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FOOD/ART

Head to Chinatown ... and Eat!

Don’t miss this year’s final Chinatown Summer Nights. The trifecta of events has featured a crowd-pleasing array of attractions and food, and this evening’s lineup does not disappoint. Starting with food, because we all know what’s best in life: Fluff Ice (which may be superior to even plain ol’ ice cream in dealing with summer weather) and eye-popping and exquisite hot dogs from Tokyo Doggie Style will be featured a crowd-pleasing array of attractions and food, and this evening’s lineup does not disappoint. Starting with food, because we all know what’s best in life: Fluff Ice (which may be superior to even plain ol’ ice cream in dealing with summer weather) and eye-popping and exquisite hot dogs from Tokyo Doggie Style will be featured.

There are so many conventions throughout the year geared toward scary imagery and entertainment. ScareLA is one of the biggest and best. Back in 2015 it was the first fan convention dedicated to Halloween, and even though it’s faced some fandish competition from other cons, the promoters strive to outdo themselves via weird workshops, creepy classes, impressive industry panels, haunted tours, screenings and more. This year the event will take place in a dark zone: Vendors and attractions will appear within the setting of a haunted experience, complete with mood lighting and pop-up scares. There will also be freaky VR fun, live dark bands and big names including renowned makeup artist Ve Neill, George Cameron Romero (son of the cinematic icon), John Murdy (creative director at Universal Studios’ Horror Nights) and the queen of possession herself, Linda Blair.

Los Angeles Food & Wine Festival — Ann Haskins

LA Phil’s annual concert will be a tribute to Jonathan Gold with fireworks. Although the pyrotechnics display and a visit from the USC Trojan Marching Band will provide dramatic counterpoint to the Russian composer’s brassy 1812 Overture, the real fireworks are in the way Dudamel artfully finesses Tchaikovsky’s music, including adaptations of Hamlet and Romeo and Juliet that feature such actors as Asia Kate Dillon, Joan Gruffudd and Anika Noni Rose. Hollywood Bowl, 2301 N. Highland Ave., Hollywood Hills; Fri.-Sat., Aug. 24-25, 8 p.m.; $14-$195. (323) 850-2000, hollywoodbowl.com. —Falling James

MUSIC

Harvey Milk’s birthday is Aug. 24, so this year’s Summer of Love concert at the Hollywood Bowl will feature a tribute to the slain gay rights activist. The event will celebrate not only Milk but also other people who died under anti-gay hate through the years, including Matthew Shepard, a Wyoming college student who was lured to a wooded area by two men under the promise of a date and then beaten, shot and left to die. Ever since Milk’s murder in 1978, the annual bash has featured live dark bands and big names including renowned makeup artist Ve Neill, George Cameron Romero (son of the cinematic icon), John Murdy (creative director at Universal Studios’ Horror Nights) and the queen of possession herself, Linda Blair.

Los Angeles Food & Wine Festival — Ann Haskins
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ARTS
Street History
Steve Grody has forgotten more about the history of graffiti and street art in L.A. than most people will ever know. Luckily for us, he’s all about sharing his encyclopedic knowledge and enthusiastic insight with anyone who can keep up. His wildly popular Arts District walking tours guide people through the streets, alleys and indie venues that nurture and celebrate graffiti practitioners of all generations and styles. As part of the Cartwheel Art brain trust, offering context and analysis that help folks understand the deep significance and meaning of individual works and the whole movement, he literally conjures modern art history as he walks. Also, there’s BBQ and a drawing session with UTL crew artist Nuke for those who find themselves inspired. Pearl’s BBQ, 2143 Violet St., downtown; Sun., Aug. 26, 2-5 p.m., $58 (includes lunch). (213) 537-0637, eventbrite.com/event-graffiti-with-steve-grody-and-nuke-pears-arts-district-tickets-48458847407-aff-edbssbest-search. –Shana Nys Dambrot

COMEDY
Check Your Voicemail
Modern communication revolves around emails, texts and social media — you probably only get calls from your doctor and your tech-challenged parents. But voicemails haven’t completely gone the way of beepers and fax machines. Directed by Christine Bullen, The Truce: The Voicemail Show! reminds us that people still leave voice messages on our phones, and that they’re often very funny. Karen Baughn, Geri Carrillo, Sara Clarke-Chan, David Danipour, Andrew Goldmeier, Madeleine Kang, Amber Kenny, Josh Krilov, Alex McCale, Charlie Mihelich and Michael Murphy, who perform monthly as sketch comedy team the Truce at ACME, crowdsourced actual voicemails — wrong numbers, sales calls, automated messages, drunk dials — from friends and family. Tonight, they perform the best of the worst, each followed by a sketch routine. Comedy Central Stage, 6539 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood, Tue., Aug. 28, 8-9 p.m.; free; RSVP required. (323) 960-5519, comedycentralstage.com. –Siran Babayan

MUSIC
It’s a Thriller!
Michael Jackson’s 60th birthday is Aug. 29, and Moonwalker, his cinematic musical anthology, marked its 30th anniversary this year. Motown on Monday, the long-running soul-dance shindig at the Short Stop, “wanna be startin’ somethin’ ” to celebrate both, and they’re even changing the event’s name for this evening to Michael on Monday. It starts with a screening of the movie, followed by dancing to Motown, Jedi and Expo’s off-the-wall hits sets, mixing in funky jams from MJ’s friends and artists he influenced. Expect videos, a King of Pop photo booth (featuring album-cover backdrops), drink specials and a thriller night’s worth of fun. The Short Stop, 1455 Sunset Blvd., Echo Park; Mon., Aug. 27, 7 p.m. - 2 a.m.; free, 21+, eventbrite.com/e/michael-on-monday-mj-b-day-tribute-827-motown-on-mondays-la-tickets-4867931790. –Lina Lecaro

MUSIC
Medieval Classic
Considering that Carl Orff’s 1936 cantata Carmina Burana was based on medieval poems written almost 800 years earlier, the choral piece has nonetheless remained compelling in the modern era. The work has been adapted in numerous formats, including a version by former Doors keyboardist Ray Manzarek, but guest conduc-
 Forgotten History
People sometimes forget that the very early punk-rock shows were much more diverse — both musically and racially — than the mostly white, male hardcore scene that followed in the early 1980s. Director James Spooner’s 2004 documentary, Afro-Punk, points out that African-Americans were a major force in punk rock, even if they were often left out of the mostly white-centric histories of the era. While Spooner’s documentary is by no means definitive and leaves out the crucial contributions of influential black punk rockers in L.A., for instance, it nonetheless highlights the startling impact of bands such as Bad Brains, who were faster, harder and more musically dexterous than their white rivals. Spooner, writer Tisa Bryant and the incisive critic Ernest Hardy discuss the film after a free screening. Hammer Museum, 10890 Wilshire Blvd., Westwood; Wed., Aug. 29, 7:30 p.m.; free, RSVP required. (310) 443-7000, hammer.ucla.edu/programs-events/2018/08/afro-punk. —Falling James

BOOKS
Those Who Can, Write Books
Fans of comedian-writer Adam Cayton-Holland know him best as Spanish teacher Loren Payton on truTV’s Those Who Can’t, which returns for a third season this fall. In the sitcom, Cayton-Holland, Andrew Orvedahl and Ben Roy play self-absorbed and woefully dysfunctional teachers — they’re the rotten apples, not the students — who wreak havoc at fictional Smoot High in Denver. (The series has featured nearly every big-name comedian as a guest star, including Patton Oswalt, Eddie Pepitone, Baron Vaughan, Mary Lynn Rajskub and the perpetually drank Kyle Kinane.) This year, Cayton-Holland published a new book, Tragedy Plus Time: A Tragi-Comic Memoir, which he discusses tonight. In it, he recounts his career and forming the Denver-based comedy trio The Grawlix but, more important, his relationship with his parents and two sisters, one of whom committed suicide in 2012. Skylight Books, 1818 N. Vermont Ave., Los Feliz; Thu., Aug. 30, 7:30 p.m.; free. (323) 660-1175, skylightbooks.com. —Siran Babayan

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Are you using meth? Interested in participating in a research study?
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Jonathan Gold found his imitable voice at L.A. Weekly. The much-admired food critic and cultural icon, who died of pancreatic cancer on July 21, proclaimed this in a piece celebrating the paper’s 30th anniversary in 2008 (this December marks our 40th anniversary). He also said he found his politics at this publication, “the result of concussions sustained while butting heads with the editor, Jay Levin.”

In the piece, titled “Between the Lines,” Gold shared that he learned about “love and loss and betrayal and loyalty” at the Weekly, which was obviously as formative as what he came to know about constructing paragraphs, comma placement, and the power of words to convey mood, atmosphere and flavor.

Though he eventually took his masterful food coverage to the Los Angeles Times, the L.A. Weekly was his home and that of his beloved wife, editor-in-chief Laurie Ochoa, during a prolific and game-changing period, for the writer and for this publication itself. At the Weekly, he became the first Pulitzer Prize–winning food critic ever in 2007, and he pushed his already deep and beautiful writing to extraordinary heights, injecting history and culture into his reportage, giving his vibrant words context, and making us look at eating as an art form.

Gold’s piece chronicling a year devouring the many flavors available on one Los Angeles street, Pico Boulevard, is probably his most cited work, so much so that those not familiar with it might expect it to be an epic think piece of great length. It’s relatively short for such a robust report, and it represents the writer’s soulful gift for saying a lot with a little. (Gold’s N.W.A cover feature, also included here, is a lengthier example of his

L.A. Weekly joins the city in mourning Jonathan Gold

TRIBUTE TO
brilliance.)

