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BODY SLAMS AND BURLESQUE

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Lucha VaVOOM: Body Slams and Burlesque...

It's Valentine's Day, which for all you romantics is bound to mean a night out at the Mexican wrestling extravaganza.

By Libby Alyneaux.

Music...

Brett Callwood hangs out with the Hot Club of Los Angeles and learns about the world of Django Reinhardt-inspired musicians. Plus: listings for Rock & Pop, Jazz & Classical and more.

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**Explore African Films**

The 26th annual Pan African Film & Arts Festival (PAFF) kicked off Thursday with the world premiere of the family comedy Love Jacked, and it continues through Feb. 19 with 170-plus new films from more than 40 countries. Seventy-five fine artists also are participating in what’s touted as the largest black film festival and the largest Black History Month celebration in the U.S. In addition to the new ’n’ Talks Reel panel series, there’s a stand-up comedy showcase Feb. 15, a fashion show Feb. 18 and the U.S. premiere of The Forgiven, starring Forest Whitaker and Eric Bana, closing the fest on Feb. 18. Forgiven, starring Forest Whitaker and Eric Bana, closing the fest on Feb. 18 and the U.S. premiere of Forgiven, starring Forest Whitaker and Eric Bana, closing the fest on Feb. 18.

**DANCE**

**Step This Way**

In 60 colorful canvases, Harlem painter Jacob Lawrence audaciously tackled the original involuntary migration from Africa as well as the more voluntary African-American migration from the rural South to the industrializing North starting with WWI. Drawing on African percussive traditions and incorporating the percussive African-American dance style known as stepping, Step Afrika draws inspiration from Lawrence’s paintings in The Migration: Reflections on Jacob Lawrence. Replicas of some of the paintings join the dancers onstage as part of this performance. Dancers from Jacob Lawrence: Reflections on Jacob Lawrence. Replicas of some of the paintings join the dancers onstage as part of this performance.

**ART**

**Something Resembling Jasper**

Flags, targets and bees—subjects close to the heart of artist Jasper Johns, whose retrospective Something Resembling Jasper opens today. Exhaustive but never exhausting, it’s a constitutionally illuminating triptych of six decades of art by the iconic American artist, made possible by a meeting of the minds with London’s Royal Academy. More than 120 of Johns’ drawings, paintings and sculptures—many never before seen in L.A.—give you the full measure of the man, whose art has distilled his dreams to bring you this powerful moment of the American artistic experience. The Broad, 221 S. Grand Ave., downtown; runs through May 13, $25, 17 and under free. (213) 224-6200, thebroad.org. —David Cotner

**MUSIC**

**Punk Scholarship**

Is there a genre more unscholarly than punk, a movement born out of chaos and anti-authority? At the inaugural event, Curating Resistance: Punk as Archival Method, you can be a slaming, spit-and-scabies punk rocker and learn about the music’s academic side, too. Hosted by the UCLA Center for Musical Humanities, the two-day conference features walkthroughs of the UCLA Library Special Collections Punk Archive plus dozens of panels and workshops on just about every imaginable topic related to punk and its history, culture and ethos: women, Latinos and queer in punk; L.A. and East Coast punk; punk subgenres like hardcore and Straight-edge; punk in the digital age; punk zines. Co-organizers Jessica Schwartz and Candace Hansen have assembled an impressive roster, including Allison Wolfe, Donita Sparks, Patty Schemel, Pleasant Gehman and Tequila Mockingbird. UCLA, Royce Hall and Charles E. Young Research Library, Westwood; Fri., Feb. 9, 10 a.m.-9:45 p.m.; Sat., Feb. 10, 9:30 a.m.-8:30 p.m.; free, resv. required. eventbrite.com/e/curating-resistance-punk-as-archival-method-tickets-42368937633. —Siran Babayan

**THEATER**

**Ponies on the Pier**

Have you ever seen a play inside a merry-go-round? Santa Monica Public Theatre presents An Illegal Start inside the historic Hippodrome building on Santa Monica Pier. The drama begins on a thunderstruck night in 1980s rural western Colorado, where an old amusement park merry-go-round (hence the setting) becomes a refuge for two young men after a near-fatal accident. The play was written by the pier’s deputy director, James Harris, and is directed by Paul Sand, founder of SMPT, 200 Santa Monica Pier, Santa Monica; Feb. 9, 10, 16, 17, 23 & 24, March 2, 9 & 10, 8 p.m.; $30. (310) 458-8901, anillegalstart.eventbrite.com. —Richard Chang

**BOOKS**

**You Had Me at Zombies**

With an eye to the ongoing pop culture fascination with triumphing over sick murder-happy ghouls, author Dahlia Schweitzer discusses Going Viral: Zombies, Viruses and the End of the World (Rutgers, $28). She’s down with the sickness and will tell you about how it informs everything from The Walking Dead to the Burroughs-ian language virus of the 2008 film Pontypool to that damned flu that’s been going around. Constant viral awareness in the culture is somehow cathartic and helps cope with terrorism and the spread of the apocryphal Other; no guarantees you won’t catch something by going out tonight, though. Skylight Books, 1818 N. Vermont Ave., Los Feliz; Sat., Feb. 10, 5 p.m.; free. (323) 660-1175, skylightbooks.com. —David Cotner

**GO」LA**

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ARTS & CULTURE

Carnival, Bahia Style

When it comes to Carnival, Rio gets all the glory, but those in the know head to Salvador de Bahia — the heart of Afro-Brazilian culture and home to one of the world’s biggest, music-fueled street parties. Bahia is a wellspring of traditional forms and contemporary practice — like those featured in the Fowler’s “A Café Bahia: The Power of Art in an Afro-Brazilian Metropolis,” on display since September. Today the museum offers a family-oriented celebration of Bahian Carnival. Make jewelry and masks, wish on colorful ribbons like those adorning the gates of Salvador’s Nosso Senhor do Bom-Fim church — where a miraculous statue celebrates the convergence of Catholicism and West African deities — and dance to the spectacular samba-reggae rhythms of Batala Los Angeles. Fowler Museum, 308 Charles E. Young Drive N., Westwood; Sun., Feb. 11, 1-4 p.m.; free. (310) 825-4361, fowler.ucla.edu. —Beige Luciano-Adams

PERFORMANCE ART

Man With a Vision

It would be slightly reductive to call “El borde brujo,” the new spoken-word monologue by Guillermo Gómez-Peña, a monologue — he speaks for those countless undocumented who got him to where he is in life, which is ironic since tonight is subtitled The Most (un) Documented Mexican Artist. Featuring manifestations by members Baltronica and Saula from his performance art troupe La Pocha Nostra, Gómez-Peña faces inner demons and then turns those faces to look at you in a performance the style of which he explains is a “combination of embodied poetry, performance activism and theatricalizations of postcolonial theory.” LACE (L.A. Contemporary Exhibitions), 6522 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood; Mon., Feb. 12, 8 p.m.; $15, $10 LACE members/students. (323) 957-1777, welcometolace.org. —David Cotner

BOOKS

Feel Her Hunger

Tonight’s Some Favorite Writers salon presents Roxane Gay, the cultural critic riding high on her autobiography, Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body ($26, Harper). You can look at that memoir in terms of a concrete moment — because, as she explains in her gripping, nakedly honest tales, the form she finds herself in at the moment is not her final form. Through body-image agonies to healing, weakness and strength, Gay transmits the best of herself through her writing — changing those reading about her plight and triumph as much as she has changed herself. Billy Wilder Theater, Hammer Museum, 10899 Wilshire Blvd., Westwood; Mon., Feb. 12, 7:30 p.m.; free. (310) 443-7000, hammer.ucla.edu. —David Cotner

VALENTINE’S DAY

White Rabbits in a Tiki Paradise

In a whimsical salute to love — and to the inexhaustible marketing potential of Alice in Wonderland — Clifton’s Republic promises V-Day revelers a Wonderland of thematic options during its Mad Hatter’s Sweetheart Soiree. For $25, you can go “through the Rabbit Hole” and into one of its refurbed vintage bars, with complimentary refreshments, entertainment and other, more mysterious enticements. A cool $100 buys dinner for two with a live swing show in the Brookdale Ballroom, or seats at the tiki-themed Pacific Seas Punch Party. Those who’ve always dreamed of spending $2,500 on a boat “ride” that doesn’t leave downtown can sit in the vintage vessel at the center of the Pacific Seas for dinner, cocktails and entertainment.
— plus a souvenir “to remind you this really happened.” Fine print: Entry to Clifton’s Exposition Marketplace & Monarch Bar is free, starting at 5 p.m. Clifton’s Republic, 648 S. Broadway, downtown; Wed., Feb. 14, 6 p.m.; $25-$2,500; 21+. (213) 627-1673, nightout.com/events/the-mad-hatters-sweetheart-soiree/tickets. —Beige Luciano-Adams

VALENTINE'S DAY

An Electric V-Day

The Edison’s Queen of Hearts Valentine’s Ball offers a pastiche of neo-vintage sights and sounds in its vast, industrial-glam subterranean vault, arguably among the best iterations of this city’s fascination with aesthetic markers of Prohibition-era gaiety. Nancy Sanchez and her band headline with jazz standards and Latin pop originals from her new album, American Novio, with performances by renowned aerialist Brenda Hamilton and a blend of soul/funk/jazz from frequent Edison DJ Bennet Schmid. “Upscale cocktail attire,” $25 and reserving ahead of time will get you in. The Edison, 108 W. Second St., #101, downtown; Wed., Feb. 14, 7 p.m.-2 a.m.; $25; 21 and over. (213) 613-0000, edisondowntown.com.

