How a Vegas Festival Revived Retro, Rockabilly and Pinup Culture in L.A.

By Lina Lecaro
Chinatown
AFTER DARK

FIRST THURSDAYS
APRIL 5TH, 2018  6PM - 10PM

DESSERTS by ISA FABRO
TED MONTOYA at CALOPROVISIONS
OYSTERS ON THE HALF SHELL by CHEF DOM CRISP
CHEF JOHNNY LEE
GOOD GRAVY BAKES by CHEF BETH KELLERHALS
KIM CHUY
QIN WEST
LAO TAO TAIWANESE STREET FOOD
SCOOPS
THIEN HUONG
EAST/WEST SHOP
ENDORFFEINE COFFEE BAR
RAMEN CHAMP
BAOHAUS
LASA

LIVE MUSIC FEATURING:
6PM–8PM UKULELE FESTIVAL – JASON ARIMOTO AND JIM DUNCAN
8PM–10PM CHINESE ZITHER 古筝 – SEAN WANG

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GO LA...7
The Music Center and the Autry host “after hours” events, Dosshaus turns Corey Helford Gallery into a “Paper-Thin Hotel,” Dance Camera West adds outdoor events and more to do and see in L.A. this week.

FEATURE...13
How the Viva Las Vegas festival revived retro and rockabilly culture in L.A., BY LINA LECARO.

EAT & DRINK...19
The Pacific Food and Beverage Museum, now open in San Pedro, tells the story of cuisine and cocktails, BY PAUL HODGINS.

CULTURE...24
The Wooster Group channels avant-garde Polish director Tadeusz Kantor in A PINK CHAIR (In Place of a Fake Antique). BY JORDAN RIEFE.

ADVERTISING
CLASSIFIED...42
EDUCATION/EMPLOYMENT...42
REAL ESTATE/RENTALS...43
BULLETIN BOARD...43
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LA WEEKLY
**MUSIC**

**Disco After Dark**
The Dorothy Chandler Pavilion is usually the site of such high-art forms as ballet and opera, but every once in a while the grand old dame of the Music Center lets down her hair and transforms herself into a glittery latenight disco. The doors to the Chandler’s chandelier-bedecked lobby and private chambers alike open wide this weekend for the return of **Sleepless: The Music Center After Hours**, this time a two-night event. Dublab DJs spin records as the backdrop to roller-skating demonstrations, film screenings, art installations, a fashion show, “pop-up dance happenings” from Invertigo Dance Theatre, creative typewriter exercises from Melrose Poetry Bureau and a drag revue helmed by DJ Lady Bunny. Local disco-funk band Luxury perform on Friday, followed by a set from post-disco acolytes De Lux on Saturday. Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Fri.-Sat., April 6-7, 11:30 p.m.-4 a.m.; $30. (213) 972-0711, musiccenter.org/sleepless. —Falling James

**BOOKS/FOOD**

**Fighting for Food**
The oldest wisdom often comes in handy when cataclysm looms large and we realize what clods we’ve been all along about preserving our most precious resources. From Garden Warriors to Good Seeds: Indigenous Food Sovereignty is a book project of Dr. Elizabeth Hoover of Brown University, and she’ll tell you about modern developments in local food movements. Other highlights: nationwide Native American farming projects that continue to forge their own paths when it comes to taking care of their own food stores, and the importance of heritage seeds, which could become a watershed of radical self-reliance. UCLA La Kretz Garden Pavilion, 707 Tiverton Drive, Westwood; Fri., April 6, 4-5 p.m.; free, RSVP requested. (310) 825-1260, eventbrite.com/e/from-garden-warriors-to-good-seeds-indigenous-food-sovereignty-community-gardens-tickets-43480173369. —David Cotner

**ART**

**Cardboard-Thin Walls**
“People are defined by the things they surround themselves with,” David Connelly told the Weekly earlier this year about the strangely mundane assortment of monochromatic painted-cardboard objects — a couch, vintage turntable, suitcase, beer cans, lipstick, typewriter, chessboard and even an elevator — he and fellow artist Zoey Taylor have assembled for their new exhibition, **“Paper-Thin Hotel.”** Better known as the art collective Dosshaus, the duo are transforming Corey Helford Gallery into a virtual flophouse replete with its own lobby and series of seedily noirish motel rooms through which they’ll wander as living-art characters inspired by Arthur Miller and Bonnie & Clyde. Dosshaus’ elaborate cardboard costumes and sculptures are simultaneously playful and surreally distinctive. Corey Helford Gallery, 517 S. Anderson St., Boyle Heights; opening reception, Sat., April 7, 7-11 p.m.; through May 5; free. (323) 287-2540, coreyhelfordgallery.com. —Falling James

**OUTDOORS**

**Roaring ’20s Lawn Party**
Cast your mind back to those thrilling days of yesteryear — before the horrors of the stock market crash, the Great Mississippi Flood of ’27 and the suicide of sur-realist Jacques Rigaut — when you enjoy today’s **Roaring ‘20s Lawn Party**! Situated by that beautiful, grand old 1926 Griffith Park merry-go-round, this rollicking sockdoller comes replete with snappy Charleston dancers, vintage photo ops, games of croquet and horseshoes, contests for the best-dressed men, women and children, and live music from the ’20s and ’30s. **Party Like It’s 1920!**

Outdoors

**ART/SHOPPING**

**On the Record**
Vinyl collectors, mark your calendars. The **Los Angeles Record Fair** returns today with the first of four scheduled events this year. Approximately two dozen vendors will offer for sale records, cassettes, CDs, music collectibles, apparel and music equipment. DJs will perform for your entertainment and food trucks will be on-site should you work up a fierce appetite crate-digging. The venue is located just a short walk from the Expo/Crenshaw Metro station. Ali’s Banquet Halls, 3420 W. Jefferson Blvd., Jefferson Park; Sat., April 7, noon-6 p.m.; $5. (213) 926-8220, larecordfair.com. —Matt Miner

**ART/SHOPPING**

**Artapalooza**
Twice a year, the L.A. Brewery Art Colony transforms into a party where the public can amble through its 16-acre industrial campus, meeting artists and artisans where they live and buying work directly off the walls of the lofts where it was created. A former Edison plant turned PBR brewery, the historic site began its transformation to the “world’s largest art complex” in the early ’80s, and still only rents to artists. This weekend, **Spring Art Walk at the L.A. Brewery** will include more than 100 studios — artists making everything from jewelry and ceramics to furniture, fashion, sculpture, installation, printmaking and every manner of painted canvas. There will be a serious food truck lineup, a beer garden and limited free parking (at adjacent UPS building, none on-site) — so consider ridesharing. Dogs not allowed. The Brewery Arts Complex, 2100 N. Main St., Lincoln Heights; Fri.-Sat., April 7-8, 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; free. (323) 638-9382, breweryartwalk.com. —Beige Luciano-Adams

**ACTIVISM**

**Cruel and Unusual**
In 1971, Robert King, Albert Woodfox and Herman Wallace were sent to Angola Louisiana State Penitentiary for armed robbery. Each spent decades in solitary confinement following the stabbing mur-
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ART/CULTURE

Viva La Raza
Pacific Standard Time LA/LA is the gift that keeps on giving, a catalyst for collaboration and dialogue still ricocheting across the city — like the Autumn’s dynamic “La Raza” exhibition (through Feb. 10), culled from more than 25,000 archival photographs documenting the height of the Chicano Rights Movement. Experience it in a celebratory atmosphere at Autry After Hours, where local poets, artists, DJs and performers converge for a “compelling cultural encounter.” Global bass/vintage tropical beats by Subsuelo, crafts with Self-Help Graphics and something from performance artist Artemisa Clark. While you’re there, check out “Chicano Male Unbowed,” Harry Gamboa Jr.’s striking photo series of the city’s Chicano avant-garde, presented in conjunction with LA RAZA, Autry Museum of the American West, 4700 Western Heritage Way, Griffith Park; Wed., April 11, 6:30-9 p.m.; $5 nonmembers, free for Autry members; (323) 667-2000, theautry.org/events/special-events/autry-after-hours. —Beige Luciano-Adams

BOOKS/FILM

Odyssey Into Space
Fifty years after it emerged into global consciousness, 2001: A Space Odyssey still maintains its power to thrill, enthral and perplex its audience. To better understand the legacy of this constantly unfolding creative touchstone, Michael Benson unveils Space Odyssey: Stanley Kubrick, Arthur C. Clarke and the Making of a Masterpiece (430, Simon & Schuster). A triptych through the creative processes of both director Kubrick and author Clarke, it includes insightful interviews with Kubrick’s widow, Christiane, visual effects sorcerer Douglas Trumbull and a wealth of others. The ads called the film “The Ultimate Trip” — and for once, they were right. Book Soup, 8818 Sunset Blvd., West Hollywood; Wed., April 11, 7 p.m.; free. (310) 659-3110, booksoup.com/event/michael-benson-discusses-and-signs-space-odyssey-stanley-kubrick-arthur-c-clarke-and-making. —David Cotner

BOOK

Finding Your Moment
Just imagine the forces of the universe that have worked against you and/or helped bring you to the point in your life that you’re reading these words. That’s timing, baby. Live Talks LA presents Daniel H. Pink discussing his book When: The Scientific Secrets of Perfect Timing (430, Riverhead). Pink, who’ll expound on the subject with neuroscientist Daniel J. Levitin, has distilled developments in scientific fields including psychology and economics to give you a brief history of timing and reveal how to succeed in all aspects of your life by showing you when to zig — and when to zag. Ann & Jerry Moss Theater, 3131 Olympic Blvd., Santa Monica; Tue., April 10, 8 p.m. (reception 6:30-7:30 p.m.); $20-$95. (310) 855-0005, livetalksla.org/events/daniel-pink/. —David Cotner

DANCE/FILM

Seaside Soiree
Fans of live dance, dance on film and folks who just like to go to the beach will all find much to love as this year’s Dance Camera West Film Festival adds To the Sea: Dance Concerts on the Pier, a live performance component curated by choreographer Jacob Jonas and his eponymous Jacob Jonas the Company. The film component begins Thursday with a screening of international short films at UCLA’s Fowler Museum, then shifts to Santa Monica’s Laemmle

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Theaters. The live dance performances Friday through Sunday are a short walk west at the Santa Monica Pier. Announced local and visiting companies including Pilobolus, L.A. Contemporary Dance, Rubberlegz, Emily Kikta from New York City Ballet, the aptly named Seaweed Sisters and Jonas’ troupe. The pier performances are free; film screenings are ticketed. International short films at Fowler Museum, 308 Charles E. Young Drive N., Westwood; Thu., April 12, 8 p.m.; $25; and at Laemmle Film Center, 1332 Second St., Santa Monica; Fri., April 13, 8 p.m.; Sat., April 14, noon & 3 p.m.; Sun., April 15, noon, 1:30 p.m. & 3 p.m. $12. To the Sea: Dance Concerts on the Pier, Santa Monica Pier, 200 Santa Monica Pier A, Santa Monica; Fri.-Sun., April 13-14, 6:30 p.m.; free. dancecamera west.org.