“The Year I Ate Pico Blvd.” still reads like poetry, very personal poetry from someone who loved his surroundings so much that he actually became absorbed by them. Gold was great at conveying the unique details and creativity that goes into making the finest cuisine. But it was his gift for helping us to appreciate the full cultural breadth of cooking and consuming in the city — from ingredients and preparations to innovations and traditions — that set him apart from everyone else attempting to write about food, and about L.A. in general.

With his public memorial taking place in downtown this weekend, L.A. Weekly joins all of Los Angeles in honoring the one and only Jonathan Gold, by sharing some of his words (reprinted here with his family’s blessing) as well as sharing reflections by, and conversations with, writers he greatly influenced.

The Community Tribute to Jonathan Gold will take place on the steps of Los Angeles City Hall, 200 N. Spring St., downtown, on Sunday, Aug. 26, from 5:30 to 8 p.m. It will be hosted by L.A. Times staff writer Carolina Miranda, and will include tributes from Mark Gold, Jonathan’s brother and UCLA associate vice chancellor for environment and sustainability; Evan Kleiman of KCRW’s Good Food; Laura Gabbert, producer-director of the documentary City of Gold; L.A. City Councilmember José Huizar; Providence’s Michael Cimarusti; Bricia Lopez of Guelaguetza; Sang Yoon of Lukshon and Father’s Office; and composer Carl Stone. KCRW’s Anthony Valadez will DJ, and there will be a picnic with food trucks, followed by speakers and then a screening of favorite and never-before-seen moments from City of Gold. Members of the community are encouraged to share their own tributes using #LAGold.
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Jonathan Gold, back in the day

AS GOOD AS GOLD
A colleague recalls what Jonathan Gold did for her, and for L.A.

BY SEVEN MCDONALD

ike any L.A. native worth their weight in sea salt — or any who have driven across the city to experience the most reliable lamb barba-coo tacos, blackened at the edges and caramelized to a sweet subtle gaminess; or bowls of ramen filled with resilient noodles and fatty, long-simmered meltingly soft pork; or the swelling xiao long bao dumpling in all its splendor — I was heartbroken to hear of Jonathan Gold’s passing. I’ve known Jonathan since the ‘90s, when we both worked at a start-up teen magazine, where he was still, magically and wonderfully, writing about music, and I most likely was clumsily writing about Hollywood and “trend forecasting.”

Years later, I learned it was Jonathan who’d encouraged his deep, beautiful wife, then–L.A. Weekly editor-in-chief Laurie Ochoa, to hire me at the paper after I cold-pitched a story about a Kali temple. I had recently returned from living in an ashram in the Bahamas, where I had spent a year and a half submerged in practice, seriously considering renouncing the world as a Brahmachari (a Vedic or Hindu monk).

Having been away from writing for years, at the time I had only worked as a celebrity journalist with contracts at numerous glossy magazines, a career I was extremely grateful to have stumbled into, because I hadn’t gone to college. I wanted to write about the temple and assumed nobody at any of the publications I knew would let me, but maybe the Weekly would? The way I heard it, he told Laurie the paper would be “lucky to have me.”

So Seven, then known as Shamala at the ashram, was able to write for the first time about something other than Hollywood, celebrities and trends. This changed my life in a meaningful way. It allowed me to change my voice and develop my writing. Soon I was writing cover stories for the Weekly about young political activists trying to save the planet, child actors who had moved here for pilot season and the underage music scene.

Eventually Laurie gave me my own column. I was historically slow getting covers in and sometimes wouldn’t even turn them over to her — like the year I spent with a Krishna family or another writing about all the elephants living in captivity in America. Laurie said if my pieces were shorter, maybe she “could have me in the paper more.”

She even let me do it bimonthly, instead of every week. “24/Seven” (cleverly named by then–deputy editor Joe Donnelly) ran here for some five years, with Laurie serving as my editor most of that time. It allowed me to have an incredible relationship to my city, the people who live here and Laurie, who was a perfect editor for me. It was an experience I cherish.

I wanted to bring my spiritual practice into my writing, and I was inspired by something I heard Ram Dass say: that the only way to create change is “from heart to heart.” I was allowed to explore the idea of capturing the hearts of my subjects, in hopes that readers would experience their own heart opening as they read, in turn creating connections across a city that people often said lacked community and depth. Like Jonathan, if I may presume, I didn’t see my city that way. Maybe I was trying to grant permission to my fellows to stop and smell the roses or, perhaps more apt, the sugary scent of Mexican sweet bread wafting through my neighborhood’s streets.

For the years I wrote “24/Seven,” my life had a wonderful, almost prayerful purpose. I started most mornings exploring the city looking for subjects doing interesting things, hoping to share with readers the beauty and, yes, God within the everyday, the non-famous. I wrote about guys posting flyers for their bands with push pins and Scotch tape, free spirits at the Venice drum circle, stoners dressed in pink pushing pink bikes with flat tires down the street on Valentine’s Day, money-obsessed 13-year-olds hanging out at the Koreatown Plaza, talking punk-rock stuffed animals, young Republicans, perfectly average hipsters, young soldiers at the Greyhound station heading off to Camp Pendleton.

Strangers would often stop me to tell me how much they loved the column; humbling and wonderful, this allowed me to feel that authentic connection I was hoping to provide. I share this with you to give a taste, pun acknowledged, of what Jonathan did for me personally.

Jonathan’s loss is vast for L.A., the writing and food communities at large, readers, eaters, longtime foodies and those who recently, over the last decade, got on board, and also for everyone who has ever lived, worked or visited in our city. He changed the landscape. He showed us how to explore, live, enjoy life; respect ingredients, kitchens, the people who make our food and the cultures they come from.

He democratized fine dining and gave people permission to seek dining experiences that were exceptional, saving a whole class of people who basically have lunch for a living from a hell of a lot of soulless, unnecessarily expensive meals. He was a teacher, explorer and topographer; an exceptionally generous, unique human, talent and voice. There was nothing common or pretentious about him at all; he was as beautiful and authentic as his surname indicated. He loved his city, people, strangers, food, music and his family. His own writing allowed me the opportunity to have one of the most meaningful experiences of my life.

"It can be noted that I waited until the last hour to turn this piece in and, in that time, I hoped to make an important dinner of grocery store steak, frozen peas and organic Finley Farm carrots for my spoiled springer spaniel."
by jonathan gold

for a while in my early 20s, I had only one clearly articulated ambition: to eat at least once at every restaurant on Pico Boulevard, starting with the fried yucca dish served at a pupusería near the downtown end and working methodically westward toward the chili fries at Tom’s No. 5 near the beach. It seemed a reasonable enough alternative to graduate school.

After I’d finished work each day at a legal newspaper near City Hall, I would walk to the next restaurant on Pico. After dinner I would buy an orange from a street vendor and catch a bus the rest of the way home. (I should mention here that I actually lived on Pico, over a kosher butcher shop near Robertson.)

When the enormity of the adventure seemed overwhelming, I might buy a taco at one restaurant, a hamburger at the next and a bowl of chilate y negados at a third. I never made it to the beach, but I did eat my way almost to Century City that year, from the El Salvador Cafe all the way to the old Roxbury Pharmacy grill. I grooved on the Persian-Jewish neighborhood around Beverly, the remarkable strip of soul food between Fairfax and Crenshaw, the pan-ethnic zone around Westwood. I especially liked the neighborhood — mostly Central American — that had sprung up between Vermont and the Harbor Freeway, the thousands upon thousands of Guatemalans and Salvadorans who crowded Pico until dark, choosing toys from big displays set up in grocery-store parking lots, buying mayonnaise-smeared ears of corn from street-corner pushcarts. The restaurants in that neighborhood were good, too. I learned about everything from marinated octopus at El Pulpo Loco, El Parián’s Jalisco-style goat stew, and Salvadoran pupusas to El Nica’s giant Nicaraguan tamales, Cuban fried rice, Guatemalan pepian and Ecuadorian llongingachos.

This was not my mother’s cooking. Pico, in a certain sense, was where I learned to eat. I also saw my first punk-rock show on Pico, was shot at, fell in love, bowled a 164, witnessed a knife fight, took cello lessons, raised chickens, ate Oki Dogs and heard X, Ice Cube, Hole and Willie Dixon perform (though not together) on Pico. These experiences are, I suspect, not atypical. Sunset may have more famous restaurants, La Brea better restaurants and Melrose more restaurants whose chairs have nestled Mira Sorvino’s gently rounded flanks. No glossy magazine has ever suggested Pico as an emerging hot street; no real estate ad has ever described a house as Pico-adjacent. The street plays host to the unglamorous bits of Los Angeles, the row of one-stops.

That supply records to local jukeboxes, the kosher-pizza district, the auto-body shops that speckle its length the way giant churches speckle Wilshire. And while Pico may divide neighborhoods more than it creates them — Koreatown from Harvard Heights, Wilshire Center from Midtown, Beverly Hills—adjacent from not-all-that-Beverly-Hills-adjacent, neighborhoods your cousin Martha lives in from neighborhoods she wouldn’t step into after dark — there isn’t even a Pico-

identified gang.

But precisely because Pico is so unremarked, because it is left alone like old lawn furniture moldering away in the side yard of a suburban house, it is at the center of entry-level capitalism in central Los Angeles, and one of the most vital food streets in the world. Pico is home to Valentino, which specializes in preparing customized Italian food for millionaires, and to Oaxacan restaurants so redolent of the developing world that you half expect to see starred chickens scratching around on the floor; to Billingsley’s, a steak house, which could have been transplanted whole from Crawfordsville, Indiana, and to the Arsenal, a steak house decorated with medieval weaponry; to chain Mexican restaurants, artist-hang-outs, Mexican restaurants of such stunning authenticity that you’re surprised not to stumble outside into a bright Guadalajara sun. Greek and Scandinavian delis still flourish on stretches of Pico that haven’t been Greek or Scandinavian since the Eisenhower administration.

