PHOTOGRAPHER “SUITCASE JOE” GETS CLOSE-UP WITH THE CITY’S HOMELESS

NO EASY ANSWERS

More than money and new housing, it will take a collective change of heart to end L.A.’s homelessness problem

BY SEBASTIAN KEMPKENS
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L.A. Phil plays a Stanley Kubrick Sound Odyssey, L.A. Ballet kicks off Nutcracker season, Karina Longworth and Edgar Wright talk film and more to do and see in L.A. this week.

FEATU FE...11
We take a trip through the past to shed light on Skid Row’s future. BY SEBASTIAN KEMPKENS.

EAT & DRINK...17
Piero Selvaggio is shuttering Valentino and looking to a new venture in Orange County. BY MICHELE STUEVEN.

CULTURE...23
Scenes from a mall: The Beverly Center unveils its revamp. BY LINA LECARO.

ARTS...24
An exhibit at the Huntington Library celebrates Los Angeles’ forgotten architecture. BY JORDAN RIEFE.

FILM...25
YOLANDA MACHADO praises Alfonso Cuaron’s latest, Roma, and BILGE EBIRI reviews period piece The Favourite, plus other movies OPENING THIS WEEK, and YOUR WEEKLY MOVIE TO-DO LIST.

MUSIC...28
Guitar goddess Nita Strauss will rip you to shreds. BY BRETT CALLWOOD. Plus: listings for ROCK & POP, JAZZ & CLASSICAL and more.

ON THE COVER: Photography by Suitcase Joe

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Puppets Aren’t Just for Kids

A play starring puppets in a space called Cupcake might suggest some good clean family fun, but don’t get it twisted, this ain’t no Bob Baker’s Marionette Theater production. The Broadway hit Avenue Q, featuring felt creatures in an uproarious musical about young adults trying to make it in New York City, is like Sesame Street meets Friends, if Friends were a PG-13 movie. Strong language and adult themes are involved, so this one is not recommended for the kiddies, though it is an all-ages venue (and let’s face it, youngsters hear worse on the playground). Running since the top of the month, the Tony Award–winning musical has been a smash for the Valley venue with a cast of locals taking on the music and lyrics of Robert Lopez and Jeff Marx — who initially conceived Avenue Q as a televi- sion series, then developed it for the stage in 2002. Sassy and sardonic numbers like “Someone’s a Little Bit Racist” delve into topical issues but somehow manage not to let’s face it, youngsters hear worse on the playground. Running since the top of the month, the Tony Award–winning musical has been a smash for the Valley venue with a cast of locals taking on the music and lyrics of Robert Lopez and Jeff Marx — who initially conceived Avenue Q as a televi- sion series, then developed it for the stage in 2002. Sassy and sardonic numbers like “Someone’s a Little Bit Racist” delve into topical issues but somehow manage not to resist getting in on the Saturday morning preview brunch not only for early access to the goods but also fresh coffee and fancy treats. Craft & Folk Art Museum, 5814 Wilshire Blvd., Mid-Wilshire; VIP preview brunch: Sat., Nov. 24, 10-11:30 a.m., $15; market: Sat., Nov. 24, 11:30 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sun., Nov. 25, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; free with museum admission. (323) 937-4230, cafam.org. —SHANA NYS DAMBROT

Broadway-bound

Avenue Q is, come off gratuitous — unlike that recent movie! A play starring puppets in a space called Cupcake might suggest some good clean family fun, but don’t get it twisted, this ain’t no Bob Baker’s Marionette Theater production. The Broadway hit Avenue Q, featuring felt creatures in an uproarious musical about young adults trying to make it in New York City, is like Sesame Street meets Friends, if Friends were a PG-13 movie. Strong language and adult themes are involved, so this one is not recommended for the kiddies, though it is an all-ages venue (and let’s face it, youngsters hear worse on the playground). Running since the top of the month, the Tony Award–winning musical has been a smash for the Valley venue with a cast of locals taking on the music and lyrics of Robert Lopez and Jeff Marx — who initially conceived Avenue Q as a televi- sion series, then developed it for the stage in 2002. Sassy and sardonic numbers like “Someone’s a Little Bit Racist” delve into topical issues but somehow manage not to resist getting in on the Saturday morning preview brunch not only for early access to the goods but also fresh coffee and fancy treats. Craft & Folk Art Museum, 5814 Wilshire Blvd., Mid-Wilshire; VIP preview brunch: Sat., Nov. 24, 10-11:30 a.m., $15; market: Sat., Nov. 24, 11:30 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sun., Nov. 25, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; free with museum admission. (323) 937-4230, cafam.org. —SHANA NYS DAMBROT

Take a Sonic Voyage

Film director Stanley Kubrick’s use of classical music in his films was so effective that many people, when they hear the momentous strains of Richard Strauss’ “Also sprach Zarathustra,” can’t help immediately picturing scenes from 2001: A Space Odyssey. This weekend, actor Malcolm McDowell hosts Stanley Kubrick’s Sound Odyssey as Jessica Cottis conducts the L.A. Philharmonic in a weekend of classical selections from Kubrick’s films, including 2001 (which also featured work by composers Ligeti, Johann Strauss and Khachaturian), The Shining (Bartók, Penderecki), Barry Lyndon (Handel, Schubert and Bach) and Eyes Wide Shut (Shostakovich, Ligeti), as well as lilting melodies by Beethoven that provided a soundtrack to the gleeful violence perpetrated by McDowell’s character, Alex, in A Clockwork Orange. Walt Disney Concert Hall, 111 S. Grand Ave., downtown; Fri.-Sat., Nov. 23-24, 8 p.m.; Sun., Nov. 25, 2 p.m.; $69-$207. Also at Alex Theatre, 216 N. Brand Blvd., Glendale; Sat., Dec. 1, 6 p.m.; Sun., Dec. 2, 2 p.m.; $36-$104. Also at Dolby Theatre, 6801 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood; Sat., Dec. 1, 5-7 p.m.; Sun., Dec. 2, 9 p.m.; $46-$124. Also at Redondo Beach Performing Arts Center, 1935 Manhattan Beach Blvd., Redondo Beach; Sat., Dec. 15, 1 & 5 p.m.; Sun., Dec. 16, 1 p.m.; $36-$104. Also at UCLA Royce Hall, 10745 Dickson Court, Westwood; Sat.-Sun., Dec. 22-23, 1 & 5 p.m.; Mon., Dec. 24, 11 a.m. & 3 p.m.; $36-$124. losangelesballet.org/the-nutcracker. —ANN HASKINS

Support Local Artisans

For anyone who has partaken of art therapy to try to express themselves better, been asked what they see in an inkblot or tried to decipher modern art, this show is your chance to turn the tables. Now in its seventh year, the annual “Mirrors of the Mind” exhibition put on by the Los Angeles County Psychological Association gives viewers the chance to scrutinize the subconscious truths of the doctors for a change. Aside from the nuances between therapists, analysts and clinical psychologists, this open-call, all-media exhibition is every bit as fraught and eclectic as any group show, with self-portraits, dreamscapes, quick sketches, high-tech renderings, collages and cartoons. The key difference is that this time, you have permission to project. The Hangar Gallery, Santa Monica Art Studios, 3026 Airport Ave., Santa Monica; Sat., Nov. 24, 5-10 p.m.; free. (310) 397-7456, lapsych.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=1114303. —SHANA NYS DAMBROT

DANCE

On Your Toes

For the next six weeks ballet will be blooming across SoCal as that seasonal favorite The Nutcracker arrives. Sugar plum fairies, mouse armies, toy soldiers and dancing snowflakes take the stage in dozens of productions ranging from ballet studios to visiting professional companies. First out of the gate and one of the best belongs the Los Angeles Ballet, the city’s own professional ballet company. Set in 1913 Los Angeles, LAB’s picture-postcard version is also the most accessible since it tours Metro L.A. with performances in Cerritos, Glendale, Redondo Beach, Westwood and Hollywood, with live music by the Los Angeles Ballet Orchestra. Full schedule and tickets at losangelesballet.org.

SAT 11/24

Support Local Artisans

It’s a match made in artisanal, #shoplocal heaven at the return of the Craft & Folk Art Museum’s Holiday Marketplace. It’s a slightly more global take on the local makers scene, augmented by music and snacks, with the added benefit of taking in the museum’s current round of impressive mixed-media shows and installations. Tip: The faux-fur safe room by Uzumaki Cepeda might come in handy for weary shoppers seeking a calming respite. The jewelry, textiles, ceramics, and unique, sustainable home goods are not only irresistible but also cash and carry — so consider getting in on the Saturday morning preview brunch not only for early access to the goods but also fresh coffee and fancy treats. Craft & Folk Art Museum, 5814 Wilshire Blvd., Mid-Wilshire; VIP preview brunch: Sat., Nov. 24, 10-11:30 a.m., $15; market: Sat., Nov. 24, 11:30 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sun., Nov. 25, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; free with museum admission. (323) 937-4230, cafam.org. —SHANA NYS DAMBROT

MUSIC

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ART

Psychoanalyze This

For anyone who has partaken of art therapy to try to express themselves better, been asked what they see in an inkblot or tried to decipher modern art, this show is your chance to turn the tables. Now in its seventh year, the annual “Mirrors of the Mind” exhibition put on by the Los Angeles County Psychological Association gives viewers the chance to scrutinize the subconscious truths of the doctors for a change. Aside from the nuances between therapists, analysts and clinical psychologists, this open-call, all-media exhibition is every bit as fraught and eclectic as any group show, with self-portraits, dreamscapes, quick sketches, high-tech renderings, collages and cartoons. The key difference is that this time, you have permission to project. The Hangar Gallery, Santa Monica Art Studios, 3026 Airport Ave., Santa Monica; Sat., Nov. 24, 5-10 p.m.; free. (310) 397-7456, lapsych.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=1114303. —SHANA NYS DAMBROT
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SUN 11/25

F O O D / S P O R T S

Dine and Dash, Vegan Style
For some people, their Thanksgivings are inextricably wrapped up in pilgrimages and suffering and meat. For others, their Thanksgivings center around discovering new lands without the burdens of exploitation and wishbones. Today's L.A. Tofurky Trot Fun Run & Vegan Food Fest brings together like-minded progressives courtesy of the Factory Farming Awareness Coalition in this afternoon cornucopia of vegan food vendors (Compton Vegan, Avocado Mama, Nelly's Organics); speakers such as Jasmin Singer of VegNews, Chef Babette of Stuff I Eat and Megan Sadd from Carrots & Flowers; and the 5K Trot that's a holiday miracle for both family and cute dogs alike. Crystal Springs Picnic Area, 4659 Crystal Springs Drive, Griffith Park; Sun., Nov. 25, 10 a.m.; $15-$35. (818) 238-9522, eventbrite.com/e/2018-la-tofurky-trot-fun-run-vegan-food-fest-tickets-50871762812.