—Ann Haskins

FILM

World’s Unfair

Whenever people bemoan the lack of jetpacks or flying cars as hallmarks of modern living, they’re usually referring to the wonders and inventions that regularly graced various versions of the World’s Fair during the last century. Modeled after the French Expositions of the 19th century, America had World’s Fairs through 1984 — and today’s screening of What Happened to the World’s Fair? is followed by a Q&A with architect-director Mina Chow, who blows the lid off the controversy about U.S. involvement in the World’s Fair, something that has led to isolationism and/or snobbery that just really doesn’t need to exist. Ray Stark Family Theatre, George Lucas Bldg., SCA 108, USC, 900 W. 34th St., University Park; Thu., April 12, 7 p.m.; free, RSVP required. (213) 740-2804, cinema.usc.edu/events/event.cfm?id=23531. —David Cotner

COMEDY

It’s the End of the World

In his 2014 Netflix stand-up special In Ruins, Eddie Pepitone riffed on everything from having five cats and one dog to how he prefers masturbating to hockey games because they’re less predictable than porn. Pepitone also bemoaned the continued hipsterfication of his native Brooklyn — especially those gourmet grilled cheese shops — and called his adopted hometown of Los Angeles a “soulless, sunbaked landscape of apocalyptic proportions.” Tonight the “Bitter Buddha” performs Eddie Pepitone: In the End of Days, a one-man sketch show set entirely in an end-of-the-world L.A. Directed by fellow comedian-writer Sean Conroy, who with Pepitone co-hosted the podcast The Long Shot, the comic plays such characters as an overzealous theater usher, a motivational speaker and the last woman on the planet. Lyric Hyperion Theatre, 2106 Hyperion Ave., Silver Lake; Thu., April 12, 8 p.m.; $10. (323) 928-2299, lyrichyperion.com. —Siran Babayan
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PLEASE ENJOY RESPONSIBLY
Join us as we slip back to a simpler, spiffier time—when guys greased their hair and pressed 'n' cuffed their jeans, and gals perfected flawless curly coifs and bright crimson lips, and wiggled into '50s frocks, frilly and full-skirted or tarty-tight and pencil-straight. Cars were big, beautiful gas guzzlers, art and home decor was kitschy but streamlined with lots of pastel panache. The music was swingin', sexy and twangy, rhythmic rock & roll to rumble and stomp to. We're talking rockabilly and midcentury styling here, kids, and all of the above are, in fact, not symbols of the past but of the present. In the past few years, '50s-influenced retro culture has re-emerged in L.A., providing a unique contrast to the modern music scene and other thematic subcultures in the city.

The 1970s, '80s and, lately, the '90s are repped all around L.A.'s clubs and by music played within them, as well as in the casual, mismatched fashion mix favored by the hipster set. In a week or two, these neo-boho–blending bunches will empty out of L.A. to slather on sunblock, don floppy hats and big sunglasses, and model mall-bought "festival fashion" as they descend upon the desert for Coachella, a SoCal institution and world-renowned music gathering.

But on the second weekend of that fest, tens of thousands of Angelenos with a different musical mindset and aesthetic, most in meticulously coordinated 1950s and early-'60s vintage gear, will head further into the desert to Las Vegas for a weekend of equally rousing amusements: live bands, burlesque shows, pool parties, a massive car show and vendors galore. And they’ve been partaking in this parallel universe of sorts for just as long as the Coachella hordes have.

Viva Las Vegas, named after the Elvis Presley film, was created by U.K.-born, Los Alamitos–based rockabilly enthusiast Tom Ingram and co-produced by Burbank burlesque queen Audrey Deluxe. It has been the premier rockabilly event in the country for more than two decades, recording exponential growth each year. Ingram ran a big rockabilly festival in England called the Hemsby Rock’n’Roll Weekender before he moved to Southern California in 1996. He initially planned a Hemsby offshoot on the West Coast, but when things went south with his partner in England, he decided to throw his own fest. He soon looked to Sin City because the “licensing restrictions in L.A. and the O.C. were too strict,” he says.

Now in its 21st year, Viva, as it’s called for short, is the world’s most popular rockabilly fest, attracting 20,000-plus people from around the globe, a third of which Ingram estimates come from California.

The event has become so popular that many plan for it all year. And unlike other festivals, its fans conjure a very specific era focus and an ardent level of dedication to representing it, particularly when it comes to fashion. Ladies especially take their looks to period-perfect extremes, planning outfits for each day and night, documenting it all on social media and via online groups — from their accessories to their swimsuits (modest by today’s standards but undeniably sexy) worn during the event’s epic tiki pool party.

“It’s really impressive — these...
women have Excel spreadsheets with the jewelry, the purses, the shoes and the hair planned out for each day,” says Deluxe, who’s been working with Ingram for the last several years, running her popular show, Burlesque Bingo, and coordinating all the burlesque performances at the event. “There are a lot of women out there who actually live this lifestyle. So many women really identify with it and the beautiful aesthetic of it. Like Dita Von Teese, for example—these ladies are almost creating characters, and there’s a fantasy element that you just don’t have in real life, where people are wearing yoga pants to the grocery store. It’s about adding a little bit of glamour to daily life.”

Burbank, where Deluxe resides, has slowly become one of the biggest hubs for this kind of traditional Americana glam, and since a lot of the architecture remains unchanged, its kitschy 1950 and ’60s buildings and old neon signs provide the perfect backdrop.

Every Friday night a dapper car-crazy crowd heads over to Bob’s Big Boy on Riverside Drive for the restaurant’s weekly car-show meetup, where the old eatery’s parking lot is a bumper-to-bumper bounty of spruced-up classic autos from the 1950s and ’60s. The family-friendly flashback feel of spruced-up classic autos from the 1950s car-show meetup, where the old eatery’s erside Drive for the restaurant’s weekly glamour to daily life.”

Curious about all the burlesque performances at the event, Mamont got her start in the fashion industry, showing off her ‘billy-ish lines such as Stop Staring, Bernie Dexter and Bettie Page Clothing in her position as marketing director of the California Market Center downtown. “I was always a rockabilly girl and I brought in bands to play the fashion events way back, like Royal Crown Revue, Big Sandy and His Fly Rite Boys, Deke Dickerson, The Palladins, The Blasters, bands from Wild Records — people who really started the genre,” says Mamont, who eventually moved into full-time booking, hosting shows at Weber’s Place in the Valley around 2000 (attempting to conjure the vibes of the popular Palomino Club of the ’50s).

She went to Viva Cantina after that, helping put the Mexican restaurant on the map for the greaser crowd, along with L.A. Weekly writer Jonny Whiteside and his punky twang thang called the Messaround. Both happenings moved recently when the Cantina got into trouble regarding its entertainment license, with Whiteside now at Joe’s and Mamont at Petie’s Place in Tarzana. Mamont has been busy planning her infamous “All Night Jumpin’ Showcase” (midnight to 4 a.m.) at Viva Las Vegas; she’s done it there for the past six years. She’s also working on some shows with “teddy boy” Lee Dexter, coming to L.A. next month.

Speaking of the “teddy boys,” Ingram notes that British subculture was the starting point for him and the scene itself. He first got into ’50s music and dress back in England, seduced by the Teddys of the ’70s. Originally, the term referred to British fellows of the ’50s who reinterpreted American rock & roll style in their own way, with Edwardian wear and exaggerated pompadours and sideburns. In the ’70s, a resurgence of this look took hold in London and surrounding areas; it influenced the punk aesthetic, too, as seen in Vivienne Westwood and Malcolm McLaren’s Let It Rock shop. At the same time, the flames of ’50s freakdom were being fanned on both sides of the Atlantic by films like American Graffiti and Grease and TV shows such as Happy Days and Laverne & Shirley.

By the time the ’80s rolled in, pop culture was primed for another resurgence, ushered by American bands like The Stray Cats and The Pole Cats. The Strays will reunite for the first time in 10 years at Viva and they’ll celebrate their 40th anniversary next year. Thanks to exposure on MTV in its heyday and hits like “Rock This Town” and “Stray Cat Strut” (which are still heard on radio), they are the most recognizable faces of rockabilly for many. Lead singer Brian Setzer has stayed active with orchestral shows during the holidays. Drummer Slim Jim Phantom was a popular Sunset Strip club owner (The Cat Club, now Rock & Reilly’s), and he played in super-groups The Head Cat with Lemmy Kilmister and Dead Men Walking with Capt. Sensible. Bassist Lee Rocker still plays shows under his own name. The band’s mainstream success was temporary but it inspired offshoot genres and other retro rock revivals to follow, such as neo-swing in the ’90s (Big Bad Voodoo Daddy, The Cherry Poppin’ Daddies) and psychobilly (Reverend Horton Heat).

Big Sandy and the Fly Rite Boys, who play Viva Las Vegas on April 19, also emerged around this time and have endured as a local favorite, playing their own combo of roots and rockabilly swing in L.A., Orange County and all around the country. “The popularity of this music goes in waves,” says Big Sandy, aka singer Robert Williams. “An event like Viva pulls it all together, so it’s at a peak right now. You have the original artists who started in the ’50s, you have a ton of new bands who are just breaking ground now, and
> then there’s The Stray Cats, who are responsible for the revival in the ‘80s, which was huge.”

No one can discount the significance of The Stray Cats, but rockabilly did enjoy a niche following before they hit it big. Ingram says that people in his age group had already been into the music for a while. “We listened to bands like The Jets and Matchbox,” says the rockabilly expert, who hosts a rockabilly radio show on the web and started an entire networking site and dating site for rockabilly fans as well.

“The bigger bands did create a whole new audience and exposed it to a new generation,” he concedes. “Especially in America, The Stray Cats inspired a new interpretation of what rockabilly was to the mainstream, just as the Teddy Boys of the ‘70s did for the Teddy Boys of the ‘50s.”

Today, he says the meaning of “rockabilly” is no longer what it was. “What’s happened is now rockabilly is being used to describe any type of ‘50s music,” he says.

Still, at Viva, Ingram and his team stay faithful to a bluesier ‘50s mood. There are no psychobilly bands or country bands, unless the acts known for those styles change it up and do more traditional ‘billy sounds. Mamont says her all-nighters feature more “jumpin’ rock,” including such L.A. favorites as The Moontones, Pachuco Joe and Blazing Hailey.

This year, the rapid growth of the scene and event has encouraged Ingram to use some bigger spaces at the Orleans Casino, where the event is being held (it started at the Gold Coast in Downtown Vegas). The burlesque showcase and competition will now be in the building’s “arena,” which holds about 4,000 people, and the main concert, where Stray Cats, Jerry Lee Lewis and Duane Eddy will play, is held during the car show outdoors on a massive stage erected in the casino’s adjacent parking lot. The “car show” was simply the parking area for the event at first, but so many Viva attendees drove gorgeous wheels that people wanted to walk through and look and take pictures. It’s since become one of the most popular parts of the event, with thousands of vamped-out vehicles to ogle and pose with. One wonders about the long hot drive to Vegas from places like L.A., but it’s obviously worth it to many.

Mamont, who lives in the Valley, thinks cars are a big part of why L.A. and the O.C. have been breeding grounds for the rockabilly scene in the first place.

