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**FILM**

**Cutting-Edge Cinema**

The Fine Arts Film Festival is just what it sounds like: two jam-packed days of shorts and features made by visual artists and/or about them. Evocative documentaries, biopics, experimental shorts, animation and even virtual reality hail from local, national and international artists. Now in its fifth year, the FAFF screens dozens of new works of art cinema, touching on the lesser-known lives and works of celebrated figures and uncovering the stories of unjustly overlooked artists. Highlights include the new documentary Tales of the American Highlights include the new documentary Tales of the American

**FRANKENSTEIN**

metheus, one of the most famous monster tales — and sci-fi novels — ever written. To celebrate the bicentennial, the Huntington Library hosts Frankenstein: Then and Now, 2018-2019, a two-day conference with scholars, writers, scientists and directors discussing various topics inspired by the book, including its origins, publication, cultural and scientific impact, and film and stage adaptations over the years. A highlight is Saturday’s screening of Frankenstein, the 2011 National Theater of Great Britain production, directed by Danny Boyle and starring Benedict Cumberbatch and Jonny Lee Miller, who alternated the roles of Dr. Frankenstein and the Creature. Huntington Library, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino; Fri.-Sat., May 11-12, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.; $25. (626) 405-2100, huntington.org. —Shana Nys Dambrot

**COMEDY**

**Cutting Humor**

Asking the hard questions doesn’t always usher in glittering peals of laughter in stand-up comedy (even if the response a routine dissects topics of sex and sexism — and sometimes, as a woman, you punch in the gut — as well as satire and stand-up). Koester’s sparkling knife of a routine dissected topics of sex and sexism and mores and morality — and it’s one that has become especially polished in these times. Hosted by Andy Kindler, who’s just a really good friend like that. Velaslavasay Panorama, 1122 W. 24th St., University Park; Fri., May 11, 8 & 10 p.m.; free (RSVP required). (213) 746-2166, panoramaonview.com/upcoming-events. —David Cotner

**LITERATURE**

**It’s Alive!**

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the publication of Mary Shelley’s 1818 novel Frankenstein: or, The Modern Pro

**Viva Las Chicas**

Inspired by an ongoing exhibition of works by the groundbreaking veteran artist-muralist Judithe Hernández, the Museum of Latin American Art’s Barrio Baroque is a free-wheeling, far-ranging event aimed at celebrating Chicana feminism, color of women and their wildly varied creative outputs. With a set from the brilliant ’77 punk rock spearhead Alice Bag, a creative powerhouse whose 21st-century re-emergence as both an author (with her stunning memoir Violence Girl) and a vocalist capable of electrifying performances and arresting statements on gender, inequity and social injustice; plus rad post-punk “artivists” ELLA, a dazzling array of multimedia installations, film, discussions, popups, more art, female craft vendors, food, booze and a photo booth, this is certain to be as thought-provoking as it is rewarding. Museum of Latin American Art, 628 Alamitos Ave., Long Beach; Sat., May 12, 4-8 p.m.; $20; (562) 437-1680, molaa.org. —Jonny Whiteside

**BEER/MUSIC**

**Start Your Summer**

Endless beer and celebration launches your weekend into an inebriated stratosphere at this year’s Downtown Los Angeles Beer and Music Festival. This is the de facto start to summertime, boasting more than 100 craft beers, a wealth of food vendors and popup ramen restaurants, which help sop up all that booze taking up residence in your system — and, for reasons that shall become clearer after a few beers, the song stylings of Dirty Nasty, Mickey Avalon and Alien Ant Farm. A portion of the proceeds goes to Craft Gives Back, which donates to initiatives assisting children and adults with depression. Pershing Square, 532 S. Olive St., downtown; Sat., May 12, 7-10 p.m.; $35; 50 VIP. (213) 847-4970, dtlabeerfest.com. —David Cotner

**SPORTS**

**Winter Olympic Encore**

The annual Stars on Ice revue rolls into Southern California with a roster of U.S. figure skaters who are loaded with medals from the recent national and world championships and Winter Olympics. Arcadia native Mirai Nagasu overcame years of injuries and adversity to unexpectedly place second at nationals before becoming only the third woman skater to execute a triple axel at the Olympic Games. Nathan Chen re-established his dominance with a gold medal at the world championships in March following uncharacteristic stumbles at the Olympics. Beloved sister-and-brother ice-dance team Maia and Alex Shibutani managed to earn an Olympic bronze medal despite tough competition, whereas defiant gay skater Adam Rippon took on not just the other men’s skaters but also this country’s homophobic vice president. The cast also includes stirring ice-dance newcomers Madison Hubbell and Zachary Donohue and powerful jumper Bradie Tennell. Honda Center, 2695 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim; Sat., May 12, 7:30 p.m.; $12-$85, (714) 704-2400, hondacenter.com. —Falling James

**POP-UP**

Why Read When You Can Watch?

If you haven’t been to a Pop-Up Magazine show at the Ace, you haven’t experienced one of the best cultural events in the city. The multimedia show, which is meant to exist only onstage (no streaming, taping or replay), is best described as a magazine come to life. The Pop-Up Magazine Spring Issue features a great cast of L.A.-based performers, including Jimmy Kimmel Live’ comedian writer Bess Kalb; The Queen of Versailles filmmaker Lauren Greenfield; Los Angeles Times opinion columnist Gustavo Arellano; and filmmaker and Found magazine creator Davy Rothbart, who will tell a fascinating story that takes the audience from prison to Hollywood. Also: out-of-towners John Jeremiah Sullivan, Andres Gonzalez and Marcus Ubungen. “It’s going to be memorable,” says Doug McGrady, editor-in-chief of the San Francisco-based Pop-Up and California Sunday magazines, which local readers may recognize as a supple-
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**ART**

**Exploring Memory and Loss**

Mario Ybarra Jr. and Karla Diaz founded *Slanguage* in 2002 as a loosely affiliated artist collective. Its evolving membership makes art, curates shows and generally does whatever wokeness interdisciplinarily is required to get the beauty and knowledge out to as many people as possible, making incursions from both deep inside and way outside the mainstream art world purview. Their current residency at the Armory Center’s off-site project space, a formerly residential property fittingly called La Casita is termed a “social sculpture.” This means that *Slanguage* recombines elements of site-specific materials recycling, performance, public engagement, research into local history, and the sights and sounds of the neighborhood — from local artists to nearby schools and street vendors — in producing staged events, mask-making workshops for all ages, and random acts of real life, condensed. La Casita, 805 N. Madison Ave., Pasadena; Sun., May 13, 2-4 p.m.; Wed., May 16, 6-8 p.m.; Sun., May 20, 2-4 p.m.; free, armoryarts.org/about-us/news/slangue-in-residence-at-la-casita-pasadena-ca. —Shana Nys Dambrot

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**COMEDY**

**Sex Ed**

Not to be confused with the slightly perfunctory wonder of TED Talks, TEDxxx: *Ideas Worth Spreading* is a night of people inspiring you to evolve as individual, adult, sexual human beings. Produced by Philip Labes, it features chortlesome confessional gooeyness from Sabrina Brennan, Jajquis Neil, Ash Webb and “more” — which is really what you should want from sex in the first place. You’ll learn more about the nether of your neighbors than you ever thought you could from a comedy club, and maybe you’ll come away with a greater understanding about what your weird deal is with sex, anyway. UCB Sunset, 5419 Sunset Blvd., East Hollywood; Mon., May 14, 10-30 p.m.; $8.50. (323) 908-8702, sunset.ucbtheatre.com. —David Cotner

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**DANCE**

**Not Your Typical Mother’s Day**

For a certain kind of mother, waiting for brunch at an overcrowded fancy restaurant is not the ideal way to spend Mother’s Day. A delightful alternative with entertainment and an optional al fresco brunch is MOMEntum Place. Nestled in pastoral Topanga Canyon, the venue that hosts summer Shakespeare is turned over on Mother’s Day to Lexi Pearl, who curates an eclectic parade of dance, circus, aerial and music performers. The preshow buffet brunch ($30) is available starting at noon in the theater’s parklike environs, with picnic tables for dining, room for kids to run around, and a setting for adults to appreciate spending a special day in a special part of this city. Casual dress and cushions for the terraced amphitheater seating are advised. Will Geer’s Theatricum Botanicum, 1419 N. Topanga Blvd., Topanga; Sun., May 13, 2 p.m., $35 advance, $40 at door, $15 students, $10 children 12 & under. (310) 455-2322, theatricum.com. —Ann Haskins

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**BOOKS**

**Life’s Questions**

If you’re unlucky with drugs, you’re like Jean-Paul Sartre and you have crabs following you around for life after one bad mescaline trip. If you’re slightly more fortunate, you’ll get something like today’s presentation by Tao Lin about his
new book, *Trip: Psychedelics, Alienation, and Change* ($16, Vintage). Leaping from the stimulants of pharmaceuticals to the more spiritually beneficial worlds of DMT, psilocybin and salvia, Lin unveils how his entire worldview changed after psychedelics. This, of course, led to asking (but not answering) such trippy questions as “Is the world made of language?” and “What happens when we die?” Book Soup, 8818 Sunset Blvd., West Hollywood; Tue., May 15, 7 p.m.; free. (310) 659-3110, booksoup.com/event/tao-lin-discusses-and-signs-trip-psychedelics-alienation-and-change. —David Cotner

**wed 5/16**

**ART/HISTORY**

**Love the Painting, Hate the Painter?**

Whether they were murderers, misogynists or bigots, some of the greatest artists were corrupt, which poses a moral quandary: Can we differentiate between creation and the creator, and if so, does that make us bad people? Zócalo Public Square’s latest lecture, *Can We Appreciate the Great Art of Bad People?* looks at famous examples including Eadweard Muybridge, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot and Pablo Picasso, and ponders “whether we can value the art of rogues and criminals.” Moderated by *New Yorker* writer Amanda Fortini, this panel discussion features film critic Neal Gabler, USC popular culture scholar Todd Boyd and University of Notre Dame art professor Ingrid Rowland. *The Getty Center, 1200 Getty Center Drive, Brentwood; Wed., May 16, 7:30 p.m.; free (RSVP required). (310) 440-7300, getty.edu/visit/cal/events/ev_2160.html. —Siran Babayan

**thu 5/17**

**CLASSICAL MUSIC**

**Spring Is in the Air**

In just a few weeks, the L.A. Philharmonic sets up camp for the summer at the Hollywood Bowl, but the ambitious orchestra still has several major performances scheduled this month at its home base, Disney Hall. Tonight, conductor Gustavo Dudamel and the L.A. Phil plunge into the first of a series of concerts reveling in the works of Robert Schumann. Estimable Japanese-British pianist Mitsuko Uchida stirs up the delicate flurries of the German composer’s only piano concerto, releasing its fluttering, birdlike melodies with a touch that ranges from gently nuanced to decisively forceful. Then Dudamel opens the windows wide for Schumann’s First Symphony, a joyful ode to spring that bursts through the clouds with ebullient rays of sunshine. *Walt Disney Concert Hall, 111 S. Grand Ave., downtown; Thu.-Fri., May 17-18, 8 p.m.; $20-$205. (323) 850-2000, laphil.com. —Falling James*
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THE GREENING OF SKID ROW

Weed the Homeless founder urges cannabis industry to share the wealth — for a good cause

BY MADISON MARGOLIN

Once upon a time in modern-day L.A., a group of generous DIY do-gooders looked at the city’s rampant homeless problem, and then at the city’s flourishing weed industry, and decided to use the latter to help the former. What’s become known as Weed the Homeless isn’t a fancy operation: It’s as simple as handing out weed, in addition to clothing, food, toiletries and other essentials, to people living on the street.

The movement began on Thanksgiving 2017 when cannabis activist and entrepreneur Jackie Sponseller, a self-proclaimed “international epileptic stoner,” was home alone in Venice and wanted to give back. “Ever since I was a little teenage stoner, I used to want to have so much weed that someday I could just give it away,” she jokes.

