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Drawing & Composition
Drawing Form (ONLINE)
Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain
Life Drawing
Life Drawing (ONLINE)
Pastel Drawing
Perspective Drawing

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“JENNIFER LOPEZ PROVES THAT SHE’S THE HARDEST-WORKING SUPERSTAR IN SHOWBIZ.”
– The Guardian

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PARTIES

**Up in Smoke**

Late last month, resurgent DTLA gallery Think Tank launched its weeks-long group exhibition “DrinKin’ Smokin’ & West Coastin’,” a so-called “love-hate letter” to L.A. that focuses on the years between the 1984 Olympics and the Kings-Lakers rivalry of the early ’00s. The gallery is hosting pop-up events and themed parties throughout the show’s run, and this week, it’s teaming with Little Face and Higher Beauty for the **Cannabis Cabaret**: Called the “best pot party in California” by Rolling Stone, the weed-themed, speakeasy-style variety show features drag by Samantha Starrland and Selena Blackwater, puppetry by Cain the Puppet Master, music by Nicky Disko, burlesque by CannaMiss Marquez and Puppet Master, music by Nicky Disko, featuring drag by Samantha Starrland and Puppet Master. The gallery is hosting pop-up events and themed parties throughout the show’s run. 

ART

**Coaster of Love**

From the sublime to the ridiculous, the fifth annual “The Coaster Show” at La Luz de Jesus Gallery presents great art, writ small, on more than 1,000 4-inch coaster by illustrators as varied as Ron English, Penelope Houston, Maia Gross and Mark Ryden. For many of the artists, this constitutes the first public showing of their work, all of which is on for sale for $250 or less. Whether you’ll actually use them as coasters at home depends on how much free will you actually have — are they art or are they still functional? Eh, probably stick with the Ikea coasters for your can of PBR. La Luz de Jesus Gallery, 4633 Hollywood Blvd., Los Feliz; Sept. 1, 8 p.m.; $34-$54. (323) 461-3673, fordtheatres.org.

—Katherine Spiers

FOOD & DRINK

**A Sense of Taste**

The Taste, sponsored by the L.A. Times, is one of the biggest food events all year. The three-day festival has a different theme for each three-hour block of time, though all five of those generally aim to celebrate L.A.’s best restaurants and most iconic ambassadors of food culture. Weekend passes are already sold out, but tickets for the different three-hour blocks can be purchased individually, at $95-$180. Extras.

—David Cotner

DANCE

**What the Folk**

Just ahead of the real Mexican Independence Day (which is September 16, not Cinco de Mayo), **Grandeza Mexicana Folk Ballet Company** displays why it is one of SoCal’s most popular folkloric performance groups. Expect the troupe’s signature meticulous footwork and exuberantly colored costumes as the ensemble celebrates director Jose Vences’ 25th-anniversary with dances that capture Mexico’s varied regions. Known for careful research into the regional cultures underlying his choreography, Vences unveils a new work for this celebration. Although the troupe doesn’t usually perform to live music, this anniversary event brings La Banda de Tlayacapan from Mexico to accompany the festivities. Ford Theatres, 2580 Cahuenga Blvd. E., Hollywood Hills; Sat., Sept. 2, 8 p.m.; $34-$54. (323) 461-3673, fordtheatres.org.

—Siran Babayan

PODCASTS

**The Crappingen**

Bravo has some of the biggest stars on reality TV, love ‘em or hate ’em. Since 2012, Ronnie Karam and Ben Mandelker have hosted Watch What Crappens (a play on the network’s nighttime talk show Watch What Happens Live With Andy Cohen), their wonderfully bitchy, L.A.-based five-day-a-week podcast that lovingly mocks all things Bravo, whether it’s the obscenely rich busboys of The Real Housewives franchise, hard-partying Persian-Americans of Shahs of Sunset or contestants on Top Chef. For tonight’s live taping, Karam and Mandelker will discuss Flipping Out with the show’s cast members, including house flipper and designer Jeff Lewis, plus Gage Edward and Jenni Pulos; they’ll also revisit a season-three episode of The Real Housewives of New York titled “Scary Island.” Teragram Ballroom, 1234 W. Seventh St., Westlake; Sat., Sept. 2, 9 p.m.; $20. (213) 689-9100, teragramballroom.com. 

—Gwynedd Stuart

BLOCK PARTIES

**Magically Delicious**

Since Delicious Pizza opened on Adams Boulevard in West Adams in 2015, it’s become a hub in a neighborhood on the upswing. In the outdoor garden they call “the Yard,” co-owners Mike and Rick Ross host the West Adams Block Party just in time for Labor Day. The free, open-to-the-public party features music from jazz, funk, soul and hip-hop artists and DJs, kids activities like face painting and a bounce castle and, of course, yummy food. Besides its popular pizza offerings, the shop is hosting a pop-up of the Detroit-based doughnut shop Dilla’s DeLights Doughnuts, in honor of legendary producer-rapper J Dilla. Spending time with the community just got sweeter.

5419 W. Adams Blvd., West Adams; Sun., Sept. 3, 2-10 p.m.; free. (323) 424-3014, deliciouspizza.com.

—Gwynedd Stuart
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Rodney Dangerfield classic
to benefit the new
institute of higher laughing
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THE
STAGE READING
of
BACK TO SCHOOL

FOOD & DRINK

A Hill of Beans
The ninth annual Camarillo Chili Cook-Off & Music Festival is an official event of the ICS — International Chili Society, if you don’t know. That means the country’s best chili cooks will be setting up their pots and vying for both the love of the audience and for ribbons. There is also a choice award at the event, so you can taste as many of the contenders as you like, then cast your ballot. There are food vendors, too — all down-home stuff like burgers, ice cream, kettle corn and lemonade. While you’re sampling bean stews, a bounce house and all kinds of kid-friendly arts and crafts will keep the youngsters occupied. Windows down on the not unsubstantial ride home. Camarillo Ranch Foundation, 201 Camarillo Ranch Road, Camarillo; Sun., Sept. 3, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.; $20, free kids 12 and younger. www.camarillochamber.org/chilicookoff. —Katherine Spiers

ARTS & CULTURE

Ease on Down the Broad
The Broad Stage celebrates the waning days of summer at its annual Broad Fest, which spreads food, booths, music and other entertainment across three areas. The Plaza Stage includes Indian, Bolero, blues, electric violin and family-friendly reggae performed by Sadubas, Aaron Nigel Smith, Tres Souls, Val Vigoda and Shawn Amos. The Edye Second Space features Global Motion dance company (composed of Santa Monica College students), the SMC Jazz Ensemble and educational talks presented by SMC students), the SMC Jazz Ensemble and educational talks presented by SMC students), the SMC Jazz Ensemble and educational talks presented by SMC students), the SMC Jazz Ensemble and educational talks presented by SMC students), the SMC Jazz Ensemble and educational talks presented by SMC students), the SMC Jazz Ensemble and educational talks presented by SMC students), the SMC Jazz Ensemble and educational talks presented by SMC students), the SMC Jazz Ensemble and educational talks presented by SMC students). The Music Halls hosts interactive tango, hula-hooping and art-making lessons. The Broad Stage, 1310 11th St., Santa Monica; Sun., Sept. 3, 2-7 p.m.; free. (310) 434-3200, thebroadstage.org. —Siran Babayan

PODCASTS

I Give You This Ring
Will Hines is a UCB actor, teacher and director, whose credits include Inside Amy Schumer, Crazy Ex-Girlfriend, Brooklyn Nine-Nine and Broad City. He’s also a Fab Four super fan, who this year launched the podcast Screw It, We’re Just Gonna Talk About The Beatles. Hines and his fellow UCB comedians discuss one of The Beatles’ studio albums per episode, from Please Please Me to Abbey Road, as well as related topics: George Martin, Lennon songs vs. McCartney songs, Beatles books, covers, etc. (Ever heard Sean Connery’s spoken-word version of “In My Life”? Chilling.) For the podcast’s first live taping, Hines and co-host Joel Spence will analyze John, Paul and George’s vocals and harmonies, and guests Ariana Lenarsky, Heather Woodward and Jackie Johnson will sing “Oh! Darling,” “Because” and other Beatles tunes. UCB Sunset, 5419 W. Sunset Blvd., East Hollywood; Mon., Sept. 4, 10:30 p.m.; $7. (323) 908-8702, sunset.ucbtheatre.com. —Siran Babayan

BOOKS

Capital Records
Washington, D.C., hardcore punk is synonymous with Bad Brains, Minor Threat and other influential acts from the late 1970s and early ’80s. Live at the Safari Club: A History of harDCore Punk in the Nation’s Capital: 1988-1998, however, focuses on the music and the scene that flourished in the city after hardcore punk’s heyday, namely the sweaty, stage-diving glory of the Safari Club, a windowless dive and Ethiopian restaurant that also hosted bands. Co-authors Shawn Kenney, who was one of the venue’s promoters, and husband Rich Dolinger share hundreds of black-and-white photographs and interviews with members of Bad Brains, Danzig, Rancid, Hole, Sick of It All, Gorilla Biscuits and other groups, in addition to clubgoers, artists and zine makers. Dolinger is a writer and photographer, and Kenney is the author of the 1999 memoir I Was a Teenage Dominatrix; both currently live in L.A. The two discuss their book with Mark Gitter, who also previews his upcoming book, xXx Fanzine (1983-1988): Hardcore & Punk in the ’80s. Skylight Books, 1818 N. Vermont Ave., Los Feliz; Tue., Sept. 5, 7:30 p.m.; free, book is $30. (323) 660-1175, skylightbooks.com. —Siran Babayan

COMEDY

Ready, Eddie
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Fake Eyelashes, Real News.

Follow @WeHoCity for alerts on local events where drag queens slay and policy is made.

Drag Queen Story Hour at the West Hollywood Library.
the first comedian to have a weekly residency at Dan Harmon’s newish venue, Starburns Castle. In his appearances on everything from the podcast WTF With Marc Maron to Conan and Bob’s Burgers — not to mention his frequent stand-up gigs on stages around town — Pepitone exudes a born-and-bred New Yorker’s manic energy, frequently breaking into fits of incandescent anger that you can’t help but enjoy. It’s like secondhand catharsis. He brings his manic vibe — some call it genius — to the stage at Starburns four times this month, each night spitting pearls of wisdom like a disgruntled East Coast oyster.

Starburns Castle, 1105 W. Isabel St., Burbank; Wed., Sept. 6, 8 p.m.; $10. (818) 433-3300, starburnscastle.com.
—David Cotner

When It Rains, It Pours

With a snazzy score by Lennie Hayton and ebulliently memorable tunes by composer Nacio Herb Brown and lyricist Arthur Freed, Singin’ in the Rain remains one of the most thoroughly enjoyable musicals from Hollywood’s Golden Age. Choreographing many of his own fantastic dance sequences, Gene Kelly portrays a silent-film star at the dawn of the talkies era who is pulled in opposing directions by his ostensible girlfriend (Jean Hagen) and a mysterious stranger (Debbie Reynolds). Rampant silliness ensues, not to mention soaring, dreamy dance interludes with Kelly and Cyd Charisse. Conductor David Newman, scion of the Newman dynasty of composers (Alfred, Maria, Thomas and Randy), aligns L.A. Philharmonic with the film in a live instrumental score at tonight’s screening.


Right on Q

Long Beach Qfilm Festival is the city’s oldest film festival, attracting more than 1,500 visitors annually. This year’s highlight is the opening-night screening of The Untold Tales of Armistead Maupin, Jennifer Kroot’s new documentary on the famed author of the Tales of the City novels. The four-day schedule includes dozens of features, shorts and more documentaries that highlight LGBTQ topics, as well as discussions, awards, parties, an ice cream social and a drag brunch.