“Southern California is conducive to vintage car culture — spelled with a ’K,” she adds. “It works in California because of our wonderful weather. Our cars, our clothes and the music all go together so well — it’s a whole lifestyle.”

Orange County also is known for its rockabilly scene, but in general the bands from that part of town tend to have a rowdier rep. Events like the now on-hiatus Hootenanny in Silverado Canyon and the Reverend Horton Heat’s Hayride in San Pedro also have catered to punk, “punkabilly” and “gothabilly,” so the fans aren’t quite as into the vintage fashions. Also, the crowds seem to be a little less ethnically diverse than in L.A., an obvious reflection of the area’s differing populations.

Everyone can agree that L.A.’s Latino contingent has been a huge part of rockabilly’s success here, and why that is has been questioned nearly as much as why Morrissey is beloved in the same circles. Maybe Latin people just love nostalgia. We definitely love “oldies” and old cars. Ingram credits the Latino fan base for his big break into rockabilly DJing; he spun at a popular Latin-favored ‘50s R&B night called Be Bop Battlin’ Ball at the club/restaurant Rudolpho’s near Frogtown (now Home Restaurant) for several years.

More recently, Latin crowds frequented Spike’s in Rosemead for promoter Brando Von Badsveil’s Revv It Up!, showcasing rockabilly, punk and psychobilly bands past and present, but the venue closed late last year. Now the promoter does rockabilly shows at the Airliner and does his own weekender, the Long Beach Psyclone, for Labor Day. He’ll throw an unaffiliated event in Vegas during Viva at called Vegas Neo Invasion at Fremont Country Club downtown on April 20.

There’s a revelry and reciprocal energy exchanged between promoters and scenes, extending to the tattoo community, the tiki crowd, the burlesque and pinup world and vintage music nerds, too. To an outsider looking in, it probably appears a Disneyland-like rebel rocker sock-hop. A few years ago, filmmaker Brent Huff attended a car show with a friend and was so blown away he made a movie about the scene, “It’s a Rockabilly World.” Currently available for streaming on Amazon, it explores everything about this retro world, and it features Ingram, Mamont and all the major players in the scene. Huff calls Viva Las Vegas the “mecca” for this enduring subculture, and with a large international attendance (bands and fans come from all over the globe, from Spain to Japan), it really is just that.

The SoCal connections are so prevalent, Viva is something more akin to a high school reunion. Rockabilly is a niche thing in some parts and a phenomenon in others, but L.A. has been its most bodacious breeding ground. For many here, it feels personal, like family even. It may be driven by flashes from the past, but the talent, reverence and beauty of its present is why it continues to rock.
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EATING UP HISTORY
Pacific Food and Beverage Museum, now open in San Pedro, tells story of fine cuisine and cocktails

BY PAUL HODGINS

The Pacific Food and Beverage Museum is a work in progress. Although it opened on March 24, the 1,200-square-foot space in downtown San Pedro is largely bare, down to its ancient red brick walls. There’s scant evidence of the splashy media event that drew well over 150 people to this former music store just a few days before my visit.

With so little to see at this point, certain questions beg to be asked: Why this? Why here? Why now? It is a line of inquiry that Tracey Mitchell and Philip Dobard have clearly anticipated and probably answered many times already.

The pair make their case about quality by opening several large boxes and producing a gold mine of historic cuisine ephemera: mid-19th century menus from fancy French restaurants in New York and other northeastern cities; cocktail napkins festooned with leggy young beauties drawn by Peruvian Alberto Vargas (1896-1982), the king of pin-up girl artists; photos of old saloons and upper-crust dining rooms with elaborate tableware.

“Most of the collection resides in Los Angeles,” Dobard says. “What you see here is not even the tip of the iceberg. It goes back to the 18th century — yes, even unto the Middle Ages.”

The museum’s back wall displays more of the same. A quick perusal of five-star restaurant menus in the era of Lincoln reveals a fascination with French cuisine, local game, organ meats and exoticism. It’s a wonder the green turtle wasn’t driven to extinction by 19th-century American chefs.

On the wall to the left of the entrance is a display of large photos by well-known New Orleans photographer Romney Caruso. They show elaborately tattooed men and women, all of them professionals in the city’s beloved food and cocktail communities.

“Romney found himself intrigued with all the ink that chefs and bartenders have,” Mitchell says. “In New Orleans, tattoos are part of the culture of chefs and bartenders. We intend to document culinary culture and history in this way.”

Both Dobard’s and Mitchell’s museums are part of the National Food & Beverage Foundation, a decade-old nonprofit educational and cultural organization dedicated to the discovery, understanding and celebration of food, drink and its related culture. (Dobard is the foundation’s vice president and president of the San Pedro museum.)

NatFAB, as it calls itself, is home to several entities: the Southern Food & Beverage Museum, the Museum of the American Cocktail and the John & Bonnie Boyd Hospitality & Culinary Library, all in New Orleans; and the Pacific Food & Beverage Museum in San Pedro.

“Our long-term goal is to grow into the most comprehensive national culinary institution studying food and drink,” the foundation’s website proclaims.

“We survive on the typical not-for-profit mix: corporate sponsorships, corporate giving, individual donors and a teeny bit of government assistance,” Dobard says. Admission to the museums and event sales provides some earned income.

Dobard says the foundation’s main activity is event programming. “We do cocktail and spirit seminars; we e-partner with other organizations.”

Dobard and Mitchell both come from classical music backgrounds. “My first career was in opera as a singer,” Dobard says. “I had modest success. Not nearly as much success as this woman,” he said, gesturing to Mitchell. “I went into theater production, then into film and TV.”

Food and drink have been an abiding passion for Dobard. “I grew up rather deeply embedded in food. Every member of the family was involved professionally. I had an uncle who was a master brewer, and another one who harvested whatever was in season: shrimp, duck, oysters. My aunt and godmother sold soft-shelled crabs. Our freezer was always full. I didn’t pay for seafood until my 20s.”

Mitchell, also a New Orleans native, was a childhood fan of Julia Child’s cooking shows, and she inherited her mother’s passion for food and French-based culinary expertise. After a career in music, she shifted her focus to business administration, working in academia, government and nonprofit management. At home she perfected her skills in the garden and the kitchen.

Clearly, Mitchell and Dobard are both scholars of American culinary history. While we look at old restaurant menus, Mitchell describes the fascinating early days of haute cuisine in America.

“The development of the American palate was [shaped] by the French Revolution. All these chefs were displaced because they lost their work. So where did they go? Many came to the U.S. So you get these restaurants opening and developing in the [early to mid 19th century], and that started a cultural revolution in terms of food in this country.”

Photos from the museum’s collection show those French restaurants were frequently decorated like high-class brothels. Mitchell says there was a reason for that. “Women did not frequent the restaurants. They were for men. If a woman walked in on the arm of a man, she was thought of as a wanton woman.”

“We couldn’t inhabit the public space like men could back then,” Dobard adds. He points to some small cards displayed on the back wall. “But there’s a part of the display over here that shows a little memento for ladies’ day at a restaurant. They could go, but it had to be an event such as a famous speaker or something.”

Mitchell says she plans to display much more from the permanent collection. “There will be pieces covering most of the masonry walls, and we have two-sided movable panels that will increase the wall space.”

Looking at Vargas napkins, pre-Prohibition glasses and old photos of mustachioed bartenders could give one a powerful thirst. Sadly, it can’t be quenched at the museum.

“We have no license to serve alcohol,” Dobard says. “We can give it away at events and parties, but we cannot sell beer, wine or spirits.” The foundation hosts weekly tastings at Sassafras Saloon on Vine Street in Hollywood and holds curated dinners with wine and cocktails every month.

Dobard smiles and gestures toward the door. “We can send you to some places nearby that are really very nice. San Pedro is a surprisingly good cocktail town.”

Who knew?

Pacific Food & Beverage Museum, 731 S. Pacific Ave., San Pedro; (562) 251-4739, pacificfood.org. Open Thursday-Sunday, noon to 5 p.m.; extended hours first Thursday of every month.
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AN EDIBLE JEWEL

Parachuted onto Hoover Hill overlooking Virgil Village, the former Hot Hot Food space has been transformed by the Springs chef Jasmine Shimoda and wife Sharky McGee into the plant-based concept Jewel. The lavender corner building welcomes foot traffic with a colorful mural celebrating flora and the vegetable kingdom. Inside, the simple luncheonette space is flooded with natural light with an adjacent covered outdoor patio.

Shimoda kept a lot of the dishes on the menu that developed a cult following at the Springs — the forbidden fried rice, kale salad and her famous L.A. Phil wrap. The wrap, by the way, has nothing to do with the Philharmonic but is her vegan take on a Philly cheesesteak, with braised yuba sheets, shiitake, caramelized onions, jalapeño and cashew fondu ($3.50). The avocado toast comes with cashew-herb spread, puffed quinoa togarashi and crunchy house pickles, which give a great contrast in texture and bite ($9). Non-vegans can add a Chino Valley Ranchers farm-fresh egg to any toast. The Jewel box is a rainbow of brown rice or sweet potato, avocado, black beans, garlicky greens, turmeric tofu, raw veggies, pickles and amaranth-pumpkin crunch with miso-ginger sauce ($12). You may want to share it — it’s huge and will fill you up for the rest of the day. I’m a salad Niçoise snob, and I wasn’t disappointed with Jewel’s version, made with activated almond and sunflower seed “tuna,” greens, Weiser potatoes, Kalamata olives, green beans and red wine vinaigrette ($12).

Shimoda has given an exotic new face to plant-based foods, taking eating with your eyes to a whole new level by combining colors and textures. The best thing: She appreciates and never underestimates the power of a good crunch.

There are plenty of cold-pressed juices on the menu; try the Radiant Skin — apple, lemon, ginger, casenye, chia seeds, collagen and maqui berry ($10). Jewel also offers wellness and turmeric shots with a kick ($5). One of the most popular gems on the menu at the cafe is the selection of vegan doughnuts: matcha, red velvet, cinnamon, strawberry or chocolate, with natural light with an adjacent covered outdoor patio.

Shimoda has helped transform the neighborhood, where women-owned businesses keep cropping up. Sparked by Jessica Koslow’s Sqirl down the road, there’s also Vinovore, a wine and goods shop with a focus on female winemakers across the globe, and the homey Melody’s for pescatarians and oyster lovers.

“With Jewel, our goal was to create a comforting neighborhood restaurant with options for everyone and an element of magic. I think people are surprised when the food comes out and the plating is so artful,” Shimoda says. “You can really see the technique on the plate, but more importantly you can taste the freshness of the ingredients and the

Eats // Squid Ink //
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thoughtfulness behind each dish. It’s important to me that people leave feeling good.”

Shimoda is excited about the changing face of her block. “I’m really happy to be a part of the girl-power moment in our neighborhood,” she says. “The more empowered females running their own businesses the better. Why not start in Virgil Village?” —Michele Stueven

Jewel, 654 N. Hoover St., Virgil Village; (323) 522-6927, jewel-la.com.

