels through the stomach, how the ear makes sense of sound and how a fetus develops. California Science Center, 700 Exposition Park Drive, Exposition Park; opens Sat., July 1, 10 a.m., 12, 2 & 5 p.m. (runs through Sept. 4); $8.50, $6.25 students and seniors, $5.25 children. (323) 724-3633, californiaScienceCenter.org/max/the-human-body. –Siran Babayan
Tamer Kattan. Nerdist Showroom at Melt-down Comics, 7522 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood; Sun., July 2, 9-10:30 p.m.; $10. (323) 851-7223, nerdmeltla.com. —Siran Babayan

FOOD & DRINK

Happy Hundredth
What to expect at the Culver City Centennial Food & Wine Festival: a lot of food, a ton of booze and fun for a good cause. The ticket price isn’t steep, and the money goes to a pair of local charitable organizations — Meals on Wheels Culver/Palms and Culver City Backpacks for Kids — as well as local musician Rick Joswick, who is battling cancer. The event is 21 and up, because there will be a number of alcohol vendors, including Spa Girl Vodka, American Born Whiskey, Rock & Roll Tequila, Humboldt Rum and Vodka and Iron Fist Craft Beer — not to mention the wines. Good thing the food vendors tend toward the carby.


—David Cotner

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HOLIDAYS

Bursting in Air
The political climate being what it is, you might not exactly be in the mood to chant “USA! USA!” this July Fourth. Totally fair. But can anyone resist a free fireworks display, impending doom notwithstanding? Grand Park and the Music Center have again joined forces to host the Fourth of July Block Party, a big downtown L.A. hang session with music, food, games for kids and, of course, a big fireworks show once the sun goes down. Entertainers this year include the Inner City Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles and Angel City All-Star Brass Band, plus DJs and local pop acts. Grand
HOLiDAYs

God Bless Americanism
Perched along steep, crumbling cliffs above the ocean between Santa Monica and Topanga, Pacific Palisades is part of the city of Los Angeles, although you wouldn’t necessarily notice it while driving past on PCH, as there are almost no signs marking the wealthy enclave. But for one day each year, the neighborhood welcomes outsiders for a Fourth of July celebration that includes the annual, early-morning Palisades Will Rogers 5K and 10K runs, followed in the afternoon by the Palisades Americanism Parade. Unlike most small-town processions, the parade, which travels down Sunset Boulevard, is a pretty spectacular affair that features skydivers, a horde of marching bands and local celebrities, and culminates in a pop concert and fireworks display. 15120-15140 Sunset Blvd., Pacific Palisades; concert and fireworks at 6 p.m.; Tue., July 4, 2 p.m., concert and fireworks at 6 p.m.; free ($50 for grandstand seating), $10 for concert and fireworks. palisadesparade.org. –Falling James

FILm

Mousy Murderer
Artist-photographer Cindy Sherman is best known for her provocative self-portraits in which she sardonically reinvents herself via a series of chameleonic characters. In 1997, she released her only full-length film as a director, Office Killer, co-written with Todd Haynes and others and featuring a stellar, mostly female cast that includes Carol Kane, Jeanne Tripplehorn and Molly Ringwald. Unlike so many dozy and pretentious art projects, Office Killer is a witty, fast-paced, thoroughly campy horror-comedy that portrays Kane as a nebishy, mistreated magazine editor who ends up murdering her pompous co-workers and even some innocent Girl Scouts. Echo Park Film Center, 1200 N. Alvarado St., Echo Park; Thu., July 6, 3 p.m.; $5 donation. (213) 484-9848, echoparkfilmcenter.org. –Falling James

23
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SUMMER JAZZ NIGHTS

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NOSTALGIA ON WHEELS

Sunday nights at Skateland in Northridge are for grown folks and custom skates

BY LASHEA DELANEY

Skateland on Sunday night is all about the sounds. When you walk through the door, the speakers are blaring golden oldies, the slow jams of the past, that smooth R&B. The music is what makes everyone want to get on the floor and move. The whir of the skates on the maple skating floor, a stomp when the beat hits and the chatter of people who are excited to see one another create a party atmosphere.

The skaters on Sunday night are skilled—they move in unison but everyone has a style of their own. If you are on the outside of the circle, there’s no slowing down—you have to go with the flow and the rhythm of the group. If you want to slow down or work on your footwork, you can skate into the center of the circle, maybe learn a routine. There are single skaters, couples locking arms and threesomes supporting one another on the floor, and they are all in the pocket, moving without thought, just letting their skates glide. The fluidity and freedom of their movement is infectious.

Another thing you’ll notice about Skateland on Sunday night is that the crowd is almost exclusively African-American and many skaters are nearing retirement age.

The 21-and-up Oldies Night on Sundays began out of necessity. As demand has dwindled, skating rinks in Los Angeles, including the legendary Skateland in Compton, have shuttered one by one, as they have elsewhere in the country. Skateland has been a fixture since 1958 and has managed to survive what other rinks have not. Oldies Night at Skateland became a particularly enthusiastic crowd reaction. He makes the session move. He plays all the hits and the crowd responds by moving with the beat, taking hold of a partner or stomping their skates. There are adult skate scenes in black communities all over the country, but what sets L.A.’s apart is the proliferation of outrageous custom roller skates.

On the night that I visited Skateland, two people were celebrating birthdays. There was food, hugs and an overall feeling of fellowship. The skating community is dynamic, allowing older people to move with grace and speed. I spoke with two women who have been friends since 1966, when they met in high school. One of them was wearing sparkling skate covers that she made herself. They stood next to each other, holding hands like schoolgirls and could’ve been mistaken for them as they entered the rink and glided across that maple floor.
LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON
JEFF AND MIKE LIPSCHUTZ
EXPLORE “POST-TERRITORY”
AT MARS GALLERY

BY CATHERINE WAGLEY

This week, an artist unveils a lighthouse in the desert, and another finds inspiration in toilet seats.

Family business
The father-son team of Jeff and Mike Lipschutz go by Lipschutz & Lipschutz, the name intentionally resembling a family law or accounting firm. They wanted through their current exhibition at Mars Gallery to explore what they call “post-territory,” a more barren, chaotic time and space beyond the golden age of American progress. The show features both paintings on the walls and sculptures scattered throughout the space. The sculptures, made entirely of found objects, often involve telephone books — one red-painted telephone book of found objects, often involve telephone books — one red-painted telephone book sits on a yellowed stand with two blue feet. It looks like a worn-out relic of a pre-digital era, perhaps left behind in someone’s sun-baked backyard. The paintings are more era, perhaps left behind in someone’s sun-baked backyard. The paintings are more...

Scenes of sand
Desert Lighthouse, a sculpture by Daniel Hawkins in the Mojave Desert, looks mystical in renderings. It’s white and glowing amidst an arid sea of sand, mountains visible in the distance. Although made for land and not sea, Hawkins’ lighthouse is meant to function just as such structures do: as a beacon for travelers. According to writer Doug Hickey, the artist conceived of the sculpture after an agoraphobic night driving through the desert and feeling lost at sea. It officially opens this weekend, with a sunset reception. RSVP required: 323-643-4656, kristinakitegallery.la.

Have a seat
It takes a moment to realize that you’re looking at toilet seats when you first see Joel Holmberg’s paintings, up now at Michael Benevento Gallery. Initially, they look like flat, whimsical abstractions, rectangles layered over big ovals. But the rectangles are in fact pieces of toilet paper used to cover the seats of a public toilet (Holmberg used as his model for these paintings the communal toilet in his studio building). His work shares space with Tory J. Lowitz, who has been studying ikebana, Japanese floral arrangement. Lowitz’s minimal sculptures mimic the gallery’s infrastructure and hold fresh flowers and plants. As you open the gallery door, you’re face to face with a white metal door frame holding a modest plant on a built-in shelf. 3712 Beverly Blvd., Koreatown; through July 8. (323) 874-6400, beneventolosangeles.com.

Heavy petting zoo
Amy O’Neill brought her parents’ kitschy, enduring 1970s television console to Kristina Kite Gallery, where it sits in the gallery’s back room, in front of a stack of bean bags, as part of O’Neill’s show “Convex Cornea.” Playing on the TV screen inside the console is a collaged-together 16mm film called Zoo Revolution and the Well Fed Wolf. The heavy-metal soundtrack, by the band Orphan, gives the footage a nostalgic but also comically dramatic weightiness. Clips from cartoons and childhood films interrupt footage of a now-closed petting zoo and storybook garden O’Neill used to visit as a child. The film recalls the absurd, anxiety-filled performance and videos L.A. icon Mike Kelley used to make about his teenage years, except O’Neill’s film isn’t angsty. Rather, it’s comfortable with its nerdy quirks and dramas. Also included in the exhibition are the artist’s “Bean-Bag Flats,” 1970 bean-bag chairs taken apart at the seams and screen-printed with slogans from vintage T-shirts.