Screenings are at the art deco Art Theater, with receptions at the LGBTQ Center of Long Beach, which has served the local gay and lesbian community since 1980.

Art Theatre of Long Beach, 2025 E. Fourth St., Long Beach; Thu., Sept. 7, 7:30 p.m. (through Sept. 10); $12. (562) 434-4455, qfilmslongbeach.com. —Siran Babayan
A DISASTER TRUMP CAN’T TAKE CREDIT FOR

Just when you thought the coward-in-chief couldn’t risk his tie any further twist his legs, he jet over to Arizona and turns the Phoenix Convention Center into a hellish hothouse where truth, sanity and the English language were tortured for well over an hour. Trump sought to annihilate the reputations of fellow Republicans and pathetically re-truth his blowouts post-Charlottesville, like covering the threadbare tires of a used car with black spray paint and calling them new.

Animals will chew their leg off to get out of a trap, Trump will hack his off to better kick himself in the nuts. Trump is the quarterback of a team that continually sacks himself and then blames his lineman for not protecting him.

Trump needed this rally. It had been a tough week in the real world of fake news, Mueller’s slow squeeze and the realization that, as they say in the shop, “You break it, you bought it” — when you say it, you said it. He had to surround himself with people who would cheer such downsers as, “And yes, by the way, they are trying to take away our history and our heritage. You see that.” Who are “they” in that sentence? All those who are not “our.” This line-drawing line, relating to the statues of Confederate icons being taken down, was the bumper sticker. This, after he read the list of all the baddies he finally acknowledged as such: “I hit them with everything. I got the white supremacists, the neo-Nazis. I got them all in there, let’s say. I got the white supremacists, the neo-Nazis. I got them all.”

From her malodorous cave, the wicked Hillary stirred a bubbling cauldron of lies and thousands of incriminating emails, shook a veiny, clawed fist at the sky and screamed. And thus, Hurricane Harvey was born.

Texas is getting pounded by the weather. William Brock Long, administrator of FEMA, said that bringing the affected areas back will take years. Long’s burden is extra heavy. Without all the key positions at FEMA, NOAA and the National Hurricane Center filled, it’ll be multitasking. Beyond what Long estimates will be at least a couple of years of rebuilding and relocation, it’s going to take a hellish hothouse where truth, sanity and the English language were tortured for well over a year.

For a man who keeps repeating that he wants the United States to be a coast-to-coast group hug, he sure seems to be trying to start a fight.

So far, he has failed at every opportunity to funding that will be coming in from those dreaded liberal blue states.

This is the first true test of Trump’s presidency — a disaster he can’t take credit for. So far, he has failed at every opportunity to lead. Here are two tweets, to show you where he’s coming from.

Aug. 27, 0615 hrs.: “I will be going to Texas as soon as that trip can be made without causing disruption. The focus must be life and safety.”

Aug. 27, 0615 hrs.: “I will also be going to a wonderful state, Missouri, that I won by a lot in ‘16. Dem C.M. is opposed to big tax cuts. Republican will win!”

Unbelievable. Might be best for him to lay off the golf and weekend trips to his ugly resorts for a few years, lest he be accused of being a fat fuck Nero, putting white Texas struggles to regain its footing.

The state’s recovery is going to take more than a lot of money. It’s going to take a full-court press by the rest of the states and a president who can prioritize, focus and lead. Trump would be well advised to make regular TV appearances, cut his “me, me, me” victim bullshit and make sure he says the word “Texas” a lot. Imagine his wall being built while Texans wait for their president to make Texas great again.

TRUMP HAS PROVEN TO BE A SORE WINNER AND WILL NO DOUBT BE A FAR SORER LOSER.

He’ll be multitasking. Beyond what Long estimates will be at least a couple of years of rebuilding and relocation, it’s going to take a lot of money. Hopefully, Texas will be open to funding that will be coming in from those dreaded liberal blue states.

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TRUMP SUPPORTER TALKS POT

Some minority marijuana entrepreneurs are boycotting Roger Stone’s appearance at an L.A. pot expo. Stone accuses them of being a part of a liberal conspiracy.

BY DENNIS ROMERO

n a fashion now familiar to those following the current administration, longtime Trump backer Roger Stone lashed out at critics who are boycotting an upcoming marijuana convention that features him as a headlining speaker. “I will not be silenced,” Stone told the Weekly via email.

Multiple exhibitors and speakers have pulled out of the Cannabis World Congress & Business Exposition (CWCBE), scheduled for Sept. 13-15 in Los Angeles, as a result of Stone’s presence. The long-time political consultant, who worked on the political campaigns of Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan and Donald Trump, was targeted mostly as a result of his support for the 45th president.

Seventeen speakers and seven sponsorship partners, including the Drug Policy Alliance, have abandoned the event, boycott organizers say. The Minority Cannabis Business Association (MCBA) initiated the boycott earlier this month after learning of Stone’s appearance. A Change.org petition with more than 500 endorsements also is urging the expo to drop Stone. “Inviting Mr. Stone to speak to the crowd, especially as we see the rise of overt racism and anti-Semitism, is an affront to the very movement you purport to promote,” according to the petition.

Boycott participants cited denigrating and racist remarks made by Stone, including that fellow expo speaker Rev. Al Sharpton is a “professional Negro,” and argued that the timing, after the deadly white nationalist demonstration in Charlottesville, Virginia, is problematic. They also noted that Stone helped elect President Nixon, an architect of the so-called “war on drugs” that’s now being revived by Trump administration Attorney General Jeff Sessions.

Stone suggested that the left-leaning website Media Matters for America and its founder, David Brock, were behind the boycott, which he described as a move inspired by a “recycled” and “phony charge that I am a racist.”

The boycott, he said, is happening “despite my longtime activism in opposition to New York’s draconian, racist Rockefeller Drug Laws dating to a speech I made at the Countdown to Justice Rally in New York City in 2003. Other speakers included Russell Simmons and Rev. Al Sharpton. My critics propose censorship. “To be clear this manufactured ‘boycott’ is agitprop astroturf, with all the usual trolls and bots featured in a heavy-handed but obvious smear campaign waged by David Brock and his minions,” Stone wrote. “I will not be silenced in the fight for states’ right to legalize a medicinally beneficial plant that helps millions of Americans.”

Boycott organizers scoffed at Stone’s claim that a liberal conspiracy was behind the action. “Mr. Stone’s assertion that this is a smear campaign waged by his enemies is exactly the type of dismissive behavior he has displayed toward communities of color and women for years,” Jesce Horton, co-founder and chairman of MCBA, said via email. “The idea that cannabis business owners and activists can’t assess for ourselves his deplorable rhetoric and his camp’s self-serving intentions in the cannabis industry is sad.”

Marijuana entrepreneur Bonita “Bo” Money, a co-signer to the Change.org petition’s preamble, says, “All the women involved are veterans of the industry. We are pushing for legalization, not hate.”

L.A. HATE CRIMES CONTINUE TO INCREASE, AND THEY’VE EXPLODED IN LONG BEACH

Hate crime in the city of Los Angeles remains on the rise in the era of President Trump, according to preliminary midyear data from the Center for the Study of Hate & Extremism at Cal State San Bernardino. Such incidents surged 12.6 percent compared with the same time last year. The increase would put Los Angeles on track for a fourth straight year of hate-crime increases, according to the center’s data.

Researchers used L.A. Police Department data to measure violent aggravated assaults and other incidents motivated by hate. Los Angeles’ midyear increase was mild compared with other cities. Long Beach was looking at a preliminary surge of 700 percent this year; San Jose, 400 percent; San Francisco, 100 percent; Portland, Oregon, 233 percent; and New York, 28 percent.

The number of hate crimes in the city of Los Angeles through the end of July was 161, versus 143 at the same point in 2016, preliminary figures show.

“The combination of an escalating set of connected rallies, increasing polarization and political instability, coupled with the dawn of a new academic year for universities, means this trend likely has not yet peaked,” the report’s author, criminal justice professor Brian Levin, said via email. Academics pointed to greater numbers of confrontational protests and events across the nation at which people have been injured. A chart with preliminary data shows statewide arrests, injuries and incidents so far this year at demonstrations regarding police shootings, Trump’s election, Black Lives Matter, Islamic customs and “America First.” The nation has experienced “significant aggressive physical disruption of lawful public gatherings,” Levin said.

“A hate crime is more than just an attack on an individual or group,” LAPD public information director Josh Rubenstein said via email. “It is a violent tear at the fabric of our community.”

He said that despite LAPD’s appointment of a hate-crimes coordinator and extra detectives throughout the department’s divisions, L.A. “and other major cities across the nation [are] dealing with this uptick in reported hate crimes.”

A scene from a Los Angeles anti-Trump demonstration

“The LAPD is committed to keeping our vibrant and dynamic city safe,” he said, “while celebrating the diversity that makes Los Angeles one of the most exciting cities in America.”

—Dennis Romero
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Not long after sunrise on a weekday morning in August, stocky men in baseball caps and paint-spattered jeans gathered in front of food stands lining the entrance to a shopping plaza near Sixth and Union in Westlake. A cumbia played at low volume. Over the din of customers and passing cars, the women vendors intoned the items from the morning’s menu: torta de huevo con espinaca, gallina chipotle, caldo de res. The young women who assist the vendors exchanged pleasantries with customers and ladled beans and rice out of steaming Coleman coolers onto Styrofoam plates.

The bustle of foot traffic and the aroma of home-cooked foods transform the dull corner of a parking lot into an open-air market worthy of a visit from Anthony Bourdain. But the modest assemblage of market stalls here — a poor man’s Grand Central Market — has for decades been regarded by the city with something like contempt.

While apostles of street food have made hit shows that popularize street food as an uncensored entrée to other cultures and customs, sidewalk vending been an illegal practice in Los Angeles since a citywide ban took effect in 1980. As street food enjoys a renewed appreciation globally, Los Angeles finds itself in the peculiar position of being at once the only major U.S. city that does not permit some form of sidewalk vending and the one with more sidewalk vendors than any other.

“Many cities have permits that allow some vending, whether they set a hard cap like in New York City … or limit the places you can sell or the hours of the day,” says Mark Vallianatos, director of urban policy think tank LaPlus, who has published extensively about the informal economy of sidewalk vendors in Los Angeles. “But no other very large city in the country has a strict ban.”

On any given day in L.A., an estimated 10,000 street vendors cater to the city’s appetite for no-frills ethnic cuisine from push-carts or centerfold tables set up on sidewalks or in parking lots. In New York City, by comparison, food carts are legal, and the number of permanent permits is capped at 3,100, with another 1,000 seasonal permits. Far from eliminating street vending, L.A.’s ban has merely forced the industry underground, where it is unregulated and untaxed — and where vendors operate in fear of raids that strip them not just of their food and supplies but of their livelihoods.

“These hubs already exist where you can get the tastiest food,” says Randy Esbinosa, executive director of the nonprofit Leadership for Urban Renewal Network and spokesman for the L.A. Street Vendor Campaign. “It so happens that some of these vendors are amazing chefs. Imagine if these folks were actually welcome.”

Two City Council members are currently working to lift the ban and regulate L.A.’s street-food vendors. Their plan wouldn’t instantaneously put Los Angeles in the same league as global street food capitals like Bangkok or Mexico City, but it would make the best street-food city in America even better — both for eaters and for vendors.

It’s Time to Legalize Tacos

Will L.A.’s Street Food Finally Get the Recognition It Deserves?