—Beige Luciano-Adams

THU 2/15

ART/TALK

Sex and Censorship

If you missed Ron Athey’s recent Gifts of the Spirit: Prophecy, Automatism and Discernment, a performance/installation he co-created with composer Sean Griffin at the Broad in January, you can catch the performance artist discussing the Getty’s “Outcasts: Prejudice and Persecution in the Medieval World” (through April 8). Sexuality, Sanctity and Censorship: A Conversation With Artist Ron Athey looks at the collection of illuminated manuscripts of the Crucifixion, Alexander the Great and other religious and historical figures and how they depict people who were considered outsiders in medieval society, including Jews, Muslims, women and the poor. Getty Center, 1200 Getty Center Drive, Brentwood; Thurs., Feb. 15, 7 p.m.; free, reservations required. (310) 440-7300, getty.edu. —Siran Babayan

BOOKS

Risking Life and Limb for Coffee

Dave Eggers sure does get around, and tonight the mind-blowing globe-trotter will be joined by Mokhtar Alkhanshali to talk about Eggers’ newest book, The Monk of Mokha ($29, Knopf). It’s the fantastic yet true story of Alkhanshali, a young Yemeni who grew up in San Francisco and fell in love with the coffee-making culture. He loves it so much that he goes back home to reignite Yemen’s ancient art of coffee-making and — of course! — war breaks out. Find out what happens next when Eggers and Alkhanshali lift their cups to the power of the over-caffeinated human spirit. Mark Taper Auditorium, Central Library, 630 W. Fifth St., downtown; Thu., Feb. 15, 7 p.m.; free. (213) 228-7500, lfla.org. —David Cotner

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SKID ROW SINGS OUT

Urban Voices Project creates safe space for homeless people to find their passion

BY JESSICA DONATH

Sidewalks and shopping centers are like no other. Spread across a few square blocks in the heart of downtown L.A., many of its roughly 25,000 unsheltered homeless people live in tents on the sidewalk. Blocks away, patrons shop at glitzy stores, dine at fancy restaurants or catch a show at one of downtown’s world-famous cultural institutions.

A few years ago the Colburn School, a renowned music and dance conservatory, decided to do something about this paradox. The administration asked around for ideas. “I raised my hand and said, ‘Singing sounds like the most accessible,’” recalls Leav Sofer, Colburn faculty member and frontman of Jewish folk band Mostly Kosher.

That’s how a burly 23-year-old who often wears his long brown hair in a man bun became co-founder of the Urban Voices Project (UVP), a choir for homeless people and their allies.

UVP was supposed to be a short-term community outreach project. Sofer partnered with Christopher Mack, who works at the John Wesley Community Health Institute. Together they recruited enough people to perform at Wesley’s annual gala in October 2014.

The event was a huge success. Sofer realized that folks responded to what he offered in a way he didn’t expect. He felt that he couldn’t return to his own professional life on Bunker Hill as if nothing had happened.

Sofer looked around and told the singers: “If you show up next week, I show up next week.”

The free professional classes UVP’s artistic director offers are similar to those he teaches at Colburn. But over time the choir also became a designated safe space for the Skid Row community to gather. “They want people to congregate and give them a reason for being that’s constructive and positive,” says choir member Vachel McFarland. The slender 63-year-old with youthful energy joined UVP more than a year ago.

McFarland, who hails from Nashville, has experience with homelessness. His life fell apart in 2002 after he got divorced. His ex-wife accused him of domestic violence. He denied the allegations and spent a year in jail.

“I got out of jail with no place to go and nothing but the clothes on my back,” he recalls. He stayed at a Skid Row shelter for a few weeks.

UVP’s associate director, Kate Richards Geller, also functions as a music therapy consultant. “I have many years of experience doing group therapy and I know about creating a safe container and allowing people to have their own experiences,” she says. Richards Geller, 54, a calm and soft-spoken music therapist from New York, joined the choir a couple of years ago. She had no intention of joining the leadership team until Sofer recruited her.

She teaches seminar-style classes that emphasize the positive effects music has on people’s lives. During song share, for example, members can convey experiences and feelings through a song that is meaningful to them. But they don’t have to. “We never ask,” Richards Geller says. “It’s all about the music.”

Once they are in, they tend to want to seek out other, more professionalized help,” she says. The choir meets at the Wesley Clinic for rehearsals and classes where people can access services.

With her professional training and significant life experience, Richards Geller brings a warm nature that adds a certain sensitivity to the program. “I know how to run a very good choir rehearsal, but there are people I had to adjust for and didn’t have the tools until she came in,” says Sofer, who has the authority of a seasoned choir director and teacher.

Richards Geller observed a rehearsal, for instance, and made Sofer aware of the effect some of his warmup exercises could have on members. “A woman coming off the street looking disheveled, is she somebody who wants to reach her arms up to the sky and then bend down toward the ground?”

Formerly homeless members such as McFarland, who has a degree in music educa-

tion, and Linda Leigh, are proof that the program works.

“If you stick with it, you’ll find that you will start to be more consistent in your life,” Leigh says. The 71-year-old became a UVP cornerstone after she began attending sessions in June last year.

In 2014 she headed to Chicago to attend the School of the Arts Institute. She held a yard sale, sold her car and moved. A few days before classes began, an administrator told her that her paperwork was incomplete. Her high school graduation date was missing on her transcript. Leigh returned to L.A.

“I didn’t want to have to depend on anyone,” says the marble-haired artist and former yoga teacher from Queens, New York.

She stayed at a shelter for a couple of months and volunteered as a chef.

“When you come down here, one thing that needs to happen is that you have to have a plan and stick to it,” Leigh says. “And don’t make it so big that you can’t do what you want to do.”

Both Sofer and Richards Geller live downtown, a stone’s throw from Skid Row.

“You live in a neighborhood, then you have the neighborhood’s problems as well as its positives and you should be active about it,” Sofer says.

Yet they struggle to reconcile the glaring discrepancy between their own lives and the situations many of UVP’s members face.

“I sometimes feel a real conflict: ‘Am I allowed to have the life that I have knowing that this is going on?’” Richards Geller says.

When she first began to spend time on Skid Row, she wasn’t sure if she could deal with the omnipresent trauma. To cope, she sang while riding her bike from her apartment to the Wesley Clinic.

“I’ve never really seen this level of human suffering; I needed to sing and process all of what I was feeling and witnessing,” Richards Geller says.

Sofer is now 27 but he comes across as an old soul. He attributes some of his personal growth to his work with UVP. It’s also an opportunity to give back.

“I feel very privileged growing up,” he says. “I had a very nice middle-class upbringing, very supportive parents.”

After four years of private fundraising and struggling to find sufficient funds, UVP is becoming a 501(c)3 charitable organization.

The relaunch doesn’t focus solely on structure but also on programming. Long-standing members can receive training to become facilitators and instructors. This will enable UVP to spread to other pockets of homelessness in the county and beyond.

Sofer and Richards Geller recognize that some people can’t or don’t want to deal with the stress of joining a quasi-professional choir. Their lives are complicated enough.

Therefore, UVP will split into two groups: one choir for casual singers with occasional and limited performances centered around the healing potential of music; and a chamber group, which will perform more frequently and at bigger venues so members can earn extra income through UVP.

UVP will start recruiting singers this month. Plans for a spring concert are in the works.

For more information, go to urbanvoicesproject.com.
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EMERALD CITY

Los Angeles loves weed and Los Angeles loves farmers markets. So, of course, the Emerald Exchange, a cannabis farmers market that brings outdoor, artisan growers from Northern California down south, has been a hit among Angelenos since it began in August 2016.

Those who have attended may fondly look back on leisurely afternoons meandering among the various booths, talking to farmers, snagging prerolls, trying new products, rubbing topicalson their hands, sampling medicated goodies and inhaling the sweet, dank aroma of cannabis bud in large glass jars put on quaint, Instagrammable display.

The Emerald Exchange has gone through three iterations so far, twice in Malibu, once in Moorpark. But since the Jan. 1 launch of California’s legal cannabis program, the organizers behind the farmers market, like all other cannabis businesses, are tackling a confusing set of new regulations. These rules dictate the most esoteric details of how the event can function, and could change its format altogether.

Regardless, the Emerald Exchange remains committed to bridging the culture gap between NorCal cultivators and SoCal consumers — with the largest market being Los Angeles. After all, your average dispensary area, where you would purchase your product after choosing it and taking a few free samples (you can only do that if you’re not a commercial operator in the industry). Supporting the mom-and-pops, however, is exactly what the Emerald Exchange aims to do. The event fosters connections between consumers and farmers to show weed comes from and how it’s grown.

“We’re responsible members of a responsible community, with a focus on lifestyle and education,” says Jessica Cure, Emerald Exchange co-founder.

The state law disallowing cannabis cultivators from selling directly to consumers (unless they hold a special license) creates another obstacle. In other words, if your favorite pasttime is schnorring free samples at weed events, it’s not as simple anymore as talking to farmers and trying their product as you would at any other farmers market. “We’ve developed a couple different strategies for this, being that basically we will partner with retailers that do the selling,” Katz says.

“Nothing is stopping cultivators and brands from having booths and doing brand ambassadorship, but they can’t make the sales directly if they don’t have a retail license.”

And because all the farmers participating in the Emerald Exchange will be licensed commercially by the state, they can’t give away free samples (you can only do that if you’re not a commercial operator in the industry).