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If you are 18 years or older, using crystal meth, and looking to stop, call our research clinic in Hollywood (310) 449-UCLA or visit www.uclacbam.org/meth

UCLA Research Study

Are you interested in participating in a study focused on improving heart health?

If yes, you may be able to join a study where you add FDA-approved medication to your HIV-regimen to help prevent cardiovascular disease (CVD).

This study is for HIV-positive people who are taking antiretroviral therapy and are interested in strategies to reduce heart disease

Statins are a group of medicines used to lower cholesterol and triglycerides (fat in the blood) and to prevent problems related to heart disease, such as heart attacks in persons with high risk for heart attacks.

To join you must be:
- Between the ages of 40 and 75
- HIV-positive
- On antiretroviral therapy for at least 6 months
- T-cell count at or above 100

For more information contact the UCLA CARE Center at careoutreach@mednet.ucla.edu or via phone 310-557-9062

This study is for HIV-positive people who also have HIV-associated neurocognitive disorder (HAND) as defined by the Frascati criteria. It will help us to identify if adding Maraviroc (MVC) and/or Dolutegravir (DTG) to their current antiretroviral therapy will improve neurocognitive performance. Participants will be enrolled in this study for about 96 weeks. Compensation will be provided.

To join you must be:
- 18 years of age or older
- HIV-positive with an undetectable viral load
- Have had a HIV-associated neurocognitive disorder within 45 days prior to study entry

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.
RAISING THE BARD

Independent Shakespeare Company brings two “riskier” shows to the Griffith Park Festival

BY EMILY ROME

“Comedy: love and a bit with a dog. That’s what they want,” Geoffrey Rush declares in Shakespeare in Love. Indeed, that’s what’s supplied in The Two Gentlemen of Verona, which features Shakespeare’s only canine role. Still, the play has never shared the enduring popularity of Shakespeare’s most celebrated comedies. Nor has Measure for Measure. Yet ISC has produced it.

Two Gentlemen has proved to be that crowd pleaser in the three times ISC has produced it. Measure for Measure follows the novice nun Isabella as she pleads for the life of her brother, Claudio, when he is sentenced to death for impregnating his betrothed before they’ve married. A society that criminalizes cohabitation may sound distant and outdated for a modern production, but ISC’s promotional materials manage to frame it in a way audiences today may find relevant, describing Claudio as “a man whose only crime is love.”

Despite its deceptively wacky title, Measure for Measure appears to be getting staged more than usual this year across the country (including in Berkeley and Santa Cruz). “Even though it seems like perhaps one is picking it for sort of political reasons, we didn’t,” Chalsma notes, adding that ISC is picking it for sort of political reasons, among other reasons, because the company hadn’t done it before. “For us, we’re not really interested in doing this if all we’re gonna be doing is the obvious [plays],” Melville says.

Among the plays’ challenges: Both depict attempted sexual assault, and their final scenes each leave a female lead silent for a long stretch of time when audiences — modern ones, at least — might expect these women to have something to say. William Elsman, who plays the corrupt, conflicted deputy Angelo in Measure for Measure, said he expects the production “to prompt a lot of discussion. Part of the ending is the question, would you be willing to forgive your attacker, your abuser, the person that assaulted you?”

Directors Chalsma (Measure) and Melville (Two Gentlemen) did not begin work on this season with a solidified vision for their interpretation of the plays’ tricky endings, allowing them to be discovered in rehearsal with the actors.

While there are adult themes in each play, Chalsma said kids are welcome. “We present all our plays as adult plays. It’s not children’s theater, but it’s family-friendly.” With a 1950s setting and a rockabilly band onstage — plus Chalsma and Melville’s dog, Pickles, playing Crab — ISC’s production of Measure for Measure serves up plenty of laughs, too, making frequent tonal shifts from darkly intense scenes to the farcical and silly.

Elsman noted the Globe Theatre, where many Shakespeare plays were first performed, “was designed for these plays to be audience-interactive. [Our audience] will experience that — they will take with a hairpin turn and go to a farcical, wacky place. It’s just even more extreme and delightful explorations of the palette that Shakespeare provides, and that is the human experience.”

INDEPENDENT SHAKESPEARE COMPANY
GRIFFITH PARK FESTIVAL | Old Zoo, 4730 Crystal Springs Drive, Griffith Park
Measure for Measure, June 24–July 23; The Two Gentlemen of Verona, July 29–Sept. 3 | iscla.org
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Study Class, 7:30 to 8:45 PM in The Secret Doctrine by H.P. Blavatsky
Spanish Study Class, 7:30 to 9:00 PM in La Doctrina Secreta by H.P. Blavatsky

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Edgar Wright’s Baby Driver makes the car chase soar again

BY BILGE EBIRI

Edgar Wright’s Baby Driver is a remorselessly entertaining, impeccably assembled action-musical in which cars and people defy the laws of physics and common sense. They leap into gunfire and hop over hoods and careen down streets in perfect time to the beats of an unimpeachably cool soundtrack. It’s all absurd, but set to music it just feels right. And unlike, say, Fast and Furious flick, Wright’s movie delivers action that’s convincing and concrete — the cars seem real, even when the people don’t. This is the kind of pure pop confection that leaves you breathless with admiration for the director’s supernatural command of his frame. But it might also leave you a little cold.

Not being familiar with the Simon & Garfunkel song, when I first heard this movie’s title I briefly entertained the notion that Wright, the auteur of the Cornetto Trilogy (Shaun of the Dead, Hot Fuzz, The World’s End), Wright blends humiliation comedy with the choreographed mayhem, finding humanity in between; when the characters start fighting zombies to the accompaniment of Queen songs, you roar with approval not just for the filmmaking but for the triumph of little people finding their rhythm. In Baby Driver, by contrast, everybody is super-cool, and I’m not sure they ever quite come to life. But it’s all so effective as a demented action spectacle that this is a minor quibble. I’ll probably see this thing 10 more times.

This time, the lonesome driver is Baby (Ansel Elgort), an introverted automotive savant who knows his music as well as his cars, and uses both to hide a lot of hurt. Baby works for Doc (Kevin Spacey), a smooth, calculating crime lord who plans immaculate heists that ultimately hinge on one key element: Baby’s expertise behind the wheel. The assorted goons Doc hires — crude stickup men played with grimy glee by the likes of Jon Hamm, Jamie Foxx and Jon Bernthal — are understandably put off by our hero’s aloof, unnaturally quiet demeanor. Is there something wrong with him? Does he think he’s better than they are?

The dark sunglasses never come off and the earbuds never come out; Baby needs his music the way Samson needs his hair. It’s the source of his strength — his ability to stay focused and centered on the move. (It also drowns out his tinnitus.) And if Baby keeps his distance from the other thugs, it’s because he absolutely is not one of them, and Doc recognizes that. This is just a kid who’s slowly paying back some debt to Doc in perfectly executed getaways. (The precise nature of the debt, as far as I can tell, is never explained.) When he’s not transporting sociopaths, Baby takes care of his elderly, deaf foster father, Joe (C.J. Jones), and longs quietly for Debora (Lily James), a waitress who reminds him of his deceased mother.

Wright is playing with archetypes here. Throughout, his characters deliver hilariously quotable mock-tough-guy dialogue. (“We’ve met before, right?” “I don’t know. You’re still alive, right?” “Yeah.” “Then I guess we ain’t never met.”) Baby and Debbie both long to escape — they want to be lovers on the run, tapping into a noble cinematic tradition of romantic wanderlust. (“Sometimes, all I want to do is head west on 80 in a car I can’t afford, with a plan I don’t have.”)

Cars, shootouts, gangsters, doomed lovers and limitless blacktop to match the limitless menace of men — this is Edgar Wright’s fantasy of America, a land where everyone is a killer or a dreamer or a driver, and sometimes all three. A guy like David Lynch uses such archetypes to explode our myths and reveal our spiritual corruption. But hey, he’s a disillusioned Eagle Scout from Missoula, Montana; U.K.-born Wright is the zealous outsider who longs to make the myths breathe again.

Baby Driver is an almost perfect pastiche, a thoroughly enjoyable object. But sue me, I kind of miss the losers of the Cornetto Trilogy. In the masterpieces Shaun of the Dead and The World’s End, Wright blends humiliation comedy with the choreographed mayhem, finding humanity in between; when the characters start fighting zombies to the accompaniment of Queen songs, you roar with approval not just for the filmmaking but for the triumph of little people finding their rhythm. In Baby Driver, by contrast, everybody is super-cool, and I’m not sure they ever quite come to life. But it’s all so effective as a demented action spectacle that this is a minor quibble. I’ll probably see this thing 10 more times.