By Jason McGahan

Photography by Ted Soqui
There is perhaps no more accessible way to start a small business in Los Angeles than with a food cart. Street food is the entry level below the entry level. As Mayor Tom Bradley said when vetoing a City Council attempt to ban street vendors in 1974, “Many people whom we now consider big-time businessmen had their start as street hawkers.”

Bradley added, “I believe we need to encourage, not discourage, the creation of new small-business enterprises, without which upward mobility on the socioeconomic ladder would become that much more difficult.”

To explore this entry-level point of L.A.’s food scene, I enlisted the help of chef Louis Tikaram, who trained in Sydney and runs E.P. & L.P. Asian Eating House in West Hollywood. Tikaram, 31, credits the street food he consumed during his travels to Thailand and Fiji as his reason for becoming a chef. “I’m a chef because of my travels.”

He consumed during his travels to Thailand and Fiji as his reason for becoming a chef. “I travel overseas for this, and here you have it practically free.”

Galdamez says. Tikaram — mi amor.

Galdamez says she has sold her food in the same spot for a decade. Her tagline: Barata la comida, casi regalada (“Food so cheap it’s practically free”).

“This is why I gravitated to Los Angeles,” Tikaram explains. “I’m used to having to travel overseas for this, and here you have it on your doorstep: street food, chatting with the locals, learning to understand other cultures through cuisine.”

Galdamez served Tikaram his first pacooyo, the slightly astrigent flower of a species of palm tree. She prepares it in the typical Salvadoran fashion, boiling the plume of fronds and then golden frying them in an egg-white batter. Tikaram savored it as part of a plate of stewed beef shin in a tomato base with red salsa, black bean puree and rice; the price is $5. “Best thing I’ve eaten in a while,” he says, “and it’s off the street — at 7 a.m.”

Galdamez says she gets up at 1 a.m. to begin preparing the day’s guisados, enchiladas, tacos dorados. (“Good for the Saturday hangover,” she playfully advises a construction worker buying lunch.) Everything must be prepared for a two-hour window from 6:30 to 8:30 a.m. Many of the men and women who buy meals there take them to go, neatly wrapped and ready to eat at lunchtime.

“These people are the backbone of the city,” Tikaram says. “Everything about the food is geared toward wanting to work all day. These guys aren’t going to stop for a meal.”

There was a grim undercurrent of chatter at the outdoor market. Suspicous looks and long faces. Fear of immigration arrests is widespread with Trump in the White House. But the vendors say the bigger problem lately has been crackdowns from the city, which they say have grown more frequent. They say men riding in pickup trucks with L.A.’s insignia have raised this corner twice in the past week. They arrived with a police escort and hauled away the food and supplies. “They come more often all the time,” Galdamez says.

When the city enforcement team arrives, the vendors flee the area, abandoning their belongings. They also activate what they call el pitazo, a phone chain of calls to vendors at other corners in the area, warning them the city is out on patrol. The unlucky ones who don’t run away in time can wind up with several hundred dollars in fines.

Juanita Son was one of the unlucky ones. Son, an indigenous Kitchen’ from Guatemala, is a small, soft-spoken woman in a colorful handmade blouse and skirt and a violet cardigan. She runs a food stand at the same corner as Galdamez, and the city has written her two citations in the past week, she says. “They took away the coolers and food and left me with nothing.” She estimates she lost $400 worth of merchandise and supplies.

The vendors returned the next day. Some of them say that after so many raids they have learned to keep supplies in reserve. “We come back,” Son says, “because we need to make a living.”

Los Angeles City Councilman Joe Buscaino became well acquainted with the city’s ban on street vendors in the years when he was a police officer in the Harbor Division, tasked with enforcing it. Buscaino says he answered many complaints from neighbors or business owners, wrote many citations and even made a few arrests. It came to nothing. “I was frustrated with the enforcement because it didn’t work,” Buscaino says. “Clearly it seemed like a waste of time. They were back out there the next day.”

Political support to legalize street vendors in Los Angeles has bogged down for decades. Time and again the push back tends to come from councilmembers who want the power to exempt areas of their district from the plan and from brick-and-mortar business owners who view the vendors as competition.

Then Donald Trump was elected president. Spurred by fears of a pending immigration crackdown, the City Council in February downgraded street vending from a misdemeanor to an administrative infraction similar to a parking ticket. (It remains a misdemeanor to sell in city parks.) As the L.A. Times wrote in an editorial, “The decision means city inspectors or police can issue citations and levy fines for peddling goods on the sidewalk, but sellers won’t face criminal charges that could lead to deportation for vendors in the country illegally — a long-standing concern that became urgent with the election of President Trump.”

The decriminalization was part of a proposal outlined by councilmembers Buscaino and Curren Price last year to legalize and regulate street vending citywide. The proposal would allow up to four stationary vendors per block in commercial and industrial zones and allow mobile vending from ice cream and food carts in residential areas, provided they stay moving. It also would allow each council district to determine hours of operation and types of items that could be sold — or to prohibit vending in that district altogether.

Six months have passed since the council’s last meaningful action on street vending.

“The reason why it’s taken quite a bit of time is because the city has not tackled such an issue that involves a comprehensive street-vending policy,” Buscaino tells the Weekly. He says the council will reopen discussion on the proposal later this month.

Then, in late July, came the viral video of the attack on an elote vendor. A man who was out walking his dog in Hollywood was angry that the vendor, Benjamín Ramírez, was blocking part of the sidewalk. When Ramírez stood his ground, the man advanced toward the vendor, blocking part of the sidewalk. When Ramírez stood his ground, the man advanced toward the elote vendor brandishing what Ramírez later said he believed was a stun gun. Ramírez then tossed chili powder at the man, who seized hold of the cart and overturned it, spilling ears of fresh corn onto the sidewalk and into Romaine Street.

Ramírez filmed the attack on his cellphone, and 8.9 million people have watched the video since his mother uploaded it to Facebook. Ramírez has appeared at two rallies and received a groundswell of support that brought pressure on the City Council to set practical, enforceable rules to regulate street vending.

“A group of women who are street vendors came up and told me, ‘You’re a hero to us,’” Ramírez says. “I was shocked and flabbergasted.”

On Aug. 15, Councilman Buscaino posted a video on Facebook of a meeting he had with Ramírez in which they discuss the effort to legalize street vending. In the video, the councilman gives Ramírez a rosary that belonged to his Italian grandmother; Ramírez’s father, Alex, serves the councilman an espresso from his food cart.
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LIVING THE DREAM

At Botanica, two food writers cross the divide to become chefs and restaurateurs

BY BESHA RODELL

As someone who covers the tear-stained, blood-soaked money pit that is the restaurant industry, I can say without hesitation that I want no part of this business except as an observer. “Why does anyone do it?” my fellow food writers and I often ask one another, wondering about the audacity of chefs and restaurateurs who wade bravely into the muck of city regulations and real estate and contractors and a fickle, oversaturated and understaffed market. Restaurant seems like the career most non-assured of this business except as an observer. “Why does anyone do it?”

The decision to start a magazine and a restaurant that are based on one another speaks volumes about Botanica and its owners, and also about the state of restaurants in Los Angeles right now. This is an intellectual pursuit as well as an aspiration-fulfillment fantasy. The look and feel of the place are massively important, in the same way that a glossy food magazine is judged less on its intended audience (and even some people smack in the midst of that audience). “I was so annoyed by it,” one friend said. “I just felt like they were pandering exactly to the people who work in restaurants,” another said. “If you were at the same spot. The building has been gutted and opened up and transformed completely. The storefront space is now a market selling wine and coffee and a few beautifully chosen baskets of seasonal produce; behind that lies a long bar and banquette seating, and there’s a garden spillings of fried shallots and a jumble of flowers. At lunch you can get a bowl of what is so much more. You could go there simply to be the type of person who knows about a rare spice from a far-flung location. Botanica scratches a similar itch. The all-day restaurant is located on Silver Lake’s prettiest retail corridor, in what was formerly a dimly lit, halfway decent liquor store. The vintage “liquor” sign still hangs above the door. If you were at all familiar with Silver Lake Liquor, that

Eats // Fork Lift //

BOTANICA IS A RESTAURANT, BUT IT ALSO IS A LIFESTYLE.

sign is perhaps the only indicator that this is the same spot. The building has been gutted and opened up and transformed completely. The storefront space is now a market selling wine and coffee and a few beautifully chosen baskets of seasonal produce; behind that lies a long bar and banquette seating, and there’s a garden patio out back with more seating and vases spilling unruly arrangements of flowers. It’s all quite fabulous. Most of the food comes in wide, heavy bowls, herbs and lettuces and pops of flavorful fruit—made to order and perfectly composed. In the kitchen, Botanica is a restaurant, but it is also a lifestyle. What lifestyle is that? One lived in Silver Lake in 2017, where you’re wealthy enough to pay $50 for lunch and have enough leisure time to spend three hours lingering over that meal, sipping natural wine and chatting about your creative endeavors. Like its most obvious contemporary, Botanica is the type of place you’re likely to see movie stars dining unshaven and relaxed, where million-dollar Holly-wood deals are made at adjacent tables by dudes who look fashionably unemployed.

For years, writing about food for Tasting Table, Daily Candy and StarChefs, among other websites and publications, Botanica was conceived as a way to bring their food dreams to life, both physically and on the page. They refer to the endeavor as a “restaurant, marketplace and magazine,” and while the magazine has yet to materialize it’s still very much a part of the plan.

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FUELING UP //
A VINTAGE KOREATOWN GAS STATION IS REINCARNATING AS A COFFEE SHOP

Koreatown, not necessarily known for its destination indie coffee shops — although Alchemist and Bia Coffee are pretty great — is getting a new one, this time in an abandoned gas station from the 1940s. It’s called Full Service Coffee Co., and it’s set to open this fall.

Because one of the most beloved aspects of L.A. is its midcentury architecture, it’s nice that the bones of the building will remain in the new design. The former Whittier’s Texaco Station is at the northern end of Koreatown, at Beverly and Hobart boulevards. Built in 1941, it fueled drivers in L.A. until 1965, when it was turned into a used-car dealership. Although its complete history in recent decades is not filled in, it had been abandoned for a while.

“My partners commute through that street, so they’ve seen the building for years,” says Edoardo Chavarin, one of three co-owners of Full Service Coffee Co. “It was fenced off and not in use, and a lot of people have said that it would be an ideal place for a food or coffee concept. So when my business partner saw the sign going up, we decided to call immediately and put together a pitch.”

Chavarin is a brand consultant who’s on the creative side of things, and his partners, John Juniper and Jeff Solorio, co-own an eyewear company together. This is their first food and beverage project.

“I don’t think we would have been interested in opening a coffee shop — it’s the iconic location that really inspired us,” Chavarin says.

While the menu, coffee sourcing and barista team are still being dreamed up, the building change of use was one of the most complicated parts of the process so far, Chavarin says. Although the gas pumps were removed when the gas station was converted to a used-car dealership, serving food at the location meant making sure that all residual chemicals were cleared from the site.

That process was completed in the ‘80s, according to Chavarin, but finding proof was almost impossible. “We spent months literally looking for these documents and this paperwork, making visits to the fire department and police station,” he says. Accessibility was another issue — buildings in the 1940s didn’t have the same ADA standards as they do today. “Now you need ramps, now you need big enough restrooms and things like that,” Chavarin explains. “But we’re trying to do as less as possible to keep [the building] in the most original form. Our partners come from a design world and the aesthetics are gorgeous.”

There are a few other repurposed gas stations in the city: Afters Ice Cream in Pasadena and Hollywood’s gleaming white Starbucks on Highland and Wilshire, which is actually a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument. Though the Koreatown gas station applied for this same designation, it was turned down in 2011 — probably making for an easier construction process for its new owners.