I went back to Pico last week, to a faded Mexican joint once famous for the best carne asada in Los Angeles, beer so cold that a thin sheet of ice formed on top of it on hot summer days, and waitresses beautiful as Velázquez princesses. The restaurant had not aged well. It was populated with guys sitting around in stained undershirts, half-looking at the Galaxy game that drone from a TV overhead, dosing shrimp cocktails with generic-brand ketchup, listlessly draining one can of Modelo after another. The food was rank — sour grilled meat, cardboard-thin, a week older than it should have been; watery beans; commercial tortillas. I probably would have pushed it aside unheaten if the cook hadn’t been sitting three feet from the table.

I couldn’t help wondering whether I would have grooved on the scene 15 years ago, followed the game, plowed through the food. (It was approximately 15 years ago, after all, that I had sung with an excruciatingly bad white blues band that used to cap its sets of Peetie Wheatstraw and Blind Lemon Jefferson covers with a song I’d written called “Breakfast on Pico.”)

The last time we did this, at a disco deep in the north Valley, a bouncer unplugged the PA and then pounded me bloody when we refused to stop playing. Perhaps it was the couplet rhyming “mountain-size” with “chili fries” that set him off.) I thought about Pico restaurants — Mr. Coleslaw Burger, Hody’s, Nu-Way, Chicken Georgia, Ben’s Place, Kong Joo (for goat soup), Carl’s BBQ, the carnitas place on the corner of Vermont with old boxing snapshots on the walls — that had vanished except for a shiny patch of sidewalk or the ghost of a painted sign. I wondered whether my infatuation with Pico was purely nostalgic, standard-issue post-adolescent infatuation with poverty.

I finished the bottle of Bohemia, paid the check and walked sadly away from a barely touched plate of food.

GUSTAVO ON GOLD

Food writer and former OC Weekly editor Gustavo Arellano on Jonathan’s impact on him and his career

BY LINA LECARO

It’s hard to say who Jonathan Gold influenced more, people who love L.A. (both “new” and “old” journalists and historians, food enthusiasts (fine-dining fans and seekers of bites on a budget), Caucasians seeking knowledge of ethnic flavors, or people of color who came to realize that our food heritage is an essential part of what makes this city the most diverse and delicious melting pot in the world. More than any food journalist anywhere, Gold made us recognize that we have a responsibility to our readers and to our public at large.

There’s another important group Gold influenced: writers. His writing was so good, there was no way he couldn’t have had an effect on those of us who use words for a living.

Since Gold’s death on July 21, the heartfelt sentiment from fellow scribes has been one of the most telling signs of his cultural impact. You can see it in Seven McDonald’s piece and here, in our exclusive chat with Gustavo Arellano, former editor-in-chief of OC Weekly, nationally syndicated columnist (“Ask a Mexican”), author of books and busy freelance writer for countless publications including the Columbia Journalism Review.

Arellano knew Gold since his days with this publication back in the early 2000s (as did I) and, as he shares with me here, the iconic food critic remained inspirational throughout his life and will surely continue to do so even in death.

L.A. WEEKLY: You wrote some of the most heartfelt remembrances and tributes to Jonathan in the L.A. Times, on L.A. Taco and on your own website and newsletter, covering his influence. Can you tell me about your personal relationship with him and how you guys first met?

GUSTAVO ARELLANO: Yeah, I know, I’m not sure. I think it was the Weekly’s old offices on Sunset Boulevard. I would always end up hanging out with the fact checkers there, who were friends. We’d hang out, then go down the street to Cat & Fiddle to look for Morrissey. One time I was there and this big tall guy walks by. And then somebody says, “Oh, that’s Jonathan Gold.” I was like, “Really?” So I go to say hi to him — and this was like around 2003, so I was still starting as a writer. I said I was a big fan and I hoped to try to do what he was doing, down in Orange County.

He said Orange County had some good food. He wished he could get down there more and to reach out if I wanted any help with anything. And I was like, “Wow, that’s really cool.” This was before Jonathan became “Mr. Gold,” by the way. It was just “Jonathan.” He seemed shy, and he picked his words carefully. But he was funny always. Always smart and always really gracious, too.

Did you ever write for L.A. Weekly?

Yeah, I wrote for John Payne [former music editor]. I was doing rock en español stuff and some concert reviews.

Wow, John Payne (who still writes for the Weekly) was my first editor at the paper also — when I started interning at the Hyperion Avenue location in Silver Lake.

So you’re known for writing about political and social issues as well as food, mostly because it pertains to the Latin experience, but in a broader sense as well. I bet a lot of people probably didn’t know you started with music, just like they didn’t know that about Jonathan. Was he a direct influence in inspiring you making the leap into food coverage and critique?

Oh yeah, as a food writer, for sure. Back then I didn’t know Jonathan’s music writing career. This was before the internet, so you didn’t know all this stuff. I just knew him as a food writer, and I first started reading him even before getting into journalism. I’d pick up L.A. Weekly at Tower Records in Buena Park. I remember getting the paper and reading the food section and thinking, “Wow, this guy really knows his shit.”

In 2003, I started a column called “This Hole-in-the-Wall Life.” I did it for 14 years at OC Weekly. That’s what people outside of Orange County don’t realize: I was a full-time food critic.

So how did you develop a friendship with Mr. Gold over the years?

We would send little notes to each other via email. Then social media came around and we would leave comments on each other’s Facebook or Twitter. Once I started becoming more known for my food column, we started to be on the same food panels. So that’s really when I would see him most — at events. He lived in Pasadena and I lived down in Orange County, so it was impossible for me to go up there and hang out with him more, or go on the food adventures I would have liked to, or anything like that.

What was your perspective on his Pulitzer win? It was amazing. Of course it was deserved. All food writers try to mimic Jonathan Gold in one way or another. What I love about his stuff was just stories of immigrant communities and telling like whole prior histories of a neighborhood just through one dish. That’s what really struck me. That’s what made me decide to be a food writer in Orange County.

It’s funny, because whenever we’d run into each other we wouldn’t talk about food. We would gossip about the old owners of the L.A. Weekly and OC Weekly. Like, what weird email did we get from the bosses this time ... what crazy new demands? Reporters always talk about their bosses. Always.

You dealt with lots of, shall we say, challenges with the former owners at OC Weekly. What was your impression of Jonathan’s relationship with the former owners at L.A. Weekly?

Well, he left the Weekly because of the way [owners Village Voice Media] treated his wife.

Right. That’s been well documented. They let editor-in-chief Laurie Ochoa go and she went to the L.A. Times, where he followed.

Yes, and it’s a little-known fact that Jonathan tried to recruit me for the Times from OC Weekly. I said, “It would be an honor to work alongside you, Mr. Gold” (at that point I always called him Mr. Gold) but “the OC Weekly is my home forever.”

Well, that didn’t end up being true. Obviously.

I feel like journalists are all in this sort of club, especially in L.A. Sadly it’s more like high school, with cliques and bullies, these days; people who’d rather judge each other for their work or professional choices than support each other. Jonathan was never like that. It’s part of why he was so inspirational to all of us. Losing him was a real blow to the journalism community. But what would you say Jonathan’s impact on Los Angeles as a whole has been?

I think he might go down in history as the greatest Southern Californian of them all. He was from here. And he really made an effort to try to learn about all the different parts of what makes Southern California special. We were all shocked about his passing because it was so sudden. He was at a pie contest just a few months ago, like beginning of May. Now this amazing man is gone. It’s been beautiful to see so many people of all walks of life understand how important he was. We’ve seen simultaneous sadness and happiness — sadness because he’s gone but happiness that we had him to begin with and that we all had the privilege of reading his work. We haven’t lost someone on this level since Huehl Howser. The next time we might see such goodwill in L.A. for someone is whenever Vin Scully passes away.

What else would you like to say about Mr. Gold’s passing?

Just that he was a kind man. He was a kind man to people who didn’t know him, and even kinder to those who did. It’s sad what happened, and I just hope before he passed away that he knew how many people loved him.

PHOTO BY ANNE FISHBEIN
Thank you for inspiring us all through the love of food. Rest In Peace Mr. Gold

2014 Best of LA Weekly Winner
“Best Salad”
2013 Best of LA Weekly Winner
“Best Off-Menu Burger”

Featured on The Food Network, The Cooking Channel and The Travel Channel.

Thank you for your forever love Jonathan Gold. Our family misses you very much.

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FIGHT THE POWER, BE THE POWER

Crime + Punishment exposes the heroic struggle to change policing from within

BY ALAN SCHERSTUHL

Several weeks ago, as BlackKkKlansman debuted in theaters, Boots Riley, the writer-director-radical behind that satirical marvel Sorry to Bother You, tweeted a brash callout. “After 40 years of cop shows and cop movies,” he wrote, “did we really need one more movie where it’s supposed to be about racism but the cops are the actual heroes of the film and the most effective force against racism?”

Riley later deleted this rhetorical question, and he has expressed admiration, elsewhere, for Lee’s film. His concern, it must be noted, is written right into the script of BlackKkKlansman, which is hardly a brief for the Blue Lives Matter crowd. Patrice, the college radical played by Laura Harrier, insists that a minority cop could never force significant change upon a racist police department. Lasting change, she insists, must come from outside. The undercover cop hero never mounts much of an argument against her, and despite the heroics of his Klan-busting unit, BlackKkKlansman is at best ambivalent about the prospect of him transforming the department itself.

Stephen Maing’s searing documentary Crime + Punishment offers a fuller look at the question of what can be accomplished from inside, revealing the personal toll that fighting the system can exact but also the urgent necessity of such battles. Through sensitive portraiture and vigorous investigative reporting, it tracks the struggle of minority police officers within the NYPD to reshape the culture of law enforcement itself. “The reality of it is law enforcement uses black bodies to generate revenue,” bluntly states one officer, Edwin Raymond. He’s a member of what came to be known as the NYPD 12, a band of minority cops who in 2015 sued New York City and its police department over the pressure put on officers by supervisors to meet monthly quotas of arrests and summonses.