Gelato That Tastes Like Los Angeles

The days are getting longer and warmer, perfect ingredients for a walk through the neighborhood for ice cream after dinner. Wandering the diverse districts of L.A. is exactly what inspired dreamer Uli Nasibova to create the uniquely local flavors you can dip into at Gelateria Uli downtown in the Spring Street Arcade and in Beverly Grove.

An immigrant from Baku, Azerbaijan, Nasibova always imagined herself living in the United States; she moved here by herself when she was 17 years old with a scholarship to attend Colorado College. That was followed by a more than eight-year career in the world of finance, where she did everything from investment banking to investment management research. It was one of the easiest fields for her to score a work visa.

Nasibova moved to L.A. and worked at Alliance Bernstein, living through the Great Recession of 2008 and hearing people scream about liquidating assets. It was during that high-anxiety period that she discovered her passion for the cool world of gelato. She left her finance career and dove head-first into learning everything she could about the frozen treat.

Nasibova became a citizen when she married her American husband in 2012. She took master classes, studied food science and spent endless nights in the home kitchen of their downtown L.A. loft experimenting with flavors. She tracked down a commercial-grade gelato machine and started perfecting the water-based recipes she developed from scratch on her own, and she still makes them in small batches today. Nasibova opened her first store in the Spring Arcade downtown in 2014 and the second location in 2017.

“No, I’m not Italian and I don’t have an Italian grandmother who taught me her family recipes,” Nasibova tells L.A. Weekly. “I’m a self-taught recipe maker and all the flavors come from me.”

Her frozen case is a combination of three influences — standard flavors like stracciatella, chocolate, California pistachio and espresso, made in the traditional Italian way; seasonal ingredients; and tastes from various neighborhoods. Nasibova puts her own spin on homemade gelato that comes out of the small kitchens with just one refrigerator and one batch freezer.

In addition to the regular flavors, and depending on what the farmers have to offer, in spring you’ll find blood orange and grapefruit sorbets, followed by black mission fig with toasted almonds in summer, persimmon sorbet in fall and mulled wine sorbet in winter.

“As an immigrant, I have a special relationship with the city of Los Angeles, where I can go into other immigrant kitchens and explore and fall in love with their food and develop new flavors,” Nasibova explains of her inspiration.

Many of the flavors in her case come from visiting parts of the city and exploring different cuisines she had never experienced before. Her black sesame gelato for Chinese New Year came from a love of black sesame sweet buns in the San Gabriel Valley. She has ube gelato from her trips to Filipinotown. And she loves crisscrossing the city from her downtown loft on the train discovering new territory, often with her 2-year-old daughter in tow.

“One of my favorite drinks and an ode to every taco shop or truck in town is jamaica agua fresca,” she says. “I added mint for a water-based sorbet. I also have horchata and mango chili, inspired by Mexican street food.”

“My husband and I love Thai Town and we went through this period about six years ago when we fell in love with Jitlada and went every week for six months. We especially loved the tom kha soup. My coconut with lemongrass sorbet was a direct inspiration from dinner one night at Jitlada. I also have Thai iced tea.”

Nasibova says that because Azerbaijan is a small country, it grows all its own food, and most of the family’s goods still come from the local farmer. “Even though the country has become more developed, it’s still very much that way,” says the Caucasus native.

“My mother was a Ph.D. in mathematics and still cooked from scratch every day. She bought the live chicken, chopped the head off and plucked it before cooking it. That influences me on where I buy my ingredients and build relationships with my vendors. When I grew up we only ate what was in season, and that’s my approach to gelato.”

So what’s this self-made dreamer’s secret to freezing success? “I formulate all my recipes on spreadsheets. Gelato is an exact science. You have to document all the properties, it’s food chemistry. My recipes from four years ago taste exactly the same today. I’m an Excel nerd, it’s just in my DNA.” —Michele Stueven

Gelateria Uli, 541 S. Spring St. #104, downtown; (213) 900-4717. Also 8044 W. 25th St., Inglewood; 11511 West Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90064 topitierests.com 310.478.1971

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EXPERIMENTALISTS

The Wooster Group channels avant-garde Polish director in A PINK CHAIR (In Place of a Fake Antique)

BY JORDAN RIEFE

When the Wooster Group co-founder/director Elizabeth LeCompte was first exposed to the work of legendary avant-garde Polish theater director Tadeusz Kantor, she was unmoved. “I thought, this has nothing to do with me,” she says. “The fact that it was this big male standing in the middle of the piece telling the actors what to do didn’t relate on any level.”

That was before the renowned theater company was commissioned by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute in Poland and the Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts at New York’s Bard College to mark the centenary two years ago of Kantor’s birth. The resulting work, A PINK CHAIR (In Place of a Fake Antique), had its world premiere at Bard last summer and plays at REDCAT April 5-15.

“I really had to say, ‘I don’t know if we’re the right people to do this,’” LeCompte confesses. “We didn’t know how to approach it. They wanted us to do it because they assumed our company was like his company in that we’re a full ensemble that works together, a lot of us, over many years. We all collaborated on the composing of pieces that had no traditional theater text.”

Using film of Kantor rehearsing his late masterpiece, I Shall Never Return, a mashup assembled at the end of his career that incorporates characters and props from earlier works as well as episodes and memories from his life, PINK CHAIR explores numerous unrelated topics.

“The thematics, of course, are how to translate one piece of art into another, or how to discover your roots in someone else’s work, how a company works with a director and material and what the relationships are between people who work so close together and have a history,” LeCompte explains. “There are five stories, and each one makes some kind of nugget of feeling and emotion around what we are talking about. It’s not really an intellectual idea, it’s really an emotional idea.”

The title comes from one of Kantor’s essays on theater, A Kitchen Chair in Place of a Fake Antique, but the Wooster Group substituted “pink” for “kitchen” to incorporate a beloved prop that has appeared in many of its productions over the past 20 years. As with Kantor’s company, Cricot 2, the new show employs costumes and props from past performances.

Coming of age during the Nazi occupation of Krakow, Kantor quickly became Poland’s master of experimental theater, staging in private homes adaptations of Jean Cocteau’s Orpheus and Stanislaw Wyspianski’s The Return of Odysseus; in the latter, he cast a woman as Telemachus. With the founding of Cricot 2 in 1955, Kantor garnered global recognition for his adaptations of plays by absurdist artist/playwright Stanislaw Ignacy Witkiewicz, including The Cuttlefish and The Water Hen, using mannequins in place of actors and incorporating “happenings,” a prominent movement in the 1960s predicated on spontaneity.

Unsure of how to approach her subject, LeCompte turned to Kantor’s daughter, Dorota Krakowska, for a personal angle. Educated at the Krakow Academy of Fine Arts, Krakowska is employed by the Goethe-Institut but has secretly always dreamed of working in theater. “Being with the Wooster Group at rehearsals was an arrival at an intended destination,” she tells the Weekly via email. Decades ago she was invited to join Cricot 2; she demurred and wound up regretting it for the rest of her life.

“I was afraid of being lesser. I knew I would be compared, always pointed to and laughed at, always the daughter that’s not as good as her father.”

Krakowska, LeCompte and the cast screened recordings of Kantor’s work and incorporated interviews with Krakowska into the text. “I think it riles theatrical authorities because we are coming at this man’s work through his daughter and she’s a woman, and that’s already something that isn’t accepted traditionally in Poland,” LeCompte says.

It remains to be seen how the production will be received in Poland, where the ruling nationalist Law and Justice Party, in addition to assuming control of the courts and media outlets, has jurisdiction over what can play at Krakow’s Stary Theatre.

“The work of creators is seriously threatened. All but a few theaters in Warsaw have been destroyed,” Krakowska notes. “Until very recently we had festivals that showed work by visiting artists. But now, I’m unsure whether this will continue. Many of my friends have lost their jobs, some have emigrated and some work abroad. The problem is not just in the censoring of topics that do not need to be censored – the main problem is the systematic destruction of institutions, which is leaving valuable humans without work.”

No telling how Kantor, who died in 1990, might have responded to the current crackdown, but Krakowska is optimistic that her father’s theory linking misery to artistic impulse might leave him brimming with creative energy in the face of oppression.

After her parents divorced when she was still a child, Krakowska was estranged from her father, but she reconciled with him in adulthood.

“Fascinating, human, charismatic, being around him I always felt the existence of eternity,” —DOROTA KRAKOWSKA, ON HER FATHER, TADEUSZ KANTOR

“FASCINATING, HUMAN, CHARISMATIC, BEING AROUND HIM I ALWAYS FELT THE EXISTENCE OF ETERNITY.”

A PINK CHAIR (In Place of a Fake Antique) runs April 5-15 at REDCAT 631 W. Second St, downtown: Tue.-Sat., 8:30 p.m.; Sun, 3 p.m.
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consciousness” is 1956’s Godzilla, King of the Monsters!

Or so insists Akuma-shin, Kenley Smith’s outlandishly clever if sometimes wincingly on-the-nose Godzilla homage, now getting its world premiere. Why the Americanization of Ishiro Honda’s 1954 kaiju classic, Gojira, should be held up as a primary palimpsest for the rampaging horrors of post-industrial capitalism is just one of the mysteries driving a play that ricochets between parodic mockumentary, whimsical alternative history, allusive movie-geek trivia game and moody metaphysical thriller.

And if the slipperiest of those questions is ever what kind of beast is Akuma-shin (literally “demon-god”), that ambiguity provides much of the action’s poetic lift, beginning with the mutilated figure of Billy Childers (Eddie Goines), luridly sporting prosthetic hooks where he once had arms. “I saw the monster,” he hoarsely croaks in what will be a recurring refrain among eyewitnesses, who ultimately are able to provide little in the way of clear description or documented proof of the creature’s existence. Akuma-shin apparently cannot be photographed and is known only by the apocalyptic devastation that it leaves in its Earth-shaking wake.

The only consensus seems to be that in 1956, Tokyo and 2 million of its residents perished in a fiery, radioactive conflagration that has gone down in history as “the incident.” But the lack of clear-cut, objective evidence also makes the event a political football that, 20 years later, is still being kicked around by TV pundits on programs like the 1996 PBS special that frames the play. Hosted by Nancy Dickerson (Stasha Surdyke), TV personalities Dr. Joyce Brothers (Libby Baker) and monster denier William F. Buckley Jr. (David Wilcox in an uncanny impersonation) debate Akuma-shin’s existence with the paraplegic survivor/radio reporter Mason (Tony DeCarlo) and a trio of celebrity literati promoting their own Akuma-shin books: Truman Capote (Amir Levi), Norman Mailer (Paul Parducci) and Yukio Mishima (Reuben Uy).

Much of the fun — as well as the meaning — comes from the ways in which the script mischievously teases out the alternate trajectories of the celebrated novelists as well as the surprise fates of the beloved 20th-century military and political figures that make brief cameo appearances in the story. For example, Mishima no longer takes his own life after failing to foment a 1970 right-wing putsch (although seppuku is still on his mind).