That fantasy eventually became a reality for Sponseller, who, having been diagnosed with epilepsy at the age of 10, set out to heal herself and others with medical marijuana. The California native moved abroad to Israel, eventually building a cannabis empire centered around her various projects, including Kaya Seeds, Daily Dab TV and Queen-dom Canna.

In between jetsetting abroad and back home, Sponseller now is spearheading the fourth installment of Weed the Homeless this weekend on Skid Row.

The night before the first Weed the Homeless, Sponseller invited over a handful of friends to bake edibles and roll joints for charity. For subsequent installments, she had friends in the industry donate oils, prerolls and other products.

“The homeless get tears in their eyes. They’re used to people calling them druggies and looking down at them — they’re not used to getting weed from people,” Sponseller says. “What’s inspiring too is with the whole Jeff Sessions thing — ‘good people don’t smoke weed’ — I’m pro the idea of stoners giving back, being a good example in society.”

Homelessness in L.A. has surged 75 percent in the past six years, affecting about 55,000 of our fellow Angelenos. Less than 30 percent of L.A.’s homeless people have access to any kind of legitimate shelter. At a time when there’s so much excitement around L.A.’s cannabis green rush, it only makes sense to use some of that weed money for a cause that’s so desperately acute in the world capital of the weed industry, Sponseller is not alone in Weeding the Homeless.

“WITH THE WHOLE JEFF SESSIONS THING — ‘GOOD PEOPLE DON’T SMOKE WEED’ — I'M PRO THE IDEA OF STONERS GIVING BACK, BEING A GOOD EXAMPLE IN SOCIETY.”

—JACKIE SPONSELLER

Some have suggested that legal weed entrepreneurs could use their own capital to build homeless shelters.

“Marijuana has always been a taboo subject in the recovery world, but it can reduce the harmful effects of substance abuse,” says Joshua Harvey, a psychologist and addictions counselor. “A majority of the people on Skid Row suffer from mental health issues ... and marijuana can be used as a medicine to help treat addiction and mental health issues.”

While cannabis isn’t for everyone, and can exacerbate certain mental health conditions in some cases, such as schizophrenia, the human body nonetheless is built with an inherent network of receptors — aka the endocannabinoid system — that fit perfectly with the chemical compounds one ingests from cannabis. This system regulates a variety of physiological functions including sleep, mood, appetite and pain.

While cannabis is for everyone, and can exacerbate certain mental health conditions in some cases, such as schizophrenia, the human body nonetheless is built with an inherent network of receptors — aka the endocannabinoid system — that fit perfectly with the chemical compounds one ingests from cannabis. This system regulates a variety of physiological functions including sleep, mood, appetite and pain.

The premise of Weed the Homeless may appear controversial to some — why give out weed to people with dubious mental health conditions? — but the truth of the matter is that those on the street have access to cannabis and hard drugs regardless. Weed the Homeless provides clean, safe cannabis flower, edibles and oil from legal sources.

The volunteers, of course, hand out weed at their own discretion — eventually there may be a license for this kind of effort — but for now, says Sponseller, when “the Californian cannabis market is flourishing, where industry professionals on both sides of the legal fence are making great profits, it only makes for better timing to also give back.”
L.A. Weekly is launching a new series of issues to be curated by guest editors, with the goal of showcasing the diverse voices from the Los Angeles community. Our guest editors will be individuals or representatives of events and organizations that help to enrich our city’s culture.

Our series debuts today with Insomniac Events, producer of Electric Daisy Carnival Las Vegas, as curator. L.A.-based Insomniac, led by founder-CEO Pasquale Rotella, is putting the final touches on this year’s EDC, which runs May 18-20 this year. The popular music festival, which typically draws crowds of 400,000 over its three days, will be held a month earlier this year in an attempt to beat the searing Las Vegas heat.

Electric Daisy Carnival is international as well, with events in Japan, Asia and Mexico, in addition to other U.S. locations.

Insomniac’s endeavors stretch beyond EDC into fashion and a record label too, as you’ll learn in these pages.
GLAMPING AT EDC

Spend the weekend in an on-site luxury tent or an RV and beat the traffic

BY BRETT CALLWOOD

This year’s Electric Daisy Carnival in Vegas will include an option to camp at the festival for the first time since the event began in 1991. The area, located next to the event’s main gates at the Las Vegas Motor Speedway, has been dubbed Camp EDC.

Pasquale Rotella, the brains behind Insomniac, which organizes EDC, has been planning to introduce camping to the EDC experience for a couple of years, says Yvonne Liu, Insomniac’s festival operations and experience specialist. “He loves the atmosphere of a campground, and the community is unbeatable,” Liu says.

Organizers also hope the addition of a campsite will help alleviate the terrible traffic conditions that attendees have sometimes had to deal with in the past. Some may wonder about camping in Las Vegas, where temperatures typically soar. “It’s something that’s never been done before in Vegas. Now that we’ve moved the dates to May [from the usual June], it’s actually possible because the temperature is so much nicer,” Liu says. “Typically, we’re a bucket-list event. People want to come and do it, and then they’ll cross it off their list. We want to provide more than that, so Pasquale started working on a lot of ideas.”

New ideas are considered and discussed every year when EDC ends, with a view to improving the experience the following year. The campsite is one idea that took, says Rich Thomas, Insomniac vice president of culture and content. “Our fans love to camp,” Thomas says. “Pasquale is always inspired by other festivals that he goes to, like Eclipse and Burning Man. He’s always wanted to try to figure out how to bring something like that to EDC.”

The camping at EDC won’t be a traditional festival popup tent setup. The dome-like tents, called ShiftPodz’s, are already erected. All campers will have AstroTurf floors, a four-port USB strip, interior string lights and their own air conditioning unit. Higher-tier campers will find their ShiftPodz outfitted with an inflatable mattress and bedding.

“The most important thing for us was to create a safe and regulated environment,” Thomas says. “It’s not your traditional popup tent campground. We’ll have everything set up for you. For the past year, we’ve been setting up these ShiftPods at our various festivals and testing them out. We’ve even set up on our balcony for what feels like forever.”

A number of activities are planned for the campsite — everything from Rave Booty Boot Camp to Hula Hoop 101. Three large tents will be erected — one for relaxing and hanging out, one for workshops and one for meditation and yoga. Thomas says health and wellness is an important part of the EDC experience.

“You’re dancing all night from dusk to dawn, bouncing around from stage to stage. It was important for us to make health and wellness as big a part of Camp EDC as it is with the actual festival,” he says. “We wanted to include a nice selection of transformational wellness events, where people can reset their minds and bodies with some juice and some meditation and oils before they go back out and go to work.”

With a show that is largely focused on partying and raging, the campsite activities can help change the focus, Liu says. “A lot of our headliners [Insomniac-speakers for attendees] are younger — 18 to 25 — so there are a lot of young minds that we’re able to start shaping. It’s a privilege to be able to present this to them and have them maybe find things that they’ve never explored, like chakra balancing.”

Traditional yoga sessions are planned, veteran DJ Marques Wyatt will do a deep house yoga session called Deep Exhale, and there will even be “goat yoga” — “in L.A. it’s all the trend,” Liu says. Other activities include AcroTherapeuits: Partner Massage, defined thus: “Honor your inner healer as Andrew Sealy walks you through Thai partner massage and therapeutic acroyoga flying.”

There’s the Afro Urban Flow session (“Amy Secada is a multidisciplinary artist and environmental/human rights activist — and she’s renowned for her unique Afro-urban, capoeira-inspired flow”) as well as Live Band Vinyasa: “Continue your adrenaline kick from the EDC grounds or take a moment and meditate during this vibey set. Drishti Beats, a family of six, brings you vinyasa flow movement paired with live singing, saxophone and percussion.”

With their focus on well-being, Insomniac officials say they take seriously any accusations of sexual harassment. A Teen Vogue story detailing sexual assault and harassment allegations at last month’s Coachella Music Festival has prompted an online petition calling on music festivals to take a stand on the issue.

“We have a zero tolerance policy toward sexual harassment and are continuously re-evaluating our policies and procedures to keep our guests safe,” says Maren Steiner, Insomniac’s health and safety director. “Guests behaving outside of those terms will be evicted from the festival and turned over to local authorities if the situation warrants.”

At the campsite, those not wishing to sleep in tents can drive up in an RV. Power and water facilities will be on-site. There will also be two pools with tiki bars.

“There will be nightly pool parties with different crews and collectives every night,” Thomas says. “Insomniac Records, Space Yacht and Brownies & Lemonade, as well as a Thursday night kickoff party with Excision, Habstrakt and G Jones.”

But the best campsite-related news comes from Liu, who proudly says the restrooms will all be flushable. Meaning no stinky Porta-Potties in the desert heat.

More Camp EDC activities:

Flash Mob Choreography: Take part in a hooping flash mob with the Hootpoptn Hotties, an L.A.-based hoop dance team that melds hula-hooping and contemporary dance with show-stopping moves, synchronicity and high-energy sassy.

OM Vibes Only: Om Vibes Only creates conscious gatherings incorporating power yoga, live deep house DJ sets, high-vibe food, mocktails and/or juices.

Rave Aerobics: FitnessPalooza’s explosion of energetic moves starts your day with an extra pump.

Rave Booty Boot Camp: Steph Haven’s all-encompassing class will work a little “extra perk into your rave booty!” Zumba is mixed with pilates, ending with a deep stretch and meditation.

Expression Through Sound: Music Alliance Academy and Studio DMI present an all-star panel of music industry pros discussing their own journeys through the music business. They’ll provide guidance and advice for up-and-coming artists, as well as insight on how to increase productivity in any artistic field through conscious holistic practices.

Kiss Addiction Goodbye: Mary-Margaret Stratton helps you support your recovery and address addictive and compulsive behaviors through holistic natural nutrition and mindful behavior modification.

Divine Goddess Celebration — Vaidehi Amair: Explore interactive partner work, as well as a fun, sexy movement practice while learning about the masculine and feminine sides within.
The Insomniac headquarters, located at a busy intersection in Beverly Hills, is eerily quiet. The dimly lit offices embody that combination of professional trappings and laid-back decor common to cutting-edge companies, where the employees are unassuming but what they create is immense.

Spread out over three floors, the rows upon rows of workstations hardly look like a rave command post. But the murals painted on many walls and posters from numerous events suggest otherwise.

Perhaps the only boisterous person here this afternoon is the boss himself, Pasquale Rotella. Once he is extracted from one of the many offices that line the hallways, he brings the noise and with it, an alluring type of controlled chaos. Even with a strong, streamlined team of experts in their fields to whom responsibilities are delegated, so many people demand Rotella’s attention, so many meetings require his presence, so many decisions need his sign-off.

This morning’s news of Avicii’s death knocked the global dance community side-
ways, and Rotella is definitely reeling from the shock.

Premiering this tragic event underscores his mood, Rotella has Electric Daisy Carnival Las Vegas just a few weeks away. EDC Japan is taking place the week before Vegas and EDC China is two weeks before Japan. In about 36 hours, Rotella will be on his way to Asia, with his wife, Holly Madison, former Playmate, reality television star and mother to his two children, 5-year-old daughter Rainbow and 19-month-old son Forest, in tow.

Rotella’s corner office doesn’t have a desk, but it does have a closet full of toys for Rainbow and Forest plus an outdoor eating area for them. He spends four nights a week at home with his family in Las Vegas but there are times, like this week, when he can’t make it back. “It’s tough,” he says. His office also has an extra-long L-shaped sectional sofa and a round glass would-be-dining table with four comfortable chairs. It has a DJ coffin with both turntables and CDJs. A tall, all-glass double-door display case is filled with Sofubi and Kaiju Japanese vinyl toys. Beat-up skate decks with mind-altering illustrations from the ‘80s onwards line different walls. These aren’t just for show; Rotella, born in Glendale on March 24, 1972, is a bona fide surfer and skater.