Such quotas are illegal, and the NYPD has long insisted its cops are held to none, but Crime + Punishment, shot between 2014 and 2017, again and again demonstrates otherwise. Listen to the surreptitiously recorded sergeant beseeching an officer to score his “collar, collar, collar for the month.” Fume at the printout itemizing the brass’ expectations for office productivity, filed from an office. And witness the cruel tragedy of men and women arrested, ripped from their lives and sent to Rikers Island for months on end, only to see their cases dismissed due to a lack of evidence.

Between 2007 and 2015, a staggering 900,000 summonses issued by NYPD officers were dismissed. Crime + Punishment makes it clear that, whether or not it’s official policy, quota systems have long ruled at the NYPD. The reasons for this prove complex. Raymond insists that it has much to do with the raising of money through fees and fines; he argues that the economic abuses that the police in Ferguson, Missouri, long visited upon their city’s most vulnerable citizens were inspired by the NYPD’s example. Also bound up in this, of course, are the long-gone stop-and-frisk policy and the more durable mandate toward “broken windows” or “quality of life” policing, the aggressive punishment of petty crimes as a preventative measure against serious ones. The calculus is bald: More arrests equals more “productivity” equals more revenue equals more opportunities to insist that the streets have been made more safe.

But safe for who? The officers, citizens and lawyers profiled in Crime + Punishment — like so many nonwhite New Yorkers — all attest to the dehumanizing horrors of years spent under constant threat of arrests and summonses, of detentions and strip searches, of the possibility of confrontations that go wrong. The film’s wrenching centerpiece is the 2014 death of Eric Garner, killed due to “compression of neck, compression of chest and prone positioning during physical restraint by police” who suspected him of selling loose cigarettes.

The case brought by the NYPD 12 has brought some change. As we see in Maing’s film, NYPD commissioner James O’Neill in 2017 sent an email to all officers declaring that the NYPD “does not and will not” use quotas; this past February, all officers were required to undergo a training session that stipulated that quota systems were verboten and called for any cop facing pressure to meet a required number of tickets or arrests to report it to internal affairs. Whether that results in actual change remains to be seen.

What is clear, though, is the cost paid by these whistle-blowing cops. Maing captures them receiving blowback: denied promotions, busted down to miserable street patrols on dead blocks, subjected to disingenuously negative performance reviews, cited for nonsensical violations. One officer, a mother, reveals her fear that her life will be upended by being put on midnight shifts. A retired cop, supportive of the 12, drops by a gathering to lay out for them all the ways in which the top brass can use “performance monitoring" programs against them. When one officer tells the others always to wear a “vest” on duty — as in, bulletproof — it’s impossible to judge whether this precaution is over the top.

For all its investigative rigor and sympathetic character studies, Maing’s film also proves arresting in its compositional, its moody, city-spanning drone montage of videos, emails and texts presented in a manner reminiscent of Apple ads that try desperately to convince us of the joy of the form, so it’s not just tearjerker commercials, though scientists have found that attempting to ape reality’s waning chemistry between actors has only fueled Hollywood filmmakers strive to achieve for what has happened to her. The viewer has to try and keep her upholding the reality: the streets have been made more safe.

BY APRIL WOLFE

THE FILM’S Wrenching CENTERPIECE IS THE 2014 DEATH OF ERIC GARNER, KILLED BY POLICE WHO SUSPECTED HIM OF SELLING LOOSE CIGARETTES.

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For all its investigative rigor and sympathetic character studies, Maing’s film also proves arresting in its compositions, its moody, city-spanning drone photography, its occasional playful looseness. But its power rises from the courage of its subjects, men and women who don’t necessarily want to be fighting the system — they’re eager to be out there in their city, policing in a way they consider just. One heartening sequence finds an NYPD 12 cop attempting to talk down a furious man outside a bodega. The customer spits the foulest of invectives about the shop’s owner but the cop — rather than restraining him or citing him with a drunk-and-disorderly — tells him, again and again, with unflagging warmth, that it’s over and spend your money somewhere else. It’s the answer that BlackKkKlansman’s hero cop never mustered to that college radical’s talk of pigs: Doing the job right is all the justification anyone would ever need for doing the job at all.

CRIME + PUNISHMENT | Directed by Stephen Maing | Hulu/IFC Films | Premieres Aug. 24 on Hulu
CTRL-ALT-DEL
COMPUTER-SCREEN THRILLER SEARCHING
IS A STRONG ARGUMENT FOR LOGGING OFF

BY APRIL WOLFE

D irector Timur Bekmambetov has said that he developed the screen-capture technology responsible for the transtextual horror film Unfriended: Dark Web and the thriller Profile when he realized Americans spend up to half their waking hours online or connected to devices. Now he has produced a feature directed by Aneesh Chaganty called Searching, starring John Cho as a checked-off father combing through his missing daughter’s online footprint, hunting for any clues that might help reveal what has happened to her. The story has some of the hallmarks of the best twisty, turny who-dunits, and that at least kept my interest, but as the action played out via FaceTime and YouTube videos, I couldn’t help but wonder: What’s actually gained by this novel technique of watching a story on a screen on a screen? And every time I wondered this, I imagined how whatever scene I was watching might have been staged and shot and acted out in the middle of the night, David misses three calls from Margot, and then everything goes awry. Now no one knows where Margot has gone, and after digging into her computer, David finds out he may not know his daughter at all. It’s an apt story for today. Think of how many news articles have popped up about parents who didn’t realize their kids had been indoctrinated into Nazism via YouTube.

The film has promise, but the tech keeps getting in the way of the performances. Debra Messing, who plays Detective Vick, is a formidable actress, yet I didn’t believe a word she said, especially when she was just a detached voice on the phone — too clean and too crisp. Why wouldn’t you want to see John Cho and Debra Messing actually vibing off each other in a scene? Chemistry between actors has only fueled Hollywood filmmaking for a century! But the bigger question is why a filmmaker would be so committed to putting what we watch on the small screen on the big screen. What’s the point, when even YouTube is creating content (such as Cobra Kai) that is designed to make you forget you’re watching YouTube?

See, there’s a thing called “co-presence” — that feeling of being there with the people you see on the screen — that most filmmakers strive to achieve for their audience, even if they don’t know that’s what they’re doing. Tech has been trying to make big strides toward co-presence with AR and motion capture, though scientists have found that attempting to ape reality’s dimensions onscreen doesn’t actually trick the human brain. It might look cool, for sure. But we don’t buy it as real. The only thing that does create a feeling of co-presence? Big-screen technology like IMAX or your local Cinerama theater, with traditional filmic cinematography. It’s one of the reasons film lovers are so averse to watching movies with the smooth motion setting on their TV.

In the least effective parts of Searching, David must leave his FaceTime camera on his laptop open, even after calls have ended, so that we can see Cho’s performance. I was yanked out of Searching’s reality every time this happened. Bekmambetov’s purpose for telling stories onscreen is to mirror our reality, but the choices the characters make to keep the drama unfolding before our eyes are at cross-purposes with the producer’s intent. Though the script by Chaganty and Sev Ohanian is taut and surprising, I’ve felt more absorbed in an episode of Murder, She Wrote than I did in this film, because there, it’s story and performance that we’re invited to savor, not just tech and technique.

SEARCHING | Directed by Aneesh Chaganty | Written by Chaganty and Sev Ohanian | Sony Pictures | Citywide

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310-478-3836 ± laemmle.com
**BLUE IGUANA** Back in 1988, a little movie came out called *The Blue Iguana*, where a cool, smart-ass American dude goes overseas, gets into some lucrative criminal activity and faces violent, buffoonish antagonists and a flirtatious, manipulative female fate. Now, here we are 30 years later, and here comes another little movie called *Blue Iguana*, where a cool, smart-ass American dude goes overseas, gets into some lucrative criminal activity and faces violent, buffoonish antagonists and a flirtatious, manipulative female fate. The American time this is recent: Oscar winner Sam Rockwell. He plays a military-trained ex-con who travels to England, along with his equally snarky and faces violent, buffoonish antagonists and a flirtatious, manipulative female fate. The American time this is recent: Oscar winner Sam Rockwell. He plays a military-trained ex-con who travels to England, along with his equally snarky and faces violent, buffoonish antagonists and a flirtatious, manipulative female fate.
SONGWRITER Don’t Look Back it isn’t, but Songwriter — a documentary about Ed Sheeran, co-produced by Apple Music and featuring a boatload of Apple products — is an interesting window into the creation of a modern pop behemoth all the same. Directed by Sheeran’s cousin and best pal Murray Cummings, who has been shooting footage of the redheaded singer since he first picked up a guitar, Songwriter is a closely guarded affair. There’s zip in here about the young Briton’s private life, apart from the fact that he wrote a song about his mum. We’re witness to the recording of his latest album, + (aka Divide), which Team Sheeran does at a luxurious California ranch, an English countryside studio and aboard the Queen Mary 2. That last location is thanks to his diamond-touch producer Benny Blanco (né Levin) and his unwillingness to fly. Blanco’s sanguine demeanor livens up the workmanlike proceedings considerably. His claims that Sheeran’s mild vocal tracks are “fire” may seem dubious at first, but with enough poking at computers, they evolve into the agreeable songs you hear at the drugstore.