But the dramatic fireworks come in the riveting multiple flashbacks of the monster encounters that play out in the wings of designer Joe Jordan’s simple, shoji-paneled set. The best feature DeCarlo, Goines and Uy as they confront their own demons during a live broadcast of “the most famous 15 seconds in radio,” a scene that somehow visually quotes Honda but torques it with the psychological horror of the unseen. Director Scott Leggett weaves together stylish video projections (by editor Allison Faith Sulock, graphics designer Curt Bonnem and animator Emily Bolka), spectacular lighting effects (by Matt Richter) and searing, high-decibel sound (Jaime Robledo) to theatrically suggest what the production cannot literally show — the monumental, pulse-pounding physical presence of Akuma-shin.

Had it stopped there, Akuma-shin would have been a shoe-in for whatever acclaim go-seat theater has to shower on cinematically savvy coups des théâtre. But Smith proves fatally determined to close off each of the text’s tantalizing gaps between language and meaning, story and emotion, signifier and signified — all the spaces where stage poetry lives and breathes. “Every choice that impacts our society — politically, militarily — harbors a monster at its core,” Dr. Joyce spells out early in the play. A version of that moral, along with several seat-squirming images of America’s more recent collective traumas, is paraphrased by each character long past the point at which the mystery of Akuma-shin has been smothered into a dead certainty.

AKUMA-SHIN | Sacred Fools, 1076 Lillian Way, Hollywood | Through April 28 | sacredfools.org

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Girls Just Wanna Have Fun

Clear a path to the riotous loss-of-virginity comedy Blockers

By Kristen Yoonsoo Kim

Raunchy bro comedies may now be a thing of the past, with the ever-louder demand for Hollywood to evolve both on- and offscreen. Even the Seth Rogen-versus-Zac Efron throwdown Neighbors reconciled with its slightly retrograde nature by letting women run wild in its sorority sequel, Neighbors 2: Blockers, helmed by first-time director Kay Cannon (the woman who wrote and produced the Pitch Perfect movies), getting it right the first time around, proving that a 2018 sex comedy can still be shocking and hilarious while checking all the woke boxes. Though written by two men, Blockers smartly confronts the gendered double standards that have littered the genre for generations, as well as homophobia and other vehicles for predictable jokes. But that doesn’t mean Blockers will pass up the chance to butt-chug and projectile vomit with the rest of them.

At one point in the film’s long wild night, Mitchell (John Cena) finds himself butt-chugging beer from a keg in an effort to — deep breath — stop daughter Kayla (Geraldine Viswanathan) from losing her virginity to a boy. Hence the aforementioned butt-chugging, in order to infiltrate a prom afterparty where the parents suspect their daughters may be entering bone zone.

Lose-your-virginity comedies are nothing new, but the American Pies of the world usually involve horny teen boys trying to stick it in anywhere they can, and the journey there is treated like some holy quest. When these girls try to do it, we find their parents racing to cock-block their daughters’ cherry-poppin’ pact as if they’re on a mission to stop the apocalypse. They’re no Eugene Levy, flipping through porno magazines with his son, studying the female anatomy together. There’s an obvious double standard here, which Mitchell’s wife (Sarayu Blue) points out, swooping in as the voice of reason to note that society is still uncomfortable when women have autonomy over their bodies. She’s the progressive thesis of the film, the one who makes the characters confront their liberal values versus their actions. Lisa says that she and her daughter march for women’s rights together — but the film asks what those ideals actually look like in the families’ everyday lives. The lecture, of course, doesn’t stop the rest of the parents from Operation Cock-Blocking. “I’ll deal with society tomorrow!” Lisa yells.

It all begins when Lisa stumbles upon her daughter’s open MacBook, which reveals messages between Julie and her friends. Yes, it’s unrealistic that any teen would just willy-nilly leave her texts open for snooping mothers to see, but I can roll with it. When you’re preoccupied by thoughts of becoming a new woman, you can be abdomened. As the three parents gather around, the screen floods with eggplant emojis. Manly but sensitive Mitchell assumes, wishfully, that the young women are planning on making eggplant parm together. Everyone else knows better: The eggplant, of course, has become a universal symbol for dick, something the girls are trying to all get on the same night because they want to celebrate their virginy-losing anniversary together — at Olive Garden, with breadsticks.

Julie had announced to her friends earlier that day that she’s ready to go all the way with her steady boyfriend and sets the pact in motion, and Kayla joins in with plans to seduce her prom date so she can get it over with herself. Sam eventually agrees, too, but she secretly has her eyes on a cool girl at school. These three teenagers are slightly less developed in character than their parents — the movie is more about the adults than the kids. While Neighbors 2 played things too safe, denying the sexual drives of its sorority sisters lest they seem objectified, Blockers acknowledges that teen girls have desires, too, but that sex can mean so many different things to different people.

Cannon’s film always lets the girls call their own shots on their own terms. That’s despite their parents chasing after them Fast and Furious style (well, more like slow and unfurioso, as Barinholtz’s character says), somersaulting across hotel rooms and, in one of the funniest scenes, accidentally getting caught up in kinky sex play between two other parents (Gary Cole and Gina Gershon). The boys of the daughters’ choosing are obviously eager to fulfill the girls’ sexual wishes (what straight teen boy wouldn’t?) but they’re never shown pressuring their partners or putting them in uncomfortable situations. Look at that, dudes: Even the horny can be respectful!

Blockers, on the surface, sticks very much to the formula — even the prom setting is very been there, done that. But it’s subversive in these little details, and the resolution is genuinely touching. The best part is that Cannon doesn’t have to sacrifice any of the laughs to get there.

Blockers | Directed by Kay Cannon
Written by Brian Kehoe and Jim Kehoe | Universal Pictures | Citywide
THE SOUNDS OF SILENCE
WITH A QUIET PLACE, JOHN KRASINSKI HAS CRAFTED A HORROR GREAT

BY CHUCK WILSON

It's Sound! screams a briefly glimpsed newspaper headline flapping in the wind at the start of actor-director John Krasinski's marvelously tense, surprisingly melancholy horror thriller, A Quiet Place. That headline is no longer news to the family of five we meet inside an abandoned country market, where they gather supplies while communicating via sign language, encouraging smiles and, when the 4-year-old boy (Cade Woodward) nearly sends a toy crashing to the ground from a high shelf, looks of pure terror.

The family's trip to town will turn out to be a prologue that builds, inexorably, to the death of the youngest child while also setting the ground rules for this desolate new America: Make any sort of sharp, unexpected sound and a mantis-like alien creature will zoom out of nowhere to swoop you away to an instant, grisly death.

A year later, that family has settled on a vast wheat farm, living in the basement of the main house they've carved out of the garage. The family's trip to town will turn out to be a prologue that builds, inexorably, to the death of the youngest child while also setting the ground rules for this desolate new America: Make any sort of sharp, unexpected sound and a mantis-like alien creature will zoom out of nowhere to swoop you away to an instant, grisly death.

A Quiet Place is completely gripping, and in a film fully reliant on facial expression, exquisitely acted by those amazing kids, and by Krasinski and Blunt, who've never been better (and who also happen to be married in real life). The creatures, who look scrappy and disillusions by movie's end, aren't likely to be remembered for long, but the husband and wife's tender late-night slow dance feels inedible. It's a funny thing, A Quiet Place is full of fabulous, virtuosic action set pieces, but mere hours after seeing it, I'm already flashing on the most are ways in which each member of this family, children and adults alike, tries to carry the weight of their central burden, which isn't fear and anxiety, but survival. When it's time to check the fish traps in a nearby river, the family's surviving son (Noah Jupe) begs not to go — there be monsters out there — even as his sister pleads to take his place. The father insists the boy come along and the girl stay behind where she'll be safe. What's fascinating about the exchange is that in the middle of a scary movie, Krasinski and co-writers Scott Beck and Bryan Woods turn our full attention to the plot and character relationship rather than the problems of alien-invasion survival. When it's time to check the fish traps in a nearby river, they're sent to a mysterious “New Eden” where all this is headed, and on Pete explores a world of racetracks and trailer parks, and highway diners that the filmmakers just seem to have found rather than staged."

PANDAS The unexpectedly impressive nature documentary Pandas is so visually dynamic that even the most pedantic (think Neil deGrasse Tyson–level) skeptics probably won't mind listening to narrator Kristen Bell — speaking in a soft whisper. The film is directed by Drew Fellman — as she rattles off 43 minutes’ worth of cutey panda trivia. You may, admittedly, wonder what Fellman means when Bell says that pandas "need" to eat 50 pounds of bamboo per day if bamboo has almost no nutritional value. But it's hard to stay mad for long at Fellman and his fellow cinematographers and their stunning use of wide-angle 3-D IMAX cameras to film the streams and mountains surrounding China's Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding. Fellman and Douglas thoughtfully present their furry, camera-shy subjects as a small part of a vast ecosystem; the filmmakers slowly move the camera around the panda's natural habitat before settling on a small cluster of pandas half-sleeping, half-hiding up some very high limbs. This sequence lasts about 10 to 15 minutes, long enough to establish how slow life can be for the sluggish — or, in Fellman's words, "energy-efficient" — pandas. So feel free to laugh when Bell and Rachel are on the run from Kross' evil bureau boss, Adam Westinghouse (Hugh Dillon), the 11-year-old Lucas takes a bathroom break away from the adults and gets his own action sequence, which is laughably graphic for such a tiny human. (April Wolfe)
SWEET COUNTRY

Warwick Thornton’s Aussies Western Sweet Country is a lyrical meditation on a significant but subtle turning point in his country’s history: the moment where some white colonizers struggling in the Outback turned against slavery, not necessarily out of moral outrage but because they determined that the enslavement of indigenous black aboriginals was not a viable future for the country. Others, of course, would fight to the death to ensure the old order of things. As presented in Sweet Country, the attitudes and events leading up to the abolition of slavery in Australia play out as frighteningly similar to our own. Told by an aboriginal director, the film does not revel in brutality, nor does it paint any one person as a hero or villain. Sam Neill plays Fred, a man of religion, who sees all men as equal but still exercises some authority over his indigenous friend Sam (Hamilton Morris). This ensemble drama has no traditional lead, but Sam is as close as we get to a protagonist. What sets off a series of fatal events for the other characters, Fred’s white alcoholic ex-schooler neighbor, Harry March (Ewen Leslie), manipulates Sam and Sam’s wife, Lizzie (Natassia Gorey Furber), into going to his property to do some work on her farm. As Keith Matthew’s doe-eyed bear accompanied by a human protagonist, the film is overwhelmingly quiet, with long moments of stillness. Thornton delicately peels back all the layers of Aussie injustice, but what’s most unnerving is that the story proves to be so universal. (April Wolfe)

SHELTER

In the slow-burning thriller Shelter, two women fight for their lives in a safe house, Mona (Goldshifteh Farahani), a Lebanese informant who jilted her former lover, has had plastic surgery to give her a chance at starting an anonymous life away from the highly dangerous Hezbollah she betrayed to the Israeli government. But first Mona’s new face must heal, and that means trusting in Naomi (Neta Riskin), the seasoned Mossad agent assigned with keeping her alive for the next two weeks. The pair are wary of every fleeting encounter, especially the seemingly innocent interlopers who threaten to derail their life-or-death mission: Will their cover get blown by the new neighbor with the chiseled cheekbones? Or that lonely old woman searching for her dog? Faced with a new life of near constant companionship, the two women bond despite their mistrust of each other’s abilities and allegiances. Filmmaker Erin Rickis forces viewers to contemplate big sociopolitical questions while Shelter’s leads shed their poker faces and grapple with the highly personal, from motherhood to makeup. Such a grim story could collapse with less capable performers, but Riskin and Farahani deftly shoulder the burden as the haunted, paradigmatic and her disconcertingly glamorous character at the heart of this international scandal. (Tatiana Craine)

Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein

a complex, vibrant collage of sounds and images in order to interrogate the social history of Baltimore, the director’s hometown. Los Angeles Film Forum presents a special screening of this wildly inventive work, followed by appearances by producers Riel Roch-Decter and Sebastian Pardo. Spielberg Theatre at the Egyptian, 6712 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, Sun., April 8, 7:30 p.m.; $10. (323) 466-3436; ifilmforum.org.