BABY DRIVER | Directed and written by Edgar Wright | TriStar Pictures | Citywide
Get Thee to It

AT LAST, A FOUL-MOUTHED, PHILOSOPHICAL NUN COMEDY

BY APRIL WOLFE

Dueling images of Catholic nuns portray either holier-than-thou punishers in habits or hippie types with acoustic guitars, like the postulant Maria in The Sound of Music. Both stereotypes obscure the fact that, in real life, a lot of nuns are just... kind of weird. At one of the many Catholic camps I once was required to attend, I first had the epiphany that some may have started out as social outcasts looking for a hideaway from judgment by the culture at large. There, one of the sisters went around every morning, sweeping up all the socks and underwear we’d left on the floor of our cabin, so she could boil them and sell them at rummage sales. “They’re mine now!” she cackled. But when a brave girl questioned her, the nun shyly backed away and never made eye contact with us again.

Writer-director Jeff Baena (I Heart Huckabees, Life After Beth), in his lighthearted medieval nun-sploitation comedy, The Little Hours, depicts these socially rejected sisters as they may really have been, using modern-day language but also Boccaccio’s The Decameron as source text. The film follows three young women — Allessandra (Alison Brie), Fernanda (Aubrey Plaza) and Ginevra (Kate Micucci) — as they try to fill up hour after boring hour with anything, leading to much gossip, bickering and a dabbling in witchcraft. What’s that the Bible says about idle hands?

Throughout the film, crystal-blue skies frame a picturesque landscape of rolling green hills and the clean beige stucco of the abbey where the nuns reside — immensely peaceful scenes Baena creates just so he can muck them up. When the convent’s handyman dares to smile at them, one of the women screeches, “Fuck you, don’t look at us!” These nuns are aggro, none more than Fernanda, who takes great joy in physically intimidating men. When the convent’s humdrum day is interrupted by an alluring manservant (Dave Franco) escaping the wrath of a jealous husband (Nick Offerman), Fernanda puts an axe to the manservant’s throat, her face millimeters away from his as she bellows into his ear, “Who the fuck are youuuuuuuuuu?”

Though the F-bombs may wear a little thin, laughs do come at the expense of Offerman’s Lord Bruno and Lauren Weedman, who plays his wife. Bruno dons a voluminous, frizzy bowl cut and yacks on and on about how the Guelfs killed his family, always over-pronouncing “Guelf!” — God, it’s a funny word! The comedy here isn’t what you’d call highbrow. When the bumbling Father Tommasso (John C. Reilly) attempts to define “sodomy,” sussing out whether it’s anal sex or oral sex, he’s a little stumped: “Sodomy is lots of different things,” he says, unsure (and pissed-off).

The Little Hours shares more than a small helping of sincerity with I Heart Huckabees, which Baena co-wrote with David O. Russell. The film follows up its punch lines with philosophical discussions unangling why people behave so absurdly. The developing friendship among the sparring nuns is actually sweet to genuine emotion. We’re watching some serious weirdos try to connect — in a medieval nunnery.

THE LITTLE HOURS | Written and directed by Jeff Baena | Gunpowder & Sky | ArcLight Hollywood
THE B-SIDE: ELSA DORFMAN’S PORTRAIT
PHOTOGRAPHY

Documentarian Errol Morris’ latest is a significantly more playful and understated film than the work he’s been recognized for in recent years. In The B-Side, photographer Elsa Dorfman recalls her decades of taking portraits using large-format Polaroid cameras. She’s a chatty subject, and the film has the feel of an engaging doodle, as Dorfman guides us through her archive, rarely dwelling on one picture or figure for too long (though she does discuss her long friendship with Allen Ginsberg, whom she shot in some startling ways). The pictures are so huge that when she holds them out for us, they are overwhelming. They engage with her subject, but Morris’ lens, the images often cover her huge that when she holds them out for her clients. These photographs, we come to learn, reveal more than the defunding of scientific research policy (the anti-GMO movement) and the March for Science on Earth Day was prompted by recent federal government action. The same could be said of this slight, fascinating little movie. (Bilge Ebiri)

FOOD EVOLUTION

What Scott Hamilton Kennedy captures in his scrupulous, optimistic documentary Food Evolution is the new reality for American scientists: the challenge of reaching a public bombarded by conspiracy theories and fearmongering. The March for Science on Earth Day was prompted by recent federal government policy (the defunding of scientific research) but also by the more general political agenda to devalue scientific findings. In exploring the heated rhetoric about the prevalence of genetically modified organisms in our agriculture system (more than 90 percent of corn, cotton, soybeans and sugar beets planted in the United States are GMOs), Kennedy (The Garden) offers a methodology for scientists to systematically address bias with fact. Food Evolution opens with a milestone for the anti-GMO movement, when local legislators on the island of Hawaii passed a ban in 2013. Prominent anti-GMO activists calmly assert terrifying scenarios about widespread health and environmental danger (peppered with qualifiers such as “possibility”). By contrast, molecular biologist Dennis Gonzales can barely suppress his fury as he stands by his development of the rainbow papaya, a genetically engineered solution to the ringspot virus that had decimated the major Hawaiian crop. Kennedy splits GMOs into two categories: those concentrating on biological diseases (banana wilt) or environmental factors (drought resistance), and those engineered to work with specific herbicides — particularly seeds created by Monsanto. Much of the antipathy toward GMOs focuses on that reviled chemical company, but there’s also a strong undertone of distrust in corporations and institutions. Kennedy unabashedly admires scientists, and Food Evolution is his rallying cry to make advocacy as important as lab work.

Serena Donadoni

GOOD FORTUNE

John Paul DeJoria is, by all accounts, an amazing man with an even more amazing life story, having overcome two separate instances of homelessness, multiple divorces and failed career ventures before overcoming two separate instances of homelessness, multiple divorces and many failed career ventures before co-founding Paul Mitchell and Patrón Tequila. In the process becoming a philanthropic billionaire who gives back to people and the planet. Too bad, then, that Good Fortune is such a doggedly hagiographic nonfiction portrait, reducing his entire saga and ethos to PR-style slogans. Narrated by pal Dan Aykroyd as if he were providing overblown voice-over for a 1940s newsreel, Joshua and Rebecca Harrell Tickell’s documentary employs flashy aesthetics (split screens, color filters, archival-media montages); a boisterous score; and interviews with DeJoria, his relatives and acquaintances to recount the rags-to-riches tale, which is embellished with asides about how much DeJoria loved his mother and cares for his kids. Throughout, DeJoria’s own recollections sound rehearsed, while everyone else’s comments come across as tailored for soundbites. No doubt, these talking-head assertions about DeJoria’s charitable attitude toward work and life — from his support of eco-conservationist efforts to his backing of heart-in-the-right-place entrepreneurs to his providing free meals to those who work for him — are true. Alas, they’re delivered in a celebratory one-note package that feels like something cooked up by a publicity team. (Nick Schager)
“WARM AND HUGELY ENTERTAINING.
ELSA DORFMAN IS A FORCE, AND SPENDING TIME WITH HER IS AN INVALUABLE EXPERIENCE.”
— THE GUARDIAN

“A GENTLE-HEARTED GEM... AS PROFOUNDLY SUBTLE AS IT IS SUBTLY PROFOUND.”
— VARIETY

“INCREDIBLY DELIGHTFUL.
WARM, TENDER... SOME OF MORRIS' MOST RICH AND HEARTFELT WORK TO DATE.”
— ION CINEMA

“A GENTLE-HEARTED GEM... AS PROFOUNDLY SUBTLE AS IT IS SUBTLY PROFOUND.”
— VARIETY

“AN AFFECTIONATE AND DECEPTIVELY LAYERED PORTRAIT OF A SINGULAR CHARACTER.”
— SIGHT & SOUND

IN PURSUIT OF SILENCE

Patrick Shen’s doc Pursuit of Silence argues for an antidote to our loud, hectic, tech-driven society. He visits with psychologists, ornithologists and monks, explores John Cage’s 1952 piece 4’33” (the one in which musicians don’t play a note), and collects persuasive notions on the value of mindful pauses and contemplation. The flip side is tragic: a school so close to railroad tracks that students lose hours of instruction as passing trains drown out their lessons, workers and city dwellers forced to tolerate unhealthy, high-decibel environments. But Shen overplays his hand. “All of us know that the most essential things in life are exactly what we can’t express,” says one expert. “Silence is our natural milieu,” says another, “and the farther we get away from silence, the more we lose our humanity.” Such dictats pile up, accompanied by the counterintuitively generous use of a serene but nondescript piano score. The music, pronouncements and footage of quiet scenery can’t hide the confusion in Shen’s rich material. Consider Cage’s 4’33”, forged after the composer spent time in an anechoic chamber and designed to show that any sound, or no sound at all, is...
That is Okja, exactly? A children’s movie? An action flick? A subtle political allegory? A flamboyant, dystopian satire? A vegetarian action flick? A children's movie? An environmentalist manifesto? It is a little bit (maybe even a lot) of all these things — and for a while, at least, it works marvelously.