A WHALE OF A TALE (OKURIRASAMA: FUTATSU NO SERI NO MONOGATARI) At one point in Megumi Sasaki’s A Whale of a Tale, an American activist protesting the whale-hunting traditions of the people of Taiji, Japan, fumes, “They tell us they have respect and reverence for the animals. But we see none here.” Sasaki immediately cuts to a montage of the whale-themed public art that pervades Taiji, including the many festivals and rituals through which its people constantly honor their source of sustenance. It’s a telling juxtaposition, indicative of the ethnocentrism that often makes such conflicts intractable — and that made The Cove, the Oscar-winning doc that birthed the global outrage against Taiji, somewhat ethically suspect. A Whale of a Tale is a corrective, countering the Cove’s agitprop sensationalism with a measured and nuanced curiosity. Sasaki assembles a well-rounded cast of characters: local fishermen who insist that whaling is their ancestral way of life; historians who highlight America’s role in over-hunting whales in the 20th century and remind us that no endangered species are hunted in Taiji; foreign activists who decry the cruelty of drive-in hunting; even Japanese environmentalists, who argue that the foreign pressure has fueled a nationalistic response in the country, making it harder for them to speak up. This is all easy to understand when you see Americans showing their cameras into the faces of the fishermen, calling them “barbaric” and “dumb little shits.” Together, these voices paint a complex picture of the clash between globalization and a fast-disappearing localism. As Jay Alabaster, a Japan-based AP reporter, says toward the end of the film, it’s not just the plight of whales and dolphins that’s at stake in Taiji: “I think little communities like these are far more endangered.” (Devika Girish)

WHAT KEEPS YOU ALIVE Like its not-quite-done and dusted hero, the horror grinch What Keeps You Alive tries — boy, does it try. Jules (Brittany Allen) has just been dumped by her wife, Jackie (Hannah Emily Anderson), and Jules “dumped” I mean “pushed off a cliff in the middle of the woods during a cabin getaway.” Like the baddie of a dumb action movie, Jules improbably survives, rising from the ground a gnarly wreck. Once her broken bones are snapped back into place, she’s ready to survive the night, the next day, the following night — however long it takes to elude her surprise attacker or, once properly dehumanized and raw, enact some jilted lover’s revenge. What Keeps You Alive’s ability to keep going and going and going is impressive, but season-low-budget genre director Colin Minihan (Extraterrestrial) grounds the twisty shoegangers in something deeper — or at least gives it the old college try. The busted-up Jules has to pull double duty: staying alive while wrestling with feelings of betrayal, of trust shattered, of a relationship that, as Phil Collins would put it, has all been a pack of lies. Quickie B&W flashbacks to the salad days pop into Jules’ head during brief spurts of downtime, each one a splash of hydrogen peroxide on a fresh wound. Minihan’s ambitions are towering, so it’s only right to note that he doesn’t quite get there. The ideas, even the emotions, don’t develop and grow; they just repeat until one or both of our leads have croaked. (That one of them is a one-note psycho doesn’t help, though the role is played with deadpan elan.) We’re left with “Spy vs. Spy” by way of The Revenant, only better directed. (Matt Prigge)

CRAZY RICH ASIANS Lately, Asians in America have gravitated toward the romantic comedy genre, partly to bask in its flights of fancy and desire — and, quietly, to challenge stereotypes of a submissive, homogenous group of robotic workers. Nowhere has that been more apparent than the anticipation of Jon M. Chu’s Crazy Rich Asians. Scandal ensues when the charming Nick (Henry Golding), secretly heir to a Chinese-Singaporean real estate fortune, brings his accomplished, lower-class Chinese-American girlfriend, Rachel (Fresh Off the Boat’s Constance Wu), home for his best friend’s wedding. While the film attempts to situate identity as its emotional heart, Rachel’s sense of self isn’t easily shaken. “I’m so Chinese, I’m an economics professor with lactose intolerance,” Rachel says when her free-spirited mother (Tan Kheng Hua) worries she’s too American for the old money. If Rachel does struggle with her identity, Chu’s pacing leaves little room to investigate these nuances. Instead, Wu is tasked with delivering sentimental monologues about her background in a believable way. When Nick’s mother Eleanor (Michelle Yeoh) and her mother-in-law (Lisa Lu) try to cast doubt on Rachel, by way of a long-buried family secret, the drama and subsequent fallout feel manufactured. Rachel’s cat-and-mouse game to win Eleanor’s respect is the most enjoyable thread of the film. The opulence of the clothes and jewelry begins to take on the quality of an advertisement; of what and for whom is up for debate. But these images are too aware of the ones that have come before it; they’re diametrically opposed to stereotypes of Asians laboring or laundering clothes. For all its carnival-like antics, Crazy Rich Asians is all too aware of its own spectacle. (Alaina Mohamed)


LA WEEKLY // August 24-30, 2018 // www.laweekly.com
**LA WEEKLY**

**FRI. AUGUST 24**
- **TOM GUN LIVE**

**FRI. AUGUST 24**
- **PEACHES N’ CREAM PRESENTS: A 2000’S R&B AND HIP-HOP PARTY**

**SAT. AUGUST 25**
- **KEVIN SAUNDERTON DOC MARTIN XTENDED SET/SUBLEVEL LIVE**
- **Mr. Koolaid**
  - **SUBLEVEL: KEVIN SAUNDERTON + DOC MARTIN XTENDED**

**SAT. AUGUST 25**
- **TOM GUN LIVE**
  - **A DOPE AZZ PARTY**

**THUR. AUGUST 24**
- **PEACHES N’ CREAM PRESENTS: A 2000’S R&B AND HIP-HOP PARTY**

**FRI. AUGUST 24**
- **TOM GUN LIVE**
  - **MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE VS. GOOD**

**SAT. AUGUST 25**
- **REGGAE LEGEND**
- **PAT KELLY LIVE IN CONCERT**

**SAT. AUGUST 25**
- **WAREHOUSE LA PRESENTS LOVE PARADE**

**SAT. AUGUST 25**
- **COMING SOON:**
  - **8/26**
    - **CUMBIATRON! CITY ON FIRE**
  - **8/30**
    - **VIRTUAL REALITY TOUR**
  - **8/30**
    - **ABSTRACT, RYAN OAKS, DYLAN REESE**
  - **8/31**
    - **EMO & ALT ROCK KARAOKE (LIVE BAND)**
  - **9/1**
    - **XCELERATED DTR TAKEOVER FEAT. SOUL DUTTA, JAYLINE, MASSEO, REPLICANT & SUB KILLAZ**
  - **9/6**
    - **MONGO HOLLYWOOD**
  - **9/6**
    - **JAMAICAN JERKFEST LA 2018**
  - **9/6**
    - **HASEEB**
  - **9/7 – 9/8**
    - **SOUL INVASION WEEKENDER XII**
  - **9/7**
    - **DABRYE + KADENCE**
  - **9/7**
    - **W/PREFUSE 73, TEEBS, RAS G MONEY MAKIN MATT**
  - **9/9**
    - **DREAMVILLE, SHAWN BARRON, KARL RUBIN, SWAE LEE DRAM**
  - **9/10**
    - **TOY LIGHT, ANGELS DUST, TRIP ADVISOR**
  - **9/12**
    - **OMB PEEZY**
  - **9/14**
    - **FATMA AL QADIRI PRESENTS ‘SHANEERA’ (LIVE A/V SET)**
    - **ZOMBIE NATION**
    - **TOM GUN LIVE**
    - **OXBOW**
    - **FAMILY FUNCTION**
    - **MUSTASCH**
    - **REVOCATION, EXHUMED, RIVERS OF NIHIW, VAUTJA**
  - **9/21**
    - **HILLAHURTZ**
    - **HILLAHURTZ**
    - **Revolution, EXHUMED, rivers of nihiw, Vautja**
  - **9/29**
    - **NEROZ & INSIDIOUS**
    - **HOCICO**
  - **9/30**
    - **BEATKITCHEN RELEASE PARTY**
    - **MICHAEL CONSTANTINO**
  - **9/31**
    - **OLIVER DOLLAR W/ BRILLSTEIN & COLOUR VISION**
    - **BASS-TRAP TAKEOVER: BAPTIST, SUNNY SUN**
    - **AFRO GOGO:**
      - **THE AFRICAN FIESTA**
    - **9/1**
      - **LATIN BASHMENT ANNIVERSARY**
    - **9/1**
      - **SHABBAAAAAA**
    - **9/2**
      - **LATIN BASHMENT ANNIVERSARY**
    - **9/6**
      - **BENNY THE BUTCHER**
    - **9/8**
      - **WAKANDA PROM PARTY**
    - **9/9**
      - **COAST 2 COAST LIVE!**
      - **LOS ANARCHY RADIO PRESENTS VENICE BEACH, THE LEGENDARY**
    - **9/13**
      - **FLOR AMARGO**
      - **EMO & ALT ROCK KARAOKE: DETUNED DRAMA CLUB PEDRO**

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BY JONATHAN GOLD

August '88: Eazy E props his Air Jordans up on a desk, stares at the ceiling, and leaves the room whenever the beeper on his belt goes off, which is often. He answers most of the reporter’s questions with a non-committal mmmmm; he could as well be talking to a parole officer as a writer from the street. Eazy’s group NWA — Niggas With Attitude — has just finished mixing down “Gangsta Gangsta,” a breathtakingly violent, vulgar gangster-rap jam that is their first single in more than a year. In the office of the record company president, Dre, the producer, slaps in a tape; it’s the first time anybody has heard the song outside the lab. The angry voice cuts through the room over a funky Steve Arrington guitar riff. “... Out the door, but we don’t quit. /Ren said, ‘Let’s start some shit’ /I got a shotgun, and here’s the plot:/Takin’ niggas out with a flurry of buckshot ...”

Fifteen sets of jaws go slack, including their manager’s, their publicist’s, and the president’s. Fifteen sets of eyes stare at the carpet, the ceiling, the California Raisins gold records on the walls, anywhere but the cassette deck. The white people look shocked, the black people embarrassed. A drive-time jock rubs his temple hard. One promotion guy cackles in the corner, muttering, “I love to work dirty records. I love to work dirty records.”

Eazy smirks. The hooks are tight, the rhymes are tough, the rapping right on key — it’s a perfect hardcore rap track... and unthinkable.