—DAVID COTNER

MON 11/26

S C I E N C E

Touchdown!
It's already traveled more than 33 million miles but when NASA's robotic lander InSight touches down on the surface of Mars today, it will draw quite a big crowd of curious fans on this planet. Caltech and the Planetary Society are hosting Mars InSight Landing: Viewing Party and Discussion, with live coverage of the spacecraft's landing beamed from Jet Propulsion Laboratory. The Planetary Society's Mat Kaplan hosts a panel discussion about InSight's mission, which involves checking Mars' temperature and pulse and deploying a seismometer. Beckman Auditorium, Caltech, 332 S. Michigan Ave., Pasadena; Mon., Nov. 26, 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m.; free. (626) 395-3847, eventbrite.com/e/mars-insight-landing-viewing-party-and-discussion-tickets-5189983247.

—FALLING JAMES

TUE 11/27

F I L M

Creepy Carnival
It's coming our way again. It's the 35th anniversary of the spooky Disney classic Something Wicked This Way Comes and to celebrate, Mad Monster Movie Night is presenting a screening and Q&A. The 1983 fantasy film, directed by Jack Clayton, was based on a Ray Bradbury novel and its literary feel is clearly no accident. The title was taken from a line in Shakespeare's Macbeth (“By the pricking of my thumbs/Something wicked this way comes”) and though it’s not a traditional horror film, its air of dread lives up to its ominous name thanks to a stellar cast (Jason Robards, Jonathan Pryce, Diane Ladd and Pam Grier) and a creepy carnival backdrop. Mr. Dark’s Pandemonium Carnival, with its haunting, time-warping carousel and requisite freaks and oddities, is more than it seems, and it’ll take the will of two young boys to save everyone as the carnival sets its sinister sights on their town as winter and wickedness approach. If you’ve never seen this one, don’t miss it. Q&A to follow will feature cast and crew members Darrell Rooney, Axel Hubert and Scott De Roy. TCL Chinese Theaters, 6925 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood; Tue., Nov. 27, 9-11:30 p.m.; $12. tclchinesetheatres.com. —LINA LECARO

WED 11/28

A R T

Creative Playdate
The reinvigorated programs at USC’s Roski School of Art and Design make for some fascinating experimental interdisciplinary forays. It’s the best of archetypal art-school shenanigans but with an expanded field of resources and conspirators that stretches across campus from the painting studio to the dance hall to the film screen. For just four days this week, students from the theater, film, dance and music departments are invited over for an intensive playdate with their friends from the visual arts, culminating in an Intra-Arts Study Break–themed reception with music, snacks, dialogue and eclectic offerings to the fickle, fanciful gods of creative collaboration. Helen Lindhurst Fine Arts Gallery, 825 Bloom Walk, University Park; reception: Nov. 28, 6:30-9 p.m.; on view Nov. 27-30; free. (213) 821-1290, roski.usc.edu. —SHANA NYS DAMBROT

THU 11/29

F I L M / B O O K S

Secrets of Old Hollywood

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Caught. Long thought to have been inspired by the infamously eccentric Hughes, the movie is a commentary on capitalism and follows a poor carhop-turned-model (Barbara Bel Geddes), who’s caught in a love triangle between a rich but cruel and emotionally distant millionaire (Robert Ryan) and an earnest pediatrician (James Mason). LACMA, 5905 Wilshire Blvd., Mid-Wilshire; Thu., Nov. 29, 7:30 p.m.; free, RSVP required. (323) 857-6010, lacma.org. —SHANA NYS DAMBROT

PHOTOGRAPHY

He’s Shot it All

Fahey/Klein Gallery has a special knack for presenting compelling work by renowned editorial and fashion photographers, curating exhibitions from both their marquee careers and personal explorations. For example, Mark Seliger’s decades of iconic portraiture has elevated the game from Rolling Stone to Vanity Fair, GQ, Elle and Vogue in depictions of titans in music, art, fashion, business and politics: Johnny Cash, Barack Obama, Laurie Anderson, Muhammad Ali, Bob Dylan, Matthew Barney, Cindy Sherman and the Dalai Lama. The classically cool style of Seliger’s black-and-white photographs and the sophisticated, refined color palette of his glossies capture both the persona and the personality of his subjects. His newest book, which features an interview conducted by Judd Apatow, accompanies the exhibition, and there’s a gallery talk and book signing with KCRW’s Jason Bentley on Saturday, Dec. 1, 2-4 p.m. Fahey/Klein Gallery, 148 N. La Brea Blvd., Hancock Park; opening reception: Fri., Nov. 29, 7-9 p.m.; exhibit: Tue.-Sat., 10 a.m.-6 p.m., thru Jan. 19; free. (323) 934-2250, faheykleingallery.com. —IRAN BABAYAN

OPERA

Trauma and Memory

A girl named Bibi (portrayed by soprano Anna Schubert) who suffers from a peculiar illness and her mother, Lumee (mezzo-soprano Rebecca Jo Loeb), are shuttered away from the world in a mysterious place called Sanctuary, in librettist Roxie Perkins and composer Ellen Reid’s Prism, which receives its world premiere at REDCAT. Co-presented by L.A. Opera’s Off Grand series and Beth Morrison Projects, the psychological piece of operatic theater centers on themes of identity, trauma and violence against women as Bibi becomes “blinded by colors and by memories new and familiar” as she tries to balance Lumee’s worldview with her own search for truth. REDCAT, 631 W. Second St., downtown; Thu.-Sat., Nov. 29-Dec. 1, 8 p.m.; Sun., Dec. 2, 2 p.m.; $69. (213) 972-8001, laopera.org. —FALLING JAMES

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Reverend Andy Bales is sitting in his slightly chaotic office — the walls full of certificates, an aquarium in the corner — and talking about how the public neglects the homeless community in Skid Row. Bales is the CEO of Union Rescue Mission, the largest and oldest homeless shelter of the city. Two years ago, Bales lost his right leg due to flesh-eating bacteria on Skid Row.

It was only then, he says, that the city declared a state of emergency for the infamous section of downtown Los Angeles. "Actually, they need to declare the state of emergency for everybody who is out on the streets," Bales says angrily. "Skid Row is the greatest man-made human disaster in the U.S., and it’s been here for longer than 127 years."

He pauses, then adds: "Right now it is the worst it has ever been. It is a crisis of epic proportions."

Indeed, nowhere in the United States is the concentration of unsheltered individuals as high as on Skid Row. The numbers are shocking: On any given day in this 54-block area in downtown, there are around 4,300 homeless people on the streets. According to recent counts, the numbers have slightly decreased, but Bales and other experts doubt these statistics are accurate. From his daily experience, Bales says, "There is no evidence at all that the numbers have decreased in any way."

In any case, even if the numbers have gone down by 3 or 5 percent, Skid Row is still the epicenter of the country’s homelessness crisis. Why is that? L.A. Weekly looks into the history of Skid Row to try to understand what solutions could help solve this epic crisis.

The genesis of Skid Row lies in the early 20th century, when travelers from all over the country were drawn to the downtown area. The nearby railways provided jobs for many people. Little by little the neighborhood became a center for many of the poor and marginalized people of the city, who found a home in cheap, single-room occupancy hotels. This became even more the case in the 1970s, after Ronald Reagan, then governor of California, put in new legislation that deinstitutionalized hospitals serving individuals with severe mental illnesses.

With nowhere to go, many of the people forced out of mental hospitals were drawn to Skid Row, the only place in the city that provided services and shelters. The situation worsened in 2000, after several thousand residential hotel apartments were destroyed, according to the Skid Row Housing Trust. People lost their homes and were forced onto the streets.

Skid Row became the home of the homeless, but a home without safety. Eleven murders occurred in Skid Row last year, and a study found that 40 percent of unhoused women in the area had experienced...
It was no accident that the situation did not get any better in recent years. Asked why Skid Row became such a center of problems, Rev. Bales says one word: “containment.” It was a deliberate choice of city officials to make Skid Row the capital of homelessness. In 1976, the Los Angeles City Council adopted a redevelopment plan that included a “policy of containment” for poverty. “This policy basically said: ‘Let’s send everybody a ‘policy of containment’ for poverty.’” This adopted a redevelopment plan that included a deliberate choice of city officials to prevent things from getting any better in recent years. Asked why the effect, he tells me, was widespread. “Deputy sheriffs from every suburb used to drop people off on Skid Row,” Bales says. “Police from all over town brought people and dumped them here. Las Vegas has sent hundreds of mentally ill people over.” According to him, this continues today even though the policy was ended in 2016. “Two hospitals have been fined within the last six months for dumping patients on Skid Row,” he says.

The reasons for homelessness are countless. People end up on the streets due to family breakups, domestic abuse, drug addiction, mental health issues or prolonged unemployment. But why is the situation in L.A. so much worse than elsewhere?

William Yu is an economist at UCLA and author of the study “Homelessness in the U.S., California and Los Angeles.” As he speaks in his small office on the UCLA campus, I can hear the bewilderment over the homelessness issue in his voice. Yu is an immigrant from Taiwan.

“I have never seen a situation as shocking as in L.A.,” he says.

He is not alone: In 2017, a United Nations special rapporteur on extreme poverty and disaster zones was struck by the magnitude of the human suffering he saw when he visited Skid Row: “I think it’s on a scale I hadn’t anticipated, block after block of people. When you see how concentrated it is, it’s more shocking.”

Even though homelessness is a huge problem all over the country, the trend in L.A. is extreme. In his study, Yu states: “While the percentages of homeless people in the county and in California remain stable, the homeless percentage has been rising rapidly in L.A. County over the past several years.”

From 2013 to 2017, the homeless rate in the city increased from 0.35 percent to 0.53 percent — a total of 55,000 homeless people. During the same period, the homeless rate in the United States decreased from 0.2 percent to 0.17 percent.

Why the discrepancy? Yu says: “Homelessness is a conjunction of two factors: a bad personal economic situation and a bad housing market.” While people lose their jobs all over the country, in Los Angeles it much more quickly leads to becoming homeless. That is the first L.A.-specific reason for homelessness: skyrocketing rents and a lack of affordable housing units. According to the latest report from the California Housing Partnership and the Southern California Association of Nonprofit Housing, the city has an extreme shortfall of affordable housing. More than 550,000 units are needed to satisfy the demands of lower-income renters. It seems logical that the three states where homelessness rates are the highest are Hawaii, New York and California — all states with rents far above the average (only Washington, D.C., which Yu treats as a state in his study, has an even higher homelessness rate).