“Nothing is stopping cultivators and brands from having booths and doing brand ambassadorship, but they can’t make the sales directly if they don’t have a retail license.”

Every product needs to be tracked, traced and accounted for, Cure explains, so the event organizers are considering a couple of systems. One is to set up a local dispensary area, where you would purchase your product after choosing it and taking a ticket from a brand booth. As far as sampling goes, they’re considering a system whereby consumers can get a pre-purchased card for samples, so they’re not technically free.

This is the transitional point where the community has to step up and say, “OK, we’re in a confusing situation with some rules that don’t make sense,” Katz says. “Let’s figure it out together and keep sharing the message about the importance of sun-grown cannabis and the small-batch cultivators who grow it.”

An event such as the Emerald Exchange is particularly important because it bridges that SoCal-NorCal relationship.

“Most retailers down here will tell you there’s only a market for indoor flower, but what the new market is going to demand, especially in a health-conscious, eco-friendly community like L.A., is a different approach to their products,” Katz says. “The Whole Foods approach, the high-quality approach.”
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THE BLOW-BY-BLOW

For the seven of you who've never heard of Lucha VaVoom, the name says it all:
Lucha — meaning “fight” in Spanish, from the phrase lucha libre, a term used to describe Mexican professional masked wrestling, a combat sport that can be traced back to 1863 and developed out of the Greco-Roman version by probable tough guy Enrique Ugartechea.
VaVoom — meaning “titties.”

But it’s so much more. Throw in professional comics, and you have what has been called a “nonstop, action-packed scream-a-thon” where the Mexican masked wrestlers pounce and pulverize, while in between matches stunning professional burlesque dancers beguile and bowl over the crowd. For the price of one ticket, you get a heaping portion of ”sexo y violencia.”

Rita D’Albert and Liz Fairbairn are Lucha VaVoom’s co-producers. The pair met when D’Albert was producing the successful burlesque show Velvet Hammer, where Fairbairn designed and made costumes. “Liz took me to a Mexican wrestling show at the Olympic Auditorium,” D’Albert recalls. “She was dating a Mexican wrestler, and she was trying to get him a visa. And there weren’t a lot of wrestling shows and she thought, ‘Well, if I can put on a show, then I can get him a visa.’ The things we do for love.”

A special-effects costume designer, Fairbairn had met the wrestler when she was on location in Mexico for a film she had made — what else? — baboon costumes for. “He was one of the stunt guys,” she says. “We dated for the next 10 years and I followed him into his crazy world of lucha libre.”

A self-described “song ‘n’ dance gal,” D’Albert was a member of The Pandoras and an integral part of Andy Prieboy’s much-loved rock musical White Trash Wins Lotto. She also might be the coolest chick in the room, with a sexy, smoky voice and a serious knack for lipstick. In 2002, she was working as a costumer for porn movies three days a month. “As you can imagine, it’s not a big demand,” she quips.

For that wrestling show, “Liz had to talk me into it,” D’Albert says. “I was never into sports. I felt that was a different world than the one I inhabited. I am firmly in the rock & roll world. Any of that physical stuff is not for me. I was really close-minded about it at first. When I think of wrestling, I think of bullies. Guys with giant necks shouting...
But after that match at the Olympic, her view of wrestling changed. “In the early 2000s, there wasn’t a lot of theatricality or physicality in rock. There was a lot of shoegazing stuff going on, so this brought the energy that I was missing so much,” she says.

“It was an all-Hispanic crowd, except we ran into Tom Kenny, who does the voice of SpongeBob SquarePants. He was a huge Mexican wrestling fan,” D’Albert recalls of the comic and actor who would host *Lucha VaVoom* early on. “It was mostly families. I really loved that. It’s pretty violent but has physical humor that transcends any age. Everyone was having this great shared experience.”

D’Albert treats the wrestlers like the celebrities they are. They arrive for the show in lowrider cars. “I thought these guys are rock stars. Just that Iggy Pop, putting yourself in danger and harm’s way without regard for your own safety — that is just a turn-on. I can’t do a cartwheel. I can barely complete a somersault. People who can do those things, I have the utmost admiration for. And they’re doing this with giant guys who can really hurt you. There’s a really balls-out attitude that I’m really drawn to. I think we’re all drawn to fearlessness. It’s super sexy, especially right now when everything is so safe.”

D’Albert’s work with *White Trash Wins Lotto* and *Velvet Hammer* had her cross-pollinating with the comedy scene. “I thought, why don’t we have the comedians that I work with come do it in the *Mystery Science Theater* style,” she says. She and Fairbairn teamed up, and *Lucha VaVoom* was born in 2002.

D’Albert envisioned a spectacle for modern audiences raised on MTV. At that Olympic Auditorium show, the matches were three-fall. “Sometimes I felt like they were milking it, and our crowd wouldn’t have the patience,” she explains. “I said, ‘Let’s do one fall instead of three; you’ve got 15 minutes max, no resting, just boom boom boom.’ Some of the colorful (that’s an understatement) wrestlers include Magna, Chupacabra, Green Fuzz, Chocolatay Caliente and Dirty Sanchez, a comically nasty fellow who proudly sports the mirkin to end all mirkins.

D’Albert had the wrestlers, along with dancers “as a palate cleanser” and comics in place, but how would L.A. audiences react? “We thought it was going to be a one-off,” she says. “L.A. people — any band can and will tell you — are the worst audiences because we’re pretty jaded. In *The Pandoras*, we’d go to San Francisco and we’d say, ‘This is the best!’ and we’d come back and see arms folded doing the same show with the same energy. So when I looked around at the first *Lucha* crowd and I saw people going crazy, it was a pivotal thing for me.”

Blaine Capatch, a comic and TV writer who had been in *WTWL*, was on board from the beginning. A revolving slate of co-hosts included Fred Armisen (who hosted the very first show), Ron Lynch and Craig Anton. Later on Brian Posehn, Patton Oswalt, Drew Carey, Jeffrey Ross, Chris Hardwick and Bobcat Goldthwait would take on commentator duties.

“When the matches started, it was dead air, so I just started making jokes acting like a sports announcer,” Capatch recalls. “It was super organic, but you couldn’t sit down and create — it just hap-

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—*LUCHA VAVOOM* CO-HOST JEFF B. DAVIS
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pened in the moment.” Such as the time the legendary exotico Cassandro jumped off the balcony onto a rudo (villain) in the crowd. “It was a pretty startling drop — and I said, ‘He’s OK, folks, he landed on some old ladies.’”

A hit was born, and Lucha VaVoom made downtown’s Mayan its home. “When the show happened and was successful, it seemed really easily laid out — that this would become a regular thing, and it almost seemed to me that it would be very easy, given my contacts and Blaine’s contacts, that we could just parlay this quickly into a TV show right away. We could franchise it and be in Las Vegas and we would be the next WWE. It seemed like that would be — ha ha — easy,” D’Albert laughs.

Before the Whistle

About a week before each show, all the players gather for a meeting. After “a lot of food,” D’Albert and cast look at ways to “make things pop.” She’s strict that “there can be no downtime in the show.” Does she have to crack the whip? “Sometimes because we all love each other, and it’s the only time we get together outside of the show as a group, so of course we want to talk about everything.”

“You won’t find a weirder cast get along so well. Hugs, kisses, insanity and tequila,” co-host Jeff B. Davis says. “My favorite part of the show is backstage. The men’s dressing room is crammed with giant and tiny dudes who smell of Icy Hot and Ben Gay, talking a mixture of languages, dressed like chickens, skeletons and piñatas, happily figuring out how they’ll beat the shit out of each other in the ring. The women’s dressing room is an ongoing party, open to anyone in the show, male, female or otherwise. It’s a jumble of hot, naked people and stylists, champagne and rock stars. Showbiz at its swinging-est. There really is nothing like it. It’s like Cirque du Soleil except more fun and less French.”

“Fellini-esque doesn’t even begin to describe it. For a guy like me with responsibilities, it’s as close as I can be to running away with the circus.”

—Sometime Host Tom Kenny

Ask the regulars what their favorite part of the show is, and many will mention the dressing rooms. “It’s like the opening scene of Goodfellas where you’re walking through the kitchen, and then into the dressing room, where there are all these girls in amazing outfits and everybody in costume and Aztec dancers and wrestlers everywhere. There needs to be a show where you see all this, but nobody can find a way to bottle that. There’s a lot of liniment going on,” Capatch says. “I usually just try to make sure I have my tie the right length. It takes eight or nine tries.”

“Fellini-esque doesn’t even begin to describe it. For a guy like me with responsibilities, it’s as close as I can be to running away with the circus,” Kenny notes. “In the dressing room, you see the toll it takes on the wrestlers. I saw Cassandro jump off a balcony and I thought I was going to have to file a police report. It still feels dangerous and illegal. Me and Blaine are just sitting on a perch cracking wise, like Statler and Waldorf from The Muppets. It gives me such deep respect — way deeper than I have for anybody on a sitcom.”
A thrill for Kenny was the time he “got thrown around Andy Kaufman–style” by a wrestler known as Dr. Wagner. “He grabbed me and threw me down. The closest I have ever been to being in a fight. It was like going to Space Camp for me.”

“You’ll see a very harmonious dressing room with people helping each other with their costumes or somebody forgot a thing and everybody has an extra one,” D’Albert says. “We don’t do a prayer circle. We don’t need to. Everybody’s so excited for each other.”