February '89: On the morning his solo record was certified gold, Eazy E stood blinking in the well-kept backyard of his mother’s house in Compton, 15 minutes south of downtown. He is tiny, his neat Jheri curls just so beneath a black Raiding cap, the gold chain around his neck thick as his frail wrists. He slouched, eyes puffy, as if his body couldn’t believe it wasn’t still in bed. He and his friends in NWA had hung out at a Bobby Brown gig, holding court, until late. Two days earlier they had hosted a segment of Yo! MTV Raps (though MTV would refuse to play their video); later that afternoon they will be interviewed by Word Up!, a black-teen pinup magazine; the next day they will fly to New York for something called the Urban Teen Awards.

Eazy, who signs checks as Eric Wright, is sole owner of Ruthless Records, an independent hip-hop production company that releases music through Atlantic, Elektra/Asylum and Priority, a compilation label run by a former K-tel executive who had never before dealt with an act, unless you count the California Raisins. The Ruthless touch, the raw, danceable Compton street sound, is hot, and each of the label’s three Dre-produced rap albums — by Eazy, NWA and J.J. Fad — is certified gold, well on its way to platinum. This spring there’ll be three more, plus an unexpurgated NWA video album and, for squeamish retailers (and the armed services), a self-censored version of Straight Outta Compton minus “Fuck the Police,” half the violence and all the cuss words. (The censored version of Eazy-Duz-It reportedly accounts for close to 200,000 of the roughly 900,000 copies sold.) The final figure hasn’t been released yet, but Ruthless is rumored to have shopped around the Dr. Dre-produced album by rapper D.O.C. for a cool million, and Sylvia Rhone of Atlantic A&R snapped it up. When this summer’s projected tour with Ice-T fell through last week, Eazy arranged a 60-city Compton Posse tour himself, with NWA headlining over MC Hammer and Too Short.

Each of the five members of NWA writes songs for each of the Ruthless albums, whether dance, rap or squishy soul. Each member of NWA — young Compton men who all grew up in the same couple of blocks — will probably earn in the six figures this year. Eazy’s manager, Jerry Heller, who was instrumental in breaking Elton John and Pink Floyd, supposes $75 million in retail sales for Ruthless next year might be about right, and thinks Eazy might be the most important black-music entrepreneur since Motown’s Berry Gordy.

“I’ve been in the music business 30 years,” Heller says. “Eazy is the most Machiavellian guy I’ve ever met. He instinctively knows about power and how to control people. The couple of times I’ve gone against him, I’ve been wrong. And his musical instincts are infallible. In a few years, Ruthless could be as big as A&M.”

Today, N.W.A is being photographed. “If this is going to be on the cover, we should find us an alley or something,” Eazy says. “Man, if we get us an alley for this picture, niggas gonna know we drove to an alley in a Benz,” Ice Cube says. “Let’s do it right here in the back yard.”

They pose, first by the stagnant green water of a fountain, then near some steps, assuming a formation familiar from every published photo of the band.

“What, no AK?” somebody asks. Eazy looks disappointed. “Shit, man, this is my mother’s house. All that stuff...
There's a principle involved," Ice Cube says. "The Weekly wouldn't run a picture of a baby getting its head cut off; NWA wouldn't do a pop song"

Hardness arose as a rap aesthetic at about the same time much of the music became essentially suburban. While artists from Harlem and the Bronx were still producing good-time party jams, middle-class kids from Queens and Long Island began to form the contemporary image of the rapper as an articulate gangster with a chip on his shoulder, a young black man hard by choice. (Every rapper suburban middle-class Def Jam mogul Rick Rubin ever had a hand in producing is hard.

Ice-T's pose was a little calculated, his approach to rhyme closer to pastiche than innovation, he still developed a national reputation as the hardest rapper Pooh; and especially Eazy E and N.W.A, who came across as active gangsters, not world-weary alumni.

In '86 Ice Cube, then a 16-year-old neighbor and follower of the Wrecking Kru, wrote a cussword-packed song for HBO, a long-forgotten New York rap posse, who rejected it as too West Coast. Dre, the Kru's DJ, along with his aide-de-camp Yella, convinced his neighbor Easy to try the rhyme. E put on a pair of dark shades, ejected his friends from the studio, and rapped for the first time. Later, he sunk a few thousand dollars into getting the 12-inch record pressed and released.

Depending on who you talk to and when, the seed money may or may not have come from illicit drug profits. Last August, Easy asked me where I thought he got it. Last week, Dre refused to comment. Ren said, "Eazy had a cousin that was runnin' everything around here, man, and when his cousin got killed, he was left with all these responsibilities of the street. So many people was getting killed, I guess he realized he had to get out. He invested his money, you know, in the record business. Like he says, that's no myth." Eazy silenced him with a glance.

"I know the drug thing sounds glamorous, but I wish they wouldn't keep saying that," Jerry Heller says. "It wasn't all that much money. And IRS guys will read this thing, too."

"Boyz-N-the-Hood," five and a half minutes of cheerful vignettes from the short, happy life of a ghetto hoodlum, became the cornerstone of the California street sound, one of the first West Coast rap records rooted as much in the hardcore New York break style as in Kraftwerk. Easy's rapping is a drawling blend of Woody Woodpecker and the vicious, whiskey-smooth tenor of Rakim: a superb character voice. The song was considerably slower than the party jams put out by local groups like the Kru and the Dream Team, and the production was knowingly raw — you can pick out Dre's tinkly two-note keyboard riff and exuberantly tinny beatbox coming from a car radio two blocks away. A lot of people hated the record, because while the urban-gangster life had been romanticized since Capone, nobody had ever made it sound quite so much fun before.

"It is fun," Eazy says.

N.W.A got an opening slot on the West Coast dates of the Salt-N-Pepa tour in the fall of '87. KDAY, the local hip-hop station, put "Boyz-N-the-Hood" into rotation before the L.A. date, and the record was requested often enough to jump to No. 1 on their playlist for almost a month. Ice Cube wrote two more: "8 Ball," a paean to dope, and especially Eazy E and N.W.A, who came across as active gangsters, not world-weary alumni.

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When a policeman appears in an N.W.A song, he’s got Ren face-down on the pavement in front of his friends. In the course of an N.W.A song, crimes are punished—women are faithless, and somebody else’s stupidity inevitably leads to retribution, which leads straight to jail for keeps. N.W.A choose not to live in the outportance that rap is all about — their most controversial song, “F*ck tha Police,” is the ultimate expression of hip-hop weakness in the face of police power, the sort of snarling anti-cop rant left unsaid until the black-and-white is around the corner and safely out of earshot. “F*ck tha Police” isn’t a metaphor for anything.

When Eazy strutted among the turmoil, center stage and the cops were called in shouting “F-Fuck the Police!” in unison. and damages but, according to band members, still pays the installments with rubber checks. (“They ganked us, man, straight fucked us with no grease,” Eazy says.) After this, Ice Cube left the group for a year to study mechanical drafting.

Early last year, adjunct N.W.A member Arabian Prince produced a novelty single for some hangers-on, J.J. Fad, as a side project: “Supersonic.” The single sold half a million copies on Dream Team Records. Every record company in the world was after the album. Eazy leveraged J.J. Fad away, licensed them to Atco, and had Dre produce the album, which also went gold, for the aptly named Ruthless Records. “It’s what we call a ghetto L.B.O,” N.W.A publicist Pat Charbonnet says. “Eazy’s the Gordon Gekko of Compton.” Arabian left the group. The Priority pickup deal was signed, and Eazy recruited an old friend, Ren, to write three songs — “Radio,” “Eazy-Duz-It,” and a brilliantly funny bank-heist fantasy called “Ruthless Villain” — for a single. Covering his bets, Eazy hired KDAY DJ Greg Mack to do an intro to “Radio” à la Parliament-Funkadelic, and signed KDAY morning-jock Russ Parr’s comedy-rap act Bobby Jimmy & the Critters to Ruthless/Priority. (No ulterior motive is implied here, but the move probably didn’t hurt the record’s chances for a decent rota- tion.) The “Radio” 12-inch sold 140-odd thousand copies. Ren joined N.W.A, wrote much of Eazy’s album and, when Ice Cube returned last September, helped to write Straight Outta Compton. Eazy-Duz-It went platinum but was largely unremarked upon. N.W.A coined the phrase “reality rap,” which guilty largely unremarked upon. N.W.A coined.

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The vibe, when it’s not hardcore pissed-off, is easy, merry, casual, fun, as if the guys were just cutting loose in the studio in front of a live mike, the sort of carefully scripted heavy-bottom street-cornerlive Parliament-Funkadelic did so well in the ‘70s. (Songs are punctuated with staticky comments from the engineer’s booth, the three of rewriting tape, expressions of pleasure at the unexpected in-studio appearance of Eazy-E — on Eazy’s own record. It sounds like a bunch of guys sitting around (listening to a record, not making one.) A song might take its form from a call-in radio show or an interview with a probation officer.

There are precedents for this sort of thing — Starsky and Hutch, Iceberg Slim’s novels Pimp and Trick Baby, Leroy and Skillet, over-the-top blaxploitation pictures like The Mack and Dolomite — although nobody ever assumed that Redd Foxx or Rudy Ray Moore had any moral authority over the nation’s youth. Take out the cussing and it turns out the gangster crime-spree narrative of “Gangsta Gangsta” is nothing the network censors would blue-pencil from an average episode of Wiseguy. The lyrics of Satan-metal bands like Slayer are unquestionably more violent.

N.W.A’s canny self-identification as a ruthless Compton street gang, though, is close enough to blur the knife’s edge between streetwise fantasy and funky cold experience. Excruciatingly detailed accounts of a burglary, a liquor store holdup, a bank robbery or a drive-by shooting make equally uncomfortable both the people who think N.W.A might not be fronting and the people who’re sure that they are.