The satirist is foregrounded, as the Miranda Corporation, a giant multinational run by the garishly narcissistic Luci Miranda (Tilda Swinton), unveils a super-pig that has been discovered in Chile. She announces a contest in which farmers around the world will be given a piglet each and compete to raise the finest super-pig. How will they determine the winner? The pig, as Lucy tells us, “needs to taste fucking good.” (So maybe it’s not a kids movie?)

The story kicks into gear some years later, as Mija (Ahn Seo-hyun), an orphaned girl living in the mountains of South Korea whose beloved super-pig, Okja, is her constant companion, resists the efforts of Miranda employees to take away her porcine pal. Enter the Animal Liberation Front, an environmental resistance group led by Jay (Paul Dano), the most sensitive, beta-male revolutionary leader in the history of cinema. As Mija and these oddball guerrillas battle the megacorporation in an effort to save Okja (not to mention all the other super-pigs), the picture veers into a throw-it-all-against-the-wall free-for-all. Anyone who’s familiar with Bong’s filmmaking should know, however, that there are deeper, more serious ideas at work here. Still, the political overtones get muddled, and the human story becomes more cloying and artificial. As its many fragmented ideas threaten to fall apart, Okja ladles on the sentiment — with diminishing returns.

Bong Joon-ho’s Mad Okja Fascinates but Doesn’t Exactly Work

By Peter Hammond, DEADLINE

Okja
courtesy Netflix

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### Neighborhood Movie Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theater</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ARENA CINELOUNGE LAS PALMAS</strong> 10330 Las Palmas Avenue (323)294-1644 Call theater for schedule.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ARENA CINELOUNGE SUNSET</strong> 6464 Sunset Blvd. (323)294-1644</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TCL CHINESE THEATRE IMAX 6925 Hollywood Blvd.</strong> 1 (323) 461-4630 Call theater for schedule.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PACIFIC’S EL CAPITAN</strong> Hollywood Blvd., west of Highland (323) 467-7676 8:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 1:30, 4:30, 7:45 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PACIFIC’S THE GREAT GRAND因为在14</strong> 189 The Grove Dr., Third &amp; Fairfax (323) 692-0829 Thursday, 7:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>UNIVERSITY VILLA</strong> 3233 S. Hoover (323) 748-6321 Call theater for schedule.</td>
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### WESTWOOD, BEVERLY HILLS

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<th>Theater</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>REGAL CINEMAS L.A. LIVE STADIUM</strong> 1045 Broxton Ave. (323) 466-3153</td>
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<td><strong>AMC DINE-IN SUNSET 5</strong> 8000 West Sunset Boulevard (323)654-2217</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LAELMIE’S FAYR AIRS</strong> 8555 Wilshire Boulevard (323) 394-0525 12:30 p.m. E 8:45 a.m. 7:45 a.m. 7:45 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LAELMIE’S MALL ESCHU</strong> 7303 Wilshire Blvd. (310) 274-6889 Inception vs. 7:20 p.m. 7:30 p.m. 8:30 p.m.</td>
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<td><strong>LAELMIE’S ROYAL THEATER</strong> 11523 Santa Monica Blvd. (310) 477-9981</td>
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<td><strong>LAELMIE’S THE B’S</strong> 1127 Santa Monica Blvd. (310) 473-8530 No Texting Allowed 1:45 a.m. 7:00 a.m.</td>
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### DOWNTOWN, S. LOS ANGELES

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<td><strong>REGAL CINEMAS L.A. LIVE</strong> 14100 West Olympic Blvd. (323) 942-7342-4041</td>
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<td><strong>REGAL CINEMAS L.A. LIVE</strong> 621 South Western Avenue (213)388-9000</td>
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<td><strong>REGAL CINEMAS L.A. LIVE</strong> 14 1000 West Olympic Blvd. (310) 220-3250</td>
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### DOWNTOWN INDEPENDENT

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<th>Theater</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CITY OF INDEPENDENT</strong> 2100 Main Street (323) 671-0133</td>
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<td><strong>FILM INDEPENDENT</strong> 170000 Westport Drive (323) 671-0133</td>
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<td><strong>GAS STATION DOWNTOWN</strong> 6801 Hollywood Blvd. (323) 461-3331</td>
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<td>**AMC MONICA 17 3130 Third Street Promenade (310) 395-3030</td>
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<td>**AMC MONICA 4-PLEX 1332 Second St. (310) 478-3836</td>
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<td><strong>AMC MONICA 5</strong> 33335 West Olympic (323) 466-3153</td>
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<th>Theater</th>
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<td><strong>AERIAL THEATER</strong> 1328 Montana Ave. (323) 466-FILM Call theater for schedule.</td>
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Any one rupture that Nocando endured in the last three years could have inspired an album in its own right. There was his divorce, a split with his partners in Low End Theory, and public rancor with several artists on his Hellfyre Club label. So it was only right that his latest full-length should be called Severed.

During this decade, South L.A.'s James McCall turned himself from a Project Blowed legend and battle-rap deity into the resident emcee at the best weekly club night in America, the owner of the most consistently innovative indie-rap imprint of the 2010s and a critically acclaimed solo artist. Dr. Dre might take credit for discovering Anderson .Paak, but Nocando actually released 2013's Scenester, his first album to warrant substantial attention. 

“Everything happened when I turned 30, and the lesson I learned was that like it or not, everything was mostly my fault,” Nocando says over sandwiches at a Leimert Park deli. “It’s not because this person did this or that person did that. “It’s me.”

Severed was recorded during that discordant period between 2014 and 2015 — a turbulent window that simultaneously afforded Nocando significant victories. He inked a lucrative publishing deal that found him holding his own in writing rooms alongside platinum stars and songwriting hired guns. He wrote hundreds of songs, some lingering in hard drives, others appearing on the first Emmy-nominated season of Empire. Several songs on Severed trace back to these sessions. “Villain” was originally conceived for Panic! at the Disco.

The record’s chief engine is “El Camino,” an instant classic inspired by Frantz Fanon’s anti-imperialism opus, The Wretched of the Earth. In four minutes, the song sums up the genius of Nocando at his best, as the rapper delivers a diatribe against the death of the American dream, nine-minute Macklemore songs about white privilege, Rodney King’s naivete and people chanting political slogans for social media capital.

He uses the ‘hood classic, a Chevy El Camino, as a symbol of hopes deferred, switching between character and real life. He shouts out his Ford Bronco, purchased because “O.J. was my hero.” It’s scathing and brutal, nuanced and subtle, but fearlessly daring to be misinterpreted.

“I felt like I couldn’t make the music I wanted because I had to spend a time working at this place to take care of my kids, or I had to work with these people or this engineer, or use this kind of production because these are the people that were around,” he continues. “But now, I feel free from all of that. I’m more in love with music than at any point since I first started making it.”

(Disclosure: Nocando is a sometime columnista for L.A. Weekly, and he and I used to co-host a podcast together.)

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.

**FREE THURS JUN 22 - AUG 17 (Skipping Jul 6)**

**6/22 NEO SOUL**

**KHALID**
Bibi Bourelly

**6/29 INDIE POP**

**LEMAITRE**
Coast Modern

**7/13 REGGAE**

**MARCIA GRIFFITHS**
Jah9

**7/20 ROCK**

**ERIC BURDON & THE ANIMALS**
Mr. Elevator / Rusty’s EAC

**7/27 DANCE**

**MIAMI HORROR**
Ceopold

**8/3 AMERICANA**

**VALERIE JUNE IRMA THOMAS**

**8/10 LATIN**

**MON LAFERTE**
Buscabulla

**8/17 INDIE ROCK**

**WARPAINT**
Wild Belle
would like you to do more than watch every event. Trump gets jammed up on charges, President Sessions' face fall so fast he'll get whiplash? Go to jail? /That you will get to see the smirk on come of the investigation? /That someone will is fun to watch, but what do you think will Comey/Mueller/Kushner/Flynn/Kislyak show their agenda with great speed. I know that the perfect distraction by which they can advance demented/inept cabinet, they have found the dupe as the man who won. campaign would have been such a flat-footed eliminated over the grueling months of the election — but none of the other candidates who were who it was, would be better than a Democrat a Republican in office — which, no matter they've given publicly. Not only do they have McConnell were sincerely happy about con- doesn't get it. hard, harder than his hubris and self-absorption fi cials in America today, one is getting played private-sector nest. But of all the elected of- to stay in offi ce until they have prepared their again, resigned to their opacity. they're clever. /That's the lawyer/huck- ster thing. It's offensive and they know it. They also know you're used to it by now and that not only will you take it, you will vote for them also know you're used to it by now and that are being employed to wreak havoc in 2018. Vladimir Putin — or the Butcher of Chechnya, as I like to call him — is an enemy of every good person in the United States. What he has been able to get away with in Russia, we will never know nearly the full extent of. Nadya and Ma- sha of Pussy Riot got off easy. They're still alive. Look up what happened to one of the greatest journalists of our time, Anna Politkovskaya. Putin is the baddest of the proverbial "bad hombres" on America's radar. However, even he can't rival the hurt that the GOP wants to put on millions of Americans via Trumpcare and voter suppression.