VIVA LA LUCHA

D’Albert and Fairbairn pick a different theme for every show. “The girls do really cool amazing aerial stuff. There’s a dude on a pogo stick with glitter coming out of his g-string.” Capatch says. “There are some maniacs in the audience dressed like a Juggalo family. There’s always something to look at. I’ll look over and go, ‘Oh wow, there’s Gary Numan.’

Eric Idle shows up. He’s the sweetest guy on two legs, that guy. And everybody on the show is somebody you could be in a van with for 15 hours. The Valentine’s shows have Ron Funches. He is a huge wrestling guy, but he watches it with a feminist lens, is the closest thing to being his dirty self. In my head — including the anchor and camera crew — Leigh Acosta was upside down on a pole and Dirty Sanchez was running around being his dirty self. In my head I just picture a person waking up to this and being confused out of their minds. It still makes me giggle thinking about it.”

“We realized that people really want to identify and have contact with the wrestlers,” D’Albert says. “They fly out of the ring into those front rows, and those are the seats that cost the most and sell out first, because I think people are so hungry for something physical and dangerous that’s not really that dangerous.”

Ring girl Bonita La Belle came on board after contacting D’Albert through MySpace. “Liz and Rita have not only managed to stay relevant in the entertainment industry but have also succeeded in empowering other young women, myself included,” La Belle says. “The show is constructed through a feminist lens, therefore the machismo often erroneously associated with Mexican culture and lucha libre appears to be the running force — it is in fact quite the opposite. Lucha VaVoom challenges all heteronormative expectations of both wrestling and burlesque.”

10 THINGS YOU DIDN’T KNOW ABOUT LUCHA VAVOOM

- Lucha VaVoom is the only female-owned and run wrestling promotion in the world.
- Peaches featured Lucha VaVoom characters in her video “Close Up” with Kim Gordon.
- Ring girl and performer Bonita La Belle is studying to get her Ph.D. in education.
- Co-producer Liz Fairbairn is the former manager of costumed heavy metal overlords Gwar.
- Harry Dean Stanton celebrated his 80th birthday at Lucha VaVoom.
- Lucha VaVoom often hits the road, including numerous U.S. cities, plus Big Day Out in Australia and the Fuji Rock Festival in Japan.
- Lucha VaVoom has hosted two weddings during the show.
- Wrestler Blue Demon Jr. once remarked that Lucha VaVoom is the closest thing to what it must have felt like for his legendary father to wrestle in the golden age of wrestling.
- Lucha VaVoom has delighted notable grumpasaurus Morrissey.
- Dave Stewart featured Lucha VaVoom characters in his video “Every Single Night.”

— LIBBY MOLYNEAUX

One of La Belle’s favorite memories: “Being on morning TV and having Cassandra create hairspray clouds all over us — including the anchor and camera crew — while Leigh Acosta was upside down on a pole and Dirty Sanchez was running around being his dirty self. In my head I just picture a person waking up to this and being confused out of their minds. It still makes me giggle thinking about it.”

After 15 years, Lucha VaVoom is practically as historic to Los Angeles as the Moulin Rouge is to Paris. When you ask D’Albert if she can see herself doing this for another 15 years, she gives a hearty laugh. “I guess I have to. I have no choice.”

LUCHA VAVOOM | The Mayan, 1038 S. Hill St., downtown; Wed.-Thu., Feb. 14-15, 6 p.m. | $40 | luchavavoom.com

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SOUTHERN ITALIAN FOOD TAKES THE STAGE

Luigi al Teatro is a romantic if pricey addition to Ocean Park.

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

ucked away in one of Santa Monica’s oldest neighborhoods in Ocean Park, just down the street from the historic shotgun house, is the romantic Luigi al Teatro, Michelin-starred chef Luigi Fineo’s second restaurant. It’s an upscale version of his nearby Osteria Venice West on the boardwalk.

Heading off of the noisy beaten path near Rose Avenue and Main Street, you have to search out Luigi al Teatro at the edge of a residential neighborhood in southern Santa Monica. Once you spot the big orange historic beachside buildings. Inspired by the abundant seafood of his hometown in Puglia in southern Italy, Fineo offers a unique crudo choice: amberjack with smoked roe and egg yolk, sprinkled with espelette pepper and Himalayan salt for a slightly crunchy and smoky finish ($22).

Octopus, probably one of Fineo’s favorite and most mastered ingredients, is a good choice. His charred pulpo is served with pureed chickpeas, olives and blistered teardrop tomatoes grown on the patio for a sweet pop ($18). The scallop crudo is beautifully served in the shell with Olio Tenute Chiaromonte, preserved lemons and baguette, or deep-fried pork belly ($19).

The pasta dishes aren’t drowned by dough; they’re more of an accompaniment. The seafood is plentiful and pronounced; the sauces are light and simple. Pillow gnudi with shellfish in fish broth — gnocchi-like dumplings made with ricotta cheese instead of potato and semolina — melt in your mouth and are spiked with mussels, clams and oysters ($36). The seafood lasagna is a tower of chef’s fresh choice — mussels, calamari, langoustines, heirloom teardrop tomatoes and one thin sheet of fresh pasta ($36). And no Southern Italian ristorante would be worth its salt without sardines — pasta con le sarde is on the menu, too ($30).

The salmon is wrapped in puff pastry with spinach ($42) and there’s a Tuna con nolo with mango, peperoncino and avocado ($18). Italian Calvisius caviar is also on the menu. The Prestige is $80 an ounce and the Royal is available for $135 per ounce.

For dolci, we recommend the pastiera napoletana. The traditional Easter tart is deconstructed, with house-made ricotta, and topped with a fried crust.

Luigi al Teatro is not for the faint of wallet. The wine list, which reflects Fineo’s Italian heritage, includes a $750 bottle of Gaja Barbaresco Costa Russi as well as more reasonable options such as his signature cabernets. But it’s a memorable visual and culinary experience worth a special occasion, with a vibe reminiscent of Abbot Kinney in the ‘90s.

In 2008 Fineo earned a Michelin star while executive chef at La Botte in Santa Monica. After that he joined Thomas Keller and team at the French Laundry. He served as executive chef alongside acclaimed Italian chef Gino Angelini at Rivabella Ristorante. In 2016 Fineo co-founded Landmarks Restaurant Group, which includes Osteria Venice West and Luigi al Teatro, both housed in historic beachside buildings.

If you’re looking for a romantic Valentine’s Day dinner, Chef Luigi is offering a five-course set menu at $160 with prosecco. The regular menu won’t be available.

Luigi al Teatro, 3116 Second St., Santa Monica; (310) 328-0000, luigialteatro.com.

SOUTH E AT W RIO


SPRING’S CBD POWER LUNCH HAS A SPECIAL INGREDIENT

Husband-and-wife team chef Tony Esnault and Yasmin Sarmadi have just revitalized lunch, becoming the first restaurant to incorporate cannabidiol-rich hemp oil and cold-pressed organic CBD coconut oil into the menu at Spring, their French oasis in the Douglas Building in downtown Los Angeles.

The S37 CBD Power Lunch prix fixe menu, “created for optimal benefits and a boost to your day,” consists of three choices:

- Mixed green salad (mood-lifting, supports digestion) or butternut squash soup with spiced honey squash, pumpkin seeds, sage, crostini, celery and pomegranate seeds (supports circulation, calming, supports digestion and promotes alertness). The soup arrives with all the solid ingredients in the bowl and then the server dramatically pours the hot soup over them at the table. The yin and yang of the hot and cold demonstration already made me more alert.

- The main-course choices include beet risotto made with carnaroli rice, pickled beets and Parmesan, dusted with orange zest (supports healthy blood pressure and increases oxygen supply). There’s the delicate branzino with seasonal market vegetables (supports digestion and joint health and boosts metabolism.) Mary’s chicken breast with butternut squash, spinach and celeriac rounds out the three (improves memory, supports digestion and soothes muscles).

- For dessert, there’s the knockout panna cotta with Tahitian vanilla, mango, passion fruit coulis and coconut sorbet (increases CBD absorption, aphrodisiac, soothes muscles and just plain makes you a happy camper). The chocolate cake option comes with a bittersweet ganache, lemon honey sorbet, citrus vinagrette and praline (increases CBD absorption, promotes bliss and improves digestion).

Instead of cooking with the CBD, Esnault uses it in every dish as a finishing oil, with a few squirts applied in the airy open kitchen before serving. Because the extract has to be combined with oil — avocado, coconut, walnut, olive — that helps the chef determine food pairings. There is about a half teaspoon in each dish, for a total of about 8.5 milliliters in the three-course meal.

For an extra $5 per dish, a CBD dose can be added to any item on the regular menu, and a 30 mL bottle of Ojai Energetics Super CBD is available for purchase to go.

Cannabinoids aside, the menu is a seasonal and springlike escape to Southern France in the atrium dining room under the shade of the pepper trees and next to the bubbling frog fountain. Michelin-starred chef Esnault and Sarmadi were pioneers in fostering the sophisticated downtown L.A. dining scene with their French bistro Church & State.

The effects? Full disclosure: I walked in as a snake oil skeptic. But after the combination of superfoods and those three healthy doses of CBD, I blissfully walked the seven blocks back to the train without joint pain for the first day in weeks. Or maybe it was just the passion fruit panna cotta that had me walking on air. — Michele Stueven

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Behind the Bar
by Gabriella Mlynarczyk

A RIFF ON THE SALTY DOG,
FOR THE YEAR OF THE DOG

Behind the Bar is a new column that will take readers into the world of anything that goes into a glass — it features local sommeliers, baristas, bartenders, mixologists and their creations. Gabriella Mlynarczyk is beverage director of the Accomplice Bar in Mar Vista.