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All available vertical spaces in Rotella’s office are covered with framed bright pop art. A slightly smaller frame showcases his first L.A. Weekly cover story, from 2013, with Rotella and friends looking at work for multiple charges, including conspiracy, bribery and embezzlement — all of them long since dismissed. A floor-to-ceiling bookcase is chock-full of art and design books. Among these are the collectible, custom-created boxes in which EDC entry bracelets, along with branded pins and keychains and a letter from Rotella, are delivered to attendees, or “headliners,” as Insomniac refers to them.

Then there is the August 1991 framed issue of the original American hip-hop and electronic music magazine, URB, with a picture of a teenage Rotella, wearing a polka dot top hat and big overalls, blowing a whistle. This same whistle now hangs on the wall, above his office closet door. He is without a doubt, one of the biggest power players in electronic dance music, as his many Billboard plaques indicate, but at his core, he is still that teenage raver.

“Remember No-Doze? Land of Oz? Christmas in July? Hardcorefest with Altern-8, one of my favorite bands? Grape Ape at the water park? How the Ravers Stole Christmas?” he says. It’s 10 p.m. on a Friday and the sound of the Insomniac cleaning crew’s vacuums almost drown him out. Rotella is shuffling through flyers for very early ‘90s Los Angeles raves; his excitement is palpable, without a touch of nostalgia, and he can’t stop grinning, his eyes shining as he reads off the names: “Davin the Mad Hatter, still a good friend of mine. Rocky Racoon, Babaali, DJ Dan, Doc Martin, Ron D. Core. What do you know about that?”

Rotella has bins and bins of these flyers, in immaculate condition. Thankfully he has retired his baggy pants and oversized hoodie, replacing them with better-fitting, dark-colored items with a professional look. And his 45-year-old self is tidily groomed, with his gray-streaked beard precisely trimmed and his neat haircut unmoving. He still runs with the same friends he grew up with, who are all creatives; he now finds excuses to hire them in order to be able to spend more time with them. And he speaks Italian, something else he’s holding onto from his younger years, as that was the language in which he would converse with his famed late mother, activities area. We’re going to have yoga with Marques Wyatt, rave aerobics and inspirational speakers. There will be art installations and great food. It will be covered with the best AstroTurf you can get, and you can just relax and chill and recharge, or connect with others.

“And we have these beauty bars where you can get ready. Power outlets because we don’t want the whole grid to pop with 5,000 blow dryers at one time. Previous years, we didn’t want to rely on people bringing things and they are very vocal about it. But they’re special because regardless of who is playing, they’re going to have a good time because it’s not about the artists, it’s about the experience.”

“Everything is as important as everything else,” Rotella reaffirms. “Sometimes the impression is that the music is somehow an afterthought at an Insomniac event. It’s everything, but it’s part of the experience. In order to enjoy the music, you have to have the best artists, you have to have new acts, you have to have a fantastic sound system for them to play on, the logistics of getting into the event have to be worked out, safety, production, a decent venue. Music is a lot more enjoyable when everything is on point.

“In our culture, whether it’s an underground event or a big festival, it’s been ingrained that on the dance floor, you are your best self,” he continues. “When I went to those early parties, everyone was so nice, and I was nice when I left. I was nice that whole week. Then it wears off and you go to another party and get recharged. I never heard the music like I did after I went to my first parties. People need more than one reason to be touched in order to get it, and that’s OK. I like touching as many of people’s senses as I can. But I also like being old-school, like our Factory 93 parties at a minimal warehouse.”

Walking around the Insomniac offices are many of the nice people from Rotella’s early party experiences: Steve Levy, who threw one of Los Angeles’ first proper raves, Trance Family; Mark and his partner; and, hopefully, less traffic getting to the festival; a better shuttle system and cooler weather, including an earlier start weekend of May 18, and many of Rotella’s earlier than its customary third weekend. It’s this kind of attention to detail that makes Insomniac’s events a cut above other festivals. And with so many new features this time around, each comes with its own set of unique hurdles. For example, goat yoga at Camp EDC can’t be held in the afternoon, as the goats can’t be transported through the Mesa at that time, so the practice must be moved to the morning.

“Insomniac has a unique focus that centers around the audience,” says Leizer Guss, director of electronic events for Latin America’s biggest promoter, OCESA/CIE, who have been Insomniac’s partners for EDC Mexico for the last five years. “The EDC Mexico audiences buy tickets without knowing who is playing, which makes them valuable to us and makes EDC one of the strongest brands we manage. It’s hard to book because the audience wants so many

“Sometimes the impression is that the music is somehow an afterthought at an Insomniac event. It’s everything, but it’s part of the event.” —Pasquale Rotella

RVs with updated, good air conditioners that don’t go out. That’s a health risk I was not having everything set up properly. It’s just not an option.”

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Medical heroes can be found in everyday places. “Those genres are not only not my money makers, they’re my money suckers. If I would just pick the profitable things, I could be less busy, relax a bit and do better financially. But we were doing this for free forever. I’m a fan and I love pushing things that aren’t popular. Doing the same stuff over and over again is boring. It’s about doing stuff that’s innovative. That’s what I really enjoy.”

“The first gig we did for [Rotella] was in the mid-’90s in a small bar in Los Angeles,” recalls drum ’n’ bass legend Optical, a particular favorite of the Insomniac drum ’n’ bass die-hards. “There were maybe 50 people there and half of them asked for their money back because they hated our music. But he kept booking us and then there were 500 people, then 1,000, then 2,000, then EDC with tens of thousands at the Bassrush stage, a level I could never have possibly imagined.”

Where it has ended up is with EDC Vegas pulling in crowds of 400,000-plus over the course of its three days, and often selling out ahead of announcing its lineup. Insomniac’s last published economic impact report notes more than $1.5 billion brought in for the city of Las Vegas from 2011 to 2015.

Still, there is a strong backlash against electronic dance music, with many articles speculating about its demise, when really what is happening is what always happens with dance music: It shifts and morphs and survives with a slightly different beat pattern. What stays the same is electronic dance music’s perceived association with drugs and its fallout.

In 2010, Insomniac was the center of controversy after a 15-year-old girl died after taking ecstasy at the 14th annual EDC at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. The company settled with the victim’s family before the case went to court.

“If something goes wrong at a dance music event versus a multigenre event, it’s like versus something happening to a non-celebrity — you hear about it in one case but not the other,” Rotella says. “There is a misconception that these problems are limited to dance music festivals. There isn’t as much of a stigma if something happens at, say, country music festivals — which are probably the rowdiest.”

“Dance music has been around a long time, and it was underground for way longer than any other genre that started in the underground. There was a community there that was built around the music, but people couldn’t understand it because the music wasn’t good enough to them, so it must be about the drugs. We’ve made some huge strides, but we do events all over and there are some places that react like Los Angeles used to over 10 years ago. Any mass gathering with people between the ages of 18 and 40, the events might have different images but the problems are the same, they’re just not publicized.”

Rotella knows what he’s talking about: He is not just a festival thrower but also a festi-
EDC’s entertainers are funkdafied fantasy figures

DJs and music makers may be the main draw for Electric Daisy Carnival’s demise, but Insomniac Events figured out a long time ago that a truly magical, multisensory experience must have an equally compelling visual component.

In many ways EDC’s organic mojo comes not from the sound system, lasers or technical spectacle but from the people hired to be onstage and to entertain the crowd. To call them dancers would be a disservice. They are immersive performance artists who interpret and enhance EDC’s aural output through movement, a bit of acrobatics, lots of dazzling costumery and mesmerizing thematic theatrics.

“Insomniac performers create a unique interactive environment at our festivals that make memorable experiences,” says its entertainment director, known only as Ms. Easy. “We like to focus on both on- and offstage performance. Overall, we like to showcase a culmination of traditional circus talent, Cirque-style performances and nightlife entertainment.

“Insomniac headliners [attendees] may experience interactive characters, stilt puppeteers, choreographed dancers and more on the grounds,” she adds. “EDC has featured large-scale acts such as Tesla coil lightning throwers, motocage riders, lightwire puppets, sway poles, aerial balloons, LED track acrobats and more. Some of our entertainers have backgrounds in Cirque, theme parks and even the Olympics.”

Easy’s name is ironic because what she does is not easy at all. Her all-encompassing job description includes conceptualizing characters and looks; supervising production and wardrobe; casting and recruiting; overseeing styling, scheduling and management of the performers; directing, mentoring and coaching; and coordinating entertainment for all areas and facets of each EDC event, in Vegas and overseas.

She worked as a performer for many years before starting her own entertainment company, and then met the festival’s mastermind, Pasquale Rotella, in the mid-2000s. “As the events began to grow, I directed, costumed and hired more entertainer groups alongside my own,” she recalls. “Over time the production grew extremely large-scale and I came on to the full-time position of entertainment director.”

A longtime fixture on the rave scene — in St. Louis, where she’s from; in New Orleans, where she lived for a while; and finally in L.A. — Easy has honed her eye for alluring stage performers over the years, pushing the boundaries of creativity along the way. Each year, EDC’s performance aspect becomes bigger and better. Costumes are key and they run the gamut from quirky and fun to glitzy and glamorous — usually they are all of these things. Created based on themes running inside the events, these looks represent various areas in the fest, creating a wild, dreamlike atmosphere. Forget about drugs; you won’t need them in these trippy, sexy, surprising environs. On Rainbow Road, in the Wasteland or amid the Circuit Grounds, you’ll come across audacious apocalyptic figures and colorful sci-fi creatures pretty much nonstop.

These roving bands of “funkdafied freaks,” as EDC calls them, add significantly to the surreal atmosphere of the event. Among the costumed performers you’ll encounter this year are Atomic Ponies, inspired by vintage equestrian circus acts; Black & White Flower Clowns, dolls that inhabit magical garden areas; Bee Bees, Studio 54-style B-girls; Carousel Girls, wielding mirthfully spinning parasols; Coney Island Clowns, New York’s sexiest and silliest; Cosmic Cuties, think Barbarella at a rave; Dali Dollies, artful and audacious; Smiley Family, human emojis; Furbs, life-size plushies; Sunshine Harleys, hot and classic harlequins; Ice Cream Dreams, dancers as sweet treats (one of EDC’s most popular troupes); plus Love Rules and Love Rules Stilters, Marching Majorities, Military Brats, Party Animals, Puppet Theater, Rebel Rockets ... the list goes on. The excess and eye candy is more than words can convey.

Easy says they develop the overall aesthetic of each event before deciding which new costumed characters can be created for it. She and her team conceptualize or design the characters before moving into the production aspect with vendors, which includes artists and designers.

“I love the closeness of the entertainment community and being able to create a unique place for them where they can shine,” she says. “Look out for more visually stimulating large pieces that are performer-interactive at our events. I am inspired to go more large-scale and nightlife entertainment."
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A jamón Iberico bocata from Boqueria Street food truck

FILL ’ER UP!

Food vendors prepare to serve an estimated 15,000 EDC campers and all kinds of eaters

BY PAUL HODGINS

Along with an earlier and, we hope, cooler calendar date, EDC Las Vegas will be rolling out an expanded list of food vendors for the annual event. This year, campers and others at the first Camp EDC, just outside the festival’s main gate, will enjoy a menu of healthy food choices that cater to all tastes and predilections: vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free or meat-friendly.

“I would say this year is more diverse than any year that we’ve had, specifically because of what we’re doing at Camp EDC,” says Rich Thomas, Insomniac’s vice president of culture and content. “It’s an extension of the main festival, so we can play around a little more in terms of what we can offer.”

“We will have a wide array of food trucks there,” he says. “People will have a lot of really good-quality choices.”