A prominent Crip hung up on a journalist friend when she asked him about N.W.A; he thought they were just talkers (giving gangbanging a bad name, perhaps). A local rap promoter who’s been active in L.A. hip-hop as long as it’s existed swears N.W.A are not really active gangsters, gun-crazy, singing ‘caine. (He’s almost certainly wrong, by the way.) To celebrate the Eazy E and N.W.A albums last fall, Priority threw a pre-release bash at the World, a not-very-swanky disco in the Beverly Center. The doorman, thinking N.W.A were a bunch of thugs, refused entry to the club for their own party. Eazy, at least a foot shorter than the doorman, threw a punch. N.W.A never made it inside.

N.W.A themselves, although they insist they know gangbangers but are not them- selves gangbangers, are remarkably cagy about all sorts of basic facts: age, school, girlfriends, where they live, what they did before N.W.A.

It says something about who they are that what they’re trying to hide could either be criminal records or solid B averages and high school diplomas. “You’re not bringing up our skeletons,” Eazy says, cocking a finger. “That’s dead.”

March ‘89: The day MTV banned their
“Straight Outta Compton” video, N.W.A is hanging out at the Torrance recording studio that’s the seat of the Ruthless empire. They are all surly — they were counting on the video, a brutal vérité gang-sweep scenario directed by Australian Rupert Wainwright, to put them over the way that Tone-Loc’s did — and upset about a Compton flare-up between the Piru Bloods and the Atlantic Drive Crips. They’ve lost friends over the weekend. Concert-volume beatbox riffs whump from specially built 18-inch playback woofers in the engineers’ booth where Dre is recording the B-side for the next single, a stripped-down jam called “Give It to Dre.” He hunches over a record on a turntable like a studio guitarist over his ax and grimly scratches in the break time. He pulls a scrawled-on sheet of three-ring paper out of his pocket and walks into the studio. Yella rolls the tape, and Ice Cube starts to rap. His staccato drawl is devastating, playful, spontaneous yet on; he knows exactly which syllables to punch and which to roll; he’s comfortable and in control, although he seems to have written the rhyme only minutes before. It’s like hearing Clifford Jordan try out a new standard on tenor. It’s clear that Ice Cube would be a star rapper with any producer in the country.

In the waiting room, Ren finishes up another interview and starts talking to his buddy Laylaw about Compton. Laylaw has heard this story many times:

“I lost a lot of friends to gangbang-ing, man. When you been kickin’ it with somebody, and you hear they dead, you think like, ‘That was my homeboy, that was stupid.’ The night I got shot, I was in front of a friend’s house just kickin’ it. You know, we wasn’t doin’ nothing. It was one of my buddies, though, who was into gangbang-bang; he was into it. The Crips were over here, right? And the Pirus were over from across the boulevard; I guess they came and spotted his car, which was parked where all of us were at, like, 2 in the morning. My friend says, ‘Come on, man, let’s go watch some movies.’ All of us walking in the house, they just start blat-blat-blat-blat — shooting and shit — and I got hit. And you know, after I get shot I was like, ‘Man, damn what they shoot me for? I didn’t do nothing.’ It’s all because my friend go around shooting people. I got his bullet, man, because a bullet don’t have a name on the motherfucker. Since then I haven’t wanted to be around my friend too much anymore. But when we put this shit out on video and on records, ain’t nobody want to see this shit. The video ain’t half of a half of what go on for real. It’s just a little sweep, no guns. MTV’s into all that crazy devil-worshiping shit. ... To me there’s more violence on a motherfucking cartoon than in our music. Little kid see a cartoon character with a gun, he going to want to carry a gun, right? GI Joe, all that shit. But they aren’t even playing our video on the MTV rap show.”

This article was originally published in the May 5-11, 1989, issue of L.A. Weekly.


**The Rap Show**

Celebrating their new album, *Hypochondriac* (Epitaph Records), with a live set and signing!

**Mac DeMarco**

@ **HOLLYWOOD PALLADIUM**

A charismatic showman, noted prankster and a friendly, relaxed leader, Mac DeMarco is one of the premier acts in indie rock today. After an auspicious six-year relationship that produced two near-classic albums (2012’s 2 and 2014’s *Salad Days*), DeMarco announced this month that he is leaving Captured Tracks — he has been the Brooklyn imprint’s marquee name — to found his own label, which he has ingenuously dubbed Mac’s Record Label. The musician also has plans for his first solo tour after this current run of shows, which feature his full band. DeMarco will be coming off a three-night stand at the Teragram to play tonight at the Palladium. —Matt Minor

**Swingin Utters, Kevin Seconds**

@ **ALEX’S BAR**

NorCal punks the Swingin’ Utters have been around since 1987, although, to be fair, they took a good long break between 2003 and 2010. That hiatus clearly did them good; the 2011 full-length *Here, Under Protest* is a worthy headliner, although Bay Area great E-40 could just as easily top the bill. Fabulous saw five albums break into the Top 10 between 2001 and 2009, with *Loso’s Way* peaking in the No. 1 spot, so his set will be a crowd-pleaser too. And we didn’t even talk about 2010. That his twist yet, never mind openers Suga Free and Spice 1. Unbelievable. —Brett Callwood

**Punk Rock BBQ**

@ **HARVELLE’S**

The Punk Rock BBQ was based for many years at the West L.A. bar Liquid Kitty, but it has more recently been held at Santa Monica blues club Harvelle’s. As always, though, the afternoon shows are free and generally feature veterans from the early punk-rock scene. Today’s lineup includes such South Bay luminaries as Lawndale, who take their surf-music instrumentalists into unpredictable sonic spaces, and Mike Watt & the Secondmen, a hard-hitting bass-drums-organ trio with Pete Mazich and Jerry Trebloc. The show is highlighted by a relatively rare set from The Last, the Hermosa Beach band whose late-’70s collisions of power pop and punk influenced such seemingly unrelated acolytes as The Descendents, The Banges and The Gun Club. The Last’s poignant bewitching early single “She Don’t Know Why I’m Here” is often covered on stage by Watt, Plus, Pedal Strike and Herbert. —Falling James

**Yes**

@ **WHISKY A GO-GO**

This Yes set at the Whisky offers a rare chance to see the British prog-rock titans in an extremely intimate setting. There might be a bit of chaos on the Strip that night; tickets are available only on the day of the performance, so a few proggy fans may be imitating Walmart shoppers on Black Friday. For those who do manage to get in, it will surely be a special night. This current lineup features frontman Jon Anderson, guitarist Trevor Rabin and one-of-a-kind keyboardist Rick Wakeman. No Steve White, Alan White or Geoff Downes, who are off in another version of Yes. That’s centres on charismatic vocalist Carolina Oliveros, whose fiery exhortations are pumped up by bassist Prince of Queens, inventive drummer Dilemamourna and guitarist Niño Lento. “Pachanga” is a whirlwind of Prince of Queen’s febrile synth patterns, while “Cachimba” is an artier fusion of circular grooves and Lento’s spidery streaks of guitar. “Congo” is buttressed by Dilemamourna’s percussive interplay against a spacy dub backdrop. —Falling James

**Combo Chimbita**

@ **THE GETTY CENTER**

Combo Chimbita are based in New York, but their music draws from an entire universe of styles. While there are elements of cumbia, Caribbean rhythms and reggae on their 2017 album, *Abya Yala*, the group don’t strictly adhere to the formal limitations of world music. Such tracks as “No Regress” infuse traditional impulses with wildly psychedelic and electronic flourishes. Much of the band’s music centers on charismatic vocalist Carolina Oliveros, whose fiery exhortations are pumped up by bassist Prince of Queens, inventive drummer Dilemamourna and guitarist Niño Lento. “Pachanga” is a whirlwind of Prince of Queen’s febrile synth patterns, while “Cachimba” is an artier fusion of circular grooves and Lento’s spidery streaks of guitar. “Congo” is buttressed by Dilemamourna’s percussive interplay against a spacy dub backdrop. —Falling James

**The Gettys**

@ **THE FRIGHTS**

The Gettys are off in another version of Yes. That’s centres on charismatic vocalist Carolina Oliveros, whose fiery exhortations are pumped up by bassist Prince of Queens, inventive drummer Dilemamourna and guitarist Niño Lento. “Pachanga” is a whirlwind of Prince of Queen’s febrile synth patterns, while “Cachimba” is an artier fusion of circular grooves and Lento’s spidery streaks of guitar. “Congo” is buttressed by Dilemamourna’s percussive interplay against a spacy dub backdrop. —Falling James

**David Byrne**

@ **SHRINE AUDITORIUM**

At Coachella in April, elder statesman David Byrne performed two triumphant sets in front of a largely youthful crowd, reveling in a potent combo of Talking Heads nostalgia and his still entirely relevant solo career. American Utopia, Byrne’s 11th solo studio album, dropped in March and new tunes such as “I Dance Like This” and “Everybody’s Coming to My House” went down nearly as well as “Once in a Lifetime.” Since then, Byrne has continued to tour, using the same stage setup and performance art routines, which many fans believe is Byrne’s best all-round show since the acclaimed Talking Heads concert film Stop Making Sense. One of music’s true one-offs and genuinely unique voices, any chance to see Byrne live should be grabbed with two hands. Ibeyi also plays. —Brett Callwood

**Daphne Guinness**

Daphne Guinness celebrates her latest album, *Daphne & The Golden Chord*. The solo project of Victoria Bergsman - the band’s 10th album, kinda ironical, was a clear statement of intent. Here, Under Protest, their seventh in total, was a clear statement of intent. —Brett Callwood

**The Fright’s**

@ **ALEX’S BAR**

Singer-songwriter Kevin Seconds has been with the band since 1987. He’s been with them through thick and thin, and during his tenure with the group has demonstrated a knack for writing hooks that stick. He recently returned to the band’s lineup after a brief hiatus, which initially left many fans concerned for the band’s future. —Brett Callwood