Citrus season is upon us in sunny SoCal and I’m on the hunt for the most delicious specimens our local grocers have to offer. When I hit the mosh pit that is Santa Monica Farmers Market — to get the best loot, elbows often need to be used — my first stop is Garcia Organic Farms, where the plump and fragrant orbs of grapefruit goodness beckon me to come hither. The standout by far is the oro blanco. It’s technically not a grapefruit but a hybrid of a pomelo and a white grapefruit — sweeter, less bitter, seedless and just jam-packed with juice begging to be freed from its pale yellow skin.

As it happens, the pomelo is a lucky fruit to have at your dinner table for Chinese New Year, and since my task this week is to put together a cocktail to celebrate the Year of the Dog, I make a grab for as much of the fruit as my arms can carry. OK, to be honest, I order from Lety at Garcia Farms ahead of time; she’s a doll. As a night-owl bartender I’ve spent many a morning arriving too late at the market, when stocks are seriously depleted, but it sounds less exciting if I tell you the boring truth of how I get my white gold citrus plunder.

Once I get back to the bar, I have my way with the fruit. The peel gets steeped in vodka because why waste any of this beauty, while the juice is put aside for the cocktail immi-

To round out this cocktail, I decide on a local IPA beer as the final accent; its bitter finish and hoppy fragrance are a match made in heaven for the citrus. Beer works well as a lengthener in mixed drinks and can be added instead of soda water for effervescence. But for my purposes, I’m whipping it up with smoked salt into a head of foam that will outfit the drink with a meringue-like bonnet.

The standout by far is the oro blanco. It’s sweeter and less bitter, with notes in this wine-based aperitif make me think of adding kaffir lime leaves with their invigoratingly floral aroma.

To get the fullest flavor from the peel and the leaves, a flash infusion happens by way of sous-vide. Now don’t be put off by the fancy French term; I’m basically just dunking Ziploc bags filled with the leaves and spirit in a hot water bath, which helps to speed up the whole infusing process. An immersion circulator is used to control the heat of the water.

My circulator and I are besties and get to hang on a daily basis — the perfect relationship for me since I get to call all the shots, but I digress.

To round out this cocktail, I decide on a.DOG. Like any hunter, I’m a firm believer in using every single part of my “kill,” so I can be added instead of soda water for effervescence. But for my purposes, I’m whipping it up with smoked salt into a head of foam that will outfit the drink with a meringue-like bonnet.

The finished drink is light, refreshing and totally session-able, a perfect partner to a plate of steamed dumplings, crispy egg rolls or Peking duck.

Kung Hei Fat Choi! To happiness and prosperity then!

Lunar New Year Salty Dog
(1 serving)
1 oz. oro blanco zest-infused vodka
1½ oz. kaffir leaf-infused Cap Corse Quina
(1 serving)
1½ oz. oro blanco juice
¾ oz. elderflower liqueur
3 dashes hopped grapefruit bitters
1 pinch Maldon smoked salt

For the IPA foam (makes enough for 10-12 servings)
½ liter IPA beer
4 oz. elderflower liqueur
1 oz. Maldon salt solution (teaspoon Maldon smoked salt + 1 oz. hot water)
1 tsp. texturas sucre

Oro blanco vodka
1 liter bottle vodka; my preference is Cap Rock
Peel of four oro blancos or pomelos
Using a Y peel, shave off peel and toss either into a Ziploc bag or large screw-top jar. Pour in vodka to cover.

If you are using the sous-vide method, place bags in hot water bath with temperature on immersion circulator set at 55 degrees Celsius.

Leave for 2 hours. Allow to cool before transferring back into bottle. Store in fridge until ready to use.

If using jar method, place in fridge and allow to steep for at least 48 hours before using to get fullest flavor.

Kaffir lime leaf quina
750ml Cap Corse Quina (Lillet Blanc works, too)
20 grams (or 25-30) kaffir lime leaves
Use same method for infusing as oro blanco vodka.

To get the fullest flavor from the peel and the leaves, a flash infusion happens by way of sous-vide. Now don’t be put off by the fancy French term; I’m basically just dunking Ziploc bags filled with the leaves and spirit in a hot water bath, which helps to speed up the whole infusing process. An immersion circulator is used to control the heat of the water.

My circulator and I are besties and get to hang on a daily basis — the perfect relationship for me since I get to call all the shots, but I digress.

To round out this cocktail, I decide on a
The first play in a three-part trilogy, *Elliot: A Soldier’s Fugue* delves into the experience of war for three generations of soldiers in a Puerto Rican–American family. Written by Quiara Alegría Hudes (who wrote the book for Lin-Manuel Miranda’s *In the Heights*), it's a lyrical exploration of the fear, bravado and bewilderment of lonely soldiers struggling to survive the dubious battles our country has waged over the last seven decades. Hudes studied music before she took up playwriting, and that's evident in the lilt and rhythm of her writing, which also has plenty of droll moments to counter some of the story's dark sadness.

The play was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, an honor secured by its sequel *Water for the Spoonful* (which opens at the Mark Taper Forum on Feb. 11) in 2012. It’s regrettable that the current production, directed by Shishir Kurup at the Kirk Douglas Theatre, is notable chiefly for the poetic language of the text; on-stage, events and emotions transpire in a way that’s mostly flat and not all that affecting.

As the word “fugue” implies, the narrative is made up of several threads, arrayed in counterpoint. The pivotal character, Elliot (Peter Mendoza), is 18 when he joins the Marines, following in the tradition of his Pop (Jason Manuel Olazábal), a Vietnam vet; his mother, Ginny (Caro Zeller), a military nurse who met Pop overseas; and his grandfather George (Rubén Garfias), who saw action in Korea but now uses a wheelchair and has Alzheimer’s.

Elliot signed up not under pressure from his family — in fact, his dad won’t even speak of his own experience at war — but because he chose to do so himself. He’s proud of this choice; it’s given him a sense of self-worth, of becoming someone other than a kid making sandwiches in a hoagie shop. Later, home for a visit, his enlistment garners attention from the media, which spotlights him as a hero and interviews him on camera, a staged exploitative event in brusque contrast to the harsh realities Elliot has undergone.

The young man’s narrative interweaves with those of his dad, his grandad and his mom, who alternately spin their own tales on various parts of a broad, stark prosce-
CARAVAN BOOKS IS CLOSING

“End of an era” was a struggle for owner Bernstein

BY BEIGE LUCIANO-ADAMS

After nearly 64 years on Grand Avenue, downtown’s beloved antiquarian bookseller Caravan Book Store announced Jan. 31 it will close its doors at the end of February. Specializing in rare, curious and out-of-print books on California and the Old West, exploration, gastronomy and niche historical genres, the tiny storefront persisted in an antiquarian book market now driven by keywords and online sales.

Inextricably linked with the personality and proclivities of its owner, the shop’s essence — its idiosyncratic collection, atmospheric imprint, promise of discovery — has long been cocooned from encroaching pressures; a rare, self-contained sanctum of an already distant era.

Two years ago an evocative L.A. Times article cataloged the store’s charms, celebrating its “analog insistencies” amid upheavals of a rapidly changing downtown — and declared, “Caravan won’t be found on the internet.”

Now, owner Leonard Bernstein isn’t sure about that. “What we don’t (sell) we’ll take with us and be online, probably, and maybe open another little gallery somewhere,” he said by phone from his shop, where he has spent most days since he took over the business from his father more than 30 years ago.

Bernstein’s congenial tone belied ambivalence, sadness, determination. Even as he checked off familiar rationales for retirement — he’ll be approaching his mid-70s, people are telling him to step back, enjoy his new grandson, tend his garden — he is not ready to let go of an identity crafted through decades of daily practice, or the attendant sense of purpose.

“This is my home. I’m part of the community here. I know the neighborhood, I know the people — and yet every day is a new experience. There’s someone to meet, someone new and exciting. ... It’s very stimulating, mentally, and very refreshing.”

The decision to close, he said, has been a struggle in his mind for nearly two years. Calling it the “end of an era,” Brad Johnson, owner of Johnson Rare Books and Archives in Covina, remembered Caravan as a “great browsing shop,” the likes of which are disappearing as sellers move online and focus on more expensive and rare stock.

“That’s the great thing about open shops: When you hop on the net you have a key word, but when you walk down the aisle something might catch your eye — that ability to browse and make discoveries, that sort of serendipity, was a particular specialty of Caravan,” Johnson added. “Their roots run deep here in the L.A. book community.”

But “they” is really just “he.” With occasional help from his three children in earlier years, Bernstein has kept the doors open, answered the phone, organized, cleaned, handled inventory and shipping, developed pitch-perfect customer service and faced the onslaught of questions, both erudite and mundane.

His son, Jeremy, remembered working in the shop, often called upon to find “that one book that a customer wants, buried under a thousand books.” But now, he said, his father is also tasked with handling “the homeless and mentally ill wandering into the shop multiple times a day, every single week.”

Bernstein said he has family and good friends who “come and go or get me a sandwich from time to time, that kind of thing. But basically it’s me.”

Bernstein insists there are no economic issues, no obscene rent inflation driving him out. Succession is more complicated.

“I could’ve hired people; I took a résumé today,” he said, unconvinced. “But you have to have a sixth sense in this business and know the material.”

Caravan Book Store is at 550 S. Grand Ave. in downtown Los Angeles. Items throughout the shop will be marked down during a closing sale that runs through Feb. 24.