Inside the festival grounds, the additional food trucks will supplement the customary concession fare; it’s a more conventional lineup that will satisfy the tradition-minded.

A team curated the restaurants and food trucks that were invited to Camp EDC, Thomas says. “We wanted to have cool things for our fans. A lot of them are age 18 to late 20s, so we wanted fun as well as healthy options.”

Festival operations and experience specialist Yvonne Liu played a big part in the choice of vendors. “Some of them are local but not all of them. I spent a lot of time Googling and tasting and doing my research,” she says.

Some of the companies have intense cult followings, Liu says. “Donut Bar has this little shop (in) downtown (Las Vegas). On their door is a sign that says, ‘Open 8 a.m. to sold out.’ They sell out every day. We’re super-excited that they could come.”

Donut Bar opened its first storefront in downtown San Diego in 2013. After expanding to that city’s airport, it opened its third location in Las Vegas. It has been on the “best of” lists of USA Today, Thrillist.com and MSN.

Liu wanted to make sure there were good vegan options this year as well. “These days, a lot of people are asking for vegan menus.”

Insomniac founder Pasquale Rotella chose one vegan place personally, Liu says. “Pasquale met the people from Buddha Bowls in October. He really liked them and gave them my number. A lot of these (vendors) are people that Pasquale personally likes.”

Other Las Vegas food purveyors include Culinary Logic, a catering company specializing in mobile food vending; Boqueria Street, a food truck that specializes in unique Spanish tapas; and The Spice Is Right, which is well-loved for its Lao and Thai street food.

Insomniac uses social media to let potential concertgoers know about food options at its events. “Over the last few years we have publicized our food lineup for certain shows. For this event, we posted on Instagram and we included food images from the various vendors,” Thomas says.

The food booths are gearing up for massive food sales. Joe Thomas, a manager and partner at Donut Bar Las Vegas, says. “We’re going to feature our best bo-cata rolls,” says managing partner Roberto Liendo. Their best-seller is the vaca saltada. “We braise short ribs and mix in yellow chili aioli, and top it with some manchego cheese,” Liendo says. Other sandwiches use ingredients that will have carnivores salivating: 10-hour pulled pork, Barcelona-style sausage, jamón serrano. All sandwiches are $15. One side plate is also available — patatas bravas, or Spanish-style fries — for $8.

Liendo says those expecting typical Latín food-truck fare should be pleasantly surprised by Boqueria Street. “Our cuisine is based on Barcelona-style food, which is Catalan yet with strong flavors of Peru and its heavy Japanese influence, which is big in Barcelona. Our chef, Oscar Amador, was born and raised near Barcelona and he went to chef’s school there. He cooks with flair and a lot of imagination.”

One of the secrets to the popularity of Amador’s sandwiches is the bread, Liendo says. “We use a brioché. We toast it on butter, so it holds up really well and brings a lot of beautiful flavors to the sandwich.”

The Boqueria team plans to make and sell a lot of sandwiches with its 20-person team; the restaurant has booked a nearby home that sleeps eight people so they can be close to the action.

“We are calculating that we will serve 4,000 to 5,000 sandwiches and about 1,000 orders of patatas bravas in both locations,” Liendo says.

Boqueria Street will be open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

Here’s the complete list of food vendors at Camp EDC: Afters Ice Cream, Boqueria Street, Buddha Bowls, Buqqa Gourmet Food Truck, the Classic Taco, Culinary Logic, Bad Ass Burritos, Danny’s Vegan, Donut Bar Las Vegas, Govinda’s Veggie Bomb, Grill’d Cheese Love, Ground House Burger, Island Noodles, Just Squeezed, the Loving Cup, La Pousserie Beignets & Coffee, the Spice Is Right, Spicy Pie, Voodoo Chicken & Waffles Shack and White Rabbit Truck.
stella is a longtime burner who doesn’t hide. Effectively turned them into mobile stages. A singular appearance with production elements and high-wattage sound systems that effectively turned them into mobile stages.

Art cars became the backbone of an entire art scene that flourishes to this day, with different subsets branching off to create their own styles. The counterculture movements of the ‘60s and ‘70s saw the creation of airbrushed lowriders and hippie-themed VW vans, and designed by Rotella himself, features a 16-foot-tall Guardian Owl.

Insomniac’s relationship with art cars began more than a decade ago, when Stefano Novelli’s Space Wench, a Burning Man fixture, was brought to EDC Los Angeles in 2009. Insomniac’s original iconic ride, the Wide Awake Art Car, debuted at Burning Man in 2011 and quickly became a favorite, winning “Best in Show” that year. The signature metallic owl atop the car’s mast brought the car to perfection.

Insomniac’s Parliament art car, designed by Pasquale Rotella himself, features a 16-foot-tall Guardian Owl.

It wasn’t until EDC 2012 that attendees began to take notice of how epic these mobile stages could be. High winds shut down the festival on Saturday, leaving many ravers waiting in the grandstands at the cosmic MEADOW. After a while, the Wide Awake Art Car made its way over to act as a make-shift stage for DJs Markus Schulz and Steve Aoki, who were still on-site. Broadcasting to a small but impassioned crowd, the Wide Awake Art Car helped spark a moment that proved even Mother Nature couldn’t break the spirit of the rave.

Another high-watermark came at EDC Las Vegas 2014, as Kaskade took to the Mayan Warrior Art Car to play a secret “redux” set immediately following his performance at kineticFIELD, EDC Las Vegas’ biggest stage. Spinning a two-hour set of his classics while in the middle of one of the world’s largest festivals, the DJ gave fans an intimate experience they’d never forget.

The buzz surrounding this moment was infectious, spreading like a wave across social media and making it clear that these special sets were not to be missed. The following year brought another performance by Kaskade and other artists, including a notable old-school hip-hop set by Hardwell that left fans stunned.

As time progressed, the popularity of art cars only flourished. Recently they have featured takeovers by collectives and labels such as Moontribe, Desert Hearts, Brownies & Lemonade and Monstercat, all of which have brought lineups stocked full of special guests to perform under EDC’s “Electric Sky.”

Other high-profile art cars have made their way to Las Vegas, like Heathen, Kalliope and El Pulpo Mecano, and Insomniac is ever ready to add more to the mix. “We’re always looking for new friends to join our art car parade,” says Insomniac’s Geoff Godfrey. “We do a parade all three nights of EDC Vegas and it’s great that we can include art cars from the community.”

Once they arrive at the festival, the cars are handled by a dedicated team that makes sure they comply with all safety regulations and, where applicable, are ready to travel through the crowd. “At our events, it takes a four-person Art Ops crew to build and operate the cars, not including Parliament, which demands a six-person build team,” Godfrey explains. “It takes one driver and a crew on the ground to guide them. You can imagine how exhilarating it might be to drive these art cars through crowds of 150,000-plus people.”

Insomniac’s art car fleet includes the Wench and Pushing Daisies, but few have been as prominent as the Boombox and Wide Awake. Originally dubbed the Rockbox, the Boombox began as the creation of Derek Wunder. As one of the first art cars to pump out sound at Burning Man in 2007, after years of service it was purchased in 2012 by Insomniac and transformed into the current ghetto blaster that graces venues today. The Boombox has been so popular that there are now multiple editions that have been featured everywhere from Mexico to Asia.

Insomniac’s latest mobile creation, its most ambitious yet, debuted in 2017. Dreamed up and designed by Rotella himself, Parliament features four flame cannons, a 55-foot mobile dance floor and a 16-foot Guardian Owl with fully articulated wings and head that watches over dancers from its LED nest. Like Wide Awake, it boasts a fully customized Funktion One sound system.

Between the two art cars there are 30 21-inch drivers and eight 32-inch subwoofers set to achieve tremendous low-frequency sound pressure. Wide Awake has 30 channels of 1.5kW each, while Parliament features an epic 72 channels of 2kW each, bringing a true mobile concert sound system that rocks ravers to the core.

Whether you’ve seen them from afar, caught the parade up close on Rainbow Road at EDC Las Vegas, or danced atop one as the sun rose in the desert, there is no denying that these art cars provide a unique yet vital ingredient in EDC’s multifarious color palette.
A STITCH IN TIME

Rick Klotz and Pasquale Rotella look to the past in shaping the future of Insomniac fashion

BY CHRIS MUNIZ

To go to an underground party back in the day was an experience in sensory overload. Whether the location was a repurposed skating rink or abandoned warehouse, setting and decoration were just as important as the lineup — if not more so. Looping film clips from cartoons, space documentaries and other psychedelic visuals blended with the carnivalesque atmosphere that partygoers themselves brought to the dance floor with their own unique style. While there was no one typical outfit, accessories ranging from Tickle Me Elmo backpacks to Muppet beanies could easily be found paired with a mix of Doc Martens, Dickies, overalls, baggy jeans and oversized shirts.

For many O.G. ravers, the classic era feels like yesterday, so to do the math and realize that we’re talking about an era nearly 30 years ago is sure to cause some heart palpitations while also allowing us to marvel at just how ubiquitous electronic dance music culture has become.

As Insomniac continues to be at the forefront of that movement, its founder-CEO continues to be vocal about his desire to pay homage to the past, even as he actively looks ahead to the continued evolution of both the Insomniac brand and the culture it continues to help shape.

For Rotella in particular, a piece of the vision he has for the future is focused specifically on fashion and extending the reach of the Insomniac lifestyle into the kind of clothes one would wear every day. It’s a vision that’s been simmering for quite some time but it wasn’t until Rotella linked up with iconic designer, artist and rave fashion O.G. Rick Klotz that the vision of a proper Insomniac fashion line started to formalize.

A legend in his own right, Klotz earned his stripes designing flyers for underground promoters in Los Angeles before launching his seminal line of streetwear, Freshjive, in 1989. Capturing the unique mix of rap, surf, skate and punk cultures that was bubbling in Southern California in the late ’80s and early ’90s, Freshjive was a clothing line and brand that became an instant hit among the freaks, geeks and outsiders we now call ravers, as well as like-minded outcasts in other subcultural milieus.

From corporate logo knockoffs to exclusive merch and flyer design for local promoters, Klotz originally conceived Freshjive as a kind of art project that combined his interests in music, fashion and action sports. His early designs were bright and bold plays on familiar consumer goods graphics, ranging from Tide to Bazooksa Gum. Oversized T-shirts and baggy jeans were de rigueur.

The style quickly made its way from boutique shops like Beat Non-Stop and NaNa into mainstream chain stores like Pacific Sunwear and the Buckle. As names like Clobber, Conart and JNCO battled for shelf space, Klotz admits to not even realizing how much of an impact his clothing line had made. “I wasn’t even dressing like a raver back in the day,” he laughs.

But unlike the Warhol generation, Klotz had an Apple computer at his fingertips, a technological breakthrough that he credits with allowing him to smash and grab his way across a commercial iconographic landscape to create a subcultural attitude and language all its own. For Rotella, then, it’s not too hard to see how the merging of a well-established Insomniac aesthetic with a designer like Klotz is more than just reinvigorating the festival merch market; the project in many ways is about elevating the Insomniac brand to heretofore unseen levels of influence, all while staying true to the underground culture from which it was born.

Surprisingly, Rotella and Klotz didn’t meet face-to-face until just a few years ago. But when they did finally connect, the vibe was immediate as the pair bonded over shared memories of old raves, venues, flyer designs and people they’ve lost touch with along the way.

Rotella convinced Klotz to join him at Insomniac, with the long-term goal of helping Rotella realize his vision of establishing an Insomniac-branded fashion line at a global level.

The initial results of that collaboration debuted last year at Beyond Wonderland SoCal, where Klotz quickly made his mark on a line centered on classic rave and streetwear elements, with just the right touch of future flair.

The ability to merge the past, present and future into something all its own is not only one of Klotz’s main strengths as a designer and artist but a key element of the direction the Insomniac fashion line is headed.