THE DISTRACTOR-IN-CHIEF

Most politicians aren't stupid. We like to say they are. It's one of the first attempts at a takedown of an elected official. They're either stupid, insane, evil or a combination thereof. The reality is that many of them are lawyers, come from great educational back-grounds and are quite intelligent. But mainly, they’re clever. The ones you like and the ones you don’t all have to be sharp to stay in office. It’s impossible to tell the truth to millions of people and have it go well. You can’t even pull it off at the family dinner table without caus- ing a fight. So many politicians lie, or shade the truth, or give frustratingly almost-answers to direct questions. That’s the lawyer/huck- ster thing. It’s offensive and they know it. They also know you’re used to it by now and that not only will you take it, you will vote for them again, resigned to their opacity.

Politicians are shape-shifting pugilists who must think election to election to stay afloat. Many of them will do almost any damn thing to stay in office until they have prepared their private-sector nest. But of all the elected of- fi cials in America today, one is getting played harder than his hubris and self-absorption will ever allow himself to understand. He doesn’t get it.

I’m willing to bet that Paul Ryan and Mitch McConnell were sincerely happy about com- rade Trump’s victory, but not for the reasons they’ve given publicly. Not only do they have a Republican in office — which, no matter who it was, would be better than a Democrat — but none of the other candidates who were eliminated over the grueling months of the campaign would have been such a flat-footed dupe as the man who won.

In comrade Trump, his mutant family and demented/inept cabinet, they have found the perfect distraction by which they can advance their agenda with great speed. I know that the Comey/Mueller/Kushner/Flynn/Kislyak show is fun to watch, but what do you think will come of the investigation? That someone will go to jail? That you will get to see the smirks on Sessions’ face fall so fast he’ll get whiplash? I doubt any of that’s going to happen.

Embarrassing, catastrophic move Trump makes as they get busy in other parts of the building. Any further gaffes that Trump will perpetrate, which seems to be minute- to-minute, can be smoothed over in back- channel communications. Every leader in the world knows that Trump is a lightweight, easily goaded — in other words, the perfect mark. In Las Vegas terms, a whale. They see guys like him coming from miles off and have everything in place to take it all. This is how the GOP is playing the American people as they crassly move a health care disaster bill through the Senate. They’re doing it on your watch but not in your face. As I said, they’re clever. Meanwhile, smarter, more insidious voter-suppression methods are being employed to wreak havoc in 2018.

GOP LEADERS WANT YOU TO WATCH EVERY EMBARRASSING MOVE TRUMP MAKES.

They could very well get away with all of this. Meanwhile, we’re plugging up our ears with shows about Watergate. That’s an amaz- ing story, but themes were different times. Media wasn’t a profit-based concern and even the staunchest conservatives couldn’t stomach what Nixon was serving up. Robert Bork stupidly took Tricky Dick’s bait in the re- sulting cover-up attempt and you know where that landed him. Not even Reagan could get Bork on the Supreme Court. Words mattered, laws mattered, the Constitution mattered. It all mattered. It mattered more than party, more than an administration.

For now, that’s not how it is. That being the case, it’s not the time to take your eye off the other hand.

Sure, Trump is easily the best political spec- tator sport of my lifetime at least. He makes George W. Bush, a man I have grown to feel sorry for over the years, seem semirational, with a fair number of words in his random access memory. If you drill down, even a little bit, you can see that Dubya wasn’t a bad guy as much as someone who wandered into the maelstrom of the military industrial complex. He made a few people rich and got a lot of people killed.

Watching Trump blow out is like watching a stand-up comedian give his last performance on a ship’s deck, right after it hit the iceberg. It’s a tough laugh but it’s there. However, there are much, much worse things afoot in America and they’re happening right now, in broad daylight.
**THU. JUNE 29**

**6/30** THE HOLY TRINITY!

**7/2** THE BLACKOUT PARTY

**7/4** ANTICHRIST

**7/6** THE MOTH

**7/6** JIMMY AUDIO EP RELEASE PARTY

**7/7** NOCHE DE VERANO KANDELA

**7/8** BOOTIE LA: COMIC-CON PRE-PARTY

**7/8** DILF LOS ANGELES

**7/9** B. FERG AKA FAMOUS

**7/10** COAST 2 COAST LIVE

**7/11** GLORYHOLE

**7/12** THE LOVE-INS

**7/12** DESORDEN PUBLICO

**7/13** EVERYTHING IS ON THE ONE

**7/13** HALLYU NIGHTS

**7/13** MOON BOUNCE

**7/14** CLUB 90S!

**7/15** BOOTIE LA: 12-YEAR ANNIVERSARY PARTY

**7/15** AMIRSAYSNOTHING

**7/15** PROTOTYPE

**7/18** TACO TUESDAYS

**7/21** TRAP KARAOKE: L.A. EDITION

**7/23** AFTON SHOWS PRESENTS: KARKAZA

**7/25** COLORS COMEDY

**7/27** KABAKA PYRAMID

**7/29** BOOTIE LA: ‘90S VS. ‘00S MASHUP NIGHT

**7/30** MISTER SATURDAY NIGHT

**7/31** THERE YOU HAVE IT WITH REASON

**8/1** BRANDON ANTHONY & LA URBAN PRIDE PRESENT “GLAMROCK”

**8/2** RUIN HOLLYWOOD

**8/3** KILLAHURTZ PRESENTS DIESELBOY & MC MESSINIAN (2 HOUR SET)

**8/4** FOURTH OF A LIE

**8/6** TACO TUESDAYS

**8/7** MATIAS AGUIAYO

**8/7** XCELELATED PRESENTS SAM BINGA, FRAGMENT, MATT DECO, GABRIEL HABIT, & WRAITH / B-SIDE PRESENTS THE FINALE FEAT. LODEFAN, JOE NICE, OXOSS, DUBWOL, & MATCHMAKER

**8/8** LEGEND OF THE MOON!

**8/9** 100% WOMEN'S MASS

**8/17** DESTROY LOS ANGELES WITH ETC!ETC!

**COMING SOON:**

- 6/30 MISTER SATURDAY NIGHT
- 6/30 THERE YOU HAVE IT WITH REASON
- 7/1 BRANDON ANTHONY & LA URBAN PRIDE PRESENT “GLAMROCK”
- 7/1 RUIN HOLLYWOOD
- 7/1 KILLAHURTZ PRESENTS DIESELBOY & MC MESSINIAN (2 HOUR SET)
- 7/4 BOOTIE LA: POP CANDY!
- 7/7 COMING SOON:
  - 7/7 ROMAN FÜGEL, OCTAVE ONE (LIVE), HEIDI LAWDEN
  - 7/7 EAT YOUR FUCKING MUSIC VOL 2
  - 7/7 THE STEADY
  - 7/7 MONO MOUNTAIN
  - 7/7 THE NIGHT CAP: A LINGERIE AND PAJAMA PARTY
  - 7/7 XCELELATED 4 YEAR ANNIVERSARY FEAT. FUNKCASE, JUNE MILLER, JAYLINE, DJ RUFFSTUFF, FLACO, DJ CONSTRUCT & RANTEE
  - 7/7 ANGELNOUGHTING
  - 7/7 PROTOTYPE
  - 7/7 TACO TUESDAYS
  - 7/7 XCELELATED PRESENTS SAM BINGA, FRAGMENT, MATT DECO, GABRIEL HABIT, & WRAITH / B-SIDE PRESENTS THE FINALE FEAT. LODEFAN, JOE NICE, OXOSS, DUBWOL, & MATCHMAKER
  - 7/7 LEGEND OF THE MOON!
  - 7/7 100% WOMEN'S MASS
  - 7/7 DESTROY LOS ANGELES WITH ETC!ETC!