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This research project is sponsored by the National Institute on Drug Abuse.
BRIE MEETS GHEE

The most fascinating thing about _Basmati Blues_ is its very existence

BY ALAN SCHERSTUHL

ook, whatever you’re tempted to say about _Basmati Blues_, here’s one thing that’s true: There’s no way your satiric screwball Amerindie Bollywood-influenced Brie Larson romantic musical comedy about agriculture in India would work better. Nobody’s wheelhouse has _Basmati Blues_ in it. As such, Dan Baron’s film is less a narrative feature you get caught up in then it is a document of the fact that, yes, this thing got financed and finished. Watching it is something like watching a play’s first full dress rehearsal or a gangly baby deer’s initial attempts to stand, where it’s the effort that’s more engaging than the achievement itself.

Whatever else, _Basmati Blues_ does qualify as “achievement.” Here’s a film where Tyne Daly, as a powerful businesswoman, belts out a laugh line about her character — Linda — somehow builds to Larson on horseback (The film was shot in 2013 and is now finally realizing which of her suitors she of course, that her character — Linda — somehow builds to Larson on horseback — enough to throw any seasoned filmgoer). These opening scenes are cut with the rhythms of the actors that give the scene shape rather than the haste of the editors. Like Linda, the Indian characters slip continually from flat to round. Some are comically broad — this is, after all, a movie where a goat assists in a jailbreak — and some serve to teach Linda that, actually, the international conglomerate she works for does not have Indian farmers’ interests at heart. That this is news to her makes her difficult to cheer for, but I guess we can give the movie this: No character is as broad a caricature as its white lead. Early on, in a charmingly comic scene, our sheltered American even gets fooled into believing that it’s customary in India to greet new acquaintances with gentle slaps to the temples. Wondering about the choices behind _Basmati Blues_ often is more interesting than the film’s moment-to-moment drift. Did the screenwriters — Baron with Jeff Dorchen — intend to make their protagonist a deeply uninformed nonentity who, despite her advanced degrees and desire to feed the world, has apparently never once thought about how people other than herself actually live? Perhaps this characterization is meant as inoculation from accusations that, in creating _Basmati Blues_, they have sought to appropriate a culture that isn’t theirs. (In the press notes, Baron admits to never being tempted to say about _Basmati Blues_ what tomorrow will bring while sitting in the backseat of a car and glumly staring straight ahead at nothing in particular. The editors slice in interesting shots of village life — I guess to show us what she’s missing? The songs tend toward a glittering guitar-based pop, sometimes tinged with tabla and sitar, only on occasion compelling or expressive of the characters’ hearts. Generic yet pleasant, they sound something like a cross between late-period U2 (glisten majestically, you rising chords!) and the kind of upmarket Nashville country that sells better at Target than it does at Walmart. I wrote that in my notebook and then was gratified by the end credits, which revealed that songs had been pitched in from Pearl Jam and Sugarland. The most Bollywood _Basmati Blues_ gets is a romantic duet sung between Larson and Utkarsh Ambudkar, who plays Rajit, the poorer of Linda’s romantic options. This number’s a legitimate highlight, though it’s not as delightful as the moment that precedes it. Rajit faces Linda in a radiant two-shot inside a temple as they bicker through a seed-politics version of the small chain-vs.-megastore _You’ve Got Mail_ conflict. (He’s right; she’s wrong. Linda’s too humble/clueless to be the white savior character that some viewers of the trailers attacked.) Once they’re talked out, they hush, for a breath, and then Rajit gazes longingly upon her and, without accompaniment, croons the first line of their duet.

Linda cuts him off. “You’re going to sing now?” she snaps.

Too bad so much of _Basmati Blues_ is utterly unlike that moment, one of the few where Linda is not a naif, where she seizes control of a moment, where it’s the rhythms of the actors that give the scene shape rather than the haste of the editors. Like Linda, the Indian characters slip continually from flat to round. Some are comically broad — this is, after all, a movie where a goat assists in a jailbreak — and some serve to teach Linda that, actually, the international conglomerate she works for does not have Indian farmers’ interests at heart. That this is news to her makes her difficult to cheer for, but I guess we can give the movie this: No character is as broad a caricature as its white lead. Early on, in a charmingly comic scene, our sheltered American even gets fooled into believing that it’s customary in India to greet new acquaintances with gentle slaps to the temples. Wondering about the choices behind _Basmati Blues_ often is more interesting than the film’s moment-to-moment drift. Did the screenwriters — Baron with Jeff Dorchen — intend to make their protagonist a deeply uninformed nonentity who, despite her advanced degrees and desire to feed the world, has apparently never once thought about how people other than herself actually live? Perhaps this characterization is meant as inoculation from accusations that, in creating _Basmati Blues_, they have sought to appropriate a culture that isn’t theirs. (In the press notes, Baron admits to never having seen a Bollywood film until after he conceived of this project; Hollywood’s greatest influence on the final film mostly seems to be in the license the director and screenwriter felt to go broad.)

In one way, Linda’s story seems a version of their own: A nice American goes to India but knows not to pretend for a moment to be an expert on anything except what she’s trained in. Perhaps that’s admirable. But art demands vision rather than a surplus of notions and some humility, and the animating idea behind _Basmati Blues_ here seems simply to be, “Wow, we’re here making this movie!” It looks like it was fun.
FRIGHTENINGLY UNORIGINAL
Our condolences to the families whose kids fall for Monster Family

BY APRIL WOLFE

I can only assume that it must be great fun and good money to voice characters in animated features, because those are the only reasons I can think of for Nick Frost, Jason Isaacs, Emily Watson and Jessica Brown Findlay to have signed onto Monster Family, a lifeless, meandering mashup of The Incredibles and Monster House with a few blood drips of Monster Squad. It’s all neither funny nor sweet and seems as though someone Mad-Libbed the script together in the last few minutes before drifting off to sleep. It comes as no surprise that there are six writing credits.

Directed by Holger Tappe, the film focuses on an unhappy wife and mother (Watson) who accidentally calls Dracula (Isaacs) and is suddenly his romantic target. Dracula sends a witch, Baba Yaga (Catherine Tate), to turn the mother into a vampire because Dracula doesn’t want to cross or the mother’s hippie bookstore employee who uses the power of kindness to save them or even the one about the dad’s nervous stomach — he’s constantly farting a noxious lime-green gas. Frost speaks about five lines total, and the rest of the time just groans while his character lets ’em rip.

Nothing matters in this movie; stuff just happens.

The existence of a film like this, one whose creators put a great deal of thought into their 3-D animation and almost none into its story, isn’t an anomaly. Tappe made another knockoff film in 2012 called Animals United, with a voice cast including Stephen Fry, Vanessa Redgrave and Jim Broadbent. The most accurate review of that film came from British critic Robbie Collin, who called it “Bada-gasar,” referring to its aping of Madagascar — and its demonstration of little understanding of why that theme would work. One has to wonder about the very mindset of the filmmakers who are so untouched by the fact that the Grimm Brothers’ wolf is iconic, but not the little children who were terrified of the wolf.

This is a film for young kids, who are exactly the audience that this film clearly aimed at.

MONSTER FAMILY  | Directed by Holger Tappe | Written by David Safrer and Catarina Ijink | Viva Pictures (UK)


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of the men in the kitchens and living rooms of believers still sting and discomfit. This is all set in crisp black-and-white with the participants exhibiting no awareness of the cameras. The technique is transparent, in its way, which makes it doubly important to consider it.

TEHRAN TABOO

There are many taboos explored in Afghan filmmaker Mohammad-Reza Foroughi's luminously animated Tehran Taboo, not the least of which is the taboo against filming movies in Tehran about things that are taboo in Tehran. As such, Iranian-born Soozandeh shot his cast against a green screen in Germany — where he lives in exile, another barrier to location shooting — and rebooted them into an animated vision of the Iranian capital. Tehran Taboo would almost be too bleak had it been shot as a live-action film, exploring as it does the extreme sexual hypocrisies of the modern Islamic Republic of Iran — and, by extension, all conservative patriarchies.

Soozandeh wastes no time establishing both the hypocrisy of the devout in Iran (or America, as the case may be) and his Short Out—isian tapestry of characters: In the opening scene, prostitute Pari (Elmira Soozandeh) shot her mute son Elias (Bilal Yasar) in the backseat. The driver sees his daughter walking down the street holding a man’s hand. The driver becomes so overcome with rage at his daughter’s impurity — again, while he is getting blown by a prostitute whose son is in the backseat — that he crashes the taxi. Other stories involve marriage and divorce. The quest to either sew up a hymen or purchase a passably fake one before a wedding gets through to us as just another warning that normal people do in a morally righteous country that — and this is going to sound cuckoo-bananas, but roll with me here — may not be quite as concerned with maintaining women’s morality as it is with protecting men’s frail egos.