As the team looks ahead, Klotz is the first to tell you that the goal is not only to “tell the story of Insomniac’s history while also exploring dance music’s roots through clothing design” but also to establish Insomniac as a lifestyle brand geared toward a boutique market outside the usual space of clubs and festivals.

While event merch including T-shirts, hats, jackets and pullovers has been a mainstay of Insomniac events for years, the two men say this “new” direction the brand is heading is not so much a relaunch as it is quite explicitly introducing a proper fashion division to the company. “What we’re working on didn’t exist before,” Klotz says, describing the line as a synergy between fans and their lifestyle.

Looking ahead to the spring 2019 line currently under development, Klotz is quick to point out that it is not to be mistaken for a “rave clothing line.” As he shares sketches of designs he and the rest of his team are developing, he explains, “It’s a cultural [fashion] line — it’s related to dance music culture but it’s more than that. These new pieces are designed for you to integrate into your everyday style, your ongoing identity.”

—RICK KLOTZ ON HIS SPRING 2019 LINE

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Research Description & Purpose
The goal of this study is to learn about areas of functioning in cannabis users. Information will be collected using individual assessments over the course of three months. This research is being conducted by UCLA researchers Dr. Yih-Ing Hser and Dr. Larissa Mooney, and is funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Would the study be a good fit for me?
This study may be a good fit for you if:
- You are 18 years or older, and
- Are a regular cannabis user

What would happen if I took part in the study? You would be asked to:
- Attend 4 assessment sessions where you will be asked questions about your cannabis use and daily life.
- Provide urine samples that will be tested for drug use
- Wear a Fitbit device for the duration of the study (about 3 months)

For attending all of the assessment sessions, you will be paid at $145. Additionally, you can be paid as much as $415 if you follow all of the study procedures.

Contact Information: To take part in this research study or for more information, please call 1 (800) 581-9847.

Protocol ID:IRB#17-001767  UCLA IRB Approved  Approval Date: 3/16/2018   Through: 2/12/2019   Committee: South General IRB
Coralie Fargeat’s ferocious Revenge is a pulp-thriller knockout, the antithesis of “elevated”

BY ALAN SCHERSTUHL

I t’s no slight against Coralie Fargeat’s vivid, vicious Revenge — a film that will set midnight movie devotees cheering for generations — that you’ve probably seen every scene in it before, in some form or another. Here’s the beautiful young woman, the lover of a wealthy criminal, parading around the pool as the henchmen and the camera leer. Here she is pawed at by a subordinate of that criminal, and then raped. Here she is fleeing those men who suddenly, all at once, see her not as a prize but as a problem, a loose end that could expose their sins. And here she is left for dead, caked in blood, in a desert wasteland, vowing just what that title promises. Her mission: to hunt the bastards down, expose their sins. And here she is left for another, except for when the director doesn’t want us to.

In recent years, the nonsense term “elevated” has been attached, sometimes, to genre fare that is reputed to offer aesthetics a richer, more reputable experience than they might expect. A Quiet Place or Get Out, according to this thinking, are “elevated” horror films — horror movies acceptable for people who consider themselves elevated above horror movies. Revenge will chase the elevated crowd right out of the theater: This is wicked pulp, replete with geysers of blood. Deaths are protracted, disgustingly gratuitous as they are curiously invigorating. One sequence involving a villain fishing glass from a gash in his foot had me balled up in my seat, covering my eyes, and then roaring with laughter just a moment later, when he tries to drive to safety. Fargeat cuts to the gas pedal, showing how every time he stomps on it, his foot spurts a gob of blood. That might sound like a cheap gag, a debasing opportunity to savor violence or to laugh at human suffering. It is all that, of course, but it’s achieved with commitment to them. She has an eye for landscape, a love of light — relish the infernal glare of the dust whenever a driver here hits the brakes at night — and an all-too-rare mastery of geography in an action scene. The climax involves a chase through a mini-maze in the hunting lodge, the floor and walls slicker and redder each time the chasers pass through; viewers will always know precisely where the characters are in relation to one another, except for when the director doesn’t want us to.

Revenge is thoughtful about the elements of her genre, flagrant in her inversions of them but also ferocious in her commitment to them. She has an eye for the beautiful young woman, the lover of the men of Athens in a production of Lysistrata, a parody of masculine hardness. In the most pivotal, unforgettable scene, Jen holes up in a cave to engage in a ritual you know from almost every movie ever made about violent heroes: She has to patch herself up. It’s grisly, of course, but also inspired, a bravura bit of surgery involving a beer can and way too much peyote. Jen cuts into herself, yanks out that foreign object and studies the hole left behind. She cauterizes the wound, brands herself, loses herself in pain and dreams, and emerges — after a dizzy series of drug-fueled shocks and fake-outs — as someone new, a bathed-in-blood rebirth as potent as the one at the center of Neil Marshall’s The Descent.

Soon after, Fargeat gives her barefoot hero a true hero’s pose: Jen stands in the desert dawn, studying the horizon through stolen binoculars, as the camera circles her, rising from toes to face. The same body that, an hour before, we saw through a parodic male gaze now is revealed as entirely hers — and the certain source of those men’s demise. Fargeat is thoughtful about the elements of her genre, flagrant in her inversions of them but also ferocious in her commitment to them. She has an eye for landscape, a love of light — relish the infernal glare of the dust whenever a driver here hits the brakes at night — and an all-too-rare mastery of geography in an action scene. The climax involves a chase through a mini-maze in the hunting lodge, the floor and walls slicker and redder each time the chasers pass through; viewers will always know precisely where the characters are in relation to one another, except for when the director doesn’t want us to.

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TRUTH IN ADVERTISING
DESPITE A VILLAINOUS MARGOT ROBBIE, TERMINAL LIVES DOWN TO ITS TITLE

BY APRIL WOLFE

For all Terminal’s style and flash, Vaughn Stein’s meandering tale of assassins and fateful crosses paths lays out such a confusing narrative that three quarters of the way through, I couldn’t have passed a quiz about the characters’ goals or why they were doing anything that they were doing. From what I could gather, an assassin (Margot Robbie) promises that she can kill her competition, and then a bunch of people somehow connected to this end up at an all-night diner outside a train station. But time jumps back and forth, so the story could be taking place three weeks earlier or in the present. Mike Myers shows up as an elderly British janitor, and the people in the diner talk a lot — endlessly — and the assassin for some reason waits tables.

Bear with me. I also don’t know what’s going on, and I saw it.

Despite the story’s dire incoherence, Robbie’s reasoning for taking on the lead role of Annie (an assassin, waitress and exotic dancer) seems obvious: How often do female stars get the opportunity to play a multifaceted villain? But Stein’s direction — which favors harsh, blinding backlighting and funky Dutch angles over visibility of performers’ faces — creates a vast distance between actor and viewer.

The first-time director is done no favors by a script, his own, that’s riddled with clichés. This is the second film I’ve seen this week that features a character aiming a gun at someone, then saying “boom” instead of shooting. And I would be eternally grateful if no other man ever writes the line “leaving marks on little girls’ panties.”

It seems Stein wants to mimic the kinetic flair of Edgar Wright.

OPENING THIS WEEK

ANOTHER KIND OF WEDDING
A comedy that presents Kathleen Turner and Frances Fisher as feuding life partners — with a flashback love scene, no less — should be irresistible, but Another Kind of Wedding proves more irritating than charming. In his third feature, actor turned writer-director Pat Kiely presents the Montreal wedding weekend of Matthew (Jacob Tierney) and Louisa (Jessica Parker Kennedy), and a confusingly presented series of plot twists involving Matthew’s family. Louisa, it turns out, was once involved with Matthew’s younger brother, Kurt (Kevin Zegers), a revelation that cues the first of a series of awkwardly placed flashbacks. Also earing flashbacks are Matthew’s two moms, Barbara (Turner) and Tammy (Fisher), who are separated, as well as his depressed sister, Carrie (Jessica Paré), who has a boyfriend (Luke Kirby) but seems to be vibing on Roy (David La Haye), the inevitable crossed paths of assassins and fatefully crossed of assassins and fateful crosses paths lays out such a confusing narrative that three quarters of the way through, I couldn’t have passed a quiz about the characters’ goals or why they were doing anything that they were doing. From what I could gather, an assassin (Margot Robbie) promises that she can kill her competition, and then a bunch of people somehow connected to this end up at an all-night diner outside a train station. But time jumps back and forth, so the story could be taking place three weeks earlier or in the present. Mike Myers shows up as an elderly British janitor, and the people in the diner talk a lot — endlessly — and the assassin for some reason waits tables. Bear with me. I also don’t know what’s going on, and I saw it.

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THE FIRST-TIME DIRECTOR IS DONE NO FAVORS BY A SCRIPT, HIS OWN, THAT’S RIDDLED WITH ClichÉS.

He even cast longtime Wright collaborator Simon Peg as diner customer and schoolteacher-with-a-terminal-diagnosis Bill. But Stein mistsake successive frantic editing for purposeful action and refuses to allow cinematographer Christopher Ross to simply shoot an actor — any actor — head-on. At one point, I pleaded with the film, “Stop shooting this scene from overhead!” and “Don’t cut while people are talking!” Compounding the manic energy of the editing is dialogue that muses mostly on long-winded ideas that don’t lend themselves to any kind of visual representation. By that I mean not what’s known as see-and-say dialogue, where a director turns the camera to an object or person, and then a character notices that object or person and makes a comment, thereby reacting to their environment. With that kind of dialogue, a narrative is driven by that interaction between character and setting. But in Terminal, the settings seem to be designed simply for their cool, noir comic book style, not for how the characters will live in them.

The most successful scene comes when Annie-as-waitress and Bill sit at a diner table, talking about how Bill might kill himself before his mysterious illness takes his life. While they’re talking, the walls of the diner are pulled away using movie magic and suspension of disbelief, and we see these possibilities — getting hit by a car, pushed in front of a train, etc. — acted out in the space behind the actors as they chat. There are minimal cuts, the actors are vibing off each other and the characters seem part of the world they inhabit rather than just posed against it. Now if only that was the whole movie.

TERMINAL | Directed and written by Vaughn Stein | RLJE Films
Monica Film Center

Shattering fragility. He’s the ideal foil for a volatile Bomber, who expresses Freda’s self-protective hesitancy as pointed hostility. Early absorbs Freda’s pain into his own, and McNeil builds a delicate idyll from their defiant embrace of unexpected second chances. (Serena Donadoni)

BEAST Michael Pearce’s Beast is a quiet sort of thriller, a dark and disquieting mystery with its most pressing drama rolling beneath a comparatively placid surface. It has sensational elements common to its genre: As TV screens in the background remind us, a little girl has gone missing on this small island in the English Channel, which means we get the familiar sight of townsfolk tromping through heath or the floss or whatever they call fields over there, search parties rustling the weeds for any sign. Occasionally, Pearce stages an out-of-nowhere assault, but those attacks quickly are revealed as the nightmares/fantasies/memories of Moll (Jessica Buckley), a 27-year-old misfit. Any relief at the revelation that violence is not going down in the film’s present-day reality, though, gives way to the deeper horror about which Pearce hints. Moll might be the harbinger, teasing out the answers with a stubborn patience. Writer-director Pearce, making his feature debut, proves dedicated to a psychological naturalism. Moll falls for Pascal (Johnny Flynn), a working-class hunk who might relish killing the occasional man but proves the rare young man not to treat her like damaged goods. The only problem: He’s a surfer, an actor-child’s father who neglects his daughter’s. The suspense in Beast lies in us puzzling out what these two actually are. Is he the killer? Is she? Is this a case of a small-minded town assuming the worst about its aimless, alienated young people? Pearce understands that we’re working this all out, and he cunningly misses all the possibilities that seem likely at some point. The cost, though, of creating the circumstances in which we have room to wonder is that it leaves these characters vaguely sketched. (Alan Scherstuhl)

BOOM FOR REAL: THE LATE TEENAGE YEARS OF JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT
There are two stories being told in the doco, the one about a young artist who would become one of the greatest street artists of all time, and the other about his life in the mid-1980s, when he rose to fame in the hip-hop scene. But the film really focuses on the latter, capturing the energy of the times and the rise of hip-hop. The documentary is a snapshot of a moment in time, and it’s a snapshot that’s worth capturing. (Sara Driver’s doc tells it, Basquiat was a wandering vagabond, always looking for a place to crash for the night, hopefully
The Academy Film Archive is screening two rarely shown Cuban films from the 1970s in a double feature co-presented by the Cinemateca de Cuba and hosted by its director, Luciano Castillo. Based on a 1959 novel by Oríz Fernández, A Cuban Fight Against the Demons — newly restored by the Academy — dramatizes the plight of Cuban revolutionaries against Spanish colonizers in the 17th century. The Survivors is a satirical look at a wealthy family’s retreat from reality in the wake of the Cuban revolution. The director of both films, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, is best known for his 1968 masterpiece Memories of Underdevelopment; here is a chance to connect with two of his lesser-known works. A special panel will feature Alea’s widow, actress Mirta Ibarra, and cinematographer Mario García Joya. Linwood Dunn Theater, 1313 Vine St., Hollywood; Fri., May 11, 7 p.m.; $5. (310) 247-3000, www.oscars.org.