In addition, Yu claims that one of the biggest problems in L.A. is the way the city is constructed: with a high share of single-family homes instead of multi-family buildings and apartment complexes. According to the basic laws of economics, in a high-demand marketplace, less residential space means rapidly rising prices, and more residential space means more slowly rising prices. Thus, it would make sense to buildcondos with at least three or four floors in order to provide housing for more people. Unfortunately, this urgent and necessary change has met with resistance. “It’s always the same,” Yu says: “Not in my backyard.”

But there is more to the story: No other U.S. city has as big a shortage of shelters. New York City, for instance, has by far the most homeless people of all cities: around 76,000. But unlike in L.A., in New York a lawsuit in 1981 resulted in an enforceable, citywide “right to shelter.” That’s why in L.A. people end up living on the sidewalks more often — and, as they’re seeking services, they tend to wind up on the streets around Skid Row. Three-quarters of the people experiencing homelessness in L.A. don’t have a roof over their heads. The Union Rescue Mission’s Bales says. In NYC it’s only 4 percent.

More than two years ago, Measure HHH was overwhelmingly approved by voters. It made available $1.2 billion for housing for homeless residents and for other services. But the execution has been lagging. “It’s being slowed down by neighbors saying: not in my backyard,” Bales says. The most recent example is a planned shelter in Koreatown that was approved only after numerous arguments over the location. “Eventually they found a compromise, but why isn’t it happening now?” Bales asks.

As long as there are not enough shelters available, people will live on the streets of Skid Row in the thousands. General Jeff Page is often called “the mayor of Skid Row.” He is a Testament on the streets. “Sir, can I have your sandwich?”

That’s pure victim blaming,” Page says. Eleven years ago, the city agreed to stop arresting people who slept on the sidewalks until the city built more homeless housing. According to Mayor Eric Garcetti, this moratorium is over now since, in his opinion, L.A. has built enough housing to meet the settlement requirements. If L.A. starts ticketing homeless people again, it is likely to kick off a new battle with homeless advocates — a battle Page is sure the homeless would win again.

Garcetti in June unveiled a $20 million plan to build emergency shelters across the city, but according to experts like Page and Bales, there has not been much progress on building them so far — in part because of the lawsuits against potential shelters that have been filed by neighbors.

Page also emphasizes that Skid Row today can’t be discussed without considering race. Back in the 1950s, Skid Row residents were a rather small group of white, single men. In the 1980s, federal budget cuts started to impact the housing market. As a consequence, the causes of homelessness changed. With housing assistance and safety net programs destabilized, Skid Row has become populated predominantly by African-American people.

Asked what would have to change to solve the homelessness crisis of the city, Bales says affordable housing, immediate shelters, immediate triage care — but first and foremost a change of heart. He then tells a personal story: 32 years ago, when he was 26 or 27 and worked as a teacher at a Christian high school, he preached a sermon to the children of his classes, six times in total. The children were picking on a student. So he shared a message from the book of Matthew with them: The way you treat another person is how you treat God himself. Over the weekend, Bales worked at a downtown parking ramp and was sitting in the ticket booth, watching NFL football on a mini-screen and eating a sandwich, when a bearded man knocked on the window. “Sir, can I have your sandwich?”

So, after preaching the sermon about altruism six times, what did he say? “I said no,” Bales says. “The man then quickly disappeared into the darkness. “I quickly realized that I hadn’t practiced what I had preached.” So he hoped and prayed for another chance, found the man on the streets a few days later and fed him dinner. Some weeks later he was asked to work in a downtown rescue mission. Since then, he has worked to help the homeless.

Bales says: “The only thing besides law that will change something is a change of heart of the people of Los Angeles, a sense of caring for our brothers and sisters.”
On most days, a photographer who goes by “Suitcase Joe” spends his spare time — lunch break, before or after work, weekends — documenting the people and culture of Skid Row. Somewhere between photojournalist and artist (with certain appetites of an ethnographer), he captures the casual drama of an extreme environment: quotidian rhythms, granular textures, fleeting emotions. Intimate and raw, his photos often bypass voyeurism in favor of presence, proximity and empathy. It’s the kind of image-making you imagine springing from intuitive movement, or patient immersion.

“I feel like they become dehumanized, homeless people and street people. People overlook them — they just stop looking at them,” Joe says, adding that he hopes those scrolling through his Instagram account, so far the primary outlet for his work, will “care enough to come down there too and help in different ways, or be more aware of people with those kinds of issues in their own neighborhoods, as opposed to just turning a blind eye to them.”

Attuned to the impact of simple gestures for people so routinely denied them, he makes a point of shaking people’s hands, or offering a hug — “regardless of how long they’ve been on the street or how dirty they might be,” he says. “I really like the people down there. I find something really touching about [our interactions] and I learn a lot. And it kind of moves me.”

A writer with no formal photography training, Joe tends to prioritize content over form, posting images because he thinks they need to be seen. “The way I think about it long-term is somebody might look back on these photos 100 years from now and it’s a piece of history. … I like to post a lot and not hold back, so it’s out there.”

It started with an idea, nearly a decade ago, of how he thought Skid Row ought to be documented — in gritty, timeless black-and-white — but took a few years of observing before he decided to pick up a camera. (He keeps his biographical details, as well as what he shoots with, to himself.) Since then, his penchant for simple compositions, both portrait and candid, has begun to articulate a unique style, with glimpses of formidable artistry.

Snapshots of daily life — cooking on a portable grill, washing clothes at a fire hydrant, music, pets, fashion, scrambled signifiers of domesticity, affection, a sign on a tent that says “Together is our favorite place to be” — all in the same space as the wrenching vulnerability, shocking violence and deep despair you might expect, force viewers to see Skid Row simultaneously as both war zone and home.

People ravaged by drugs and neglect, lifetimes on the street, in Joe’s images become part of a narrative of survival. He documents their transformation, often for the worse, or just their continued presence against all odds. Asked if he feels conflicted about photographing people with questionable agency, he admits he can’t always ask permission to shoot, in cases where mental illness precludes that conversation, but insists he approaches everyone with respect.

A lifetime obsession with “old hobo culture” informs both his moniker and his aesthetic sensibilities, and a general fascination with underworlds and outsiders is evident. He draws on a broader sense of history and folklore, reading about Skid Row in Bukowski, Bunker, Chandler — “it makes me feel connected to the whole neighborhood.”

Some days, he just reports on the weather, reminding that “a bottle of cold water could go a long way right now.”

“I feel like Skid Row kind of gives me little gifts. I’ll walk around the corner sometimes and see something that strikes me,” he says. “But I also believe that some days I have to not go in there with my camera, and go and give out water, or food, or buy people socks and stuff. I feel like it’s kind of a give-and-take relationship. I always try to take care of people — if I take photos of them, I give them money or other things. But other times I feel it’s important to go down there, hang out and just talk to people. … It’s a community down there.”

He now gets daily inquiries, including requests for tours from other photographers who think Skid Row is a destination (he declines), and from family members asking him to keep an eye out for their loved ones (he tries).

“People don’t all want their picture taken and you have to do it respectfully, feel it out,” Joe says. “I see a few (photographers) but they come and go quickly. Or they stick to the outskirts. Not that many people go what I call ‘deep’ into Skid Row. … Each situation is different. A lot of people there have mental health issues and it’s not just because you have a camera. … It’s because they’ve been pushed into a very small area and they’re not always all that self-aware.”

He watches the borders ebb and flow, up to Main and back down to Los Angeles Street. Over the last six months to a year, he’s watched the opioid epidemic playing out.

“I see like 10 times more people shooting...
up on the street, people are OD-ing. I’m seeing a lot more young people. It just seems to be overlooked. I always think of Skid Row as an eyesore to people in L.A. They like to look all around it but they’ve just pushed it to this little community. Like 12,000 homeless people in 4 square miles? That’s absurd.”

By now he knows the grid — the blocks run by gangs, segmented by race; the streets where people go for heroin, meth, crack, and those “further back where more prostitution goes on.” He’s acquainted, from a cautious distance, with the underground economy, social ecosystem, the justice of the streets — “There’s a lot more going on down there than the surface of what it looks like.” And he knows better than to go at night.

“Through it all, he’s perpetually gutted by how badly the crisis is mishandled.”

“Three public toilets you pay 50 cents to go into? Where do these people go to the bathroom? Can we at least set up a building so people can go to the bathroom, shower indoors? They don’t have anywhere to use a restroom or privacy,” he said, acknowledging the handful of mobile showers but insisting it’s not enough. “They don’t have anywhere to use a restroom or privacy,” he said, acknowledging the handful of mobile showers but insisting it’s not enough.

“Hey, this is where we should put some attention.”

He says what we’re all thinking.

“Something that always bothers me in this town is there’s all these celebrities who’ve made tons of money and they all like to take on activist causes … but there’s this thing in our backyard that needs so much attention. And I don’t see anybody down there doing anything really profound, or putting a lot of money, or using their voice as somebody who has a lot of money, or using their voice as somebody famous to come down there and say, ‘Hey, this is where we should put some attention.’ Why is that not happening in this city, of all places?”

For every photo he takes, he knows there are hundreds he can’t get. But Skid Row doesn’t seem to be going anywhere anytime soon, and neither is he.

“I would like to document Skid Row with photos, better than anyone ever has. And yeah, just keep doing it, compiling it,” Joe says. “I just think I can get in there better than anybody has.”
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FAREWELL, VALENTINO

Piero Selvaggio says ciao to Santa Monica

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

I

t's safe to say that some people who drive past Valentino on Pico Boulevard think it's named after the head of the kitchen, because they're used to celebrity chefs putting themselves front and center. In fact it was named in homage to the movie star of the 1920s, and the most famous person to work there wasn't the chef but the dapper fellow at the front of the house. Owner Piero Selvaggio has been greeting guests and working the room for 47 years, and to longtime patrons, of which there are many, he is Valentino.

Selvaggio's reign over this dining room is coming to an end, as he has decided to close the restaurant at the end of December. Before he did, he sat down with L.A. Weekly to muse on the changing scene during his time in business. He was particularly talkative on the curious phenomenon of the celebrity chef. As he explained, when he opened Valentino there was no such thing, and he now believes it's a trend that is petering out.