(Sherrilyn Connelly)

Ongoing

A FANTASTIC WOMAN (UNA MUJER FANTASTICA) In the tense but hearty Chilean drama A Fantastic Woman, actress Daniela Vega plays a transwoman, Marina, who must navigate life after the death of her lover. But no matter what trials Marina must face going it alone in a city either hostile toward or simply confused by the nuances of gender identity, director Sebastian Lelio refuses to paint her as a simple victim, bucking the prevailing assumption that a transwoman at the center of a film must necessarily be a tragic figure. In the early scenes, Marina is adored and cherished by an older man, Orlando (Francisco Reyes). But Marina has no idea how dependent on Orlando she is until she suffers sudden chest pains and must rush him to the hospital. Once the two are separated by the surgery room doors, Marina seems to understand her life of happiness and security is already dissipating. A doctor delivers the news that Orlando is dead and questions Marina about a bruise on his head — sustained from a fall as she was helping him get to the hospital. But she knows people will be skeptical of her story. Marina then slips into survival mode, and Vega’s performance is so kinetic, here, that we can almost see the blood pulsing furiously through her body as Marina digests that her safety is now threatened. The physicality of her performance is the most intriguing element of this film. Marina’s oscillating comfort and discomfort in her body is a story told without words. A Fantastic Woman shows that the obvious insults a transperson may endure will, of course, weigh on the psyche, but the death by a thousand cuts is even more damaging. (Craig D. Lindsey)

LIES WE TELL Lies We Tell is the model definition of a kitchen-sink melodrama. Not only does it exhibit all of the genre’s key features — British, working-class setting, a narrative heavy in social real-
The Metropolitan Opera: L'Elisir d'Amore
The Great Escape

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LAEMMLE'S ARHYA FINE ARTS THEATRE 3050 Wilshire Boulevard (310) 232-3264

Peter Rabbit

The Metropolitan Opera: L'Elisir d'Amore Sat., 9 a.m.

LAEMMLE'S MUSIC HALL 3 9036 Wilshire Blvd. (310) 274-6869

Laurel Canyon

The Metropolitan Opera: L'Elisir d'Amore Sat., 9 a.m.

LICHESTER'S THE METRO 3 11667 Venice Blvd. (310) 395-9128

The Metropolitan Opera: L'Elisir d'Amore Sun., 7 p.m.; Wed., 1, 4, 7 p.m.

Los Angeles Times - February 9, 2018

NEIGHBORHOOD MOVIE GUIDE

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8

The Metropolitan Opera: L'Elisir d'Amore Thu., 7, 10:30, 11 a.m., 1:30, 4, 7, 9, 9:45 p.m.; Fri., 11:20 a.m., 1:45, 4:30, 7; Sat., 11 a.m., 1:30, 3:45, 6, 8, 8:45 p.m.

The Metropolitan Opera: L'Elisir d'Amore Fri., 7, 10, 11 a.m., 1:30, 4, 7, 10; Sat., 11 a.m., 1:30, 3:45, 6, 8, 8:45 p.m.

REGAL THE AVENUE 15 550 Deep Valley Dr., Rolling Hills Estates (310) 444-5000

Peter Rabbit

Chase the Blues

AMC SANTA MONICA 7 313 Third Street Promenade (310) 395-3030

Black Panther

Peter Rabbit

AERIAL THEATER 3208 Mountain Avenue (323) 466-3810

Call theater for schedule.

AMC SANTA MONICA 7 313 Third Street Promenade (310) 395-3030

Black Panther

Peter Rabbit

11:15 p.m.; Thurs., 10:45, 11:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7

The Metropolitan Opera: L'Elisir d'Amore Thu., 11:15 p.m.; Fri., 10:45, 11:30 p.m.

THE METROPOLITAN OPERA: L'ELISIR D'AMORE

The Metropolitan Opera: L'Elisir d'Amore Thu., 7, 10, 11 a.m., 1:30, 4, 7, 9, 9:45 p.m.; Fri., 11:20 a.m., 1:45, 4:30, 7; Sat., 11 a.m., 1:30, 3:45, 6, 8, 8:45 p.m.

AERIAL THEATER 3208 Mountain Avenue

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Peter Rabbit

11:15 a.m., 1:30, 3:45, 6, 8, 8:45 p.m.

Mr. B's Wireless Theater

Peter Rabbit

11:15 a.m., 1:30, 3:45, 6, 8, 8:45 p.m.

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AMC SANTA MONICA 14 3529 Cansler St. Suite 73 (310) 289-4262

Black Panther

Peter Rabbit

11:15 a.m., 1:30, 3:45, 6, 8, 8:45 p.m.

The Metropolitan Opera: L'Elisir d'Amore Thu., 7, 10, 11 a.m., 1:30, 4, 7, 9, 9:45 p.m.; Fri., 11:20 a.m., 1:45, 4:30, 7; Sat., 11 a.m., 1:30, 3:45, 6, 8, 8:45 p.m.

Fifty Shades Freed

11:15 a.m., 1:30, 3:45, 6, 8, 8:45 p.m.

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AMC SANTA MONICA 7 313 Third Street Promenade (310) 395-3030

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Fifty Shades Freed

11:15 a.m., 1:30, 3:45, 6, 8, 8:45 p.m.
the Quintette du Hot Club of France. His music remains alive and well.

There are, in fact, “Hot Clubs” all over the world. There is the Paris-based Django Reinhardt’s own Quintette du Hot Club de France, his music remains alive and well.

The Hot Club of Los Angeles, named after Django Reinhardt’s style of music, has been playing gypsy jazz since 1993. It started as a small group of session players and sidemen united, naturally, out of a deep love for gypsy jazz and the music of Reinhardt.

That brought us together initially, and then we started doing a few shows around town,” says singer, pianist and accordionist Carl Byron. “Initially we were a residency at the Redwood Bar, but then we got the offer of doing the Monday nights at the Cinema Bar and we went for that. Then we started picking up various other things — corporate things (and) weddings, and last year, Jackson Browne started sitting in with us and he hired us for an event last year, which we’ll be doing again this year in March.

It should come as no surprise that the music of Django Reinhardt remains so beloved to this day; he’s by far the most recognizable name associated with gypsy jazz, a fiery, passionate, intricate and sexy style of music.

When people who are not fans of gypsy jazz explain why, they talk, rightly or wrongly, about the genre’s perceived lack of structure and melody and the cold technicality of the players. Those same people should give gypsy jazz a shot. Still, Byron discovered it through Jackson Browne and then Stephane, who was the co-soloist on violin. But that was by no means the only configuration.

After more than seven years of performing, usually weekly, Byron says there’s a solid audience for gypsy jazz and the music of Django Reinhardt in and around Los Angeles. He also says that, were he alive today, Reinhardt would get a kick out of the fact that he could travel to so many different cities and find a Hot Club to sit in with.

“When we was such an interesting person on so many levels,” Byron says. “The way he led his own life was not typical of many musicians, and that’s already saying something. Part of it had to do with his Roma heritage and characteristics. He was not always his best promoter, and he seemed to be rather equivocal about commercial success. He transcended the idea of being a professional musician because music was his whole being. It’s not something he started doing because he wanted to be successful. It was something that he had to do. He had such a passion for it. Anybody who went through what he went through with the fire that burned so much of his body and disfigured his hand, who then went back how to relearn how to play the instrument to the degree that he did and become one of the all-time greatest musicians, obviously has a great deal of passion for the music that goes way beyond being a star and being popular.”

The Hot Club of Los Angeles continues to play every Monday evening at the Cinema Bar in Culver City, usually performing two sets a night. To keep things as interesting as possible, Byron says they mix the sets up each week to a degree.

“We bring in newer stuff,” he says. “For instance, for the record that we’re making right now, we have also incorporated some originals that a couple of us in the band have composed. Then we will adapt some other things, which is a tradition in gypsy jazz. You might hear us play our own version of ‘Goldfinger.’

The gypsy jazz songbook is so vast that it’s really impossible in the space of two sets to do more than cover a small percentage of the material. We have ones that we do on a fairly consistent basis, and then ones that we bring in and might not do as frequently, plus the new ones that we bring in.”

The HCOLA is currently finishing up its latest album, tentatively titled Cinema Swing, which should be out in the spring. And in March, the band will be performing with Jackson Browne at his Artists for Peace and Justice event. Reinhardt’s music isn’t going anywhere in a hurry, because Hot Clubs such as the L.A. branch work so hard.

The Hot Club of Los Angeles play at 9 p.m. every Monday at the Cinema Bar, 3967 Sepulveda Blvd., Culver City; (310) 390-1328.
**Music Picks**

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**Exmortus, Kreator, Sabaton @ THE WILTERN**
Whittier’s very own sonic sadists Exmortus celebrate their 15th year as one of the finest purveyors of deeply tight, extortionately ordered extreme metal that makes the unfaithful eat their words with a healthy dose of Tabasco. Kreator — the pride of Essen, Germany — formed 35 years ago and went through various name changes until finally finding their own voice, using it to flay the gathered throngs of fans like a whip made entirely of barbed wire. Swedish power metallers Sabaton — sometimes called “a tireless killing machine,” because someone has to be! — will blow your minds with tales of struggle, annoyance and victory. —David Cotner

**Dead Prez @ THE ROXY**
“Time is getting rough, huh? That’s nothing new to us,” Dead Prez announced on “A New Beginning,” from their 2012 opus Information Age. “This crazy world we live in/ They taking, ain’t no giving/ Consuming not producing.” The Brooklyn duo of stic.man and M-1 have never been fascination with collecting dead presidents like more materialistic rappers. Instead, they’d rather burn those dollar bills — and burn down the whole system: “The end of the world don’t mean too much/ To us it’s a new beginning.” For all their uncompromising lyrics, Dead Prez aren’t about death and destruction. Instead, they confront reality with something more daring than violence — hope. “The dollar bill is just a piece of paper/ If the lights go out, it ain’t gonna save ya,” stic.man advises on “What If the Lights Go Out,” emphasizing the need for “organization, communication, clarity, family, solidarity.” —Falling James