Despite the compelling aesthetics of Full Service Coffee Co., Chavarin acknowledges that a beautiful building and historic site do not a successful business make.

“Los Angeles attracts a lot of really good people in [any] category, so it’s definitely a challenge if you want to do a good job,” he says. “We’re 60 or 90 days out, and we’re already sparking a conversation, which is great. But it’s also a push because that means you have to deliver.”

Full Service Coffee Co. is set to open in October or November. —Gowri Chandra

Fueling Up
A Vintage Koreatown Gas Station is Reincarnating as a Coffee Shop

Koreatown, not necessarily known for its destination indie coffee shops — although Alchemist and Bia Coffee are pretty great — is getting a new one, this time in an abandoned gas station from the 1940s. It’s called Full Service Coffee Co., and it’s set to open this fall.

Because one of the most beloved aspects of L.A. is its midcentury architecture, it’s nice that the bones of the building will remain in the new design. The former Whittier’s Texaco Station is at the northern end of Koreatown, at Beverly and Hobart boulevards. Built in 1941, it fueled drivers in L.A. until 1965, when it was turned into a used-car dealership. Although its complete history in recent decades is not filled in, it had been abandoned for a while.

“My partners commute through that street, so they’ve seen the building for years,” says Edoardo Chavarin, one of three co-owners of Full Service Coffee Co. “It was fenced off and not in use, and a lot of people have said that it would be an ideal place for a food or coffee concept. So when my business partner saw the sign going up, we decided to call immediately and put together a pitch.”

Chavarin is a brand consultant who’s on the creative side of things, and his partners, John Juniper and Jeff Solorio, co-own an eyewear company together. This is their first food and beverage project.

“I don’t think we would have been interested in opening a coffee shop — it’s the iconic location that really inspired us,” Chavarin says.

While the menu, coffee sourcing and barista team are still being dreamed up, the building change of use was one of the most complicated parts of the process so far, Chavarin says. Although the gas pumps were removed when the gas station was converted to a used-car dealership, serving food at the location meant making sure that all residual chemicals were cleared from the site.

That process was completed in the ‘80s, according to Chavarin, but finding proof was almost impossible. “We spent months literally looking for these documents and this paperwork, making visits to the fire department and police station,” he says. Accessibility was another issue — buildings in the 1940s didn’t have the same ADA standards as they do today. “Now you need ramps, now you need big enough restrooms and things like that,” Chavarin explains. “But we’re trying to do as less as possible to keep [the building] in the most original form. Our partners come from a design world and the aesthetics are gorgeous.”

There are a few other repurposed gas stations in the city: Afters Ice Cream in Pasadena and Hollywood’s gleaming white Starbucks on Highland and Wilshire, which is actually a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument. Though the Koreatown gas station applied for this same designation, it was turned down in 2011 — probably making for an easier construction process for its new owners.

Despite the compelling aesthetics of Full Service Coffee Co., Chavarin acknowledges that a beautiful building and historic site do not a successful business make.

“Los Angeles attracts a lot of really good people in [any] category, so it’s definitely a challenge if you want to do a good job,” he says. “We’re 60 or 90 days out, and we’re already sparking a conversation, which is great. But it’s also a push because that means you have to deliver.”

Full Service Coffee Co. is set to open in October or November. —Gowri Chandra

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#TasteLA
Fukagawa May Serve L.A. County’s Best Traditional Japanese Breakfast

One of the great things about living in L.A. is how internationally we can eat, within a reasonable driving distance. This extends to morning fare, as one can start the day with any kind of breakfast — for example, a traditional Japanese breakfast, made up of several small dishes.

Despite the wealth of Japanese options in Sawtelle and Little Tokyo, you won’t find a traditional Japanese breakfast in either of those two communities. For that, you’ll have to head to Fukagawa, in the South Bay city of Gardena.

First, a little history. Gardena has a strong Japanese-American presence, dating back to the 1900s, when Japanese immigrants began farming on marginal land muddied by tidal wetlands that stretched to the harbor. After internment during World War II, many Japanese-Americans returned to Gardena. Until 2014, the city had the highest percentage of Japanese-Americans in the county.

Which brings us back to Fukagawa. The restaurant is hidden from view, tucked into a space beyond a corner of the Pacific Square Shopping Center. The breakfasts are served in four different combinations. Combo A is pescatarian (not vegan): a bowl of rice, miso soup, cold tofu with scallions and bonito flakes, pickled vegetables, a sheet of nori (seaweed) and an egg. You have one of four options for your egg: sunny-side up, raw, scrambled or dashimaki tamago, a style of egg that should be familiar to those whose sushi bar experience extends beyond ordering only California rolls.

Combo B adds the notorious fermented soybeans, natto. Considered by many to be a truly acquired taste, natto does appeal to those able to get past the goosy texture and strong aroma to discover a nutty flavor. It’s served in a small bowl, topped with scallions and a raw quail egg, with a smear of wasabi along the edge. Stir it together, adding as much wasabi as you wish. Combo C subtracts the natto and adds your choice of steak or fish (mackerel, salmon or Spanish mackerel). There’s nothing fancy about the fish, which is simply salted and then grilled. The fourth and final combo, D, includes both natto and the choice of steak or fish to provide the largest breakfast option.

Breakfast is served all day, though the restaurant is closed between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.

At night, Fukagawa serves a wide range of Japanese items, including shabu shabu (Japanese hot pot), but it’s the traditional breakfasts that are the attraction here. With the restaurant being part of the community for more than 30 years, it’s the kind of place that attracts regulars. Japanese is the language most commonly heard, and a TV in the corner plays Japanese programming. Fukagawa might not be shiny and new, and would never make any hip or trendy list, but it’s yet another reason to love the options we have available. —Jim Thurman

Papadakis’s Space Becomes Pappy’s Seafood

The legendary San Pedro gathering place Papadakis Taverna closed in 2010 after a 37-year run that saw the scrappy little restaurant (it used to be a brothel!) turn into a go-to party spot for USC glitterati and showbiz folks alike. Since then, two restaurants have attempted to fill the space — physical and nostalgic — but both closed in about a year. But the building has a new owner now, and a simple concept in a pretty, remodeled space.

Pappy’s Seafood (yes, named in homage) is a new project by the owners of the Albright (formerly SM Pier Seafood, opened by the parents of one of the current owners) on the Santa Monica Pier. They’re staying in their comfort zone with a menu of fishy crowd-pleasers like fish and chips, calamari, stuffed clams and the seafood stews of various nations. And a fish grill, and, of course, poké.

Between the name of this new restaurant and nods to the area’s history, like a bar reclaimed from the old Fisherman’s Market at Ports o’ Call, the owners are being respectful and aware of their surroundings. This means they may not even get accused of gentrification. This iteration could work. —Katherine Spiers

SteelCraft Expands to Bellflower, Garden Grove

SteelCraft, a development in Long Beach made from repurposed and repainted shipping containers and filled mostly with food and drink vendors, is getting two siblings. One will be in Garden Grove, and a third site in Bellflower was recently approved.

The Long Beach SteelCraft opened in February 2017 and has a mix of culinary options, including Smog City Brewing and Desano Pizza. The tenants at the new locations have not been picked yet, according to a publicist for the project: “Our team is actively searching for tenants for both Garden Grove and Bellflower. We plan to place them strategically based on their current operations and what makes the most sense for each unique community.”

The developers say the Bellflower building will have “around 30” tenants, including coffee, beer, wine and dessert options, plus a couple small retail shops.

The 15,000-square-foot city-owned lot, at Bellflower Boulevard and Oak Street, will be designed much like the Long Beach location: a group of 20- and 40-foot shipping containers and a communal dining area.

The development is estimated to generate $50,000 in annual sales tax. Here’s hoping the restaurant choices are excellent. —Katherine Spiers
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THIS WOMAN’S WORK
Five short plays illuminate the feminine experience in the age of Trump in “Nevertheless, She Persisted”

BY BILL RADEN

It takes a long memory to recall a time when Los Angeles gave the short play its due respect. Decades of skyrocketing rents, plunging government arts support and the recent loss of Actors’ Equity’s fabled 99-Seat Plan, which made large-cast shows affordable for L.A.’s intimate stages, have transformed a once ubiquitous and vibrant playwriting showcase into an endangered species.

Fortunately, the thoughtfully produced evening of one-act plays lives on in “Nevertheless, She Persisted,” Echo Theater Company’s latest collection of commissioned short works. This time, Echo targets the political dimensions of gender in the age of Donald Trump in an unusually strong, all-woman program of emerging playwrights backed by a rock-solid, 16-member ensemble drawn from Echo’s younger associate troupe of actors.

**At Dawn** is Chicago playwright Calamity West’s speculative look at a dystopian America 30 years after Trump’s election. Joey Stromberg and Landon Mirisciotti are Arizona bordertown cops cut from the bigoted cloth of Joe Arpaio; Kaiti O’Connor is a hapless prostitute suspected of resistance activities. Her ensuing interrogation connects the dots between Trump’s “locker-room” misogyny and the racist economic nationalism of his build-the-wall immigration policies.

**Yaju** by Writer-director Mary Laws upends gender stereotypes along with mother-daughter power dynamics in the wickedly funny dark comedy. Maya Bowman plays an emotionally vacant adolescent daughter to Julie Dretzin’s increasingly horrified mother in a parent-child negotiation, whose grisly revelations underscore the pitch-black irony of Law’s moral that “there are some things worse than not knowing.”

**Sherry and Vince** by Charlotte Miller explores the near-apocalyptic repercussions of an unnamed act of sexual violence. In 1980s San Francisco, young office temps Dana (Ellen Neary), Wendy (Erin Scerbak) and Angela (Amanda Wagner) throw a party hoping to meet attractive guys. Instead, they get Dave (Alex Waxler), a man scarred by personal tragedy, and Violet (Susan Louise O’Connor), a mother searching for her missing daughter, who’s the girls’ age. Throughout it all, Yablon’s signature cocktail of period kitsch, imminent sexual violence and unfulfilled desire persuasively implicates the women’s alienated and rootless existence in the inchoate threat lurking just outside.

**Violet** by Jacqueline Wright is the titular college student, who sits paralyzed in the dark just after being raped; Rachael Olson is her roommate, at a loss as to how to support her in her moment of crisis. Teagan Rose capably directs, but it is the quiet truth articulated by Wright’s persuasively imagined scene that delivers the evening’s haunting emotional punch even as it persuasively punctuates its political imperatives.

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**KEEPING IT REAL**

Despite breakout role, Noomi Rapace is a star hiding in plain sight

**BY APRIL WOLFE**

In one of two new action films Noomi Rapace leads this summer, she plays seven different women — sisters — in a dystopian future in which single-child policies are stringently and violently enforced because of food and resource shortages (let’s be honest: global warming). This is Netflix’s *What Happened to Monday*. In her other film, *Unlocked*, Rapace is Alice Racine, a CIA interrogator who becomes London’s greatest hope as she defends the city from a massive terrorist attack. The former is dumb-fun sci-fi that is as inane as it is novel; the latter is staid and formulaic, though well-executed — as though director Michael Apted got a spec script for a *Token* sequels and dropped in a female lead. What’s clear from both: Hollywood is grappling with what to do with Rapace.

But Rapace hasn’t always known what to do with herself. When the Swedish actor was cast in her breakout role, as Lisbeth Salander in Niels Arden Oplev’s gritty The *Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* trilogy, she’d been working onstage, doing Shakespeare. “I was an awkward theater actress,” she tells me over the phone. “I wanted my performance to be very real and authentic. I didn’t like the drama of speaking in a weird voice.”