"When I started in the business, cooking was a low-status job, and if you asked the average person to name a famous chef they would be stuck after Julia Child. The concept of a celebrity chef came from two things: Wolfgang Puck and television. Wolf went out in front of the house at Ma Maison, his first kitchen in Los Angeles, and he became a star. Then he changed everything with his restaurant Spago, but he was still having ideas. His restaurant Chinois was so, so ahead of its time when it opened, and it was a breath of fresh air. It was brilliant to use French techniques with a creative blend of Asian spices and products. That is a creative restaurant that has lasted 36 years but has never had a chef who has made it their own — it is still his. Wolf was a brilliant chef, he is my best friend, but he's an impresario now. He stimulates his chefs in ways that are important but he's now pretty much a businessman, even though he walks around in the white toque and so forth," Selvaggio says.

"Some of the other big names in the celebrity chef phenomenon are pretty much faded. Television wants novelty. ... Whatever happened to Emeril Lagasse, who was a household name with his 'Bam!' and his television appearances? So many of these people have disappeared because they just weren't that good. ... They could play a chef on television, but they couldn't really run a restaurant. What they knew was how to cook in front of a camera, and that's not the same thing. The best chef in Los Angeles right now is Michael Cimarusti (of Providence). He has never had a show on television, he is shy, but he has universal respect in the industry."

Selvaggio was quick to note that some excellent chefs have been media stars but that they were frustrated by the demands of the medium.

"Mary Sue (Milliken) and Susan (Feininger) were the first real celebrity chefs when Food Network began, and they created the perfect thing called Too Hot Tamales. They told me how draining it was to go to New York for a few days and cut 25 shows. There are mistakes toward the end of the sessions, because it took so much out of them. ... That happened even to people as good as they are, because there is such pressure to perform."

Even if some of those media stars had developed the talents of a chef who works the line on a daily basis, there are other skills involved in managing a business. TV chefs never have to wonder if their items are priced correctly to cover their food costs, and if they manage a payroll it's of PR people and personal assistants rather than line cooks, servers, bartenders and busboys. They don't have to manage a wine inventory or OSHA regulations, not to mention health department regulations, and never worry about late deliveries by linen services or produce vendors. In particular, the skills of a chef, no matter how good, won't make up for deficiencies at the front of the house, the part of the operation that customers actually see.

"There are still people cooking on TV, but many of their restaurants aren't good exactly because they are so focused on the chef," Selvaggio says. "To be a restaurateur you need to know your food, your wine, and everything about managing the front of the house. At any level beyond a little taco stand, the restaurant experience is about the way they greet you, the way they serve you, the way they make you feel important even if you are a working person who saved money for a nice evening out."

There can even be a perfect storm of errors in which the restaurant is run for the chef's convenience, not the customer's. Selvaggio has had recent experience with that — though not at his own restaurant, of course.

"I visited one of these [celebrity-run] places with a journalist who was looking for the best restaurants in the country, and the person at the front desk was staring at the Open Table [app] on a screen and ignoring the customers who were standing there. The restaurant was packed with all these foodies, the music was loud, and we could not hear each other. There was no pleasure — there was suffering. When I asked the manager about turning down the music he said, verbatim, "There is nothing we can do because the chef loves the rhythm of the restaurant so the music has to be high to help him be inspired. You don't mess around with my chef's inspiration.' And that was when I realized that this has become a false world of impostors who will never make it in the business. When I see these faces on television that are called celebrity chefs, I wait for them to be deflated. We had 20 years of that phenomenon, and it's effectively over."

Selvaggio will still be at the helm at Valentino for a little while — the restaurant's last day in business is New Year's Eve. After that he will be at a new restaurant called Louis in Orange County, where he will be managing partner with Ron Salisbury, who also owns the El Cholo in Newport Beach. The menu will be different, offering steaks as well as the Italian specialties that are close to Selvaggio's heart. The master of hospitality will learn a new staff and clientele but will strive to offer the same welcome that has made every guest feel valued for almost five decades.

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Pot Gives Back

Bloom Farms leads the way with a World Food Day campaign that helps local food bank

By Jimi Devine

As the season of giving kicks off, the cannabis industry continues its year-round effort to give back, recently highlighted by some of California’s biggest brands and a ton of local dispensaries joining forces to raise awareness of hunger on United Nations’ World Food Day. Led by Bloom Farms, which since 2014 has fed more than 1.4 million meals to Californians in need, the companies kicked off a monthlong effort starting Oct. 16, which is World Food Day. During the campaign, Bloom Farms doubled its standard donation of one meal for every one product sold. Pax, whose Pax Era is one of the most popular pieces of vaporizer hardware used for consuming Bloom Farms oil, kicked in $10,000 toward the campaign.

“There are too many people wondering where their next meal will come from in every county in America, even those with significant wealth or great agricultural traditions, like many counties in California,” said Mike Ray, Bloom Farms’ founder-CEO. “We built Bloom Farms around two missions—to provide great legal cannabis products and to end food insecurity in the communities that we live and work in. We’ve made great strides so far and, with the help of so many community-minded members of the cannabis industry this month, we can move even further toward our goal.” We spoke with Ray on the eve of the campaign’s end.

“It went really well,” Ray told L.A. Weekly. “We feel like World Hunger Day was a great success in bringing awareness to the United Nations–recognized day. We were able to take a unique approach here, something we’ve never really done before, and bring in our partners, both our dispensary partners and our product partners, to collaborate on this.” Joining Bloom Farms, Pax and Eaze were 30 retailers across the state. Nine L.A. dispensaries took part, making up nearly a third of total retail participants. Among them were Buds & Roses, Herbarium and Urban Treez.

“We get everybody behind this initiative. People sharing it on social media, people sending messages to their email list. And we got [the media] who kind of picked up on it and wrote about it as well. We think it was a big success from a visibility standpoint. There is an end goal of no hunger by 2030—it’s all about spreading the message and getting out...
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Ray took pride in how fully his team and partners got on board with this mission, which he has worked for years to embed in Bloom’s corporate culture. He brought the entire company together to help promote this mission. “This wasn’t just some kind of marketing team initiative,” he said. It went from the production department to the legal team and even the accountants.

“Everybody did whatever it was that they could do,” Ray said. “For a lot of them it was small things like volunteer day at one of the participating food banks, or just changing their email signature to bring awareness to World Food Day.”

And it wasn’t just his stuff. “We had Eaze volunteering at the food bank with us, we had brick-and-mortar dispensaries partners volunteering with us at the food bank. It was a big success in my eyes.”

As we enter the official season of giving, Ray noted the cannabis industry’s penchant to give back all the time, as opposed to when it’s at the front of people’s mind during the holidays.

“For us, our season of giving and participating in our social good program is year-round, not necessarily something special for the holidays. We just continue to promote our one-to-one program. It’s a never-ending initiative,” he said.

Ray noted, thankfully, that around the holiday season food banks get a lot of support from the community. “That’s the time the general population really wants to give back as well. So they get very busy with volunteers workers and help, which is fantastic. In November and December, they’re pushing out a lot of meals to people who need it.”

But for Ray, the problem really doesn’t change a whole lot no matter what month is on the calendar.

Here in L.A., Bloom Farms has spent the last three years working with World Harvest Food Bank and founder Glenn Curado. Curado started the food bank in 2007 after seeing the process from a volunteer perspective at other food banks and believing it could be improved.

“He’s a total sweetheart and one of the nicest people I’ve ever met,” Ray said of Curado. “He’s dedicated his whole life to this. We’re proud to be working with them.”

The praise was mutual from Curado’s end as he explained how it all came together.

“They gave me a call and said, ‘Hey, we’re a one-for-one company’ and asked if we wanted to be a part of it. I said yeah. Then he said, ‘Do you have any problems with marijuana and cannabis?’ I said no,” Curado said.

Curado told Ray he was raised in Hawaii, “so it was all over the place,” he said with a chuckle. While Curado doesn’t personally indulge in cannabis, he thought the whole thing sounded pretty awesome. “And they have
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been great ever since,” he said.

This kind of deal hasn’t always worked out well for the food bank, so Curado takes joy in how well the ball has kept rolling over the years.

“They support us every step of the way,” he said.

“Some people say this is what we’re going to do for you, for every something that we sell we’re going to donate back this much. And you never see the money. They use you for publicity somehow and you’ll be lucky if you get 35 cents.”

While Curado was on board early, his team at the food bank initially had some reservations about working with cannabis companies. The concern came around the branding on trucks, advertising, the website and other places the food bank might want to show their big sponsor some love. After a quick glance around the table when they met on the subject, everyone was ready to move forward.

As for ramping up around the World Hunger Day Campaign, with new companies and volunteers coming through, Curado said it continues to be nothing but a positive experience with the cannabis community.

Curado said he is glad to see the influx of support during the holidays. But the standard canned-goods drive doesn’t so much fit in with the healthy-eating ethos attached to the food bank’s mission. This makes the kind of financial support the cannabis community brings extra helpful.

“We’re not your grandma’s food bank,” Curado explained. “What we do here is everything is certified organic. We do as little as possible in regards to canned and nonperishable goods. So we’re all about healthy, sustainable eats. What Bloom does for us by giving us the cash is we’re able to purchase stuff for the families that we might not otherwise be able to afford. Simple stuff like milk and cheese that we don’t always get on a regular basis.

Seven other food banks also will be supported by the program this month.
The Beverly Center has been “reimagined.” That’s how Taubman Centers Inc., the corporation that owns the shopping mecca and spearheaded its recent $500 million remodel, describes it in press materials, and it’s accurate in the sense that every detail, big and small, seems aimed at reflecting contemporary culture in a new way. Whether or not one thinks this is a good thing probably will depend on a variety of factors — including age, financial status and, most important, whether you’re a local — but there’s no denying the place has a new appeal.

Like all mall environments in Southern California, this one is full of deep-seated nostalgia for many, especially natives and premillennials. Before it broke ground 36 years ago, the land belonged to the Kiddieland Amusement Park, a place where the children of L.A. who lived west-ish would celebrate their birthdays riding ponies, Ferris wheels and merry-go-rounds.

After the Beverly Center opened in 1982, it was a novel attraction for all ages. It was a favorite destination for lovers of foreign and indie movies, which screened in its 14-screen multiplex on the top level. Many also recall the Bev for its then-hip new restaurant, the Hard Rock Cafe, which was the first in the United States and third in the chain. In addition to serving food, it showcased both local and big bands.