**Goapele @ THEATRE AT ACE HOTEL**
Woke before anyone else realized they’d been sleeping. Oakland singer Goapele has since childhood inextricably intertwined activism and awareness with songs that are so smooth they boggle the cockles with the warmth of their coolness. She’ll be taking full advantage of the beautiful acoustics of the old United Artists Theatre tonight, unveiling new songs-in-progress and singing old favorites that can be interpreted in any number of ways because Goapele is nothing if not righteous in her multidimensional right-on-ness. Her music — minimal, sensual and subtly affecting — works in service of her words, never line-stepping or becoming tedious as it lifts up what she has to say. —David Cotner

**Love Is Gay @ THE ECHO**
This early-evening benefit for the LGBT Center reminds that love comes in all shapes and sizes and genders. The Valentine’s Day season can be horribly depressing, but tonight’s performers emphasize that love is inclusive and welcoming, and just not a rare state of being that must be fought over by jealous minds. With majestic pop entwines like “Human Female” and more provocatively rocking anthems such as “Keep Your Disease,” Bloodboy presides over the lineup with her aching, powerfully yearning, and ultimately inspiring vocals. Lucy & La Mer dig up relatively low-key but charming folk-pop interludes such as “Rainy Days,” while Pom Poms’ music ranges from shadowy, sensual rockers like “Gimme You” to such sweetly dreamy, perfectly soundtracks for night-time drives up and down PCH. —Jason Roche

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**Noncompliant, Anthony Parasole @ LOT 619**
Hailing from Indianapolis, Lisa Smith—who DJs and produces music as Noncompliant (and, formerly, as DJ Shiva)—is a 20-year veteran of the Midwest rave scene. In recent years, Smith, who is equally respected for her technique and her track selection, has established herself as one of the United States’ most in-demand techno DJs — as well as one of the strongest voices for women in electronic music culture. She shares the bill at Prototype with fellow master Anthony Parasole, a Brooklyn native and mainstay in New York’s nightclubs and underground parties. If you can’t catch Noncompliant tonight, never fear; Smith will be back in L.A. on April 27 at a to-be-announced location. —Matthew Miner

**Fu Manchu @ TROUBADOUR**
Huntington Beach rockers Fu Manchu have spent the majority of their 25-year career being lumped in with the stoner-rock genre. The reality, though, is that the band is a more sand-and-surf-obessed beach-bum cousin to the desert-rock movement that birthed seminal acts such as Kyuss. While lyrical themes on favorite albums such as 2000’s King of the Road were inspired by a love of cars, skateboarding and surfing, Fu Manchu’s recent output has mined more esoteric themes of science fiction and the supernatural. What remains unchanged on the band’s latest record, Clone of the Universe, is a love of catchy hard-core hooks filtered through a mix of ‘70s analog warmth and an early-’80s hard-core punk edge, making it another in a long line of perfect soundtracks for night-time drives up and down PCH. —Jason Roche

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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10
ECSTATIC BASS YOGA

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10
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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9
THE WILD HAIR

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Cartalk, Jessica Childress,
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Prudence
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Cartalk make a type of music that singer
Chelsea Moore calls tenderpunk, and it’s
a kind of alt-country that’s the perfect
soundtrack for twilled whispers shared be-
neath the harvest moon. Souful singer-
songwriter Jessica Childress plays songs
off her debut album, Days, while Hawk
Percival and Friends return to the land
with a stripped-down, heartfelt antidote
to the Land of the Spree and the Home
of the Crave. Prudence give the night a
sense of blessed completion, rocketing
you breathily away on wings of cosmic
reverie, far beyond the confines of the
greater metropolitan Highland Park area.
—David Cotner

Georgia Anne Muldrow
@ THE ECHO
Georgin Muldrow’s father was jazz
guitarist Ronald Muldrow, and her mother
is Rickie Byars-Beckwith, founder of the
Agape International Choir. While jazzzy nu-
ances and vocal dexterity course through
her music, her songs are sparked by her
own life experiences and distinctively
insightful lyrics. The tracks on Muldrow’s
2015 album, A Thoughtiverse Unmarred,
aren’t limited by the usual rules of rap. Her
lyrics flow freely, but her musical universe
expands with her to encompass dreamy
soul and subtly psychedelic passages.
Muldrow’s words are more inspiring than
cautious, and her aptly titled Thoughtiverse
is a contemplative, multilayered album
that seeks to inspire instead of criticize as
the singer invokes family, love and identity
against a backdrop of ever-changing
moods. —Falling James

Morton Subotnick
@ REDCAT
1967 was a big year for avant-garde music.
Records by John Cage, Betsy Jolas and
Iannis Xenakis rubbed shoulders in the
shops with the relative weirdness of Sgt.
Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band and The
Velvet Underground & Nico. 1967 also was
the year that composer Morton Subotnick
produced the marriage of classical and
electronic music known as Silver Apples
of the Moon. Released on Nonesuch, his LP
presented electronic music as something
accessible, even danceable. Tonight, along
with selections from that record, he’ll also
perform “Crowds and Power” — a “media
tone poem” inspired by the writing of
Nobel-winning novelist Elias Canetti — in
collaboration with wife and vocalist Joan
La Barbara, and with Berlin-based artist
Lillevan showing live visuals, the intensity
of which resemble Helen Keller touching
and re-touching a Sistine Chapel ceiling
laced with LSD. —David Cotner

Ken Boothe
@ THE ECHOPLEX
“For the first time from Jamaica... Ken
Boothe for U.K. pop reggae, with backing
bands sound systems,” Joe Strummer
once declared with star-struck admiration
on The Clash’s punk-rock ode to reggae
“White Man in Hammersmith Palais.”
After citing a list of other early Jamaican
idols, Strummer added, “And if they’ve got
anything to say/There’s many black ears
here to listen.” As with other reggae vocal-
ist, Boothe was influenced by American
soul and R&B, and you can hear those
influences in his mellifluous voice. Unlike
Peter Tosh and Bob Marley, Boothe is more
of a romantic at heart than a fiery rebel
freedom fighter, and in the 1970s he moved
away from the intensity of reggae and ska
into a lighter pop sound. Tonight, he’ll be
backed by local acolytes The Steady 45s.
—Falling James
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THE LIGHTHOUSE CAFE: 30 Pico Ave., Hermosa Beach. The CJS Quintet, Sat., Feb. 11, 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. free. The Mike Barone Big Band, Sun., Feb. 11, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., $10. The Joseph Santa Maria Quintet, Wed., Feb. 14, 6-9 p.m., free.


THE WORLD STAGE: 4231 Degnan Blvd., L.A. Bennie Maupin, Feb. 9-10, 9 p.m., $25.

COUNTRY & FOLK


DANCE CLUBS

AVALON HOLLYWOOD: 1735 Vine St., L.A. Tiger Heat, Thursdays, 10 p.m., $5.


LOS GLOBOS: 3040 W. Sunset Blvd., L.A. Club ’90s, Fridays, 10 p.m. Sinner, Lucid, Haiz, Zuma, Fri., Feb. 9, 10 p.m. DJ Alexander, Sat., Feb. 10, 10 p.m. Shabbabah, DJ Sean G, Drekwyrd, Sat., Feb. 10, 10 p.m., $10. Boothe LA, Saturdays, 10 p.m. $5 & $10. Absolute Valentine’s Night, Wed., Feb. 14, 9 p.m.

LOT 613: 613 Imperial St., L.A. Anthony Parasole, Noncomplicant, Maheras, Fri., Feb. 9, 10 p.m., $15 & $20. See Music Pick.

THE MARQUEE: 3311 S. Main St., L.A. Chapter 2: Brown Sugar, Tue., Feb. 13, 7 p.m., $5-$12.

THE REGENT THEATER: 488 S. Main St., L.A. Hip-Hop Weekly Showcase, Thur., Feb. 15, 5:30 p.m., $32.50.

1720: 1720 E. 16th St., L.A. Sinian Mobile Disco, Matthew Dear, Sat., Feb. 10, 8 p.m., $30.


For more listings, please go to laweekly.com.
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D. Johnson, Kacey Johansing, 8 p.m., $23-$65. The Second St., Santa Monica.

SAT., FEB. 10, 10 p.m. L.A. Theatre Center, 514 S. Flower St., L.A. Haskell, Perahia, 80 panels, 8 p.m., $55-$195. The Wiltern.

THE FRIGHTS:
CAIFANES:
8 p.m., $15. Hollywood Palladium.

ROBERT PALLAS M.D.
Murphy, 7 p.m., $29-$299. Dorothy Chandler Pavilion.

Los Angeles Opera’s presentation of Leonard Bernstein’s update of Voltaire’s satire is highlighted by beguiling vocal performances by coloratura soprano Erin Morley (as Cunegonde), tenor Jack Swanson (as Candide) and versatile mezzo-soprano Peabody Southwell (as Paquette), Sun., Feb. 11, 2 p.m.; Thu., Feb. 15, 7:30 p.m.; Sat., Feb. 17, 2 p.m.; Sun., Feb. 18, 2 p.m., $29-$399. Dorothy Chandler Pavilion.

THE COLBURN CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY: London Symphony Orchestra clarinetist Andrew Marriner unfurls Brahms’ Clarinet Quintet, and the ensemble also lulls with serenades by Strauss and Dvorak, Sun., Feb. 11, 3 p.m., $11 & $27. The Colburn School of Music, Zipper Concert Hall, 200 S. Grand Ave., L.A.

THE COLBURN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA: Maxim Shermann conducts selections by Holst, Purcell and Verdi, Sun., Feb. 11, 8 p.m., $38. Renée & Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall.

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