Tuesday, April 10

LACMA is curating a series of classic horror films in partnership with the Overlook Film Festival. This week features Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein, in which the popular comic duo confronts several of Universal’s franchise creations. One of the great horror parodies of all time, the movie features game turns by Bela Lugosi (Count Dracula), Lon Chaney Jr. (Wolf Man) and Glenn Strange (as the bolt-necked behemoth). LACMA, 5905 Wilshire Blvd., Mid-Wilshire; Tue., April 10, 1 p.m.; $4. (323) 857-6000, lacma.org.

Thursday, April 12

Laemmle NoHo’s screening of Weird Science gives audiences a chance to kick back with a little ’80s nostalgia. One of John Hughes’ wackier efforts, this revamping of the durable mad-doctor motif follows two nerdy teenagers (Anthony Michael Hall and Ilan Mitchell-Smith) as they conjure a sexy centerfold-cum-fairy godmother (Kelly LeBrock) after feeding commands into a home computer. Part of Laemmle’s Throwback Thursday series, the movie is presented in partnership with Eat/See/Hear. Look for the food truck outside the theater. Laemmle NoHo, 5420 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood, Thu., April 12, 7:30 p.m.; $12. (310) 478-3836, laemmle.com. — Nathaniel Bell

GO BLACK PANTHER!

It’s a great relief to confirm that Black Panther is genuinely worth rooting for, a clear standout on the Marvel movie roster. It’s only Ryan Coogler’s third feature, but it’s executed with the confidence of a far more experienced filmmaker. It’s a case of the right story finding the right director. As with Creed, Coogler again freshens up a state formula, making something familiar not just relevant but urgent. Chadwick Boseman plays King T’Challa, aka the Black Panther, a monarch and superhero who hails from the fictional country of Wakanda, a rich African nation that’s never been conquered and is uniquely rich. This Edenic world is fully realized on screen thanks to Hannah Beachler’s paradisical production design and Ruth E. Carter’s traditional-meets-futuristic costume design, and captured by Coogler’s fruitful Station since-Oscar-nominated director of photography, Rachel Morrison. Watching T’Challa’s female warriors/ bodyguards fight together — the general Okoye (Danai Gurira), spy Nakia (Lupita Nyong’o) and T’Challa’s tech-savvy younger sister Shuri (Letitia Wright) — I couldn’t help but think how the three would justly a charia’s Angeleno Reboot. Black Panther goes full fast and furious in a car chase on the streets of the practically undrivable Busan, South Korea. At times the charisma of the actresses — like Michael B. Jordan, who plays the villain — overwhelms Boseman’s. That’s partly in character, as T’Challa is a king who thinks of and serves his people, the kind of monarch who can do no wrong. In that regard, Black Panther is smart to create equally exhilarating fighting scenes for the Dona Milaje (those bodyguards) as it does for Black Panther himself. Newcomer Wright, especially, is a revelation — she’s got the spunk, the punchlines, the outfits and the body. Also, it makes sense for Coogler to have his actors starring in films.
The script is air-tight and the direction Cue a brawl that spans the entire house. guys clad in black and wielding guns break into the house and go after Brooks first. of its all-star ensemble, delivers genuinely expensive kidnap roleplay, a game where of Pictionary and charades with some night, their characters get caught up in a Bateman and McAdams explodes in every Anannie, and I mean “perfect” in the sense McAdams play perfect couple Max and directed by John Francis Daley and Jonathan GAME NIGHT

Fervor seems to have gripped Arnaud and chickens and whatever!” A similar needs “more frogs and dogs and bears (Alan Scherstuhl) Ismael’s at Cannes in 2017 and its official release and the movie has the look of having its most mistresses. Here’s more mistresses — except their names. We watch Simon and the sense that his camera is surveil- Cutting out 30 minutes and this might have been a lean ‘80s-thriller throwback with "Everybody Has a Secret," the true story of a terrorized woman in a mental But the avenging angel in Acrimony Unsane is better than most, and the sense that his camera is surveil- Download Tiff April 12th and 13th, 2018 12:00pm and 2:00pm Landmark Regent - 1045 Bruxton Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90024 Trigger Warning April 10th and 11th, 2018 1:00pm and 3:00pm Landmark Regent - 1045 Bruxton Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90024

Ismael’s Ghosts (Les Fantômes D’Ismaël) At the climax of The Muppets Take Manhattan, that reducible pro- ducer Kermit the Frog realizes at last what his Broadway show has been missing right up to the night of its premiere. It just needs “more frogs and dogs and bears and chickens and whatever!” A similar fenvors to have gripped Arnaud Despléchin, through with his-swollen direc- tor’s cut of Ismael’s Ghosts, it proves no- tably less fruitful. Here’s more mistresses and flashbacks and film-within-the-film espionage innanity! Between its unveiling at Cannes in 2017 and its official release on American screens this week, Ismael’s Ghosts has taken on an extra 20 minutes, which will certainly hit the spot for viewers disappointed that the original version found the hero, a French film director unable to complete his own out-of-control film, only taking two lovers. If the original cut was a couple of distinct Despléchin movies loaded into a woodchipper and then spattered all over on the screen, this new, longer Ismael’s Ghosts at least can be said to beef up the splotas. And some of those splotas, it must be said, prove enthrancing. One gob of story finds Ismael Vuillard (Mathieu Amalric), a director sud- denly confronted with the wife of his who had gone missing 20 years before. She’s played by Marion Cotillard and turns up at Vuillard’s beach house, first chatting with Vuillard’s current girlfriend Sylvia (Charlotte Gainsbourg) by the sea. The tangle of jealousies and seductions that follows never approaches plausibility, but everyone trembles and smolders capability. But there’s no way around it: The whole, here, is a mess. Even with the extra min- utes, the film seems unfinished, the con- nections between its disparate scenarios vague and arbitrary. (Alan Scherstuhl)

Itzhak The makers of the irresistible character doc Itzhak capture Itzhak Perlman’s characteristic warmth and bravado through short, anecdote-centric scenes that make the Israeli-American violinist seem like a big-hearted raconteur who’s just dying to tell you everything about himself. Director Alison Chernick wisely suggests that it’s something in Perlman’s bubbly, imperious personality — rather than some singular biographical event, such as the musician’s childhood struggles with polio — behind his rise to becoming the rock star of the classical music world. She lets him talk: Come for the soulful musical clips, stay for the great dialog about “desert islands” and “garbage paal soup.” And she employs exis- ting video and audio footage of Perlman performing to illustrate his abstract, even rambling theories about how he has grown as an artist by answering his Juilliard School students’ questions or what one admirer truly means when he compliments Perlman for “playing with the violin.” Think of Itzhak as a revealing scrapbook of Perlman’s favorite stories. Here he is on The Ed Sullivan Show in 1958, interpreting “Allegretto non troppo,” Mendelssohn’s joyful Opus 64. Here he is in the modern day, fielding questions from his students after they listen to a record- ing of Perlman playing Johannes Brahms’ triology, 17th Piano Concerto, “Rhenish Dances” cycle. And here’s Perlman at home, drinking red wine and kiteboarding with professional ham Alan Aida about the ineffable nature of creative genius just moments before Chernick throws on a clip of a younger Perlman joyfully shredding Johann Sebastian Bach’s raucous Second Violin Partita solo for a packed Israeli con- cert in 1973. (Samantha Kiernan)

Love, Simon Love, Simon is a movie made for and about the people who believe they are the essence of American normalcy, a movie that dutifully flatters them even as it works to expand who that normalcy includes. Simon (Nick Robinson) trusts his crew with everything but his big secret: He’s gay. On a gossip site dedicated to their school, a student calling himself “Blu” writes a post about being closeted and lonely. Simon, thunderstruck, begins a correspon- dence with Blu. In brisk, gripping scenes they reveal everything to each other — except their names. We watch Simon agonize waiting for an email back; we see Simon and Blu encourage each other to open up, to consider revealing themselves to each other — maybe at the Halloween costume party? Meanwhile, weasely thes- pian Martin (Logan Miller) has discovered Simon’s secrets and has threatened to reveal them to the entire school. Simon helps the wienie win the heart of Abby (Alexandra Shipp), a dear friend of Simon’s. The cast and filmmakers stir these elements of secrets, lies, masks and matchmaking for all they’re worth, prizing telling details and piercing observation over broad comedy. Relationships that in the film’s first moments seemed close, cohere from other motives more prickly and complex. It’s a fleet and sweet comedy/romance/mystery where the stakes couldn’t be higher — it deals with the public exposure of teenagers’ secrets! — but also where every high school crisis or embarrassment passes with time because people, it turns out, are fundamentally decent. If what teens worry about on their screens shapes future teen behavior, Love, Simon’s stoopid society is a gift to the teens of the future who may grow up on it. (Alan Scherstuhl)

Tyler Perry’s Acrimony Tyler Perry’s Acrimony was used to be called She’s Living My Life, but it may as well have been called Diary of a Mad Black Woman. In fact, many of Perry’s earlier film titles could have served this, his first thriller, from Why Did I Get Married? to I Can Do Bad All Myself. That last film, one of Perry’s better efforts, also starred Taraji P. Henson in a dra- matic role. Henson is one of Perry’s most interesting muses; he capitalizes on that festiveness of hers that’s both warm and a warning. Many fine actresses of color have given their all for Tyler Perry. They trust him. The problem is that Perry consistently lets them down. His scripts are lazily writ- ten morality plays that abruptly shift tone from comedy to tragedy. His direction is still distinguished by staging and pacing problems. Acrimony is better than most Perry films but no creative breakthrough. Cut out 30 minutes and this might have been a much better film, a ’30s thriller through and through with a killer lead performance. Most of the audience I saw this with were on the side of Henson’s character, Melinda, whose marriage to a dreamer named Robert (Lyrqk) Bent) ends just before he hits it big with the rechargeable battery he spent 20 years inventing. Perry stacks the deck for Mental Health on the soundtrack where Henson narrates with profanity-filled lines tailored to generate maximum audience response, and in the plot, where she suffers one transgression after another. Under normal Tyler Perry circumstances, this is when Mada made up to pistol-whip some sense into all parties. But the avenging angel in Acrimony is Melinda, and she makes Mada look like Gandhi. (Odie Henderson)