She had trained in martial arts since she was a child and possessed a natural aggressiveness that didn’t always jibe with the homogenous culture of her dual homelands, Sweden and Iceland. “Everyone is obsessed with fitting in and being normal, and I tried,” she says. “But it didn’t work. There were a couple of years when I was really trying to blend in and make myself invisible. I wanted to be like the other girls, but it didn’t work, and I just became unhappy and nonexisting.”

By any objective standard, Rapace has reason not to feel normal. For two formative years of her childhood, she lived on a farm in Iceland, where her mother taught children with Down syndrome and Rapace learned deep and enduring empathy for children with Down syndrome and_Racine, a CIA interrogator who becomes London’s greatest hope as she defends the city from a massive terrorist attack. The former is dumb-fun sci-fi that is as inane as it is novel; the latter is staid and formulaic, though well-executed — as though director Michael Apted got a spec script for a *Token* sequels and dropped in a female lead. What’s clear from both: Hollywood is grappling with what to do with Rapace.

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By any objective standard, Rapace has reason not to feel normal. For two formative years of her childhood, she lived on a farm in Iceland, where her mother taught children with Down syndrome and Rapace learned deep and enduring empathy lessons. But she also learned how to be the outsider — she was one of the only children there who did not have Down, and she didn’t know her father until he was dying. Acting was her escape — as was, she says, whiskey — and even though she did not know what “New York City” was, she was just 7 when she told her mother that was where she was going someday.

“We didn’t have a TV. We lived on a farm. But I had this dream that I would take off,” Rapace says. And now, as she sits in a fancy hotel in Los Angeles, meeting press to promote her films, she says she’s “shocked” that this is what she’s doing with her life. She tells me her 14-year-old son is in a room adjacent to hers. She keeps him close to keep herself grounded, but it also means he must watch his mother go through painful transformations.

“When I did Monday, I told him, ‘I’m going to do this, and I don’t know how this will affect me. I will be gone for a couple of months.’ When I was done, I came home and was just holding him, unable to function,” she says. Rapace has been known to sink deeply into her roles. At the end of filming the *Dragon Tattoo* trilogy, for instance, she’s said to have literally “vomited out” her character. For *Unlocked*, she tells me that her character would have been very by-the-book, so she devised a rigid health plan she stuck to for months. “I was very, very structured, very disciplined, on green juices and raw food,” she says. “I love to challenge myself and put myself in extreme situations, so I said, ‘What happens if I detox and fast for seven months?’ Sometimes I feel like I’m a scientist and a guinea pig at the same time.”

This willingness to manipulate the self serves her well in action roles; filming *Unlocked*, she broke a bone in her foot and a bone in her nose. “I had bumps and scars, and my nose will never look the same,” she says with a laugh. And this lackadaisical attitude toward vanity is not something you normally hear coming from an actor’s mouth — especially a woman’s. But Rapace is, well, different. Some directors have picked up on her imperfect-diamond quality and seen that she could be the female action star of the future. Ridley Scott even delivered unto us an evergreen feminist GIF with Rapace’s role in *Prometheus*: her muscular character racing against the clock to perform her own alien-baby abortion. And director Tommy Wirkola had the foresight to change the seven male siblings of Monday to female. (“He said, ‘Read this, and if you like it, I can only imagine one actress in the world doing it, so if you want to do it, we’ll change it to seven sisters,’” Rapace says.) Still, the majority of Rapace’s directors so far don’t seem to have understood her, and she has yet to become a household name.

But talking with Rapace and watching her in action sequences, it’s difficult not to think it’s just a matter of time before the actor (metaphorically) blows up. Like a parasitic alien baby, Rapace simply grows on you.

“I realized last night, when I was with both Ridley Scott and Michael Mann, that they [directors] all kind of want me to be... me. I say, ‘You don’t want me to change? You don’t want me to be someone else?’ No. But that is a blessing. My entire life has been something I’ve been struggling with, to adjust and be normal. And I said, ‘You know what? I can’t. I’m 100 percent me now, and it works.’ And it’s still a bit shocking that works.” Rapace laughs again. “Me being me.”

**Follow-up to Goon lands a lot of jokes — and this time, they sting**

Here’s a shocker: What might have seemed an ill-advised sequel to a surprisingly not-bad little hockey comedy is... surprisingly not bad! In fact, in some ways *Goon: Last of the Enforcers* actually manages to improve upon its forebear, connecting on jabs at a rate roughly equal to that of the earlier film but this time mixing in some gut punches, too. It does all this, first, by recognizing the strengths of the original Goon, chief among them a kind of provincial humility.

If you’d worried that *Last of the Enforcers* would succumb to the temptation, so typical of sequels, to go bigger, grander, glossier — say, to strain believability by thrusting lov-able-dimwit hero Doug Glatt (Seann William Scott) onto the NHL stage — fear not. The movie does exactly the inverse, beginning with news of a big-league lockout that has forced some of the top talent down, onto teams in the sticks. Thus does rising star/loose cannon/villain Anders Cain (Wyatt Russell) wind up with the hot shots from Reading, Pennsylvania, which becomes fodder for the kind of punchline Goon excels at: The Keystone State burg, one player on our Halifax Highlanders claims, is populated solely by “translucent Rust Belt weirdos.”

That’s about right for hockey, whose fans take a certain perverse pride in the sport’s fringe appeal — and who are, as this follow-up never forgets, pretty much the only people who will ever care to see it. But there’s also some pointed satire this time around. Any follower of hockey would have to be denser than Dougie not to apprehend how this sequel comments on the troubling state of affairs in the sport. —Mike Laws
CONVICTION LACKING
CROWN HEIGHTS TELLS A COMPelling TRUE STORY
WITH JARRING IMPATIENCE

BY DANNY KING

In adapting for the screen the long, hard story of Colin Warner—a Trinidadian native who, as a Brooklyn youth in 1980, was wrongfully convicted of murder and sentenced to prison for more than 20 years—Matt Ruskin’s Crown Heights moves along in a counterproductive hurry. Scenes rich with potential minutiae, ones that beg to be settled into, hustle past with a mere glance. The transition, for instance, from a prisoner who expresses his rage physically (the goading of a guard leads to an encounter and a bout of solitary confinement) to one who finds his center in books and reading, at length and uninterrogated, is based on an episode of public radio’s This American Life, suffers from structural confusion.

There’s a whole section of the movie in which secondary characters essentially tell William Pingeot all he needs to know about Warner’s prison time. (Periodic on-screen text tracks Warner’s prison time.) With

SCENES THAT BEG TO BE SETTLED INTO HUSTLE PAST WITH A MERE GLANCE.

As a result, Stanfield is left with the tall task of maintaining a hold on his character, even as the movie becomes preoccupied with helpfully vague flashbacks or jarringly casual skips in chronology. (Periodic on-screen text tracks Warner’s prison time.) With

his wiry frame and penetrating focus, Stanfield is often successful: Early on, Warner overhears nearby prisoners discussing the murder of which he’s been accused; when the scene cuts to the cafeteria, Stanfield performs a gesture so precise—dangling his spoon in the air like a string of sausages—that the character’s suddenly galvanized prospects for freedom are made palpable.

Much later in the movie, as Warner loses all expectation of exoneration, Stanfield convincingly plays the young man’s pained exhortations to be left alone—by his best friend, Carl “KC” King (ex-NFL corner back Nnamdi Asomugha), and even by his wife, Antoinette (Natalie Paul)—not out of momentary desperation but as the thought-out rationale of a wronged man striving for basic psychological survival.

These are vivid highlights, but most of Crown Heights, which is based on an episode of public radio’s This American Life, suffers from structural confusion. There’s a whole section of the movie in which secondary characters essentially tell William Pingeot all he needs to know about Warner’s prison time.

It comes as little surprise, in consulting the press notes, to discover that one of the movie’s most dramatically coherent scenes—a failed parole hearing—comes entirely from transcripts. No doubt thorough and important research informed the rest of Crown Heights, but the parole debate is maybe the only juncture at which Ruskin displays the poise and the clarity to be content with people talking, at length and uninterrupted.

CROWN HEIGHTS | Written and directed by Matt Ruskin | Amazon Studios and IFC Films | Playhouse

OPENING THIS WEEK

AFTER LOVE (L’ÉCONOMIE DU COUPLE)

Great loves often are reduced to a prosaic division of property, a fate the French couple in the fine new film After Love face with a whirling-dervish mix of fury and grief. After 15 years together, Marie (Bérénice Bejo) and Boris (Cédric Kahn) are clearly miserable, but they have two daughters to raise, and an immediate practical problem: They can’t agree on how to split the proceeds from the sale of their apartment. Boris, who refuses to move out, wants half, since his improvements increased the home’s value, while an exasperated Marie, who paid for it, thinks he deserves a third (at best). With two gifted actors leading the way, Belgian director Joachim Lafosse (Our Children, Private Property), a near master at age 42, finds revelation in the rituals of daily life, which so often involve the shuffling of active children either to bed or out the door for the day’s activities. A long dinner party, which finds Marie and Boris’ friends taking sides in the couple’s intensifying war, is a virtuoso set piece. Nearly every beat of this film feels spontaneous and true, so it’s jarring when Lafosse and co-writers Fanny Burdino and Mazarine Pingeot fall back on medical-crisis clichés in the home stretch. The forced ending is regrettable but, when a movie is this good, all is forgiven. (Chuck Wilson)

CALIFORNIA TYPEWRITER

Swiftly evolving technology has made mincemeat of plenty of economic models and machines, but few have been displaced so thoroughly as the typewriter. In California Typewriter (also the name of a retail and repair shop in Oakland that is ostensibly this film’s focus), documentary maker Doug Nichol makes a strong if meandering case that the American invention, in its day a paradigm-shaker in its own right, facilitates a connection to the subconscious that no other device can. Pulitzer Prize winners
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Drop by Le Trou

Friday, Sept. 1

Jacques Becker’s intense masterpiece *Le Trou* opens tonight at Laemmle’s Ahrya Fine Arts for a weeklong run. One of the purest of prison-escape films, it seethes with the energy of a director never content to settle for mere realism. Much more than a taut exercise in suspense, it’s a close study of men under pressure and of the primal need for freedom. Its suffocating atmosphere and laserlike focus make the Shawshank Redemption look like a cake walk. This release is the result of a new 4K transfer by Rialto Pictures. Some advice: Don’t wait for the Blu-ray. Laemmle Ahrya Fine Arts Theatre, 8556 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills; Fri., Sept. 1; $11. (310) 478-3836, laemmle.com.

Tuesday, Sept. 5

Vincente Minnelli’s all-black musical *Cabin in the Sky* transcends racial politics by virtue of sheer exuberance and talent. No, where else will you see Lena Horne (in her solo moment in the MGM spotlight) sing “Honey in the Honeycomb” or Ethel Waters croon “Happiness Is Just a Thing Called Joe.” Louis Armstrong even shows up as a Satanitic emissary. LACMA screens this anomalous Hollywood classic in its *Tuesday Matinees* series. LACMA, 5905 Wilshire Blvd., Mid-Wilshire; Tue., Sept. 5, 1 p.m.; $4. (323) 657-6000, lacma.org.