**LA WEEKLY // June 30 - July 6, 2017 // www.laweekly.com**
**Music Picks**

**fri 6/30**

**Cat Power**
@ THE OBSERVATORY
Cat Power hasn’t released a new album since 2012’s Sun, hasn’t posted on her Facebook page in more than a year, and her official website is bare except for video links and a trio of shows listed on the tour page. But the singer also known as Chan Marshall has always moved at her own pace, taking the time to mull over her feelings, and she plans to do that before transforming them into music with her rich, distinctively languorous voice. Her songs feel more like emotionally cathartic incantations rather than simple pop tunes, although she breaks free from the stark folk balladry of her early records into a more uptempo, influence-on-legends mix on a haunting version from the title track’s swirling electronica to “Nineteen But Time,” a hypnotizing, 10-minute-plus duet with a low-crooning Iggy Pop. –**Falling James**

**Vieux Farka Touré**
@ LEVITT PAVILION
Notes come pouring out of Vieux Farka Touré’s guitar like a sudden cloudburst after a long drought. The riffs begin spiraling outward in a dazzling skein of glittery melodies, yet each note is detailed and dynamically precise. The Malian singer-guitarist draws upon the strangely mesmerizing and slinky guitar patterns of traditional West African and Saharan music but also infuses them with straight-ahead hard-rock power, bluesy psychedelia and lulling reggae rhythms. The son of the influential vocalist Ali Farka Touré, Vieux is a true guitar hero, but it’s not all about flash with him. Backed by the very tight, heavy-hitting duo of drummer Maman Koné and bassist Marshall Henry, Touré uses his wizardry on guitar to propel feelings of exuberantly uplifting tracks as “Homafu Wawa,” from his latest album, *Samba*. –**Falling James**

**Matrixxman, Randomer**
@ LOT 613
Droid Behavior and Prototype present a big doubleheader at Lot 613 featuring two emerging talents from the U.S. and UK techno scenes. Matrixxman (Charlie Duff, from San Francisco) has put out a bevy of driving, futuristic releases over the past five years on imprints including Dekmantel and Spectral Sound; he dropped his sci-fi- and Detroit-inspired debut album, *Homestick*, on Ghostly International in 2015. He has established himself as one of America’s most in-demand techno DJs/producers. Randomer (London-based Rohan Walder), a producer with roots in drum ’n’ bass and dubstep, also crafts distinctive, biting techno for labels such as Perc Trax. Droid’s Raiz and Ruse Djs (Template and Kgindo) are on warmup duty. –**Matt Miner**

**sat 7/1**

**Iron Maiden, Ghost**
@ GLEN HELEN AMPHITHEATER
Iron Maiden were among many acts selling out stadiums and arenas during the 1980s heavy-metal boom. Today, they remain one of the few from that era still capable of pulling massive crowds of headbangers. The timelessness of galloping, shout-along anthems such as “The Trooper” and worthy newer catalog additions such as 2015’s *The Book of Souls* plays a large part in their enduring appeal, but it’s their still-powerful live shows that keep them at the top. Vocalist Bruce Dickinson still hits his patented “Air Raid Siren” high notes while the band tightly slings both new hits and old favorites as energetically as in their formative years. Swedish occult rockers Ghost will add to the metal celebration with the catchy Satanic sing-alongs such as “Square Hammer” — that have made them a fan favorite in recent years. –**Jason Roche**

**Agent Orange, JFA**
@ ALEX’S BAR
Despite the encroaching luxury condos, Long Beach is still very much a working-class city, musically defined as much by the G-Funk hip-hop of the ’90s as by the hardcore, skate punk and ska scenes that have been an off-and-on presence in the city since the early ’80s. That makes the slightly seedy Alex’s Bar in Long Beach a perfect venue, in a perfect city, to see the ’80s surf-punk pioneers Agent Orange and the skate-punk trailblazers JFA. Although both bands are getting up there in age, they still play with an impassioned snarl that can match any 18-year-old punk’s energy. Both bands should bring in a typically diverse mix of Long Beach punks of all races and orientations. –**Sam Ribakoff**

**DJ Quik**
Emerged from the California gangsta-rap scene of the early ’90s with a pioneering, funk-infused sound. Although not quite a household name like those other artists, his enduring influence on later ’90s West Coast producers can’t be overstated. This show is a rare opportunity to see this living legend perform in the intimate environs of the Troubadour backed not by two turntables but by a live band. Also performing will be the Quik-produced artist Suga Free, whose soulful, often humorous tracks reflect on his life as a pimp. Proceeds from this all-ages show will go to support Black Tone, Quik’s friend and manager, who is recovering from a recent stroke. –**Matt Stromberg**

**Dirty Penni Fest 2**
@ THE ECHO AND ECHOPLEX
Dirty Penni Fest is the wild child of Dirty Laundry TV, the long-standing L.A. multimedia interviewers who did indeed start out filming in a laundromat, and Penni-back Records, the DIY home label of Clit Kat, Jurassic Shark and more. Together they bring a lot of power to bear, and the lineup at this second annual Dirty Penni Fest proves it. Besides headliners Dead Vally and The Shrine, who do different and yet somehow equally shredded heavy rock, they’ve got harrowing Whittier-punk scarecrows Plague Vendol; hometown hero Mike Watt; psychotronic metalloids Zig Zags; crushing, Wipers-style rockers Flat Worms; high-intensity, high-anxiety outfit Girl Tears; and lots more besides. Altogether, this fest is a still-sizzling cross-section of a certain kind of stuff you should soak in if you feel too soft, sad or slow. –**Chris Ziegler**

**mon 7/3**

**Bloody Death Skull, Cutty Flam, Ramonda Hammer**
@ THE ECHO
Bloody Death Skull belie their macabre name with a fun yet smart combination of lo-fi folk, garage rock and punky pop. Even when the local group cover a morbid song like Leon Payne’s endlessly

**Sun 7/2**

**DJ Quik, Suga Free**
@ THE TROUBADOUR
Alongside N.W.A, 2Pac and Snoop Dogg, Compton-born hip-hop artist DJ Quik emerged from the California gangsta-rap scene of the early ’90s with a pioneering, funk-infused sound. Although not quite a household name like those other artists, his enduring influence on later ’90s West Coast producers can’t be overstated. This show is a rare opportunity to see this living legend perform in the intimate environs of the Troubadour backed not by two turntables but by a live band. Also performing will be the Quik-produced artist Suga Free, whose soulful, often humorous tracks reflect on his life as a pimp. Proceeds from this all-ages show will go to support Black Tone, Quik’s friend and manager, who is recovering from a recent stroke. –**Matt Stromberg**

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The Regrettes: See Thursday.

Laura Drover and her bandmates
in their new video for “Seashore,”
which they filmed at the L.A.-based
White Magic, The Occasion and several
NYC improvisers.
—John Payne

Bloodshot Bill
@ RESIDENT
What better way to celebrate (or ignore)
the Fourth of July than by spending it
in the company of a diehard Canadian
country band whose idea of a good time
is to take the most revered and authentic
roots music and trash it up as thoroughly
as possible? Bloodshot Bill hails from
Montreal and has collaborated in various
projects with like-minded roots-diggers
King Khan (as Tandoori Knights) and
Mark “BBQ” Sultan (in The Ding-Dongs).
All by his lonesome, Bloodshot Bill yowls
like a sick and seedy alley cat while chop-
ping away at his guitar and stomping on
a board for percussion. Such ditties as
“The Girl Who Dances Alone” and the
shaggy-dog UFO tale “Creature From
the Sky” shuffle along with raw, primitive
simplicity.
—Falling James

Melvins
@ THE OBSERVATORY
Nearly 35 years into their critically, if
not commercially, lauded career, there
are still few bands that put on a show so
monstrously heavy and brutally mono-
litic as the Melvins. Longtime members
King Buzzo and Dale Crover have always
made it their mission to release gleefully
difficult, radio-repellent, sludgy punk
rock. Fans in the underground were left
polarized with the band’s major-label
debut, Houdini, back in 1993. But by ’97,
that flirtation with stardom was left to
rot, and the Melvins crawled back into
the primordial metal ooze where they
truly belong. The remarkably prolific
 trio, now also featuring bassist Steven
McDonald, just released a new double
album, A Walk With Love and Death,
this year, so expect plenty of new songs.
Also at The Troubadour, Friday, July 7.
—Brett Callwood