**Swingin Utters**

@ **ALEX’S BAR**

NorCal punks the Swingin’ Utters have been around since 1987, although, to be fair, they took a good long break between 2003 and 2010. That hiatus clearly did them good; the 2011 full-length *Here, Under Protest*, their seventh in total, was a clear statement of intent. Everything since then has followed suit, and the end of August sees the release of the band’s 10th album, kinda ironical, was a clear statement of intent. —Brett Callwood

**Bootleg Theater**

The project of Victoria Bergsman - the band’s 10th album, kinda ironical, was a clear statement of intent. Here, Under Protest, their seventh in total, was a clear statement of intent. —Brett Callwood

**Switch**

@ **SHRINE AUDITORIUM**

The lead-off single, “Human Potential,” is a banger. Kevin Seconds declares on “Info Trip,” from his 2016 album, *Prey for the Devil*. Throughout the record, the W态度 name uses reference to prey to flip stereotypes about people living in the inner city. In Bambu’s worldview, rappers, gang members and other defiant people of color usually are treated as prey by the police and political establishment. “But the predator is sticking all my homies in the cage,” he observes before insisting, “This is not the last breath of a martyr.” The Filipino-American performer grew up amid violence but, unlike less authentic rappers, he seldom glorifies it. Tonight, Bambu previews new material from *Exorcising a Demon, Article I: A Few Left*, an upcoming project with his longtime producer and collaborator, DJ Phatrick. —Falling James

**West Coast Underground Tour**

The West Coast Underground Tour takes it to the next level. The tour features a mix of established and rising artists, showcasing the diversity of underground music in the region. —Brett Callwood

**The Gettys**

@ **THE FRIGHTS**

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always a bit awkward, but what can you do? Anderson says that whatever he does is Yes, and when he has Rabin and Wakeman in tow, few fans will argue. —Brett Callwood

mon 8/27

Zane Carney
@ TROUBADOUR
Zane Carney has just picked up this new monthly residency at the Troubadour, and he’s earned it. While working with John Mayer, his band Carney, and on the Broadway production Spiderman: Turn Off the Dark, he has developed into an accomplished and exciting guitarist and performer. The list of people he’s worked with is as long as it is impressive: Stevie Wonder, Bono and The Edge, Keith Urban and Don Was, to name just a few. He’s also opened for U2, Fergie and The Black Crowes. The guy has already crammed so much into his career, and one has to believe that there’s much more to come. His debut EP, Confluence, and instrumental album Amalgam are available now, and expect to hear tracks from both of those at this iconic venue as the months roll on. R Finn and Sophia Pfister also play. —Brett Callwood

Fiona Grey
@ MOROCCAN LOUNGE
Los Angeles can always use a new dance-pop goddess, and Fiona Grey was born to inherit the role. The Chicago native looks like a star, adding a visual flair to her live performances with her elegant ballgowns, elaborately lavish makeup and dramatically assured stage presence. In many ways, Grey is like a glittery silver disco ball come to life, radiating and spinning reflected light like diamonds all around the dance floor. "Dirty Dream," a new single from her upcoming EP, Cult Classic, Grey confides, "I had a dirty dream ... about our fucked-up love affair," but she doesn’t wallow in self-pity for long before she’s swept away by the track’s infectious disco groove and euphoric chorus. Grey previously revealed glimpses of her pop potential as a teenage diva on Striped Heart and Belladonna, as well as a more recent and languorously intoxicating interpretation of Blondie’s “Heart of Glass.” —Falling James

wed 8/29

Sam Smith, Beth Ditto
@ STAPLES CENTER
Almost a year after the release of his commercially and critically acclaimed second album, The Thrill of it All, Sam Smith brings his arena show to Los Angeles’ Staples Center. A chart-topping, multiple award winner (Grammys, Billboards, Brits and Academy), Smith has found his niche in heartbreak, his androgynous, soulful voice handily lending itself to the left-lover playlist. Not unlike Smith’s debut album, In the Lonely Hour, The Thrill of it All is a succession of ballads, which sometimes feel as if they are just one long, drawn-out lament pushed along by many sweeping orchestral flourishes. Smith’s support artist, one-time Gossip frontperson Beth Ditto, is more than his vocal match. Ditto’s brash and ballsy belting, which sparkle with pop reflections off a disco ball, are a great foil for Smith’s sad-sack croons. Also Wednesday, Aug. 29. —Lily Moayeri

thu 8/30

Alice Bag
@ LEVITT PAVILION
Unlike many of her peers in the late-'70s Los Angeles punk scene, Alice Bag continues to reinvent herself in numerous guises and musical incarnations, including Stay at Home Bomb, Cholita!, Las Tres, Castration Squad and Phag (a folk duo with Phranc), among others. While the former Alicia Armendariz still spits out early Bags classics such as “Survive” and “Babylonian Gorgon” with her current band, she’s more likely to sink her teeth into the more timely and relevant songs from her 2016 self-titled album and 2018’s Blueprint. And while she recounted her fascinating adventures in two different outspoken and revelatory memoirs, Violence Girl and Pipe Bomb for the Soul, Ms. Bag tends to use her past experiences only as a starting point to emphasize her current battles against racism and sexism. —Falling James


1720: 1720 E. 16th St., L.A. No Parents, Junkie, The Paranoys, Fri., Aug. 24, 8 p.m.

The Teragram Ballroom: 1234 W. Seventh St., L.A. Mac DeMarco, Fri., Aug. 24, 9 p.m., $42. Napalm Death, Captive Decapitation, Thrown Into Exile, Tue., Aug. 28, 6:30 p.m., $25.


4th Street Vine: 2142 E. Fourth St., Long Beach. The Things, The Two Tens, Sat., Aug. 25, 7 p.m.


Largo at the Coronet: 586 N. La Cienega Blvd., L.A. Robyn Hitchcock, Thu., Aug. 30, 8:30 p.m., $30.


The Love Song: 450 S. Main St., L.A. Tommy Alexander, Taylor Kingman, Balto, Fri., Aug. 24, 9 p.m., free. Chelsea Brown, Anthony Cozzi, Sam Burton, Sat., Aug. 25, 9 p.m., free. Greg Felden, Mon., Aug. 27, 8 p.m. The Contraptions, Tue., Aug. 28, 8:30 p.m. Spano, Thu., Aug. 30, 8 p.m., $3.


COUNTRY & FOLK


J.B.’S BEER & WINE BAR, FARMERS MARKET: 6333 W. Third St., L.A. Dane Box, Sat., Aug. 25, 7 p.m., free.

JOE’S GREAT AMERICAN BAR & GRILL: 4311 W. Magnolia Blvd., Burbank. Mary White & Magnolia Drawl, Fri., Aug. 24, 9 p.m. Rachel Rizner & the Resonators, Sun., Aug. 26, 9 p.m. The John Reynolds Quartet, Mon., Aug. 27, 9 p.m. —Falling James

DANCE CLUBS

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


SATURDAY, AUG. 25

ATTILA, SUICIDE SILENCE: The Fonda Theatre.

ERASURE: With Reed & Caroline, 7 p.m. The Wiltern.

J. COLE: 7:30 p.m. Staples Center. —Falling James

CRO MARK DE CLIVE-LOWE: With Dwight Trible, Ras G, Linafoma, 7 p.m., free. Levitt Pavilion at MacArthur Park, 2230 W. Sixth St., L.A.

CRO THE PUNCH BROTHERS: With Madison Cunningham, 9 p.m. The Theatre at Ace Hotel.

CRO THE RAP SHOW: With T.I., E-40, Fabolous, Juvenile, Scarface, Twista, 8 p.m., $35.50-$125. —Falling James

SUNDAY, AUG. 26

CRO THE ANNUAL JOHNNY RAMONE TRIBUTE: With a screening of “The Ramones,” 6:45 p.m. Hollywood Forever Cemetery, 6000 Santa Monica Blvd., L.A.


CRO ERASURE: With Reed & Caroline. The Wiltern. —Falling James

SUNDAY, AUG. 26

ATLANTIC'S ANNUAL JOHNNY RAMONE TRIBUTE: With a screening of “The Ramones,” 6:45 p.m. Hollywood Forever Cemetery, 6000 Santa Monica Blvd., L.A.


ERASURE: With Reed & Caroline. The Wiltern. —Falling James

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 29

ALICE IN CHAINS: 8 p.m. Hollywood Palladium.

GEORGE BENSON: With Ledisi, 8 p.m. Hollywood Bowl.

ROB ZOMBIE, MARILYN MANSON: 7 p.m. FivePoint Amphitheatre, 14800 Chino, Irvine.

CRO SAM SMITH, BETH DITTO: 8 p.m., $35.50-$125. Staples Center. See Music Pick.

SHAKIRA: 7:30 p.m., $50.50-$180.50. The Forum.

THURSDAY, AUG. 30

CRO ALICE BAG: With Generation Suicida, 7 p.m. Levitt Pavilion at MacArthur Park. See Music Pick.

CRO GEORGE CLINTON & PARLIAMENT: With Ibeyi, 8 p.m., $39.50-$549.50. Hollywood Bowl. See GoLA.

PHASE ENSEMBLE: The winds-piano quartet sets forth works by Robert Muczynski, George N. Gianopoulos and Gregory Wannamaker, Wed., Aug. 29, 8 p.m. free. Mimoda Studio Theatre, 5774 W. Pico Blvd., L.A.

CRO TRIO CÉLESTE: The strings-piano ensemble roams across Tchaikovsky’s epic and lyrical Trio in A minor, Op. 50, Sun., Aug. 26, 6 p.m., free. LACMA, Bing Theater, 5905 Wilshire Blvd., L.A. —Falling James

For more listings, please go to laweekly.com.

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