Thursday, Sept. 7

Sometimes you’re in the mood for Last Year at Marienbad, and sometimes you’re in the mood for *Predator*. There’s a moment in the latter when Arnold Schwarzenegger locks fists with Carl Weathers and the camera lingers on their bulging biceps, their bulk filling the entirety of the widescreen backdrop. The basic scenario involves a high-tech extraterrestrial stalking a team of commandos in the Central American jungle, but the film also is notable for featuring two U.S. governors in key roles (Schwarzenegger and Jesse Ventura). Laemmle shows this quintessence of 1980s male bravado as part of its *Throwback Thursdays* series. Laemmle NoHo, 5420 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood; Thu., Sept. 7, 7:30 p.m.; $12. (310) 478-3836, laemmle.com.

—Nathaniel Bell

David McCullough and Sam Shepard, along with Grammy-winning musician John Mayer, testify, “I realized the reason that I was able to come alive on a type-writer, where I wasn’t using a computer or even a pen, was that you’re at sort of a safe distance, where you can express yourself at the same time,” Mayer says. “You’re not taking a risk, for example. You don’t have your电脑, you know. You can express yourself in a way that I was able to come alive on a type-writer, where I wasn’t using a computer or even a pen.”

Cinefamily hosts a three-day retrospective in honor of Jerry Schatzberg, a sophisticated talent who rose to prominence in the 1970s for his gritty studies of drifters and drug addicts. The best of these, *Scarecrow*, concerns itself with two vagrants (Gene Hackman and Al Pacino), their growing bond, and their pipe dream of starting a car wash business in Pittsburgh. Scene by scene by moment by moment, it’s one of the most accurate depictions of bum life ever to appear on American screens. Schatzberg will be in attendance to share his reflections. Cinefamily/Silent Movie Theatre, 611 N. Fairfax Ave., Fairfax; Sat., Sept. 2, 7:30 p.m.; $14. (323) 655-2510, cinefamily.org.

Saturday, Sept. 2

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Sunday, Sept. 3

The cult status of *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* has only grown in the decades since Steven Spielberg’s 1977 UFO-bliss-out, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, is representative of the movie’s enduring magnetism. It is, after all, the story of a daydreamer dad (Richard Dreyfuss) who leaves his family for worlds unknown as he continually trades in one slender, luminous life companion for another: Teri Garr for Melinda Dillon for the glowing sprites disgorged from the biggest spaceship in the history of cinema. In another sense, that narrative proves deeply revealing of the character central to its story: the human. The close-association of *Close Encounters* extends beyond the no-whatever-clutter and clamor of the famously-first-place suburban life of Dreyfuss’ Roy Neary. Here was Spielberg the wunderkind, at the tail end of the decade of personal Hollywood filmmaking, dreaming the dreams that would balloon from American malaise and right into Mark Gill’s *England Is Mine*. The remaining 80 plus minutes of this muted, sometimes arresting drama concern a young man trying to find it in himself to do sulk better. Since it’s 1978, and that young man is Steven Morrissey (played by Jack Lowden), soon to be known by just his surname as the frontman of England’s most singularly literate band of the 1980s, you can’t worry too much about the lad. Still, he doesn’t have an easy go of it as he fails to connect with potential bandmates, fails to find possible friends at pubs and gigs, and fails to reach common ground with his fellow sallow Mancunians in the offices and hospitals where he works the miserable jobs that will inspire his transcendently miserable songs. No matter how bleary things look, Keats and Wordsworth are on his side — plus Oscar Wilde, The Shangri-Las and a guitar-slinging flash named Johnny who keeps not quite fully making the Mozz-to-be’s acquaintance. It’s a wallo w in a star’s pre-history, his reflections on real-life women and the things they say and think and do. Meng is a slobby free spirit and Kate is a fussy square, so early on, you might think, “Oh, this is just a gender-swapped Odd Couple.” But by the time the film smears *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence*, you’re like, “*Fuck the Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence* in general. From now on, I’m listening to radio dramas.” It’s completely unfair to compare these characters to (say) Abbi and Ilana on *Broad City*, funny women who derive dignity from their friendship. But that’s a show written, created and performed by women, while this film’s creative trust is a clueless, retrograde sausage fest. For writers David Hornsby and Lance Krall, these characters are less well and more like betta fish can drop into the same tank to watch them rip each other apart. (Chris Packham)

CINEFAMILY/SILENT MOVIE THEATRE, 611 N. FAIRFAX AVE., FAIRFAX; SAT.,_SEP. 2, _MIDNIGHT_, $12. (323) 655-2510, CINEFAMILY.ORG.

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Thursday, Sept. 7

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—Nathaniel Bell

Fascination with reflections of himself.

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Determine what you want to hear about that, too. New to the mix this year — a celebration of L.A. neighborhoods. So if you read readerschoice.laweekly.com — and look for the winners to be revealed in early October.

Now to Polls will be open through Tuesday, Sept. 5. Cast your votes at readerschoice.laweekly.com — and look for the winners to be revealed in early October.

VOTE NOW to Determine the BEST OF L.A.!

Do you have a line on a new bar that the masses haven’t yet discovered? An Instagrammer whose images you want to inhabit? A salon whose stylists deserve heaps of praise? Then make your voice heard in our annual Best of L.A. issue!

Voting is open now in nearly 70 categories, from Best Record Store to Best Podcast, Best Food Truck to Best Street Artist. And we’re adding something new to the mix this year — a celebration of L.A. neighborhoods. So if you have a favorite ’hood for cheap eats, for nightlife or for vintage shopping, we want to hear about that, too.

His new cellmates — four of them, all crammed into a tiny room that they also share with stacks of cardboard — are tough, stern men, each doing hard time. And, as they reveal to Gaspard after making sure he can be trusted, they’ve decided to dig their way out via the sewer system. Jacques Becker’s 1960 masterpiece, Le Trou, one of the most gripping of all French films, catalogs the methodical way this group of terse, no-nonsense prisoners goes about its daring, nearly impossible escape. Becker captures and keeps our attention by focusing on the tactile. The men fashion tools out of the metal frame of a folding bed. A tiny, perspex-like synglass is made of a shard of broken mirror and a toothbrush. We see how prisoners are forced to become resourceful just to survive on a daily basis, and how this in turn helps them devise solutions to their problems. If you ever wind up in a French prison, don’t smuggle in a file — just bring a DVD of this movie. It’s practically a guide to breaking out. Becker doesn’t dilute any detail, and he lets his scenes go on, so we understand just how much effort it all takes. It’s agonizing to watch but never tedious or boring. As we witness these men work, we also watch them bond, and we see what they’re made of — despite the relative lack of dialogue. Amid their silences, loyalties are built, sacrifices made. (Bilge Ebiri)

The Nile Hilton Incident Borrowing David Fincher’s viridian hues, director Tarik Saleh (Swedish, but of Egyptian descent) has created a smoky film noir based on true and recent events. The happenings of The Nile Hilton Incident lead up to the Egyptian revolution on Jan. 25, 2011. In real life, as briefly depicted in the film, Egyptian demonstrators protested the corrupt government, calling for an end to the Mubarak regime. In Saleh’s film, corruption is found compacted into a single fictional incident — yes, at the Nile Hilton — of a murdered singer-prostitute, the Sudanese maid who witnessed the crime and the officials in the business of cover-ups. The film navigates this world of crooked law enforcement, with lead Fares Fares playing Police Commander Noredin Mostafa, the investigator on the case who is met with shadiness that runs deep in the force. Though Fares is charismatic — with slicked hair and a habit of chainsmoking — he struggles to hold viewers’ interest past the murder scene. As sometimes happens in noirs, the audience is told whodunit at the beginning, but the best examples of this specialized subgenre maintain high intensity even as they work backward. The Nile Hilton Incident, despite a stylish, seedy coating, fails to even come close to the canon of greats that have influenced it. Saleh attempts a smart parallel between his story and the larger, real one that serves as his backdrop, but the revolution here seems a tired afterthought. Sadly, the movie ends up playing out like an unmemorable Law & Order episode. (Kristen Yoonsoo Kim)

Polina, Dancer Sa Vie A lot of star power, and the resources of three countries, went into the making of this subtitled dance-world weeper. Shot in French and Russian, it takes us from Moscow to Paris and ultimately to Antwerp, Belgium, showing us a young woman’s emergence from tongue-tied ballerina chrysalis into the body of a contemporary dancer, ready to advance her own creativity. In its quiet way Polina is a gender-reversed, fictional version of last year’s Danse, the doc about Ukrainian Serge Polunin, whose parents similarly sacrifice to help him reach the stratosphere, only to see him quit London’s Royal Ballet and nearly abandon his art entirely. Married directors Valérie Müller and Angelin Preljocaj (she a director, he a distinguished French-Albanian choreographer, both transitioning here from docs to narrative film) base Polina on a graphic novel by Bastien Vivès, a young French artist. Actual Russian dancer Anastasia Shevtsova takes the title role, growing from a restless bunnyhead into a brave young modernist, hopping across international borders to seize opportunities (joining a French ensemble led by Juliette Binoche), surviving adversity, finding love and delivering herself from depression by choreographing her own work. Images planted early in the film betray the path Polina will take; when we watch her move freely in the woods and commune with a moose, we guess that ballet may not be the last stop on her professional train. (Elizabeth Zimmer)

Unlocked The goofy but efficient action movie Unlocked has an ace director in Michael Apted (Coal Miner’s Daughter) and a star-filled cast, yet the only thing anyone’s likely to remember is the bit with the Rottweilers. While tracking terrorists with a plan to detonate a chemical bomb in London, CIA agent Alice Racine (Noomi Rapace) moves from one showdown to another, including an elevator stalemate that she tips in her favor via the clever use of two pissed-off dogs. Narrow escapes and cool kills are real heroes save the day with only seconds to spare. (Chuck Wilson)
## Union

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### Latin Mondays

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### Afro Music Festival Pre Party

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### NOCHE DE VERANO KANDELA 2017

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### Los Globos

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<td>The Palmer Squares</td>
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<td>10/14</td>
<td>Concrete Jungle Ent Presents: Lowerclass Brats</td>
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<td>10/27</td>
<td>Aura Noir</td>
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AGENT OF BASS

Circle Talent Agency’s Ben Hogan has an uncanny knack for launching the careers of dance music’s most talked-about talent

BY MARK ORTEGA

On a Saturday night in late July, 10,000 people are packed into an outdoor tent at the NOS Events Center in San Bernardino. L.A. bass music favorites NGHTMRE and Slander take the stage for their headlining back-to-back set at Gud Vibrations SoCal, an event NGHTMRE and Slander curated and sold out.

During the first song, a curtain falls to reveal their sprawling stage production. As the crowd erupts in cheers, 27-year-old booking agent Ben Hogan pounds his fist into his palm in celebration. As big a night as this is for his clients, it’s just as big for Hogan, who has helped guide their careers since the beginning.

Ten years ago, Ben Hogan was a high school student in Baltimore when he began working in the dance music scene, throwing all-ages events. A few years later he began working for Steve Gordon’s concert promotion company, Steez Promo, expanding its events in the Baltimore area and other markets as Gordon taught him all aspects of the music industry.

“He was throwing some college events early on and approached me to work with me and had a lot of energy,” Gordon says. “He looked me in the eye and told me he wanted to do this, so I gave him a shot. Ben has been one of my longest-running employees and has truly scripted his own career path within our agency.”

Hogan was making minimum wage as he learned the ropes, but he knew he was paying his dues and it was all going to pay off. It did — Hogan moved to Los Angeles to become an agent at the Gordon co-owned, EDM-focused Circle Talent Agency, where he now holds the title of senior booking agent.

The affable but assertive Hogan has built up an impressive roster of talent that have each made their mark in the dance music scene. His clients include Bro Safari, Ookay, Snails, NGHTMRE, Slander, Goldfish and Elohim.

The careers of NGHTMRE and Slander have been co-guided by their manager, Will Runzel of Prodigy Artists.