Luis Pérez Ixoneztli,
Mike Wexler
@ ZEBULON
Two contrasting other-music masters of-
fer alternative sounds for the soul, for
the spirit and for sheer sonic splendor. Mex-
ico City multi-instrumentalist Luis Pérez
Ixoneztli and partner Christopher Garcia
offer extended pieces that re-create the
music the Aztecs were making before the
European conquest. Ritual chants sung
in various native Mexican languages
are performed to the accompaniment
of percussion and wind instruments
from Mesoamerica such as clay flutes,
ocarinas, whistles made from bee’s wings
and butterfly chrysalis, instruments of
bone and feathers, gongs and suspended
metal objects. Highly regarded Brooklyn
acoustic guitarist Mike Wexler earned his
props back in the mid-2000s with three
albums of medieval folk-derived
songs featuring his heavy-plucking solo
stringwork and inven-
tive, freeform song structures, culminat-
ing in 2012’s Dispossession (Mexican
Summer), recorded with members of
White Magic, The Occasion and several
NYC improvisers.
—Liz Ohanesian

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PHOTO BY JEN ROSENSTEIN

by Matt McGinley
—Falling James

@ LEVIT PAVILION
The Regrettes are the Teen Vogue of
rock bands: Their intelligence and astute
observations are shocking only to those
who forget that young people are often
smarter than grown-ups. On debut album
Feel Your Feelings Fool!, they tackle
issues such as body image and relation-
ships with rock & roll rhythm and a sense
of empowerment. More recently, in their
video for “Seashore,” the L.A.-based
band move from a presidential stage to
a witch burning to a suffragette protest,
exasperated at the never-ending history
of sexism. If there’s a band ready to lead
the new generation of punk-influenced
feminists, it’s The Regrettes. Fellow locals
The Tracks have been making a splash
even without much music available
online. Most recently, they unleashed two
live tracks recorded for Amazon series I
Love Dick, including a stunning cover of
the Don Gibson song “Oh Lonesome Me.”
—Falling James

by Matt McGinley
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the Don Gibson song “Oh Lonesome Me.”
—Liz Ohanesian
THE DRESDEN RESTAURANT: 1760 N. Vermont Ave., Los Angeles. Marty & Elayne. Tuesdays-Saturdays, 9 p.m., free. The Beards, Sundays, 9 p.m.-midnight, free.

GRIFFINS OF KINSALE: 1007 Mission St., South Pasadena. Bar "Big B" Brenner, Thursdays, 8 p.m., free.

LAS HADAS: 9048 Balboa Blvd., Northridge. Cool Blue Monday, 7-9 p.m., free. The Eric Elsstrand Trio, Monday, 8 p.m., free. Jack Johnson, Monday, 9 p.m., free.

THE LIGHTHEARTED CAFE: 6030 Holliston Ave., Hermosa Beach. The Sunny Blue Quintet, Saturday, 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m., free. The Doug MacDonald Quartet, Sunday, 7-11 p.m., free.

94TH AERO SQUADRON: 16320 Raymer Ave., Van Nuys. Adrian Galysh, Fridays, 6-9 p.m., free.

PERCH: 448 S. Hill St., Los Angeles. The Joey Dosik Trio, Fridays, 7-11 p.m., free. The Todd Hunter Trio, Saturdays, 12-3 p.m., free. The Jesse Palter Quartet, Sundays, 12-3 p.m., free. Ben Rose, Thursdays, 7-10 p.m., Sundays, 7-10 p.m., free. The Molly Miller Trio, Mondays, 7-11 p.m., free. The Michael Schwartz Quintet, Tuesdays, 7-10 p.m., free. Raquel Rodriguez, Wednesdays, 7-10 p.m., free.

VIBRATO GRILL & JAZZ: 2930 Beverly Glen Circle, Bel Air. Sueños, Sabine Potthier, Friday, June 30, 9:30 p.m., free. Toss Panos, Wednesday, July 5, 9:30 p.m., $15. Bob Reynolds, Thursday, July 6, 9 p.m., $5. Sheer, Furnace Girl, Friday, July 7, 9 p.m., $10. Psychic Love, Jupiter Winter, Big Air, Friday, July 7, 10 p.m., $10. John Kirby, Saturday, July 8, 9:30 p.m., $15. Jacuzzi Boys, Cones, Saturday, July 8, 8 p.m., TBA.

THE WORLD STAGE: 4321 Degnan Blvd., Los Angeles. Justo Almario, Friday, June 30, 9 p.m., $20. The Roberto Miranda Quartet, Saturday, July 1, 9 p.m., $20. Sisters of Jazz Jam Session, Sundays, 8 p.m., 5-7 p.m., $5. Jazz Jam Session, Thursdays, 9 p.m., $5.

Falling James

LATIN & WORLD

THE CONGA ROOM: 800 W. Olympic Blvd., Los Angeles. Discoteca DTLA Fridays, 8:30 p.m., TBA. Conga Room Saturdays, 9:30 p.m., TBA.

EL FLORIDITA: 1253 N. Vine St., Los Angeles. Salsa Night, Fridays, 8 p.m.; Saturdays, 9:30 p.m., $10.

HOUSE OF BLUES ANAHEIM: 1530 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim. Margarita La Diosa de la Cumbia, Thursday, July 6, 7 p.m., $7, 10 p.m., $20.

Falling James

COUNTRY & FOLK

THE CINEMA BAR: 9967 Sepulveda Blvd., Culver City. Tom Gramlich, Friday, June 30, 9:30 p.m., free. Jed's Dead, Saturday, July 1, 9:30 p.m., free. Hot Tuna of L.A., Mondays, 8:30 p.m., free. Book of Curtis, Tuesday, July 4, 9:30 p.m., free. Roger Greenfield, Wednesday, July 5, 9:30 p.m., free. Alice Austin, T.S. Idol, Thursday, July 6, 9:30 p.m., free.

THE COFFEE GALLERY BACKSTAGE: 2029 N. Lake Ave., Altadena. The Get Down Boys, Friday, June 30, 8 p.m., $15. Kimo Williams, Saturday, July 1, 9:30 p.m., $20. Luis Vilegas, Dan Sistos, Carbe & Durand, Sunday, July 2, 7 p.m., $20.

THE COWBOY PALACE SALOON: 21635 Devonshire St., Chatsworth. Rob Staley, Friday, June 30, 8 p.m., free. The Michael Carson Band, Saturday, July 1, 8 p.m., $5. Pam Loe, Sunday, July 2, 6 p.m., free. Jimi Nelson, Tuesday, July 4, 8 p.m., free. The Kate Brown Band, Thursday, July 6, 8 p.m., free.

E.B.’S BEER & WINE BAR, FARMERS MARKET: 6333 3rd Pl., Los Angeles. John Tesch, Friday, July 1, 8 p.m., $15. Cover of Curtis, Saturday, July 2, 9:30 p.m., free. The Reading, Sunday, July 3, 9 p.m., $5. Adam Hersh, Mike Lebrun, Saturday, July 2, 9 p.m., $10. Vinny Golia, Monday, July 3, 9 p.m., Alex Hahn, Wednesday, July 5, 9 p.m., $15. Mission Statement, Thursday, July 6, 9 p.m., $10.

BUBANKO MOOSE LODGE: 1900 W. Burbank Blvd., Burbank. Pete Anderson, Mondays, 8 p.m., free. CATALINA BAR & GRILL: 6725 W. Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles. Amanda McElroy, Friday, June 30, 8:30 p.m., $15. TBA, Nicole Simms, Saturday, July 1, 8:30 p.m., $20. Johnny Britt, Sunday, July 2, 7:30 p.m., TBA, Sara Garek, Thursday, July 6, 8:30 p.m., TBA.

COLOMBO’S ITALIAN STEAKHOUSE & JAZZ CLUB: 1553 Colorado Ave., Eagle Rock. Steve Thompson, Fridays, 5:30 p.m., free. The Eric Elsstrand Trio, Monday, 8 p.m., free. Tom Ambruster, Thursdays, 7 p.m., free. Karen Hernandez & Jimmy Spencer, Wednesdays, 7 p.m., free. Tripletta, Thursdays, 7 p.m., free.

D’VINE LOUNGE BAR: 2121 Flower St., Los Angeles. Alan Price, Saturday, July 1, 9 p.m., free.

LAUGH COMEDY NIGHT: 1750 N. Vermont Ave., Los Angeles. Marty & Elayne, Tuesday-Saturdays, 9 p.m., free. The Beards, Sundays, 9 p.m.-midnight, free.
DANCE CLUBS

THE AIRLINER: 2419 N. Broadway, Los Angeles. Low End Theory Saturdays, DJ resident Ds Daddys Kev, Nobody, The Gaslamp Killer, D-Styles and MC Nocando, Wednesdays, 9:30 p.m.-1:30 a.m.