Growing up in L.A. we’d go to the Beverly Center to snatch up colorful novelties and candy at Heaven, trendy fashion at Contempo Casuals or the pricier punky chick designs of Betsey Johnson. We’d also peek into the fancy shops we could never afford or join our moms at now long-gone department stores like the Broadway and Bullocks. If you didn’t hang at the arcade called StarSky’s as a kid, you might have danced the night away at clubs housed there in later years with names like Voila, Avâs and Tempest; one was even promoted by Married … With Children’s David Faustino. There were plenty of parties on the roof and in the parking lot (which many cursed because it was hard to get out of) over the years, some for movie premiers, others for product promos. Mostly the upper level was about hanging out, eating and often celebrity-spotting, as the mall’s locale made it one of the few places where normal folks could come into contact with the rich and famous.

The youth of today take mall life for granted and probably find it quaint — after all, they buy stuff online, and pretty much hang out online, too — but for older folk a visit to the mall was and kind of still is an experience. Though the Beverly Center looks really different, it also kind of looks the same, so it remains to be seen if it can re-establish itself as a place for experiences again, what with the Grove on Fairfax and Westfield Century City both vying for attention not far away.

The competition both online and from brick-and-mortar shopping hubs definitely took its toll on old Bev over the years, and if you went there anytime in the past couple years it was quite noticeable. The place felt like a neo-modern, very white, kinda sad ghost town.

The reimagined mall retains the same basic aesthetic, but there are some changes that make it feel fresh again. Sparkles/specks in the design are noticeable throughout, even in the self-ready elevators (don’t forget to choose the floor you want before you get in; there are no buttons inside). There’s well-placed greenery and a “Grand Court” area for chilling, with furniture, charging stations and a huge vertical digital LED screen projecting fashionable ads and promos for various shops.

These days mall jaunts are as much about catching a movie at the cineplex or grabbing a bite to eat as they are snagging a cute outfit or wardrobe basic. In a bold move, the Beverly Center did not bring back its movie theaters, or its bustling food court of yore but rather chose to focus on fashion and upscale — if not fine — dining destinations. The most casual eatery is Jeremy Fall’s funky diner called Easy’s, which is in a pivotal part of the venue, where most of us took the famed escalators into the place back in the day, ending up with the beauty supply store and pet shop (both long gone) in our sightlines. Arriving or sitting and eating here now is likely to provide flashbacks for anyone who grew up going to the retail behemoth.

Other new food places include Nathan Peitso and Laurent Halasz’s communal table—adorned Farmhouse; chef Adam Sobel and Michael Mina’s Cal Mare; and John Kunkel’s Southern fried charmer Yardbird, all of which are on the perimeters of the building. Fast-casual options including Marugame Udon Noodle Bar and the ubiquitous Eggslet round out the grub on the ground level, with more to come.

On the media tour last week during the center’s big “reveal week,” we got to sample some bites from the aforementioned; I’m not gonna lie, there were some tasty alternatives to Wetzel’s Pretzels (for those who need salty dough sustenance while power-shopping, there actually is one on a higher floor near the bathrooms). Forever 21 and H&M are still here, too, but they aren’t really being touted with the new vibe. The cheapest store we toured was Zara, which William Taubman, chief operating officer of Taubman Centers, said was the biggest one in L.A. and represented the mid-to low-range buying and browsing habits of the mall’s customers, rounding out bigger designer purchases. He made sure to point out all the opulent designer storefronts, though, including Versace, Fendi, Dolce & Gabbana, Prada and Louis Vuitton.

During the tour it was clear that Taubman and his colleagues — general manager Ralph Barnes and Robert Taubman, CEO of Taubman Centers Inc. — were excited. They did their homework and delved deep into the psychology of shopping habits, and how the environment plays into it. Everything was considered, too — where a particular store stands, how big the window displays are, how each area is lit, the shapes and shades that the eye observes (even if only peripherally).

The thing they didn’t seem to consider was how those of us who used to shop there might view the new look and feel. Or maybe their goal was to make us forget, and for the most part they succeeded. The walk-through fittingly ended at the Apple Store, which seemed like an extension of the building itself. One might suppose the reimagined structure was meant to look like Apple’s retail temple, but in fact, the Beverly Center did sexy all-white sterility first. Maybe it was ahead of its time.

The Beverly Center’s reimagining couldn’t be farther from the Valley Girl/Mallrats/Fast Times at Ridgemont High–style teen scene that shaped so many cultural mindsets in California. That might be OK for Middle America or the Valley, but the goal here is something more sophisticated, something sleek and chic, and more like an enclosed Rodeo Drive. And why not? It’s right next to Cedars-Sinai (maybe the priciest hospital in L.A., and where all the celebrities go) and also near Third Street, Robertson Boulevard and, yes, Beverly Hills, with all the mystique that comes with that.

The success of the new Beverly Center will be determined by a few types of modern customer, which Taubman seems very clear about: the locals who grew up here but now have disposable incomes and limited time to spend it, the new generation of tech-savvy shoppers whose attention spans leave little time for nostalgic distraction, and the international visitors seeking a glimpse of Hollywood glamour and escape. All three should leave the mall pretty happy, especially since they redesigned the parking lots, too.
B orn of a settlement consisting of just 11 Mexican families in the 19th century, Los Angeles grew to maturity as 1900 came and went, and people from around the world came to call the city home. The rich diversity of its population — Chinese, Mexican, Native American and Caucasian — was reflected in its architecture in the first half of the century, a period Huntington Library assistant curator of architecture and photography Erin Chase burnishes in her new show, "Architects of a Golden Age: Highlights From the Huntington's Southern California Architecture Collection," on view through Jan. 21.

As the Atlantic Richfield Company's downtown headquarters fell to the wrecking ball in 1967, many wondered how a glorious art deco structure, barely 40 years old, could be condemned to such a fate. The tragedy compelled Robert Clements, son of the demolished building's architect, Stiles O. Clements, to donate papers belonging to his father to the Huntington Library in hopes that, if the wrecking ball could not be contained, at least the building could live on in history.

Some of those papers are on display in the new show, and many of the designs they depict are thankfully still standing, such as the Mayan, the kitschy movie palace on downtown's Hill Street, which opened in 1927. Clements' whimsical design graces the facade with elaborate painted tile and outlandish sculptures of seven “warrior priests” by Mexican sculptor Francisco Comejas. Viewing it in graphite on tracing paper, the eye becomes absorbed in the minutia — tall slender windows atop the marquee, elaborate headdresses of the warrior priests and ornately detailed edgings and finials.

Clements designed the theater under the aegis of his prolific company, Morgan, Walls & Clements, which also designed the neighboring Belasco Theater, the Wiltern Theater, the Deco Building, El Capitan and the Samson Tire & Rubber Corporation's manufacturing plant (now the Citadel) in Commerce, a familiar sight along the Golden State freeway. Inspired by fanciful movie palaces springing up in the 1920s, and even by the excavation of a palace belonging to Assyrian King Sargon II earlier that decade, company founder Adolph Schleicher decided on his own Assyrian palace — to sell tires.

Less random is the rationale behind Erle Webster and Adrian Wilson's Chinatown designs for immigration attorney You Chung Hong. With the construction of nearby Union Station, Chinatown was relocated to its current site after an association of Chinese community leaders, Hong among them, purchased the land with the intention of creating a commercially viable district for locally run businesses that would be convenient to tourists arriving at the new train station. Wilson and Webster's colored pencil and pastel plans on tracing paper show a familiar stretch in the heart of present-day Chinatown — a pagoda, gate and structure opened in 1937, highlighting traditional Chinese influences combined with modern Los Angeles motifs.

Opened in 1939, Union Station itself is represented by chief designer Edward Warren Hoak's moody nighttime vision of the Mission Revival structure rendered in charcoal on tracing paper. Parkinson & Parkinson, father John and son Donald, architects whose fingers touched many L.A. landmarks including City Hall, the Memorial Coliseum and the Bullocks Wilshire building, were under pressure to come up with a specifically Southern California design that included outdoor spaces. After proffering four variations, none of which satisfied representatives of the three railway companies linking to the terminus, Hoak modernized the facade, dispensing with ornamentation and conjuring a design that spoke to the region's Mexican heritage, keeping one foot in the past and one in the present.

Another design on which the Parkinsons consulted is the Stock Exchange on Spring Street downtown, though their busy schedule necessitated hiring architect Samuel E. Lunden. The design, captured in two watercolors by artist Roger Hayward, features the Classical Moderne facade with fluted pilasters framing sculptor Salvatore Car- taino Scarpitta's bas reliefs titled Finance, Research & Discovery and Production. A second watercolor shows the ornate interior of the trading room floor, with a stained-glass ceiling designed by Julian Ellsworth Garnsey in Native American and Near East motifs. Not pictured is the second story "Cathedral of Money," a tiny chapel with a smoking room featuring stained-glass images of naked women courtesy of Judson Studios, confirmed when half of a topless female figure was found in the studio basement. After breaking ground just days before Black Tuesday in 1929, developers forged ahead on the Stock Exchange, despite the crash, and it opened in 1931. These days, it's a nightclub.

Chronologically, the new show pushes up against the next great phase in L.A. architecture, midcentury modernism, with a paint and graphite rendering of architect Edward Stone's 1958 Stuart Company building in Pasadena, home to the pharmaceutical giant. Meant to be an ideal workplace, it featured outside garden spaces, a cafeteria and even an employee swimming pool. Today it's the home of theater company A Noise Within.

Hanging alongside the image is an ink-and-watercolor rendering of an interior by actor-turned designer Billy Haines for the Brody residence in Beverly Hills, built by architect A. Quincy Jones. Haines' Melrose Avenue shop was a favorite of Hollywood's elite. There he designed all aspects of the interior — lamps, low-slung furniture, rugs, fixtures, electric drapes — and, in the case of the Brody residence, a cantilevered piano protruding from the wall.

While "Architects of a Golden Age" represents a first look at the library's extensive archive, urgently compiled in the 1970s to preserve what remained of the city's battered architectural record, it also serves as a stark reminder of threats that persist today, as preservationists fight to save John Lautner's Paul Weston Work Center in Woodland Hills, Welton Becket's Parker Center in downtown and Kurt W. Meyer's Lytton Savings building in West Hollywood, among many others. In the meantime, "Architects of a Golden Age" stands as more than just a wary admonition for the future — it is also a celebration of L.A.'s unique architectural past.