“I think the reason Ben is so successful is because he’s not too aggressive,” Runzel says. “I’m a talent buyer and a manager. As a talent buyer, I get deals done with people who aren’t aggressive and don’t ask for too much money, who work with you, are reasonable and are honest. Those are the agents you look out for. When I became a manager, I wanted to make sure the agents I worked with had that same ethos. When it comes to things like billing and set times, I like to think that because Ben is a nice person to work with, we win every tiebreaker.”

Hogan has emphasized the festival circuit, and building relationships with all the top festival promoters. This year, I saw NGHTMRE and Snails deliver two of the best sets at the inaugural Middlelands near Houston. NGHTMRE played a set later that month at Hangout in Gulf Shores, Alabama, that was so packed, I couldn’t even make it into the tent.

“Hangout is in a non-market — there is no major touring market [near] Gulf Shores,” Hogan explains. “That’s a perfect festival for us … we get to play for all these kids whose average drive is five or six hours. When we tour through the Southeast after, we see a reciprocal effect of Hangout being so huge. When you play and have that awesome set everyone’s talking about, they come back to future shows.”

Bro Safari, a bass and trap producer based in Texas, became Hogan’s first major client when the two sat down and connected at SXSW in 2012. They laid out a general five-year plan, and a half decade later they’ve crossed everything off that list, playing major festivals all over the world. Canadian DJ/producer Snails will be embarking on the biggest tour of his career this fall across 40 cities, including a sellout Red Rocks date in October.

Among Hogan’s new clients, L.A.-based artist Elohim is breaking new ground as a female producer who sings live. She’s currently on tour with Alison Wonderland.

Top DJs on the EDM circuit now can make between $20 million and $50 million a year, per Forbes’ annual list of the highest-paid DJs, published in early August. While none of Hogan’s clients made the list, his most successful acts, including Snails, Bro Safari, NGHTMRE and Slander, are heading in the right direction. A prominent placement at a major dance music festival for an artist like NGHTMRE, with his 1.5 million monthly Spotify listeners, can mean a six-figure payday.

Hogan’s success can be partially attributed to his wife’s devotion to his career. Kerry Hogan, who met her husband in the Baltimore music scene, has even acted as A&R for him; she set him on the path to sign one of his artists, Goldfish, after she noticed the South African duo had no agent listed on their website.

HIS CLIENTS INCLUDE BRO SAFARI, OOKAY, SNAILS AND ELOHIM.

“His artists and his managers are his world, and their relationships go beyond a business level. They are like family to him, so they’re genuinely like family to me,” says Kerry Hogan, who works in real estate. At Hogan’s clients’ shows, she notes, “It’s not uncommon you’ll find [us] in the crowd crying together like proud parents.”

Gud Vibrations at the NOS Events Center was one such show, which ended with Scott Land of Slander asking the crowd to open the pit for a “wall of death” — where the crowd makes a mosh pit and runs into one another at full speed. Kerry sprinted into the crowd and her husband chased after her.

“Doing a show of this magnitude was something we would have never thought possible even just a year ago,” Slander’s Derek Andersen said. “Ben Hogan has taken us from being local DJs to international headliners. His passion for bass music is a real thing and that’s why we love working with him so much.”

Land adds, “I really do feel that Ben absolutely and genuinely cares about the acts he represents. To him, we’re family and not just a fee for the agency that turns into a paycheck for him.”

Hogan is well removed from those days earning minimum wage, but he’s never forgotten the lessons he learned as a teen in Baltimore. “I said, if I keep working, I’m gonna get there eventually. You can’t ever be entitled; there are no shortcuts. I knew I couldn’t do this on my own, but I thought I understood dance music and I knew how much I absolutely loved it.”
Where the Heart Is

SINGER NATASHA AGRAMA WAS UNCERTAIN ABOUT PURSUING MUSIC — BUT AFTER A FRIEND’S SUDDEN DEATH, SHE’S FULLY COMMITTED TO JAZZ

BY JEFF WEISS

M y grandma won’t stop talking about Natasha Agrama. A month ago, she acquired an advance copy of the jazz chanteuse’s The Heart of Infinite Change, and now we can’t have a conversation without her raving about Agrama’s exquisite voice and magnificent arrangements.

So if you don’t believe my assessment that Agrama’s World Galaxy/Alpha Pup debut is one of the most beautiful jazz albums of the year, take the word of an octogenarian who used to watch her cousin Benny Goodman play at the Cocoanut Grove nightclub and once parried an amorous advance from Harry Belafonte during a Catskills soft shoe.

Or scan the credits to understand its singularity. Released next week, it features the final collaboration between iconic keyboardist George Duke and Agrama’s stepfather, legendary bassist Stanley Clarke. It also captures the final session of piano prodigy Austin Peralta, who died in 2012, and his only recorded collaboration with the Bruner Brothers (drummer Ronald and bassist Stephen, better known as Thundercat).

“It’s not my album; it’s something that I facilitated,” Agrama says when we meet at Elderberries, a cafe affiliated with the social justice and conscious communities, where she used to sing at jazz brunch, down the street from where she grew up. She’s wearing ripped blue jeans and a flowing white handmade smock.

“Austin was so generous, brave and innovative; he meant the world to me,” Agrama continues. “It’s a mindfuck that the universe saw me fit to be his last collaborator, and it changed my entire perspective about music.”

In person, Agrama’s temperament matches the tone of her music: ebullient and organic, dreamy but intelligent. Her story reflects a triumph of both professional and personal adversity. Born to an Egyptian father and a Chilean mother, she weathered feelings of alienation as one of the few brown people at a San Fernando Valley private school.

She’d sung in school plays since first taking vocal lessons in the sixth grade. But by college, she’d become insecure in her musical abilities and opted for art school instead, matriculating at CalArts and then the San Francisco Art Institute, where she studied performance art. A random trip to Paris to collaborate with an electronic artist sparked her reimmersion in music. Not long after, she began crooning around L.A., occasionally accompanied by her longtime friends in The West Coast Get Down, who had just begun their now-immortalized residency at the Piano Bar.

“It wasn’t until I found a home in jazz music that I felt embraced for who I am,” Agrama says. “Jazz accepts anyone who wants to participate in it, innovate with it, let it grow and live through them to perpetuate into new horizons. Jazz is constantly adopting people and stories from all over the world, and I’m honored to have been adopted by the art form.”

Her voice is a rich, clarion instrument influenced by the harmonies and phrasings of Clarke’s bass playing, Nina Simone, Billie Holiday’s proto–hip-hop pockets and Ella Fitzgerald’s elegance. It’s traditional enough for my grandma but updates that tradition for the modern era. Agrama even wrote her own lyrics to Charles Mingus’ original “Goodbye Porkpie Hat,” reshaping Joni Mitchell’s cover version to reflect the current social climate.

“No one grows up feeling like a superhero,” Agrama says. “I had to get over my insecurity to share my music. I felt like I could’ve hidden in the shadows a little while longer, but Austin’s death was a swift kick in the pants — like, nope, you can’t fuck around anymore. You’re actually holding something that’s extremely powerful and you have to share it with the world.”

An L.A. native, Jeff Weiss is the founder of Passion of the Weiss and POW Recordings, and hosts the monthly POW Radio on Dublab (99.1 FM). Follow him on Twitter @passionweiss.
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Music Picks

**Fri 9/1**

**Honey Child**
@ THE ECHO
Honey Child are led by Claire McKeown, an operatically trained vocalist with an unabashed love for soaring melodies. In the past, the local singer and native of Northern Ireland has reveled in her indie-pop side with Dirt Bird, Afternoons and Shadow Shadow Shade, but with Honey Child she really lets her voice unfurl while backed by a small choir of female singers. Tonight, the group celebrate the release of their new video for “Gotta Wait Another Night,” a winsome slice of glitzy chamber pop that’s pumped up by cabaret piano, strings and lavish harmonies. Bewigged and sporting gravity-defying eyelashes in the video, McKeown resembles Mozart’s glamorous, time-traveling sister as she orders tacos in mundane Silver Lake before pouring out her broken heart into the ocean. Sharp Ease singer Paloma Parfrey’s new band, Scrolls, opens, followed by Crook.
—Falling James

**The Fresh & Onlys, Earth Girl**
Helen Brown, Lars Finberg
@ RESIDENT
The Fresh & Onlys are one of those quietly astonishing bands that actually aren’t that quiet — especially on new album Wolf Lie Down and singles that match the slash-your-face distortion and manic riff-writing of The Pagans to the calculated pop of post-Pink Flag Wire. Earth Girl Helen Brown is the sci-fi alter ego of The Sandwitches’ Heidi Alexander, newly relocated to L.A. and seizing the opportunity to explore the solar system with a series of planet-themed EPs that are as transportive as every good spaceship should be. Lars Finberg has a piece of the wildest West Coast weirdo bands of the last decade or so, from his own The Intelligence to A Frames, Wounded Lion, Thee Oh Sees and more. Now he’s got a solo album on deck for In the Red, which is sure to further refine his particular kind of genius.
—Chris Ziegler

**Whispertown**
@ THE BOOTLEG
More than a musical project, Whispertown is a talented songwriter who has co-written tunes with Rilo Kiley, Haim, Dave Rawlings and The Breeders’ Kim Deal. In 2005, she formed a band called The Whispertown and recorded for Rawlings and Gillian Welch’s label, Acony Records, but since then Nagler has stripped down both her sound and the group’s name and now performs under the name Whispertown. Tonight, she’s marking the release of her third full-length album, I’m a Man, performed by her longtime collaborator Jake Bellows. The title track starts out as a seemingly straightforward acoustic ballad that’s lit up by Nagler’s folkie vocals, but it soon shifts subtly into a more strangely psychedelic interlude that’s sparked by surreal slivers of violins, faraway guitar and ghostly harmonies.
—Falling James

**Sat 9/2**

**Made Music & Arts Festival**
@ GOLDEN ROAD BREWING
A two-day fest to satisfy the most insane-ly eclectic Labor Day Weekend party-downers, Made Music & Arts Festival tips a hat to L.A.-based creators and the excellently diverse communities of L.A., through music, art, local charity support and, of course, lots and lots of high-quality beer. The music lineup includes iconic West Coast rapper Warren G, conceptual pop group/performance artists YACHT and the almighty Buyepongo, a fusion of Latin cumbia, merengue and punta rhythms laced up tight with funk and jazz. Singer-songwriters Korey Dane, Viva and Maxim Ludwig, disco group Iconique and DJs from KDAY round out the bill. There also will be local vendors and food trucks, along with limited-release specialty beers courtesy of Golden Road. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to local charities Heal the Bay, Wags & Walks and Light Bringer Project.
—John Payne

**Throw Rag**
@ ALEX’S BAR
These seedy ertszailors from Salton Sea started out in the mid-’90s as a relatively stripped-down and rootsy, rockabilly-style band infused with sudden hints of Tom Waits’ bohemian affections. Even then, though, they weren’t strictly revivalists so much as they were junkyard scavengers digging through yesterday’s trash to find new thrills. Over time, Throw Rag have gotten louder and faster, with a fulsome and powerful punk-roock attack that culminated on 2005’s 13 Feet and Rising, which featured guest stars Jello Biafra and Keith Morris, as well as lead howler Sean Wheeler’s surly duet with Lemmy Kilminster on a hard-rock pummeling of Merle Haggard’s “Tonight the Bottle Let Me Down.” Wheeler often tours with Mark Lanegan and collaborates with Zander Schloss, but he’s at his full strength when fronting Throw Rag.
—Falling James