Saturday, May 12
The summer of Bergman continues with a citywide celebration marking the Swedish director’s centennial. The Academy is screening two rarely finished under the auspices of his son Ahmad, makes The Hermit. The stormy auteur’s 1957 film is one of his finest, defined by a deep humanism surrounding the story of a professor coming face-to-face with his life’s failures en route to accepting a lifetime achievement award. Starring legendary Swedish director-turned-actor Victor Sjöström, the film features a classic opening dream sequence that ranks with Hitchcock’s Spellbound and Buñuel’s Los olvidados as one of the best ever. LACMA, 5905 Wilshire Blvd., Mid-Wilshire; Tue., May 15, 1 p.m.; $4. (323) 857-6000, lacma.org.

Tuesday, May 15
If Saturday night’s triple dose of Bergman at the Egyptian leaves you wanting more, try a Wild Strawberries chaser at LACMA. The stormy auteur’s 1957 film is one of his finest, defined by a deep humanism surrounding the story of a professor coming face-to-face with his life’s failures en route to accepting a lifetime achievement award. Starring legendary Swedish director-turned-actor Victor Sjöström, the film features a classic opening dream sequence that ranks with Hitchcock’s Spellbound and Buñuel’s Los olvidados as one of the best ever. LACMA, 5905 Wilshire Blvd., Mid-Wilshire; Tue., May 15, 1 p.m.; $4. (323) 857-6000, lacma.org.

next to a warm, female body, Boom makes Basquiat out to be an on-the-fringe, Zelig-like character, attempting to get his foot into a scene where the inner-city people were beginning to mingle with the downtown folk. Driver’s film presents a Basquiat who was always trying to find ways to express himself. By the time he got to being a major, Warhol-approved Big downtown folk. Driver’s film presents a Basquiat who was always trying to find ways to express himself. By the time he got to being a major, Warhol-approved Big downtown folk. Driver’s film presents a Basquiat who was always trying to find ways to express himself. By the time he got to being a major, Warhol-approved Big downtown folk. Driver’s film presents a Basquiat who was always trying to find ways to express himself. By the time he got to being a major, Warhol-approved Big downtown folk. Driver’s film presents a Basquiat who was always trying to find ways to express himself. By the time he got to being a major, Warhol-approved Big downtown folk. Driver’s film presents a Basquiat who was always trying to find ways to express himself. By the time he got to being a major, Warhol-approved Big downtown folk. Driver’s film presents a Basquiat who was always trying to find ways to express himself. By the time he got to being a major, Warhol-approved Big downtown folk. Driver’s film presents a Basquiat who was always trying to find ways to express himself. By the time he got to being a major, Warhol-approved Big downtown folk. Driver’s film presents a Basquiat who was always trying to find ways to express himself. By the time he got to being a major, Warhol-approved Big downtown folk. Driver’s film presents a Basquiat who was always trying to find ways to express himself. By the time he got to being a major, Warhol-approved Big downtown folk. Driver’s film presents a Basquiat who was always trying to find ways to express himself. By the time he got to being a major, Warhol-approved Big downtown folk. Driver’s film presents a Basquiat who was always trying to find ways to express himself. By the time he got to being a major, Warhol-approved Big downtown folk. Driver’s film presents a Basquiat who was always trying to find ways to express himself. By the time he got to being a major, Warhol-approved Big downtown folk. Driver’s film presents a Basquiat who was always trying to find ways to express himself. By the time he got to being a major, Warhol-approved Big downtown folk. Driver’s film presents a Basquiat who was always trying to find ways to express himself. By the time he got to being a major, Warhol-approved Big downtown folk. Driver’s film presents a Basquiat who was always trying to find ways to express himself. By the time he got to being a major, Warhol-approved Big downtown folk. Driver’s film presents a Basquiat who was always trying to find ways to express himself. By the time he got to being a major, Warhol-approved Big downtown folk. Driver’s film presents a Basquiat who was always trying to find ways to express himself. By the time he got to being a major, Warhol-approved Big downtown folk. Driver’s film presents a Basquiat who was always trying to find ways to express himself. By the time he got to being a major, Warhol-approved Big downtown folk. Driver’s film presents a Basquiat who was always trying to find ways to express himself. By the time he got to being a major, Warhol-approved Big downtown folk. Driver’s film presents a Basquiat who was always trying to find ways to express himself. By the time he got to being a major, Warhol-approved Big downtown folk. Driver’s film presents a Basquiat who was always trying to find ways to express himself. By the time he got to being a major, Warhol-approved Big downtown folk. Driver’s film presents a Basquiat who was always trying to find ways to express himself. By the time he got to being a major, Warhol-approved Big downtown folk. Driver’s film presents a Basquiat who was always trying to find ways to express himself. By the time he got to being a major, Warhol-approved Big downtown folk. Driver’s film presents a Basquiat who was always trying to find ways to express himself. By the time he got to being a major, Warhol-approved Big downtown folk. Driver’s film presents a Basquiat who was always trying to find ways to express himself. By the time he got to being a major, Warhol-approved Big downtown folk. Driver’s film presents a Basquiat who was always trying to find ways to express himself. By the time he got to being a major, Warhol-approved Big downtown fol...
MEASURE OF A MAN

By shifting events in Robert Lipsey’s One Fat Summer from the 1950s to 1976, screenwriter David S. Ward creates a unique perspective on the young-adult novel’s end-of-summer narrative. There’s the economics of a single-income middle-class family being able to afford several months vacation in a modest lakeside cabin, a luxury that would soon be out of reach for middle-level white-collar workers like Marty Marks (Luke Wilson), even if they’re prudent with their investments. Scarse (A Single Man) primarily explores cultural shifts through the perception of Bobby Marks (Blake Cooper), an overweight 14-year-old trying to hide his body — and himself — during a revealing summer in the tube-top era. Everyone around him seems to glide easily through life, while he feels the effort of every step. Bobby ponders how to assert his individuality while searching for a trustworthy authority figure, a role filled by his demanding employer Dr. Kahn, played with deliciously prim rectitude by Knapp, who resents that his family’s former property is now owned by “summer people.” Loach relies too heavily on pop songs and voice-over narration for emotional substance, which is already there in the low-key, perceptive performances. The portentously titled Measure of a Man is at once an escapist fantasy and sentimental substance, which is already there in the low-key, perceptive performances. The portentously titled Measure of a Man is at once an escapist fantasy and sentimental substance, which is already there in the low-key, perceptive performances.

Ongoing

Avengers: Infinity War

is best enjoyed by disconnecting your logic circuits and just enjoying the pretty colors and sounds. (Sherilyn Connelly)

Disobedience

While Sebastian Leilo’s Foreign-Language Oscar win for A Fantastic Woman marks a significant milestone for Latin American cinema as a Hollywood hot prospect, his first English-language film, Disobedience, was actually already nearing completion by the time he accepted the trophy. Starring Rachel Weisz and Rachel McAdams, Disobedience is an adaptation of Naomi Alderman’s novel of the same name, about a light-skinned Orthodox Jewish community and the prodigal daughter who returns to poke holes in its way of life. Co-written by Leilo and Rebecca Lenkiewicz (Ida), Leilo’s interpretation of the text is a light-handed drama with hazy stakes and only flashes of the enigmatic tension he so fully realized in his last film. Here, the director attempts to give three characters — two separate little movies, but each is given too little room. Weisz plays Ronit, a New York photographer who’s called back to the U.K. and the community she left long ago when her religious leader father dies. But before Ronit actually shows up at the doorstep of her old friend David (Alessandro Nivola) and Esti (McAdams), she mortifies her father’s own girl in New York in a quick succession of buoyy, dreamlike moments. When the Orthodox community cautiously welcomes Ronit in to mourn her father, Leilo gives us a glimmer of her potential to blow their world apart with a wry humorous dinner scene, where the wild child challenges both the women and the men in their patriarchal belief system. Leilo seems to switch his focus to Esti, who’s attracted only to women — an orientation that’s obviously verboten in this community. As a whole, the film is directionless, with few individual character-study scenes making it compelling enough. (April Wolfe)

Overboard

There’s a simple reason that the plot of Overboard sounds like the sort of thoroughly trampled, downright cruel and unsympathetic stuff you’d see in some wretchedly bad comedy from the ’80s. The new Overboard is a gender-swapped reimagining of the 1987 comedy of the same name, the one where a stuck-up heiress (Goldie Hawn) suffers amnesia and gets convinced by a sailor (Kurt Russell) that she’s a blue-collar wife and mother. Overboard in 2018 is mainly a vehicle for its star-producer, Eugenio Derbez. Just as in Instructions Not Included and How To Be A Latin Lover, Derbez plays the go-between. He’s Leonardo Montenegro, the spoiled rotten bad boy of a rich Mexican family who literally tosses Kate Sullivan (Anna Faris), a pizza-delivering, carpet-cleaning, single mom of three, off his yacht when she refuses to serve him a mango. Karma, of course, hits Leonardo like a mofo when he falls off the boat. He ends up washed up ashore with no recollection of who he is. Kate’s best gal (Eva Longoria) persuades Kate to come to Leonardo’s doomed small town and, I thought there must still be half an hour of fighting to go. What higher praise can one give a movie that takes all day than, “I got caught up enough that I didn’t notice how much day it had taken”? (Alan Scherstuhl)

A Quiet Place

(2018) and A Quiet Place, Part II (2021), Diablo Cody and Jason Reitman complete their trilogy of self-delusion with Tully, a gently sardonic look at a 40-year-old woman who finds herself in a cluttered house, with a clueless spouse, preparing to have a third child. The staid suburban Marlo (Charlize Theron) inhabits a defined not by conformity but by all that’s left unsaid. This deliberate silence can be played for laughs, such as when her boring husband, Drew (Ron Livingston), tries to describe his number-crunching job and no one can muster enough interest to get a decent explanation out of him. But everyone functions as if not uttering words like postpartum depression or autism spectrum will keep their fears from being realized. Marlo sinks further into isolation after the birth of Mia, her matrilineal leave succinctly rendered on-screenc as a groaning cycle of fatigue with contrapuntal onesie snaps. The arrival of night nurse Tully (Mackenzie Davis), a ghostly figure tapping on the textured glass of their modest middle-class house, signals a shift in Marlo’s perception. She doesn’t know what to make of this boho caregiver in high-waisted jeans and crop top, bubbling with enthusiasm and ready to dive into Marlo’s life. Tully soon becomes a confidante and sounding board, the kind of supportive female friend this overextended working mom didn’t realize she’d been missing. Cody often employs a third-act surprise, but with Tully she reveals a downright Shyamalanian capacity for alienating an audience with a major plot twist. She takes the calculated risk that viewers will treat the story of a woman re-evaluating her life with the same seriousness as a mathematician tackling an unsolvable equation — and it works. (Serena Donadoni)

I’m Not Your Daughter

May 17th and 18th

12:30pm and 2:30pm

Landmark Regent - 1045 Broxton Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90024
Music //

**BROTHERHOOD OF THE TRAVELING PUPPETS**

As EDM supergroup The Binches, Ookay, Yultron, Kayzo and Dotcom find strength in numbers — and puppets

BY KAT BEIN

Best friends are truly the greatest. You give each other weird nicknames no one else understands, you can run the same jokes into the ground until everyone knows them by heart and, while they won’t let you forget it, no one judges you if you jump in a lake and lose your swimsuit.