"Architects of a Golden Age" is on view through Jan. 21; Huntington Library, Art Collection & Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino; Wed.-Mon., 10 a.m.-5 p.m. huntington.org
PAST IS PRESENT
Alfonso Cuarón's Roma is a masterpiece of memory
BY YOLANDA MACHADO

The opening sequence of Alfonso Cuarón's autobiographical Roma is oddly soothing, evoking a response similar to YouTube's popular ASMR videos, where the focus is a soft sound intended to send you into a state of bliss. In Cuarón's simple black-and-white frame, we see a marble tile being coated, again and again, by a wash of soapy water. In it, we glimpse the reflection of an airplane flying above. But the sounds: The gentle whoosh of the water as it hits the marble, the slow hum of that far-off plane, the swish-swish of wet bristles. Maybe it's your troubles being scrubbed away. Maybe this all evokes some distant memory. It's soft, alluring and enchanting, an invitation to be a voyeur in this intimate portrait of life... and that's just the first minutes.

Cuarón's most personal film to date is being (rightfully) hailed as a masterpiece. It's a portrait of the soul of a culture carried, birthed, nursed and loved by women, and it is perfection. The writer-director shot Roma in chronological order, without showing the cast the script, unveiling it to the actors the same way it is for the audience, piece by piece, a chance to marinate in each moment as it plays out. The story is that of a privileged family in the early 1970s, living in Roma, a borough just west of Ciudad Mexico. Its heart is the family's caretaker, Cleo (the transcendent Yalitza Aparicio, in her first acting role). Very quickly it becomes clear that Cleo is more than just a maid or nanny to the family; she's the quiet force that keeps the household running, no matter what may be going on outside the home or in her own life.

Cleo is the surrogate mother to the children she cares for, the soul sister and friend to matron of the home Sofia (Marina de Tavira), and also the employee who shares a tiny room above the garage with her own best friend, the household's cook, Adela (Nancy García). Cleo and Adela giggle and gossip in Mixtec, their indigenous language, over her boss' sometimes nitpicky requests, an odd dynamic but not unheard of in countries with large economic disparities. In Mexico, much of the population, particularly the indigenous communities, lives in poverty. The privileged class employs muchachas, who for a small wage and living quarters become as essential to their lives as air but teeter on the edge of involuntary servitude, as they are never really off the clock. They often exist in a space where they are viewed as the family's, but they innately know that the family is not theirs.

Cuarón has called the film, which spans one year in a changing country and evolving family, an homage to the women who raised him. As Cleo faces a surprise pregnancy, and both she and Sofia find themselves deserted by the men in their lives, Cuarón crafts a vision of Mexican womanhood in that era while also peering in contrasting reflections between poverty and privilege. Cleo represents Libo, the Cuarón family's real muchacha, who remains a part of the director's life today. Through her eyes, he shows us the struggles of Mexico in that era, including, in a simultaneously emotional and anxiety-inducing sequence, the student protest of 1968 (better known as the Tlatelolco massacre). Roma also honors Mexico in all its grace, ranging from city to countryside to sea, finding beauty in people of every class that call the country home. And through Cleo's joy and pain, the film explores the delicate nature of a woman's autonomy over her feelings, and how she changes through love and loss.

Mexican culture, as is the case with most Latino cultures, is born in machismo. A woman is taught to create a home, to rear children, to please and to serve everyone but herself. Even in privileged classes, a woman tends not to be viewed as equal to her spouse. She must be everything to everyone at all times, the roles of caretaker, socialite and martyr all in a delicate balancing act that can come crashing down in an instant. When Sofia is deserted by her husband, she drunkenly tells Cleo, “Las mujeres estamos solas”... that women are alone. The irony of Sofia saying this to a muchacha is one of the many moments that fully acknowledge the complicated nature of the women's relationship while exposing a striking truth, one reflected in Cuarón's early memory of his father's abandonment of his family. But the film is not didactic. That insight is not dwelled on; it's just another part of life that must be accepted and moved past.

Cuarón finds equal value in the mundane and the extraordinary, focusing as much on the way Cleo ends the day by going room to room, turning off every light at Sofia's request, as he does on the chaos unfolding when Cleo is about to give birth. Roma reminds us that life isn't lived just in its climaxes. Instead, it's made up of the smallest of moments and gestures, and all the cracks in between. Serving as his own cinematographer, Cuarón manifests life and humanity in its purest forms in gorgeously intricate, effusive frames. Though the entire film is shot in 65mm black-and-white, a warmth permeates each shade of gray. Yes, this is a Netflix release, a welcome development for audiences who will rewatch this on streaming like they're eating candy. But Cuarón has composed some of the most stunning shots and sequences in film history, and it would be a sin not to see this on the big screen.
FILM

THEIR MAJESTY

Emma Stone and The Favourite’s royal women scheme deliciously

BY BILGE EBIRI

A ny concern that an elegantly mounted, star-studded period piece set during the War of Spanish Succession might have diluted Greek surrealist Yorgos Lanthimos’ particular brand of sadism turns out to be entirely unwarranted. That becomes clear just moments in, as soon as Academy Award winner Emma Stone falls out of a horse-drawn carriage and into a giant, wet pile of shit. Face first. If anything, The Favourite takes to scabrous new levels the Dogtooth and The Lobster director’s fascination with the absurdity of social mores and the thin line between power and humiliation.

Stone plays the impoverished, fallen-from-grace Abigail, the daughter of a one-time nobleman who lost her in a card game. She has arrived at the court of Britain’s Queen Anne (Olivia Colman), seeking help from Lady Sarah Churchill (Rachel Weisz), the monarch’s close friend and personal adviser and, it so happens, a distant relative of Abigail’s. Don’t expect Abigail with a mixture of bemusement calculating, judgmental Sarah regards distant relative of Abigail’s. Don’t expect Abigail, the daughter of a one-time nobleman who lost her in a card game from-grace Abigail, the daughter of a one-time nobleman who lost her in a card game.

Sarah may recognize Abigail as a threat but there appears to be little she can do about it. The new arrival, motivated by desperation, ambition and a kind of merciless joy, is too good at insinuating herself into power. And the queen is deeply conflicted and lost: It’s the early 18th century, there’s a war on with France, and the persistently ill, somewhat childish Anne struggles both to assert her authority and to preserveher kingdom and her crown.

The men around them, including the Earl of Oxford (Nicholas Hoult), are dim, preening cocks of the walk whose political machinations are no match for the personal intrigues and strategic savagery of Sarah and Abigail as they struggle for the queen’s favor. Indeed, in this world where women seem to hold all the power, the men are mostly interested in hedonism and degradation. They’re also way more made up than the women: Here it’s the dudes who lumber around in high heels, ornate outfits and hilariously huge wigs; the ladies, by contrast, look gracefully modest.

Stylistically, Lanthimos continues and builds on the expressionist imagery of The Killing of a Sacred Deer. His angles are low, his lenses wide and his camera constantly in motion, tracking and whip-panning. In Sacred Deer, such elements added a kind of mythic grandeur to the proceedings, as if the judgment of the gods were ever-present, looming over the characters and their bizarre roundelay of guilt and revenge. But they imbue The Favourite with a certain delirious unpredictability, a sense that the standard-issue costume drama, usually so stately and regal, has been opened up and turned inside out. (There’s also a dance sequence, mixing the modern and the classical, that manages to be both hilariously bizarre and beautiful.)

But amid all this Lanthimosian weirdness, the film breathes, too. The screenplay is the first of his major works that the director hasn’t at least co-written; it’s credited to Deborah Davis and Tony McNamara, and apparently it has been bouncing around for two decades. Maybe that provenance accounts for the urgency of the performances, though Lanthimos has been building to that in his work. In the past, the director preferred an arch, declarative acting style, which worked perfectly well with his absurdist, symbolic storylines. Sacred Deer began to show cracks in that façade, however, letting in bits of emotion and despair and (gasp) humanity. And The Favourite’s trio of lead actresses dig into their parts with gusto.

This is a movie filled with profanity and anguish and illness and bodily fluids, and more than any previous picture by this director, its world feels lived in, its stakes important. For once, the horrors don’t seem quite so arbitrary. Beneath all their conniving and backstabbing, these women act like they deeply need this proximity to power — that it’s the one thing keeping them from ignominy and destruction. And, as the film eventually demonstrates, with painful hilarity, they’re not wrong.

IN THIS WORLD WHERE WOMEN SEEM TO HOLD ALL THE POWER, THE MEN ARE MOSTLY INTERESTED IN HEDONISM AND DEGRADATION.

CREED II

For all their triumphant simplicity, the original Rocky and the original Creed were what we used to just call “movies,” by which I mean Hollywood underdog fables told with sincerity and an attention to life as it’s actually lived. Creed II, like Rocky II, is something less. It’s a Rocky movie, just the latest go-round, its story more formulaic, its people less specific, its rhythms as wheezily familiar as a workout you should have changed up weeks ago. It’s a diminishment of Creed, a dumbing down, just as Rocky II was a diminishment of Rocky. Its makers seem to think so little of viewers that they enlist, during all three of this sequel’s boxing matches, jabbering sportscasters who exhaustively explain to us every lunge and jab that we’ve just seen. “What a turn this fight’s taken!” they exclaim. “It all feels so Shakespearean!” they insist. Imagine it: The filmmakers think you’re too dumb to follow the emotional thrust of a Rocky movie. The story concerns sort of a playdate between the kids fathered by the first generation of Rocky boxers: Creed versus the son of Dolph Lundgren’s Ivan Drago, who in Rocky IV was built up as pretty much the most devastating weapon in the Soviet nuclear arsenal. He’s the one, you may recall, who killed Creed the First in the ring. It’s all ludicrous. Still, for all that, Creed II does have a pulse. The training sequences, always the series’ highlight, again build and build and peak.
A PRIVATE WAR

Hard-edged and harrowed, Rosamund Pike is magnificent in Lawrence of Arabia from Sony last fall with the intention of exhibiting it a few times each year on the big screen. It’s still the best way to see David Lean’s stirring intellectual epic, which masterfully blends historical drama with high adventure while offering a multi-layered character study. Peter O’Toole is perfection as T.E. Lawrence, the British military officer who helped unite the Arab tribes during WWI. He achieves the impossible only to find himself a political and national orphan.