AVON LAWN: 1735 Vine St., Los Angeles. Ape Drums, Promote, Wild Boys, Not So Nala, Fri., June 30, 9:30 p.m.; Control, with DJs spinning dubstep and more, Fridays, 9:30 p.m. Kryder, Randy Seidman, Frank Nitty, Sat., July 1, 9 p.m. Dion Timmer, Mon., July 3, 9 p.m., free.

BOARDER’S: 1852 N. Cherokee Ave., Los Angeles. Bar Sinister, Hollywood’s dark-wave bastion and guth dungeon, with resident DJs Amanda Johns, John C & Tommy, plus sexxy-sensual displays and aerialist distractions, Saturdays, 10 p.m.-$10-$20. Blue Mondays, where it’s always the 1980s, a decade of “bad fashion & great music,” with resident DJs 18 & over, Mondays, 8 p.m., $3-$7.

CREATE NIGHTCLUB: 6021 Hollywood Blvd., Los Angeles. Noize Fridays, Fridays, 10 p.m.; Danny Avila, Fri., June 30, 10 p.m.; Blau, Sat., July 1, 10 p.m., $30; Blau, Justin Caruso, Sat., July 1, 10 p.m. Arcade Saturdays, 10 p.m.

THE ECHO: 1822 W. Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles. Funky Soile, with Music Man Miles, DJ Soft Touch and other DJ sessions, Saturdays, 10 p.m., free-$10. DJ Club, an eternally mesmerizing night of reggae, dub and beyond from resident DJs Tom Chase, Roy Corderoy, The Dungeonmaster and Bossa Nova, plus occasional live sets from Jamaican legends, ages 21 & over, Wednesdays, 9 p.m., $7.

THE ECHOPLEX: 1154 Glendale Blvd., Los Angeles. Franki Chan, El Giglio, Flying Horse, Sat., July 1, 9 p.m., free-$10. Dub Club, an eternally mesmerizing night of reggae, dub and beyond from resident DJs Tom Chase, Roy Corderoy, The Dungeonmaster and Bossa Nova, plus occasional live sets from Jamaican legends, ages 21 & over, Wednesdays, 9 p.m., $7.

EQUIVOCAL: 515 Sunset Blvd., West Hollywood. Don Diablo, Fri., June 30, 10 p.m.; Awakening, Fridays, 10 p.m. Inception, Saturdays, 10 p.m.; Max Enforcer, Dr. Rude, Sat., July 1, 10 p.m. GTA, Mon., July 3, 10 p.m. 12th Planet, Blaise James, Chris Lake, Fri., June 30, 10 p.m., free-$5.

GOLD DIGGERS: 5632 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles. Total No Request Live, Last Friday of every month, 9 p.m. 2 a.m. Continues through Oct. 27, free.

GRAND STAR JAZZ CLUB: 943 N. Broadway, Los Angeles. Club Underground, with DJs Larry G & Diana Williams’ score to The Godfather, 8 p.m., $31-$152. Hollywood Bowl, 2320 W. Sixth St., Los Angeles. See More Music Pick.

THE LASS: 117 Winston St., Los Angeles. Boy, with DJ Pogo Pape, Andi Synthidice, Remy Marc, Fri., June 30, 7 p.m., free.

THE LINCOLN: 2536 Lincoln Blvd, Venice. For the Record, wind night with rock DJs Bruce Duff & Kasey Bombers, Tuesdays, 9 p.m.-a.m. free.

THE LINE HOTEL: 3515 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles. Stones Throw by the Pool, with RSVP, Saturdays, 10 p.m.-a.m. free. $10.00 continues through Aug. 26.

LOS GLOBOS: 3040 W. Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles. Club 90’s, Fridays, 10 p.m. Bootie LA, Saturdays, 9 p.m.

LOT 63: 613 Imperial St., Los Angeles. Matroxa, Randoor, Raiz, Fri., June 30, 10 p.m., $20 & $25. See Music Pick.

QUE SERA: 1923 E. Seventh St., Long Beach. Turn to Reel: An Evening of Killing Joke, with DJ Mark Gemini Thwaite, MC Dave Bats, Fri., June 30, 9 p.m.-a.m., $5.

THE REGENT THEATER: 5448 S. Main St., Los Angeles. The Biggest Dollar Party Ever, with Gianni Lee, Suga Shay, Tugger, Saturdays, 9 p.m.-a.m.

THE SATELLITE: 1717 Silver Lake Blvd., Los Angeles. Adam 12’s AFEX, Fri., June 30, 9 p.m. 5 & $10. Dance Yourself Clean, Saturdays, 9 p.m.-a.m.

SEVENTY NORTH: 1524 Ventura Blvd, Studio City. DJ Analog, Thursdays, 10 p.m. Continues through Aug. 3, free.

SHORT STOP: 1455 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles. Super Soul Sundays, Sundays, 10 p.m., free. Motoon on Mondays, Saturdays, 9 p.m., free.

SOUND NIGHTCLUB: 1642 N. Las Palmas Ave., Los Angeles. Secret Guests, Bones Wolfe, Lee Wells, Fri., June 30, 10 p.m. Bruce, Sat., Tara Brooks, Sat., July 1, 10 p.m. Trent Cantrelle, Shantu, Mon., July 3, 10 p.m.

SATURDAY, JULY 1


BASSRUSH WEEKENDER: 8 p.m. Hollywood Palladium, 6215 W. Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles.

CAT POWER: With Jade, 8 p.m. TBA. The Observatory, 3053 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana.

CEF PETE ESCOFFED: 7 p.m. Levitt Pavilion Pasadena, 85 E. Holly St., Pasadena.

THE SIDE EYES: With The High Curbs, Uniform, Moss, Blivet, 8 p.m. The Observatory, 3503 S. 3rd St., Los Angeles.

THE SPACEMAVIS: 6 p.m., free. Eagle Rock Recreation Center, 1100 Eagle Vista Dr., Eagle Rock.

ASIAN KUNG FU GENERATION: 8 p.m. By Microsoft, 3800 W Olympic Blvd., Los Angeles.

BEACH FOSSILS: With She Devils, Ablebody, 8:30 p.m. El Rey Theatre, 5515 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles.

LAURIE LEWIS & THE RIGHT HANDS: 7 p.m., free & $10. Culver City City Hall Courtyard, 9710 Culver Blvd, Culver City.

TITAN: With Silverio, Anzano, 8:30 p.m. $22. The Regent Theater, 448 S. Main St., Los Angeles.

LA WEEKLY

43

L.A. PHILHARMONIC: Justin Freer conducts John Williams’ score to Harry Potter & The Chamber of Secrets, Thu., July 6, 8 p.m.; Fri., July 7, 8 p.m.; Sat., July 8, 8 p.m., $29-$147. Hollywood Bowl, 2301 N. Highland Ave., Los Angeles.

MARCELO ÁLVAREZ & TANGO SPLEEN: The Argentine lyric tenor tangoes with the music of Carlos Gardel, Jorge Calandra, Astor Piazzolla and others, Wed., July 5, 7:30 p.m., $90-$120. The Broad Stage, Santa Monica College Performing Arts Center, 1310 11th St., Santa Monica.

PACIFIC SYMPHONY: The pop-minded orchestra indulges in a symphonic homage to Bruce Springsteen, Tue., July 4, 8 p.m. Pacific Amphitheatre, 10 Fair Dr, Costa Mesa.

For more listings, please go to laweekly.com.

CLASSICAL & NEW MUSIC


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SUDAMERICANA BEACH HOUSE BOAT CRUISE PARTY: With Paul Valentin, Toka, Tuba Lopez, Saturday, 6-11 p.m., $50. Catalina Classic Cruises, 1046 Queensway, Long Beach.


VAUD & THE VILLAINS: 8 p.m., free. Levitt Pavilion Pasadena, 85 E. Holly St., Pasadena.

SOUND NIGHTCLUB: 7 p.m., free. LACMA, Bing Theater, 5905 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles.


JESSICA FICHOT: 6:30 p.m., free. Levitt Pavilion at MacArthur Park, 2230 W. Sixth St., Los Angeles.

LAND OF TALK: 9 p.m. Hollywood Forever Cemetery, 600 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles.


VAUD & THE VILLAINS: 8 p.m., free. Levitt Pavilion at MacArthur Park, 2230 W. Sixth St., Los Angeles.

TITAN: With Silverio, Anzano, 8:30 p.m. $22. The Regent Theater, 448 S. Main St., Los Angeles.

UBA: With Matiyuhol, Raging Ryah, 7 p.m. TBA, The Greek Theatre, 2700 W. Vermont Ave, Los Angeles.
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