Music festivals are the perfect place for best friends to get even closer — EDC Las Vegas especially — but to play EDC Vegas with your best friends?

“Are you kidding me?” Ookay says, his voice peaking with excitement. “Like, what the heck? That’s amazing! That will probably be one of the happiest days of my life. I’ll definitely never forget it. I already don’t forget it and it hasn’t happened yet.”

Ookay’s wildest dream will come to fruition when he takes the stage alongside Yultron, Kayzo and Dotcom, aka The Binches, on Sunday, May 20, at EDC Las Vegas. It’s six years of hard work and unabashed amusement reaching a culmination no one could have seen coming. There will be tattooed puppets, unreleased material and more backslapping buffoonery than EDC has ever seen.

Honestly, it won’t be much different than any of the other times The Binches get together.

“It’s like this weird military brother thing,” Ookay says. “There’s always that piece of you with them, no matter where you go. It feels more like a brotherhood than a friendship.”

The seeds for this “brotherhood of The Binches” were planted about six years ago when Ookay met Yultron at South by Southwest. They just sort of clicked and kept talking, and then when Ookay moved to L.A., they played a pool party together at the Roosevelt Hotel. Kayzo and Dotcom were on the bill, too, and while Ookay says the vibe was “as Hollywood as it gets,” the guys all had fun.

A similar sense of humor and interest in a genre-blending bass movement gave the forming foursome something to rally around. Soon they were all living in L.A., and created a kind of safety net of comfortable company and inspiration.

One fateful afternoon, they watched episodes of Tim & Eric Awesome Show, Great Job!, and suddenly the were sending group texts and meeting up for Korean BBQ, holding full conversations in the voice of John C. Reilly’s character, Steve Brule.

It might have been Ookay who first addressed the group text with “hey biiiiiiinch,” but it doesn’t really matter. It was adopted as the new official greeting, and when it started to seep into their respective SnapChat stories, their fan bases took notice.

“The fans felt connected to us calling each other that, and they kind of put it together,” Ookay says. “They put The Binches together before we thought of it. It feels good that people care about us like that, to turn us into the One Direction of EDM.”

“They call us the Binchstreet Boys,” Yultron laughs.

People started to recognize them as “The Binches” at parties, but it became real when they performed a benefit show at L.A. club Exchange. The fans were surprisingly receptive, so the friends thought, why not make a song? The next obvious move was to release a tune.

“We did a song called ‘Tempura Roll’ on Yultron’s EP, which is basically just like a song with four different drops from four different producers,” Ookay says. “It was just really fun, but people can see the difference in styles, how it progresses and how it changes.”

It still felt like an inside joke on the run, but when Ookay started seeing Binches posters and cutouts at his shows in Asia and Europe, he knew the accidental brand had taken on a life of its own.

“At the end of the day, the fans made The Binches,” Ookay says. “It feels like a movement, and it feels like something a lot of people can relate to. They might not have a platform to share it like we do, but a lot of people have their friends they do that with.”

Each Binch has his own nonsensical alter ego. Ookay is Bobo, Yultron is Wise Yogul, Kayzo is Kaynkle “the lonely traveler” and Dotcom is Mr. Crims, “the wise professor.” Yultron got the idea to have puppets made of each Binch character, and again, the fans have taken to the idea. The puppets are getting their own meet-and-greet at EDC, and the friends are convinced it’s the puppets that are the real stars.

“I feel like the puppets are definitely a step forward in bringing some of the happiness and the light to other people that we get when we’re around each other,” Ookay says. “I feel like I can be myself [around The Binches] more than I can around other people, because they understand me and I understand them. That’s something special you can’t buy, and you can’t re-create that. It’s just so organic, and I think that’s why it works, and a lot of fans can see that. I think that’s why we are still best friends amidst how busy we all are.”

A lot has changed since The Binches first bonded. Six years ago, Ookay was the only one touring regularly. These days, they spend time together less often, because all of these dudes are hitting major strides in their careers. Each of them has his own timeslot on the EDC lineup, yet nothing changes in the dynamic.

“EDC is about bringing people together, and through the friendship The Binches already have, we saw a perfect opportunity to book something exciting that speaks to the core of the festival,” says Chase Fiedler, Insomniac’s West Coast talent director. “It took some time and effort, but we corralled many moving parts and different artist teams to help build a performance we think will go down in EDC history. We can’t wait to see what they have in store both for their performance and their music.”

“We’ve been in the scene for a minute,” Yultron agrees, “and we’ve all hung out with different other DJs and producers, but with each other, we somehow click the best as four.”

It doesn’t feel like work to hang with The Binches, so when they hit the decks Sunday, it might be the most comfortable the guys have ever been. What makes it even better is knowing the fans will be out there with Their Binches, too.

“It’s not exclusive to us,” Yultron says. “Everyone is a Binch. We make fun of ourselves and call each other ‘binch’ because life is too short to be mad over people criticizing you and making fun of you. It’s almost like everyone’s welcome, and everyone’s a part of this club that we’re in.”

“You’d definitely see [the happiness] in our faces onstage,” Ookay says, “and you can see in our face every time we hang out. It’s only showing how everyone is working so hard. It’s amazing to see how far everyone has come.”
By Jorge Hernandez

Electric Daisy Carnival Las Vegas (May 18-20), the eighth gathering of EDM tribes in the desert metropolis organized by Pasquale Rotella’s Insomniac, will be preceded May 11 by the third EDC Las Vegas compilation from Insomniac’s homgrown Insomniac Records. Clocking in at more than 30 tracks, EDC Las Vegas 2018 highlights EDC’s eight stages by featuring a range of electronic artists including Kaskade, Chris Lake, Tiësto, Slander, 12th Planet and Chris Lorenzo.

The compilation is the 44th release for the label since it relaunched in 2016. “We formed Insomniac Records because we saw the need for a label that fosters the unique talents of dance music artists while also giving them a powerful platform to share their music with fans around the world,” Rotella says.

Since reinventing itself two years ago and effectively wiping out the slate clean, the label has doubled down on its mission statement, establishing itself as a one-stop shop for emerging artists in all facets of the EDM scene. “We wanted the label to represent the artists that Insomniac was supporting on our stages,” label general manager Greg Mateo says of the creative vision.

Label manager Joe Wiseman adds, “We wanted to establish ourselves not as a competitor but as an equal to a lot of other L.A.-based labels pushing out cool, local artists that have a buzz here. We really tried to make it an L.A.-based label the first year; then we started to move beyond that and collaborate with more globally recognized acts like Slander or Chris Lake. That first year with the re-launch, it was important for us to reaffirm Insomniac Records as a trusted curator.”

One way Insomniac Records distinguished itself was by re-emerging as a nimble, digital brand with a diversified suite of genre-based sublabels capable of distributing music quickly and widely. At present, Insomniac Records includes four sublabels: IN / ROTATION, Bassrush Records, Dreamstate Records and Discovery Project.

“Discovery is the base for new talent that we want to get into the system, while IN / ROTATION is more for acts that are starting to get bookings and have some history within the scene,” Mateo explains. IN / ROTATION debuted with “Technikal,” a deep bass house cut from France’s Dombesley, a regular on Tchami’s Confession label. More recent highlights for the imprint include the ethereal and almost romantic EP Bloom by Texas professor and producer Left/Right, and the House Philosophy/Ladies Man EP by LA Riots, who started out on an indie/electro tip but have been leaning toward more tech/house-flavored grooves lately.

For Left/Right and LA Riots, IN / ROTATION provides a supportive environment in which they can push themselves and stalwart genres such as house in new directions.

Discovery Project’s mission is to support newer artists of any style; it was born out of Insomniac’s contests and competitions. “People go to our stage to discover new sounds or if they’re fans of the label. For us, it’s about highlighting who we’re signing, and we sign such a wide array of sounds,” Wiseman explains. “Our first day is more house-oriented, our second day is more mixed, and Sunday is all bass. People go to our stage to discover new sounds or if they’re fans of the label. For us, it’s about highlighting who we’re signing, and we sign such a wide array of sounds.”

Naturally, being under the umbrella of a major brand like Insomniac has its perks. In addition to built-in trust, you also have more freedom to take risks because you have the resources of a large parent company behind you. “Every label has that kind of hook; what makes them different,” Mateo says. “In this day of digital distribution, it’s not hard for anyone to get a deal and get their music out there, but how do you differentiate yourself? For us, our biggest way is through our stages and that synergy with our festivals.”

This holistic sensibility gives Insomniac Records the confidence to look forward optimistically, and its robust release schedule — about one release every two weeks — is set to back that up. Perhaps more important, unlike many imprints that pop up daily in our digital world, Insomniac has been immersed in the culture from day one and is therefore not perceived as a carpetbagger out to make a quick buck off a trendy scene. Many of its staff members are veterans in the music industry or have been into dance music as fans for much of their lives.

From its early days as a party in Pacoima in the 1990s through its emergence as a power player in the early 2000s, up to its present state as a multifaceted conglomerate, Insomniac has been a catalyst in the development of electronic dance music culture in Southern California and the world at large. Insomniac Records aims to be a trustworthy place where aspiring artists can launch their careers.
Liam Gallagher and Richard Ashcroft
@ THE GREEK THEATRE
The '90s are back in a big way, particularly with what would have been considered a dream double bill toward the end of that decade: Liam Gallagher and Richard Ashcroft. The former frontmen for Britpop figureheads Oasis and The Verve, respectively, join up for what is guaranteed to be an unmissable swagger contest. Gallagher and Ashcroft are the poster boys for effortless and unattainable rock-star cool, not to mention enviable vocal prowess. Gallagher’s well-received 2017 debut solo album, As You Were, is a refreshing return to crafted rock & roll, and although Ashcroft’s last album, 2016’s These People, was not as well-received, it takes nothing away from his appeal or his cachet. Both set lists promise to feature selections from their former groups’ popular back catalogs as well as new favorites from their solo material. — Lily Moayeri

Poptone
@ THE GLASS HOUSE
Poptone are essentially a glorified cover band, cramming ‘80s post-punk classics from a modern perspective. But drummer Kevin Haskins and singer-guitarist Daniel Ash — joined by Haskins’ daughter Diva Dompé on bass — have every right to dig into the extensive catalog of golden oldies from their past bands Tones on Tail, Love and Rockets, and Bauhaus. The trio’s self-titled, live-in-the-studio record revisits Tones on Tail songs such as “Movement of Fear” and “Christian Diva,” while also featuring a variety show that soundtracks held together musicians, comedians and writers. Tonight’s lineup includes comedians Jeremy Beiler and Joel Kim Booster. As Garfunkel & Oates, singers Riki “Garfunkel” Lindhome and Kate “Oates” Micucci blur the lines between music and comedy with such cheerily sardonic odes as “Both Sides Can Laugh,” a folk tune that halfheartedly attempts to find the common ground between liberals who “can’t stop crying” and “pussy-grabbing” conservatives who threaten “nuclear annihilation on Twitter.” The duo’s other charming ditties range from “Pregnant Women Are Smug” to “The Loophole,” about the oxymoronic sexual behavior of virginal Christian women. Lola Kirke is an actor (Mozart in the Jungle) and singer who drapes her languorously rueful vocals over a dreamy country-pop groove on her new single, “Monster.” — Falling James