The desert imagery is justly famous, but the story of Marie Colvin, the behind-the-front-lines war reporter for England’s Sunday Times, is as compelling as any other. Colvin is very much the kind of crusading reporter that men usually play in movies. However, in A Private War, the narrator insists early on, in an attempt to incite excitement, but the story immediately becomes a snooze. There is little to enjoy in making Robin Hood more than a buff mascot than a real working-class hero. At one point, the camera lingers on a shirtless Robin as he nurses a leg wound (his pants are on but his shirt is not, and I’m no medical expert but that seems unnecessary). But the film doesn’t even commit to a “sexy Robin Hood” — which, if that’s what you’re going for, then by all means go for it — despite the flirty tête-à-tête with Marian (Eve Hewson) in the opening scene. Little John gets an interesting update in the form of Jamie Foxx, playing him as a Moorish commander set on overthrowing the English leadership. John taps his former Crusader foe and trains him in archery, helping create the masked avenger known as “The Hood.”

The double life gives this Robin Hood a superhero arc, which could have been noteworthy if not for the video game-like rendering of fight scenes with slo-mo sequences and VO漆 shots. There’s quite a lot of fighting, but it’s too chaotic to be effective. (Kristen Yoonsoo Kim)

Miss Dali

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GUITAR GODDESS

Nita Strauss will rip you to shreds

BY BRETT CALLWOOD

When Guitar World magazine recently included Nita Strauss in its “10 Female Guitar Players You Should Know” list, a line was drawn in the sand. Fret-heads, obsessed with the likes of Steve Vai and Yngwie Malmsteen, were suddenly very aware of the talents of this L.A. shredder who had previously been peddling her wares with all-female Iron Maiden tribute The Iron Maidens.

In 2014, Strauss replaced Australian musician and former Michael Jackson player Orianthi in Alice Cooper’s band, and her standing as one of the top guitarists in the country was cemented. Strauss isn’t only one of the top female guitar players you should know about, she’s one of the top guitarists, period, that you should know about. Frankly, she shreds most male players to, ummm, shreds.

“I started playing at 13, and growing up in L.A. it was such a great breeding ground for musicians,” Strauss says. “Of course, it’s the most competitive music scene but it’s an amazing education, growing up in L.A. with the best of the best from everywhere. Every great musician from every city all over America and all over the world, really — they all come to L.A. to play their music. Growing up in our music scene really drove me to continue on and get better.”

Strauss’ first band was a tiny death-metal outfit, and her first gig was a Battle of the Bands in the San Fernando Valley, where she grew up. The only people in the audience, she says, were her dad, the singer’s girlfriend and one of the drummer’s parents. As far as Strauss was concerned, she could only go up from there. But it was a cult Ralph Macchio movie that changed her life.

“I discovered my love of shred guitar specifically when I saw the movie Crossroads, which just about any guitar player will tell you that movie is life-changing,” she says.

“Once I saw [Steve] Vai in Crossroads, that was my moment of, ‘Oh my God, I need to find out more about this.’ From that moment forward, I had to get my hands on Vai, [Joe] Satriani, Paul Gilbert, Marty Friedman records, and then on to Metallica, Megadeth and all that kind of stuff.”

Between 2011 and 2014, Strauss performed as “Mega Murray” in The Iron Maidens, playing the role of Maiden’s likable guitarist Dave Murray.

“Oh my gosh, it was a blast,” she says. “Iron Maiden were legends when I was growing up, and to get to play Maiden songs and tour the world was an amazing experience.”

Strauss also has been playing on and off with re-formed ‘80s hair rockers Femme Fatale since 2013, alongside the inimitable Lorraine Lewis. However, Strauss’ commitments with Alice Cooper have understandably restricted her involvement.

Femme Fatale “are in rehearsals right now — they’re going to Wales for a festival out there,” Strauss says. “Unfortunately, my touring schedule, between my solo shows and playing with Alice Cooper, has not given me any time to play with them at all this year but it was a great time touring with them and I’m really thankful that anytime Lorraine has shows, she still does call and offer it to me. I just wish I could do more with them.”

Strauss started playing with Cooper in 2014 in time for a mammoth Mötley Crüe tour. It was Cooper’s former bass player and Winger frontman Kip Winger who recommended her to the main man.

“Kip had gotten word that they were looking for a female guitar player to replace Orianthi,” Strauss says. “It was really short notice — the tour started a little over two weeks from when I got that initial call — but Kip was kind enough to put my name forward into the hat, and from there I was introduced to Shep Gordon and Bob Ezrin, who have been part of the Alice Cooper camp for 50 years now, I guess. From that moment, I was in the band and on tour. Four and a half years now, playing with Alice, and I’m loving it.”

“Feed My Frankenstein” is Strauss’ favorite Alice Cooper song to perform live, due to the fact that the ‘90s hit featured the talents of Steve Vai.

“ALL MY HEROES ARE SHRED PLAYERS. SHRED GUITAR IS WHAT GOT ME WANTING TO PLAY GUITAR.”

— NITA STRAUSS

“He’s the reason I started playing guitar, and most people don’t know that he played one of the solos on that song,” she says. “For me to get to play a Steve Vai solo onstage with Alice Cooper every night, that’s really a treat.”

Strauss has just released her debut solo album, Controlled Chaos. It’s an instrumental shred-guitar record, as she seeks to follow in the footsteps of Vai and Satrani.

“All my heroes are shred players,” she says. “Shred guitar is what got me wanting to play guitar. So I always wanted to create something that would contribute to that scene, the shred scene. I’m really thankful that I had a little bit of time this year to make this record.”

With the exception of a Queen cover (“The Show Must Go on”), Strauss wrote all of the songs on the album, and says she has no problem expressing herself, her emotions, through music without lyrics. “I don’t sing, so I’ve always heard a melody as something that could be played on guitar,” she says. “I find it more expressive, to make something that could be played on guitar, rather than sing.”

Strauss’ Controlled Chaos is out now via Sumerian Records. She performs at Club 1720 on Sunday, Dec. 9.
**SAT 11/24**

**Holiday Sidewinder, Wet & Reckless**
**@ The Hi Hat**

“We’re humans, we make plans and machines,” Emily Wilder announces on “Machinery,” from Wet & Reckless’ 2015 self-titled debut album. “Stone walls around hearts keep them cold/Keep out what we don’t know. ”

**Meat Puppets**
**@ Pappy & Harriet’s Pioneertown Palace**

Fourteen years after bassist Chris Kirkwood served 21 months for striking a post office security guard with his own baton, getting shot in the process, the Meat Puppets are a solid hardcore cowpunk unit. Along with frontman/brother Curt Kirkwood, and reunited with original drummer Derrick Bostrom for the first time since ’96, the Puppets are touring regularly. The 2013 album _Rat Farm_, their 14th full-length studio effort, was a solid piece of dusty alt-folk, though every fan is waiting with eager anticipation for the next one, which will be their first with Bostrom since 1995’s _No Joke_. This show will be a cool opportunity to see the band in an intimate setting, and the fact that I See Hawks in L.A. also are on the bill makes it all the more special. —**BRETT CALLWOOD**

**Wednesday 13**
**@ Whisky A Go Go**

As the 1990s gave way to the new millennium, Slipknot were among the biggest and most exciting metal bands on the planet. So when, in 2002, drummer Joey Jordison decided to pick up a guitar and start a side project called Murderdolls, scores of Slipknot fans, or “maggots” as the band liked to call them, were paying attention. The singer in that band was Wednesday 13, who had made a name for himself in the horror-punk underground with his gender-bending zombie crew, Frankensteins Drag Queens From Planet 13. Now solo, Wednesday 13 has been putting out quality horror punk under his own name since 2005’s _Transylvania 90210: Songs of Death, Dying and the Dead_, although last year’s _Conduences_ has more of a metal edge. Whatever he does, he does it well and with a spooky grin. Davey Suicide, Fate DeStroyed, Darling Dead, The Rhythm Coffin, Dusty Mitchell, Mortis and Eminence also play. —**BRETT CALLWOOD**
**MON 11/26**

**Cornelia Murr**
[@bootlegtheater](https://twitter.com/bootlegtheater)

Cornelia Murr was born in London and lives in California but she's lived all around the United States, and her latest album, *Lake Tear of the Clouds*, was inspired by her time in New York's Hudson Valley. Produced by My Morning Jacket's Jim James, the new record is an aural travelogue through various mellow states of mind, ranging from the dreamy ethereality of “Billions” to the organ-steeped breathiness of “Cicada.” The album even includes a version of Yoko Ono’s “I Have a Woman Inside My Soul,” which Murr has transformed into a moving R&B ballad that’s distinguished by her soulfully soothing vocal delivery. The recording features such guests as vocalist Lola Kirke and My Morning Jacket keyboardist Bo Koster, but ultimately it’s a showcase for Murr’s uniquely restrained and low-key ruminations. This show is part of a Motor Sales residency; Mike Viola also plays. —FALLING JAMES

**TUE 11/27**

**Richard Lloyd**
[@bootlegtheater](https://twitter.com/bootlegtheater)

Best known as a founding member of pioneering New York CBGB’s house band Television, Richard Lloyd recently also has been a member of re-formed Cleveland punks (and Dead Boys/Pere Ubu precursors) Rocket From the Tombs. He’s been a solo artist of note, though, since 1979’s *Alchemy*, which arrived shortly after the initial breakup of Television. His most recent solo album, and his seventh in total, is 2016’s *Rosendale* — a wonderfully insightful, poignant and honest record at this stage in his storied career. Live, he tends to veer toward career-spanning sets, so expect a bit of everything. His own renditions of Television tunes can be fascinating, to say the least. But, whatever, he’s an underrated guitarist and any opportunity to see him is well worth grasping. —BRETT CALLWOOD

**WED 11/28**

**Brockhampton**
[@shrineexpo](https://twitter.com/shrineexpo)

Brockhampton are the rap version of your favorite boy band. Coming up as a collective led by Texas native Kevin Abstract, the hip-hop group relocated to Los Angeles and successfully broke from the underground into the mainstream light. In the group, which is approximately 14 deep, each member brings their own style and flair to the table, whether it’s rapping, singing, entertaining … you name it. With the release of their debut studio album, *Saturation*, in summer of 2017, fans flocked to their signature sound — which cannot be boxed into any type of genre — and hard-hitting production. Following a deal with RCA Records earlier this year, the group dropped their fourth studio album, *Iridescence*, which peaked at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 Album Chart. Also Thursday, Nov. 29. —SHIRLEY JU

**THU 11/29**

**Georgia Anne Muldrow**
[@lodgeroom](https://twitter.com/lodgeroom)

Georgia Anne Muldrow has been all over town lately. She was a spotlighted guest during L.A. Philharmonic’s CicLAvia spectacle back in September, and more recently she was one of several featured vocalists when the orchestra presented a rare performance of John Cage’s *Apartment House 1776* at Disney Hall. But the local singer is best represented by her own music on such albums as 2018’s *Overload*, in which she roams ambitiously through soulful balladry and funky R&B interludes. Many of her original songs are intercut with hip-hop embellishments, and there are hints of jazz and psychedelia in Muldrow’s wide-ranging approach. *Overload* also includes contributions from Shana Jenson and Dudley Perkins, but it’s Muldrow's restless, ever-changing personality that remains at the center of it all. —FALLING JAMES