Unsane Steven Soderbergh shot Unsane on an iPhone, but not in the way Sean Baker’s bright and funny Tangerine was, where the director did everything he could to minimize that fish-eye look. Instead, Soderbergh embraces the technology and its limitations, giving us flat compositions and the sense that his camera is surveil- ling the characters rather than carefully photographing them. That’s thematically appropriate. This pulp thriller tells the story of a terrorized woman in a mental hospital who’s trying to convince the staff and patients that she shouldn’t be there and is being held against her will. Her photographic memory is highly valuable, and the movie has the look of having been smuggled out itself. Simple and well-acted, Unsane has tension enough to knot the stomach. But it’s wildly different from Soderbergh’s previous film, the star- studded and critically acclaimed country caper Logan Lucky, which was set in a cartooniously jubilant reality. Unsane comes closer than many other recent small-budget projects to the methods of Wes Anderson, Jim Jarmusch, Jim McVeigh and Videodope, not in subject matter or genre but in experimentation of form. In Sox, Soderbergh experimented with video and the distance that medium created between audience and character. Here, he’s eliminating distance almost completely, as Sawyer Valentiner (Claire Foy) appears on the screen as any of your face-to-face contacts might. And while the director ob- siously employed tracking shots in Sox, he’s patient with static shots in Unsane, allow- ing the blocking of his actors’ movements to create dynamics. It’s not necessarily with the kind of careful choreography of a Steven Spielberg take, but with a kinetic energy that had me questioning how and where the characters would go next, as if they might in a tense stage play. (April Wolfe)

A Wrinkle in Time The choices Ava DuVernay makes in her heart-on-its-sleeve adaptation of Madeleine L’Engle’s beloved science fiction adventure novel might seem antithetical to the traditional big-budget adventure tale. Early in the film, she employs the vérité technique she honed on her cult film Tangerine — intimate, handheld cameras, lingering on a person’s face before cutting to two hands touching. DuVernay is most concerned with people. The moments of realism prove crucial: The adaptation must compress hundreds of pages into an hour and 49 minutes, send- ing Meg (Storm Reid), her little adopted brother Charles Wallace (Deitıc McCade) and her stepmother Mrs. Who (Mindy Kaling) and Mrs. Whatsit (Reese Witherspoon), who are adored in any number of multicolored, puffy, flowy, metallic, knit, quilted and woven gowns. As always when she takes an acting role, Winfrey reminds us that she’s not just a brand name. Jennifer Lee’s script gives her a pep talk about fighting against the dark- ness that you may need on repeat these days. But who would have thought in a film with this cast that the most cathartic mo- ment would come from Zach Galifianakis? Reid, while a little unsteady in scenes where she must play joyful, nails the darker emotions. Meg, who is mixe-aced, wears her black hair curly. That DuVernay uses her latest film to tell little girls that their natural hair is good and pretty is the kind of touch we’d expect from the activist filmmaker. That she does it in a tentpole blockbuster is revolutionary. (April Wolfe)
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This research project is funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

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4/19  ALBOROSIE, DUB ROCKERS ‘HIGH SOCIETY REGGAE’ 420 COUNTDOWN RELEASE
4/20  WE WANT YOU 2018 TOUR
4/20  DDG
4/20  DESO: W/ TARA BROOKS B2B + LEE REYNOLDS ALL NIGHT!!!
4/20  SAN E + MADCLOWN

4/22  BATTLE OF THE SALONS | LOS ANGELES
4/26  MOVING CHANNELS, BEAIZ, FRIZ
4/27  LAPALUX W/ SPECIAL GUEST DADELDUS
4/28  DAS MORTAL
4/28  THE LOS ANGELES PANCAKES & BOOZE ART SHOW
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4/29  INVISIBLE INC.
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4/11  SOMETHING COOL
4/12  CHINKY EYED LOS ANGELES PRESENTS VIC SPENCER
4/13  MTM 90'S
4/13  PEPPASEED, DJ CROOKS
4/14  LATIM BASHMENT: DJ GHETTO
4/14  NOCHEKANDELA, LOS MALDITOS
4/16  THE FLOOR IMPROV NIGHT
4/18  THE SAUZ MIXTAPE RELEASE PARTY
4/18  THE SAUZ MIXTAPE RELEASE PARTY
4/19  WILDHARD LA - EXPERIENCE LIVE REGGAE CULTURE
4/19  DEVIN THE DUDE
4/20  MIK GONZALEZ
4/20  CLUE 90'S

4/21  DILF LOS ANGELES BLACK & BLUE BALL BY JOE WHITAKER, DJ KITTY GLITTER, DJ JEFF DORITY, DJ MAX BRUCE
4/27  CLUB 90'S
4/27  SEAN HEALY PRESENTS: CASKEY
4/28  CLUB 90'S
4/28  PRLJAVO KAZALISTE LIVE IN CONCERT
4/28  CLUB 90'S
4/29  THE LOS ANGELES PANCAKES & BOOZE ART SHOW
4/29  THE LOS ANGELES PANCAKES & BOOZE ART SHOW
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**COED RECS X BIKES 4 ORPHANS**
HE’S BEEN A BAD BOY

After four decades and countless misdeeds, T.S.O.L.’s Jack Grisham pauses to reflect

BY KATHERINE TURMAN

E
everyone who has been within 10 feet of Jack Grisham has a story. But none is more horridly or shocking than the true tales the T.S.O.L. frontman tells about himself. Seemingly filter-free spewings — on Facebook live chats and in his page-turner of a memoir, 2011’s Stranglers, without sounding dated or cohesive, it sounds like late-'70s Gen X, charming, multitalented motherfucker, “I can’t, because I’m an anarchist,” he says. “I would be a fucking excellent anarchist or storefront preacher. However, I can’t take any man in charge of any other man. The trouble is, you can’t really step away from ingrained values.”

In fact, that “being in charge” thing caused him to walk away from T.S.O.L. as their star was rising on the strength of a couple of EPs and records put out between 1981 and 1983 — and incendiary live shows. So hot, in fact, that when T.S.O.L. played a metal band at SIR Studios on Sunset Boulevard, the night culminated in a riot.

“It really screwed with me,” Grisham says. As it became clear police wanted to break up the gig, Grisham told the crowd, “If we all sit down, they can’t take us out.” Then, 2,600 people just sat down on the floor. It was just like saying, “Hey, do you want a cup of water?” And they just said, “Yes.” There was something in that to me that was terrifying. Really uncomfortable. I didn’t like the feeling of power. I think it’s irresponsible. It takes a degree of responsibility that I knew I did not have.”

What happened next was unforeseen: T.S.O.L. got a new singer, made a couple records that launched the band onto the Billboard charts (1987’s Hit and Run) and radio, and the new version of the band became associated with the “hair-metal” onslaught. They enjoyed success that the original version of the band did not. The singer? Grisham’s brother-in-law, Joe Wood. Those must have been some uncomfortable holiday dinners.

“Nah, I didn’t give a fuck. I didn’t care,” Grisham claims. “The only time I gave a shit is later, when we got back together (with 2001’s Disappear).” Because they destroyed that name. They ran the name T.S.O.L. into the fucking ground. The thing that bummed me out was I got blamed for it a lot of times. I’d be out playing with my band The Joykiller, and people would say, ‘Oh, these guys used to be a fucking rock metal band, and now they’re this.’ People still say that about T.S.O.L. But it wasn’t the same band whatsoever.

It can be difficult to reconcile the lovable lunatic who is “Uncle Jack” with the evil delinquent he was, encouraging a “gang bang” on a woman who was clearly very much under the influence. Or his 14-year-old-girlfriend (when he was 25), whom he married in Mexico when she was 16. Have #MeToo and #TimesUp caught up to him?

“I did it,” he says. “Look. I deserve whatever flack I get, I deserve it. I take responsibility for it. The problem is, I have found, that I’m the only one from that whole genre of people who is even willing to stand up and say, ‘LOOK, these are not the moves of a hero, these are the moves of a fucking vicious, misogynist fucking prick. Who used and hurt people.’ And I admit it.”

Within the sober community, amends are an important step.

“I made amends as much as I could,” he says. (His then-teenage wife, following their divorce, died some years later due to drugs.) “Some of the best amends I made were the amends where I was told ‘no thank you,’” he says. “The reason I found that to be the best is that lets me live with the realization that some cuts are deep. And you have to also accept that.”

Plus, he adds, he was not only the predator, he was prey.

“Early Los Angeles [club scene], we’re talking drug abuse. Predators. The chicken hawks. The guys who I will not name who preyed on young punk boys. And don’t think I wasn’t part of that fucking line. Getting preyed on by old Hollywood art punks. Here comes some cute, naive young surfer boy. My friends were getting preyed on. This is the behavior that was prevalent... Thirty-five years after his heyday of self- and other destructiveness, Grisham, a “Christian-based atheist,” says, “I’m really solid on keeping myself in check. When somebody’s in trouble, I reach out and help them, like we’re supposed to. It’s my duty as a human, to be of service and to be helpful.”

It’s not lip service. He’s a charismatic, in-demand speaker, active in the recovery community and on a one-on-one basis. Energy once channeled into devastation now is focused on the needs of others.

Of his own past actions, Grisham knows that his innate anger and aggression is “fear-based,” and while decades of work find the American Demon somewhat tamer, he says, “At times, when fear comes over me, I slip back into that behavior. But not nearly as much as used to be. Maybe throw me under the label of a ‘hockey with a heart of gold.’ It doesn’t mean I’m not putting out,” he says with an uproarious laugh.

After numerous entertaining, eloquent asides — on topics including Gore Vidal, social anxiety, the Koran, Sammy Hagar, his 2003 run for California governor, The Sweet and Socratic philosopher Mortimer Adler — Grisham stops. “I’m going to tighten it up, because this sounds like I’m a maniac, and I’m not completely a maniac.”

What percentage maniac is he?

“Well, this is what I tell people. You can take a totaled car, and you put it into the shop, and they can straighten it out and clean it up and paint it. But when you drive it out of the shop, it goes down the street cockeyed. So I just roll cockeyed,” he says. “That’s all.”