Echosmith
@ THE FONDA THEATRE
Sydney, Noah and Graham Sierota are that rare group of kids who don’t get caught up in typical sibling rivalries. The trio get along so well that they’ve been playing in Echosmith together since they were in their early teens, although their guitarist-brother Jamie Sierota left the band in 2016. Graham, age 19, plays drums, and Noah, 22, is on bass, backing vocalist Sydney, 21. The group have evolved considerably since forming in Chino in 2009. Such songs as “Talking Dreams,” the title track of Echosmith’s 2013 album, exude a breezy charm that combines power-pop melodicism with a hint of punk-rock energy. But on the band’s new song “Over My Head,” Sydney eschews her early innocence for a newly assured mainstream-pop delivery that’s more mature and sophisticated. — Falling James

Satyricon
@ THE REGENCY THEATRE
Norway’s Satyricon were positioned within the early-’90s wave of Scandinavian black metal with their 1993 debut, Deep Calleth Upon Deep. Many of their contemporaries from that period stagnated while running in place, or imploded trying to live up to their satanic image offstage. Conversely, Satyricon grew their power through evolution. Band members Fro (drums) and Satyr (everything else) have spent the last 25 years traveling to all corners of the metallic musical universe while transitioning into a more streamlined beast. The last decade has seen Satyricon lock into catchy, head-banging death & roll grooves to great success, while flirtations with touches of industrial and prog-metal experimentation saw mixed results. The group’s latest record, 2017’s Deep Calleth Upon Deep, sees the band settling back comfortably within the realm of catchy bangers, while flourishes of their more primitive black-metal roots still bombard listeners with an aura of evil darkness. — Jason Roche

Barbara Morrison
@ CATALINA BAR & GRILL
When singer Barbara Morrison arrived here from her native Detroit in the early 1970s, she quickly found herself at the center of a rich, roaring blues scene. Mentored by the brilliant alto sax bass bad ass Eddie “Cleanhead” Vinson, Morrison was able to bask in the glorious twilight of South-Central R&B, hobnobbing with such fellow wizards as Etta James, Joe Turner, Bullmoose Jackson and bandleader Johnny Otis, with whom she worked for 20 swinging years. Along the way, the singer developed a dense, expressive jazz vocal style, loaded with adventurous phrasing and soulful smolder. Equal parts tradition bearers and high-adventure stylist, Morrison is always to joy to hear, and this Mother’s Day brunch affair will most assuredly poach your eggs to perfection. — Jonny Whiteside
Life of Agony @ WHISKY A GO GO

Although forever associated with the Brooklyn hardcore scene from which they emerged in the early 1990s, Life of Agony were always more multidimensional than many of their blantly bruising peers. While their riffs can be thuggishly ominous, there's an open-minded mobility to the quartet's songwriting and arrangements, with vocalist Mina Caputo's abilities spanning a Danzig-esque baritone, disconcerting Layne Staley sneer and a nuanced, Scott Weiland-ish purr. Last year's comeback A Place Where There's No More Pain reunited LoA's classic lineup (drummer Sal Abruscato has since departed, replaced by Veronica Bellino) and was their first album since Caputo's coming out as transgender in 2011. The wonderfully self-assured collection embraces so much of what has kept Life of Agony intriguing for nearly 30 years: variety in groove, style and delivery; convincingly heartfelt singing; and hooks that, while massively memorable, sidestep the obvious.

Cairo Gold @ NO NAME

Los Angeles native Cairo Gold is the definition of a hustler. From riding motorcycles to selling marijuana to now claiming her spot in the pop/R&B realm, the young songstress is here to tell her story. Cairo recently released her debut single, “Torture,” which sees her flexing her vocals over an 808-infused beat. With lyrics focusing on the pleasure and pain of love, listeners can't help but tune in. While residing near Venice Beach in 2012, Cairo picked up the guitar, and she's been holding it ever since. Inspired by the likes of Led Zeppelin, Tupac and Biggie, and even literature by Michael Newton and Paulo Coelho, she began writing her own songs and was their first album since Caputo's coming out as transgender in 2011. The wonderfully self-assured collection embraces so much of what has kept Life of Agony intriguing for nearly 30 years: variety in groove, style and delivery; convincingly heartfelt singing; and hooks that, while massively memorable, sidestep the obvious.

Franz Ferdinand @ THE WILTERN

Throughout various lineup changes, Franz Ferdinand have continued to construct pop-rock songs that are often inventive and lyrically thoughtful. “Always Ascending” the title track from the Scottish group’s new album, begins with leader Alex Kapranos crooning romantically over a starry-eyed landscape of stark piano before the song takes off into an electronic-pumped ’80s dance-pop groove. Throughout all the song’s variations, Kapranos maintains a reserved, Bowie-like cool while the rest of the band simulate a Duran Duran vibe. “Feel the Love Go” is another neo-funk tune that coats Franz Ferdinand’s traditional guitar sound with a sheen of electronic glitz. “See, the things that you do are not who you are,” Kapranos advises amid choppy guitar riffs, a wash of keyboards and squalling saxophone.

Numb.er @ THE ECHO

Number — or possibly Number, the dot tends to orbit like a rotten sun — are the band keeping them in, freaking them out and bowling them over during their Monday Night Residencies. A skillful mélange of darkwave and synthgaze, this is the outfit founded by Jeff Fribourg, late of local kraut-psych merchants Froth. Likely you’ll hear tracks from the magnum opus that is Numb’er’s upcoming album, Goodbye, this evening. The lineup in The CIA continues, with all agents leaving the organization, which is now apparently manned only by a singer named Denee and two bassists named Ty and Emmett. Rumblepak maintain their aura of enigma even as artist Paige Emery drinks deep from the atmosphere with her signature admixture of no-fi fuzzed-out pop, live oil painting and video art to create a spectacle unequal in our lifetime.

Life of Agony: See Wednesday.

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Ariel Pink, DIIV @ THE WILTERN

The Wiltern hosts a solid double bill tonight with Ariel Pink and DIIV. Pink (born Ariel Marcus Rosenberg) is a Los Angeles native who mines L.A.’s rich history of psychedelic and garage rock, from Strawberry Alarm Clock to The Electric Prunes, to make stylish neo-psychedelia. Brooklyn-based shoegaze revivalists DIIV are fronted by Zachary Cole Smith, who previously played drums and guitar for the lo-fi indie pop band Beach Fossils (DIIV’s former Captured Tracks labelmates). The show is part of the Desert Daze Caravan — a national tour from the promoters of the Desert Daze neo-psych festival, which will be held over three days in October at Lake Perris in Riverside County.

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THE ROXY:
THE ROSE:
RESIDENT:
THE MOROCCAN LOUNGE:
MCCABE'S GUITAR SHOP:
THE LOVE SONG:
THE HI HAT:
GRAMMY MUSEUM:
THE ECHOPLEX:
THE CANYON AGOURA HILLS:
BOOTLEG THEATER:
AMOEBA MUSIC:
ALEX'S BAR:

THE VIPER ROOM:

THE WILKINSON:

THE FIREHOUSE:

THE PICK OF THE WEEK:

THE BOOK NUT:

THE TROUBADOUR:

THE TERRAGRAM BALLROOM:

THE WORLD STAGE:

WORLD STAGE:

THE IX:

THE JUNO:

THE CINEMA BAR:

THE BAKED POTATO:

THE CAFE WHALFISH:

THE COFFEE GALLERY BACKSTAGE:

THE BULLDOG BLOG:

THE SMELLI:

THE TERAGRAM BALLROOM:

THE ECHO:

THE GLASS HOUSE:

CRAMMYS MUSEUM:

THE ECHO:

THE GLASS HOUSE:

LJODGE:

LOS GLOBOS:

THE LOVE SONG:

MCCABE'S GUITAR SHOP:

THE MOROCCAN LOUNGE:

THE ROXY:

THE ROYAL:

THE REDWOOD BAR & GRILL:

THE LIBERTINES:

THE ROSE:

THE ROXY:

THE SMELLI:

THE TERAGRAM BALLROOM:

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**CONCERTS**

**FRIDAY, MAY 11**

**AUDRA MCDONALD:** 8 p.m., $39 & up. Segerstrom Concert Hall, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa.

**GO THE CHAMPIONSHIP TOUR:** With Kendrick Lamar, SZA, Schoolboy Q, 7 p.m. The Forum, 3900 W. Manchester Blvd., L.A. See Music Pick.

**UNKNOWN MORTAL ORCHESTRA:** 8 p.m., $20-$40. The Greek Theatre, 2700 N. Prospect Ave., L.A. See Music Pick.

**WINDS OF METROPOLE:** 8 p.m., $59-$79. The Wiltern, 3790 Wilshire Blvd., L.A. See Music Pick.

**RAINBOW KITTEN SURPRISE:** 8 p.m. The Fonda Theatre. See GoLA.

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**Saturday, May 12**

**THE AFRO-HAITIAN MIXFESTIVAL:** 2 p.m., $50-$150. Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum.

**GO BARRIO BAROQUE:** With Alice Bag, Chulita Vinyl Club, Etta, Mujeres de Maiz, 7:30 p.m., $15-$30. The Observatory, 9580 E. Pico Blvd., L.A. See Music Pick.

**GO THE CHAMPS:** With Dorian, 7 p.m., $43.50-$78.50. The Wiltern.

**SOFI TUUKER:** 9 p.m., $26. The Fonda Theatre. See GoLA.

**THE LOVE POTION:** With Falling James, 9 p.m., $50-$150. The Wiltern, 3790 Wilshire Blvd., L.A. See Music Pick.

**THE PHILARMONIC:** With Tenor Holm, 7:30 p.m. Walt Disney Concert Hall.

**THE MARÍAS:** 9 p.m., $25. The Fonda Theatre. See GoLA.

**STEVEN WILSON:** 9 p.m., $26-$50. The Wiltern.

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**Sunday, May 13**

**EDITORS:** With Plush, 7:30 p.m., $25. The Belasco.

**GEORGE EZRA:** 7 p.m., $30-$35. The Wiltern.

**L.A. NINETIES BLOCK PARTY:** With Guy, Teddy Riley, Jagged Edge, 9:30 p.m., $49-$50-$130, The Forum, 3900 W. Manchester Blvd.

**SATYRICON:** With Goathorm, Micticantluchetti, Highland, 7 p.m. The Regent Theater. See Music Pick.

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**Tuesday, May 15**

**ANDREW MCMANON IN THE WILDERNESS:** With Bob Oakwood, Zac Clark, 7:30 p.m., $35. John Anson Ford Amphitheatre, 2580 Cahuenga Blvd. East.

**GO FRIEZHOW:** With Priests, 7 p.m., $33-$34. The Wiltern, 3790 Wilshire Blvd, L.A. See Music Pick.

**SOFI TUUKER:** 8 p.m., $46-$330. The Forum, 3900 W. Manchester Blvd., L.A.

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**Wednesday, May 16**

**SOFI TUUKER:** 9 p.m., $26. The Fonda Theatre. See GoLA.

**ZOE:** With Dorian, 7 p.m., $43.50-$78.50. The Wiltern.

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**Thursday, May 17**

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**Friday, May 18**

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**Saturday, May 19**

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**Sunday, May 20**

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**Monday, May 21**

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**Tuesday, May 22**

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**Wednesday, May 23**

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**Thursday, May 24**

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**Friday, May 25**

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**Saturday, May 26**

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**Sunday, May 27**

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**Monday, May 28**

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**Tuesday, May 29**

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**Wednesday, May 30**

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**Thursday, May 31**

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