**Sun 9/3**

**Backyard Bash with Dokken, Bang Tango, Enuff Z’Nuff**
@ RAINBOW BAR & GRILL
Back in April, the Rainbow hosted its first Backyard Bash of 2017, as ’80s favorites Quiet Riot, Black ‘N Blue and Jetboy all rolled back the years on the Sunset Strip, with Lemmy’s statue observing approvingly. As summer draws to an end, the Rainbow has assembled an even better bill. This time, Dokken headlines (which is interesting, because Lynch Mob, led by former Dokken guitarist George Lynch, plays the Whisky that night — can we whisper “reunion”? The top end of the bill also features local sleaze-sters Bang Tango and Chicago power-pop vets Enuff Z’Nuff. It’s fascinating that English new wave band Bow Wow Wow is on the bill for a little bit of something different, while Highland Park metalheads Huntress will amp up the heavy. Whether you go for the music or the people-watching, the Rainbow parties are always a blast.
—Brett Callwood

**DIY Music Festival**
@ THE GLASS HOUSE, ACEROGAMI
When most people think of DIY music, they probably think of bands with guitars. But you don’t need to be a garage rocker bring a do-it-yourself mentality to music-making in 2017, as this all-ages festival in Pomona amply illustrates. Low End Theory resident DJ Nobody headlines one of the festival’s two stages, but beyond that, you’re unlikely to recognize any of the 40-plus artists performing — and that’s by design, as the festival’s promoter, BrickToYaFace, specifically seeks out truly DIY artists, most from the Inland Empire, with no label or management. Bellflower rapper Stevie Crooks, La Puente space funksters Chola Orange and Corona producer-rapper O.K.I.M., who skillfully hits the sweet spot between trap, pop and hip-hop, are among the festival’s many promising up-and-comers who likely won’t be DIY much longer.
—Andy Hermann
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The Entire Universe, Reggie Watts, Fatal Jamz
@ ZEBULON
The Entire Universe are the new band from Jeff Ramone, aka Jeffertitti Moon, who moonlights (pun intended) as bassist for Father John Misty and whose previous project, Jeffertitti’s Nile, was a blissfully zoned-out exploration of lo-fi psych-rock. The Entire Universe haven’t released any music yet but, judging from Ramone’s bandmates — Evan Snyder of Seattle psych-rockers Night Beats and Eric Lodwick of fuzzy New York power-pop trio-trainined Mirrors — we probably can expect a trippy, riff-heavy extension of his previous work. They begin a Monday-night September residency at Zebulon with comedic and vocal-loop maestro Reggie Watts, local glam-rockers Fatal Jamz and the spacey bedroom pop of Oxnard native Cola Boy: It all begins with a DJ set by some of Zebulon’s coolest Program neighbors, psychedelic synth-rock duo Gardens and Villa.
—Andy Hermann

John Chin Trio
@ BLUEWHALE
A treasured longtime figure on the New York jazz scene, pianist John Chin is a prolific composer and heavy-duty improviser who pulls real magic out of his eclectic bag of jazz, pop and Western classical traditions. With a deft, light touch, Chin goes from speedy, Tatum-esque runs up and down the keyboard (amazing independence of both hands) on a variety of boppish standards to bruisingly intimate reflections that poke at the harmonic, melodic and contrapuntal possibilities of his chosen repertoire. Working within the confines of a trad jazz trio (acoustic piano, stand-up bass and drums) seems to open wide vistas for the trio (acoustic piano, stand-up bass and drums) to reprise Chin’s full of surprises in his seemingly organic ability to veer from the bluesy roots of the jazz-canon playful style of Tatum to classical traditions. With a deft, light touch, Chin goes from speedy, Tatum-esque runs up and down the keyboard (amazing independence of both hands) on a variety of boppish standards to bruisingly intimate reflections that poke at the harmonic, melodic and contrapuntal possibilities of his chosen repertoire. Working within the confines of a trad jazz trio (acoustic piano, stand-up bass and drums) to open wide vistas for the Chin’s full of surprises in his seemingly organic ability to veer from the bluesy roots of the jazz-canon playful style of Tatum to classical traditions.
—John Payne

Quincy Jones: The A&M Years
@ HOLLYWOOD BOWL
Composer-arranger Quincy Jones recorded three iconic big band albums between 1969 and 1971 that remain as fresh today as they were four decades ago. Tonight bassists Christian McBride and John Clayton lead an all-star big band in music from this trilogy — Walking in Space, Gula Matar and Smackwater Jack — at the Hollywood Bowl. Two of the sessions’ most prominent contributors, flutist Hubert Laws and vocalist Valerie Simpson (later of Ashford & Simpson) will be on hand to reprise their roles, along with guests including trumpeter Sean Jones, pianists Dave Grusin and Alfredo Rodriguez, guitarist Lee Ritenour, and drummer Lewis Nash. Opening the evening will be bass wizard Richard Bona’s Mandekan Cubano and Dirty Loops vocalist Jonathan Nilsson. —Tom Meek
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Voting is open now in nearly 70 categories, from Best Record Store to Best Podcast, Best Food Truck to Best Street Artist. And we’re adding something new to the mix this year — a celebration of L.A. neighborhoods. So if you have a favorite ’hood for cheap eats, for nightlife or for vintage shopping, we want to hear about that, too.

Cast your votes at readerschoice.laweekly.com — and look for the winners to be revealed in early October.

Amoeba Music: 6400 Sunset Blvd. DJ AntX, Fri., Sept. 1, 8 p.m., free. Mduo Moctar, Thu., Sept. 7, 6 p.m., free.


Canyon Club: 29812 Roadside Dr., Agoura Hills. The Badlands, Fri., Sept. 1, 9 p.m., $24-$34. The Fixx, Sun., Sept. 3, 9 p.m., $18


The Echo: 822 W. Sunset Blvd. Honey Child, Crook. Scrolls, Fri., Sept. 1, 8:30 p.m., $10 (see Music Pick). Witch Taint, The Drama, Fact Pattern, Wed., Sept. 6, 8:30 p.m., $12. New Mystics, HOTT MT, Thu., Sept. 7, 8:30 p.m., $10.


Golden Road Brewing: 5410 W. Santa Fe Rd. Made in LA Music & Arts Festival with Iconique, Hanni El Khatib, Yacht, Mx MORAINE, Kory Dane, Sat., Sept. 2, 5:30 p.m., $30 (see Music Pick). Warren G, Buylepongo, Val Fleury, Vlaa, Sun., Sept. 3, 5 p.m., $30.

Harvard & Stone: 5221 Hollywood Blvd. Wyatt Blair, The Planters, Tue., Sept. 5, 8 p.m., free; Name the Band, Tuesdays, 8 p.m. Thu Sept. 27, free.


Los Guapos: 30491 Sunset Blvd. Malibu Drive, Dethonator, Amber Renee, Fri., Sept. 1, 7 p.m. Stevie Ray & the Soul Union, Jevery McCloy, Eva B. Ross, Stephen Harris, Myra Washington, Wed., Sept. 6, 9:30 p.m. A Chester Bennington Tribute Charity Show, with musicians TBA, Thu., Sept. 7, 9 p.m.


Molly Malone’s: 757 S. Fairfax Ave. The L.A. XTC Appreciation Society Concert, with Zak Schaffer, Jordan Summers, Jon Button, Dan Roothidle, Mike Voia, Blair Sinta, Thu., Sept. 7, 8 p.m., $10.


Rainbow Bar & Grill: 9015 Sunset Boulevard, West Hollywood, CA 90069 (310) 278-4232 www.rainbowbarandgrill.com

Ringo Bucket, Sat., Sept. 2, 8 p.m., TBA. Lick My Boot, Sun., Sept. 3, 8 p.m., TBA. Blaze Bayley, Mon., Sept. 4, 7 p.m., TBA.


Jazz & Blues


Catalina Bar & Grill: 6725 W. Sunset Blvd. Bobby Caldwell, Fri., Sept. 1, 8:30 p.m., TBA. The Eric Essix Move Trio, Wed., Sept. 6, 8:30 p.m., TBA. The Billy Vera Band, Sat., Sept. 9, 9 p.m., TBA.
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Big Band, Tamela D’Amico, Thu., Sept. 7, 8 p.m., TBA.
DESERt ROSE: 1700 Hillhurst Ave. The Mark Z. Stevens Trio, Thursdays, 7-11 p.m., free.
THE Lighthouse CAFE: 30 Pier Ave., Hermosa Beach. The Sabine Trio, Wed., Sept. 6, 6 p.m., free.
PEOPLE’S PLACE & PALACE: 365 W. Sixth St., San Pedro. The Fabulous Esquires Big Band, Sat., Sept. 2, 6:30 p.m., $25.

COUNTRY & FOLK


DANCE CLUBS

AVALON HOLLYWOOD: 1735 Vine St. LloveMakonnen, Lil Texas, Jon Mon, Cyran, Fri., Sept. 1, 9:30 p.m. Markus Schutz, Sat., Sept. 2, 10 p.m., TBA. LaborDrake: A Drake Tribute Party, Sun., Sept. 3, 9 p.m. Fatboy Slim, Mon., 10 p.m. Heat, Thursdays, 10 p.m.
EXCHANGE LA: 618 S. Spring St. Showtek, Fri., Sept. 1, 10 p.m., $35 & $90. Shiba San, Sat., Sept. 2, 10 p.m., $20 & $90. Lil Jon, Jaykobe, Sun., Sept. 3, 10 p.m., $20 & $90.
LOS GLOBOS: 3040 W. Sunset Blvd. Supernova, Major League, Fri., Sept. 1, 10 p.m.
THE VIRGIL: 4519 Santa Monica Blvd. Funkmosphere, Thursdays, 9:30 p.m.-2 a.m., free-$5.

CONCERTS

FRIDAY, SEPT. 1
BARRINGTON LEVY: 8 p.m., $5. The Observatory.
COUNTRY ALTAR: 3:30 p.m. Long Beach Terrace Theater.
GOO PEANUT BUTTER WOLF: 8 p.m., $15. Levit Pavilion at MacArthur Park, 2230 W. Sixth St.
THE PHARCYDE: 8 p.m., $5. The Novo.
HICKEY WOODWARD: 6 p.m. LACMA, 5905 Wilshire Blvd. GOO SALT N PEP: With SpinDynamite, Biz Markie, All 4 One, Color Me Badd, Coolio, Rob Base, 7:30 p.m., $25. Pomona Fairplex, 1101 W. McKinley Ave.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 2
GOO BURGERCON: Part of Long Beach Comic Con, with music from Nobunny, The Dwarves, The Zeros, White Fang, DJ Don Bolles, 5 p.m., $25 & up. Long Beach Convention Center, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.
GOO CHINATOWN SUMMER NIGHTS: With KCRW DJs, 5 p.m., free. Chinatown Central Plaza.
DAIS RECORDS’ 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY: With Drew McDowall, Drab Majesty. Rebellion is Over, High-Functioning Flesh. Body of Light, Cold Showers, 8 p.m., $25. The Regent Theater, 448 S. Main St.

COUNTRY ALTAR: 3:30 p.m. Long Beach Terrace Theater.
GOO PEANUT BUTTER WOLF: 8 p.m., $15. Levit Pavilion at MacArthur Park, 2230 W. Sixth St.
THE PHARCYDE: 8 p.m., $5. The Novo.
HICKEY WOODWARD: 6 p.m. LACMA, 5905 Wilshire Blvd. GOO SALT N PEP: With SpinDynamite, Biz Markie, All 4 One, Color Me Badd, Coolio, Rob Base, 7:30 p.m., $25. Pomona Fairplex, 1101 W. McKinley Ave.
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