T.S.O.L. play April 5 and 6 at the Viper Room; Grisham also has a solo photography show April 13 at the Dove Biscuit Gallery in the Last Bookstore.
Reverend Beat-Man  
@ THE HI HAT  
4/6

In theory, infamous Swiss oddball Reverend Beat-Man seems like a gimmick-reliant pain in the ass — but in practice, he’s an unhinged dynamo whose blast of lowly, scabrous junkyard rock & roll is as exhilarating as it is unexpected. Roaring into town with a trove of typically aberrant new tunes from the aptly named Blues Trash platter (his first full-length release in more than a decade), the good Reverend is certain to conjure his perfected mix of mad-dog abandon, wild-eyed zeal and penetrating, painstakingly crafted musical catastrophe. While definitely prowling the Lux Interior/Hasil Adkins side of the alley, this weird little miscreant’s squalid musings — a mutant brand of blues-fueled philosophizing all his own — are consistently (and deliciously) legit. — Jonny Whiteside

L.A. Guns  
@ THE CANYON, SANTA CLARITA  
4/7

Ever since the core L.A. Guns' pairing of Tracii Guns and Phil Lewis buried their differences and started working together again a couple of years ago, the reputation of the band has been restored perhaps not to where it was during their '80s Sunset Strip pomp but certainly to a respectable standing. If “respectable” is the right word, which it probably isn’t when discussing these shameless reprobes. All joking aside, this is a band that has always carried the name of the city with pride; Guns is and has always been a technically brilliant and perhaps underrated guitarist, and he and Lewis bring out the best in each other. Thankfully, that silty period when there were two L.A. Guns bands is over, and they can get on with creating more excellent sleaze-rock slabs like 2017’s The Missing Peace album. — Brett Callwood

Ramonda Hammer  
@ THE ECHOPLEX  
4/9

“My dreams are selfish as hell/Your dreams are overly apologetic, but hey,” Devin Davis admits against the restrained glimmers of her and Justin Geter’s guitars, which lurk at the beginning of “Destroyers,” the title track of Ramonda Hammer’s new EP. “We'll annihilate, and with these acts of virtue we are not sure if we’ve saved or killed.” Bassist Andy Hengl and drummer Mark Edwards then slam into the “sinister dynamics” that vault the guitars into a crushing grunge-rock chorus, adding power to Davis’ dramatic words. This collision of hard-rock storminess with Davis’ wailing melodies has made Ramonda Hammer one of the more fascinatingly pulverizing local bands over the past few years. “Bender” contrasts Davis’ introspective desperation with thick, hard-rock riffs, whereas the fuzzed-out “Same Thing” is launched by Hengl and Edwards’ interlocking riffs. — Falling James

Kate Nash: See Tuesday.
Kate Nash, Miya Folick
@ THE FONDA THEATRE

With her 2007 debut, Made of Bricks, Kate Nash announced to the world that she was a madly talented singer of pure pop. But somewhere along the way, the English vocalist evolved from the slyly witty vulnerability of her early persona into a far more confrontational riot-grrrl anger that culminated in the garage-punk intensity of 2013’s Girl Talk. On her latest record, Yesterday Was Forever, Nash retains much of her early self-deprecation (“I think you hate yourself/I think I hate me even more”) on such surging intensity of 2013’s Masseduction, as the iconoclastic singer educates and seduces the masses with her most commercially popular work yet. Against a fizzy backdrop of pop electronics, St. Vincent invokes a litany of modern-day saints and sinners through occasionally arty lyrics that belie the album’s mainstream production. “I hold you like a weapon... I can’t turn off what turns me on,” the former Annie Clark declares amid the slinky electropop funk of the title track. She leaves the dance floor for occasional interludes on such intimate piano ballads as “Happy Birthday, John” and the enigmatic “Smoking Section.” The sarcastic, synthetic yearning of “Los Ageless” contrasts the more heartfelt intimacy of “New York.” —Falling James

Tom Keifer
@ THE CANYON, SANTA CLARITA

Tom Keifer’s solo album, 2013’s two-decades-in-the-making The Way Life Goes, ripples with the robust songwriting and raw-throated timbre that was his contribution to Cinderella, without the melodramatic production intrinsic to the ’80s hair-metal genre of which that Philly foursome was a hit-machine high-water mark. A palpable deference to hard rock’s blues roots was always what set ‘Rella apart from most of their poufy-permed peers, and left alone Keifer is able to also fully indulge his love of all manner of Americana, including country and classic rock & roll. Traversing Aerosmith-y swagger, arena-ready ballads and rollicking dive-bar anthems replete with slide guitar, harmonica, Wurlitzer and sax, Keifer’s real achievement with The Way Life Goes is simultaneously satiating Cinderella diehards and thoroughly entertaining listeners unaware of his former outfit. Also Friday, April 13, at the Rose, Pasadena, and Saturday, April 14, at the Whisky A Go Go. —Paul Rogers

Portugal, The Man, Cherry Glazerr
@ FOX THEATER, POMONA

Cherry Glazerr are in the middle of a series of high-profile shows in Southern California this month. On Thursday, April 5, the L.A. band open for The Breeders at the Fonda Theatre, and later this month they will appear over the course of two weekends at Coachella. The L.A. trio have undergone several lineup changes since forming in 2013, but singer-guitarist Clementine Creevy has maintained a consistently mesmerizing mix of indie pop, grunge, garage and punk on Cherry Glazerr’s two albums, 2014’s Hazel Princess and 2017’s Apocalipstick. Creevy’s slippery, side-winding riffs are wrapped tightly around her dreamily hazy vocals to most enchanting effect on “Told You I’d Be With the Guys.” Headliner Portugal. The Man’s latest album, Woodstock, is an ambitious work that attempts to blend hints of ’60s psychedelia with modern indie pop. —Falling James


THE COFFEE GALLERY BACKSTAGE: 3967 Cahuenga Blvd. W., Studio City. Carlos Rodrguez, Fri., April 6, 9:30 p.m. Carl Verheyen, Sat., April 7, 9:30 p.m., $25. The L.A. Jazz Quartet, Sun., April 8, 9:30 p.m., $15. Tara Grainer, Tue., Apr. 10, 9 p.m., $15. Scott Henderson, Apr. 12, 9:30 p.m., $25.

ZEBULON: 2478 Fletcher Dr., L.A. Skm Milk, Less Than Local, Angelica Bernal, Fri., April 6, 7 p.m., free. Jonathun Toubin, New York Night Train, Ex-Stains, Htig Bargain!, Sat., April 7, 9 p.m., $10. Eric Copeland, Robert Akt, Aubrey Love, Swave Danielle, Chris Dunnan, Sun., April 8, 9 p.m., $15. Joachim Cooader, Buzzy Lee, DJ Max Goldblatt, Mon., April 9, 9 p.m., free. MK Machine, Eddy Ruscha, Tue., April 10, 9:30 p.m., $15.

THE JIMMY: 924 3rd St., Santa Monica. The Mark Isbell Quartet, Sat., April 7, 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Huntington Memorial Hospital, 100 W. California Blvd., Pasadena.


THE TITLE: 4212 W. Sunset Blvd., L.A. The Horace Tapscott Birthday Tribute, with Michael Session, Roberto Miranda, Bobby West, Dwight Trible, Fri., April 6, 9 p.m., $20. The Arbii Ensemble, Sat., April 7, 9 p.m., $20. Sisters of Jazz Jam Session, Sundays, 8 p.m., $5. Jazz Jam Session, Thursdays, 9 p.m., $5.

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MAGNOLIA: 4211 W. Magnolia Blvd., Burbank. Lee Harper, Fri., April 6, 9 p.m. James Intveld, Sat., April 7, 9 p.m., $15. The Benny Bryden Quartet, Mon., April 9, 9 p.m. The Atomic Roots Orchestra, Tue., April 10, 9 p.m. Paulie Cerra, Thu., April 12, 9 p.m.

THE UNWINKED EARTH ESTATE FESTIVAL OF IMPROVISED MUSIC: With Bobby Bradford, Roi locus Mitchell, Evan Parker, Sandi Henderson, 2 p.m. First Presbyterian Church, 1220 Second St., Santa Monica.

TUESDAY, APRIL 10

GO KALI UCHIS: With Cuco, 8 p.m., $39.50 & $44.50. The Novo by Microsoft. See Music Pick.

GO KATE NISHI: With Miya Foik, 9 p.m. The Fonda Theatre, 6126 Hollywood Blvd., L.A. See Music Pick.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11

CHROMEO: With Phantoms, 9 p.m. El Rey Theatre.

FRANKIE COSMOS: With Ian Sweet, Soar, 8 p.m., $15-$20. The Regent Theater. 448 S. Main St., L.A.

HAIM: 8 p.m. Fox Theater Pomona, 301 S. Garvey Ave. Tickets $15-$30.

MUSICA: 5 p.m. Sony Music, 13946 Wilshire Blvd., L.A.


THURSDAY, APRIL 12

CARPENTER BRUT: 9 p.m. El Rey Theatre.

FLITE BOXES: 9 p.m. Warner Grand Theatre, 478 W. Sixth St., Santa Monica.

MARIAN HILL: With Sir Sly, 9 p.m. The Fonda Theatre.

PERFUME GENIUS: With The Big Thief, 9 p.m. The Mason, 1036 S. Hill St., L.A.

PORTUGAL. THE MAN, CHERRY GLAZIER: 9 p.m., $50. Fox Theater Pomona, 301 S. Garvey Ave., Pomona. See Music Pick.

TOLLY SIGHTS: 8 p.m. The Novo by Microsoft.

CLASSICAL & NEW MUSIC

ANDRAS SCHIFF: The Hungarian-British pianist unleashes selections by Brahms, Mozart, Bach and Beethoven, Sun., April 8, 7:30 p.m. Walt Disney Concert Hall, 111 S. Grand Ave., L.A.


EINAY YARDEN: The Israeli pianist fantasizes about Robert Schuman, Béla Bartók, Leonard Bernstein and Ludwig van Beethoven, Sun., April 8, 2 p.m., free. Rolling Hills United Methodist Church, 26438 Crenshaw Blvd., Palos Verdes Peninsula.

GABRIELA MARTINEZ: The Venezuelan pianist roams through landscapes by Granados, Beethoven, Dan Visconti, Adam Schoenberg and Ginastera, Sat., April 7, 8 p.m., $35. Edye Space 2, 1310 N. Colorado Ave., Santa Monica.

HUMAN/INSTRUMENT: Music/que presents a look at the connection between the human body, health and music, with sets from a cappella singers Arora and percussion group Moloid, Sun., April 8, 7 p.m., free. Huntington Memorial Hospital, 100 W. California Blvd, Pasadena.

LA: PHILHARMONIC: Gustavo Dudamel conducts Gustav Mahler’s Das Lied von der Erde in a visual presentation by director Yaval Sharon and Chilean group Teatrocinema, Fri., April 6, 8 p.m.; Sat., April 7, 8 p.m., $20-$159. Sun., April 8, 2 p.m., free. LACMA, Bing Theater.

SLEEPY PARISIAN FRENCH DANCE CLUB: 3787 Cahuenga Blvd. W., Studio City. For more listings, please go to laweekly.com.

LA LE SALON DE MUSIQUES: A piano-strings quintet assembles works by Borodin, Glazunov, Napravnik and Sosnitskiovich, Sun., Apr. 8, 4 p.m., $55. Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 N. Grand Ave., L.A.

RYAN DE RYKE & DANIEL SCHLOSBERG: Baritone de Ryke and pianist Daniel Schlosberg confer over selections by Mozart, Schubert and Robert Schumann, Sun., April 8, 6 p.m., free. LACMA, Bing Theater.

SHEakespeare Day!: L.A. Opera vocalists and performers from the Guild of St. George Inc. pop up at various scenic locations to mark the English playwright’s birthday month, Sat., April 7, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Huntington Library, Arts Collections and Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Rd., San Marino.
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GANG OF YOUTHS • KAILEE MORGUE • FREYA RIDINGS • CALEBORATE • DURAND & THE INDICATIONS
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