**Elvis Costello**
[@thewiltern](https://twitter.com/thewiltern)

Much like a David Bowie or even a Bob Dylan, how much you enjoy Elvis Costello in 2018 depends on how prepared you have been to evolve with the artist. This isn't the same quirky, bespectacled new-waver who charmed the world with punk-ish anthems such as “Oliver’s Army,” and “Pump It Up.” Today’s Costello is far more subtle a singer-songwriter. A storyteller. The *Look Now* album, released last month, is glorious proof. It’s also his first studio album in five years, and finds him writing with the very un-punk likes of Carole King and Burt Bacharach. Hey, one could argue that his determination to do exactly what he wants is the very definition of punk. Whatever — the new album is a banger, and he’ll inevitably be wonderful at the Wiltern. —BRETT CALLWOOD
MUSIC

GO OUT

CLUBS

ROCK & POP

ALEX'S BAR: 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach. Furcast, Devil Season, Asi Fui, Fri., Nov. 23, 8 p.m., $5. The Rocketz, Jesse Ray, Sun., Nov. 25, 2 p.m., free; Diablo Dimes, Steven El Rey, Sun., Nov. 25, 8 p.m., $7. Bundy, Forest of Tongue, TV Heads, Spirit Mother, Thu., Nov. 29, 8 p.m., $8.

AMOEBA MUSIC: 6400 Sunset Blvd., L.A. Mon Laferte, Tue., Nov. 27, 5 p.m. Richard Lloyd, Wed., Nov. 28, 8 p.m., free.

BAR DOT HOLLYWOOD: 1737 N. Vine St., L.A. Monogem, Rainsford, Aaron Aye, Otzeki, Mon., Nov. 26, 8 p.m.


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BOOTLEG THEATER: 2200 Beverly Blvd., L.A. Claud, Sonoda, Billy Uomo, Sat., Nov. 24, 8:30 p.m., $10. Deep Fields, Draag, Space Equator, Alex André, Sun., Nov. 25, 8 p.m., $10. Motor Sales, Mike Viola, Cornelia Murr, Mon., Nov. 26, 8:30 p.m., free. (See Music Pick.) Richard Lloyd, No Win, Tue., Nov. 27, 8:30 p.m., $12. (See Music Pick.)

Cafe Nela: 1906 Cypress Ave., L.A. Loss for Concern, Revolting Sounds, Facelift, Fri., Nov. 23, 9 p.m. Decry, Just Head, Hot Fuck Sundae, Culo, Sat., Nov. 24, 7 p.m. Lunar Gateway, Mushroom, Jean Caffeine, The Lower Echelon, Sun., Nov. 25, 5 p.m., $5. Lunar Gateway, Mushroom, Jean Caffeine, The Lower Echelon, Sun., Nov. 25, 5 p.m., $5. Hauk, Stormlight, Kathleen Gunderson, Johnny Fierro, Thu., Nov. 29, 8:30 p.m., $5.


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MUSIC

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THE CINEMA BAR: 3967 Sepulveda Blvd., Culver City. Cooper Walker, Fri., Nov. 23, 9 p.m. The Hot Club of L.A., Mondays, 9 p.m., free. The Deltaz, Tuesdays, 9 p.m.

JOE’S GREAT AMERICAN BAR & GRILL: 4311 W. Magnolia Blvd., Burbank. Jack Brand & the BC Riders, Fri., Nov. 23, 9 p.m. The Candy Jacket Jazz Band, Mon., Nov. 26, 9 p.m. Dizzy Dale Williams, Wed., Nov. 28, 9 p.m. Mark “The Luvman” Pender, Thu., Nov. 29, 9 p.m.

DANCE CLUBS


CATCH ONE: 4067 W. Pico Blvd., L.A. Orkester, Fri., Nov. 23, 9 p.m., $10; AfroGoGo, with Zonge Zongo Sound System, Bleg Pages, Tucha, Fri., Nov. 23, 10 p.m. A Club Called Rhonda, Sat., Nov. 24, 9 p.m. Coucou Chloe, Wed., Nov. 28, 9 p.m. Glass Spaceship, Thu., Nov. 29, 9 p.m.

EXCHANGE LA.: 618 S. Spring St., L.A. Moksi, Sat., Nov. 24, 10 p.m., $20-$90.

SOUND NIGHTCLUB: 1642 N. Las Palmas Ave., L.A. House Heads, with Lee Wells & Bones, Fri., Nov. 23, 10 p.m., $10-$15; AfroGoGo, with Zonge Zongo Sound System, Bleg Pages, Tucha, Fri., Nov. 23, 10 p.m., $10-$15; AfroGoGo, with Tantric full body massage, Fri., Nov. 23, 10 p.m., $10-$15; Deep Space After Dark, Sundays, 10 p.m. Space Yacht, Tuesdays, 10 p.m. Night Bass, Thu., Nov. 29, 10 p.m.

THE VIRGIL: 4510 Santa Monica Blvd., L.A. Come Sail Away: A Yacht Rock Adventure, Last Sunday of every month, 9 p.m.-10 p.m., free. Fun4mosphere, Thursdays, 9:30 p.m.-2 a.m., free-$5.

CONCERTS

FRIDAY, NOV. 23

BILLIE EILISH: 8:30 p.m. The Fonda Theatre, 6126 Hollywood Blvd., L.A.

EGGS: Wes Hoolahan, Victoria O’Hanlon, Yialmelic, Tuesday, 10 p.m., $10-$15. The Regent Theater, 448 S. Main St., L.A. See Music Pick.

JOE BONAMASSA: 8 p.m., $89-$199. Long Beach Terrace Theater, 300 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach.

THE MICHAEL SESSION SEXTET: 6 p.m., free. LACMA, 5905 Wilshire Blvd., L.A.

MINZY: 8 p.m. The Novo by Microsoft, 800 W. Olympic Blvd., L.A.

PATTI LABELLE: 7 p.m. Pechanga Resort & Casino, 45000 Pechanga Parkway, Temecula.

Rezz: With 1788-L, 9 p.m., $29.50-$49.50. Shrine Auditorium & Expo Hall, 665 W. Jefferson Blvd., L.A.


SATURDAY, NOV. 24

A.C.E.: 7 p.m. The Fonda Theatre, 6126 Hollywood Blvd., L.A.

ADAM BEYER, CIREZ D: 9 p.m. Hollywood Palladium, 6215 W. Sunset Blvd., L.A.

GO BEHEMOTH: With At the Gates, Wolves in the Throne Room, 6:30 p.m. The Willow, 3790 Wilshire Blvd., L.A. See Music Pick.

CHASE ATLANTIC: With Cherry Pools, Riley, 9 p.m. The Fonda Theatre, 6126 Hollywood Blvd., L.A.

EVERY TIME I DIE: With Turnstile, Angel Dust, Vein, 8 p.m. $30. The Regent Theater, 448 S. Main St., L.A.

GUCCI MANE, SMOKER PURP: With Hoodrich Pablo Juan, Asian Doll, 8:30 p.m., $39.50-$75. The Novo by Microsoft, 800 W. Olympic Blvd., L.A.

Rezz: With Drezo, 8 p.m., $29.50-$44.50. Shrine Auditorium & Expo Hall, 665 W. Jefferson Blvd., L.A.

SCOTT BRADLEE’S POSTMODERN JUKEBOX: 7:30 p.m., $29.50-$105. Long Beach Terrace Theater, 300 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 28

ANDRE NICKATINA: 7 p.m. The Belasco Theater, 1505 S. Hill St., L.A.

BLACKBEAR: 8 p.m. Hollywood Palladium, 6215 W. Sunset Blvd., L.A.

BROCKHAMPTON: 9 p.m. Shrine Expo Hall, 665 W. Jefferson Blvd., L.A. See Music Pick.

LEMAITRE: With Otzeki, 9 p.m., $22. El Rey Theatre, 5516 Wilshire Blvd., L.A.

THURSDAY, NOV. 29

BROCKHAMPTON: 9 p.m. Shrine Expo Hall, 665 W. Jefferson Blvd., L.A. See Music Pick.

ELVIS CESTELLO: 7 p.m. The Wiltern, 3790 Wilshire Blvd., L.A. See Music Pick.

GIRAFFAGE, RYAN HEMSWORTH: 8 p.m., $28. The Regent Theater, 448 S. Main St., L.A.

IGGY AZALEA: 7 p.m. Hollywood Palladium, 6215 W. Sunset Blvd., L.A.

KASBO: With Vancouver Sleep Clinic, Ford, 9 p.m., $25. The Fonda Theatre, 6126 Hollywood Blvd., L.A.

SHALLOW: With Japanese Wallpaper, 8 p.m., $18.50. The Novo by Microsoft, 800 W. Olympic Blvd., L.A.

THE TALLEST MAN ON EARTH: 8:30 p.m., $30. The Warehouse, 3300 Wilshire Blvd., L.A.

WHEELER WALKER JR.: With Roky Scovel, Jaime Wyatt, 8 p.m., $10. The Novo by Microsoft, 800 W. Olympic Blvd., L.A.

CLASSICAL & NEW MUSIC

CAMERATA PACIFICA: Violinists Kristin Lee and Jason Uyeyama, violinist Richard O’Neill and cellist Ani Aznavourian assemble string quartets by Arensky and Beethoven before doubling in size with the Calder Quartet for Felix Mendelssohn’s Octet in E-flat major. Oct. 20, Thu., Nov. 29, 8 p.m., $56. The Colburn School of Music, Zipper Concert Hall, 200 S. Grand Ave., L.A.

GARLANDS FOR STEVEN STUCKY: Pianist Gloria Cheng, mezzo-soprano Peabody Southwell and oboist Carolyn Hove pay homage to the late composer, Tue., Nov. 27, 8 p.m. The Colburn School of Music, Zipper Concert Hall, 200 S. Grand Ave., L.A.


IN YOUNG HUH: The pianist plays Beethoven, Liszt and Prokofiev, Sun., Nov. 25, 8 p.m., free. LACMA, Bing Theater, 5905 Wilshire Blvd., L.A.

L.A. PHILHARMONIC: Malcolm McDowell hosts as Jessica Cottis conducts soundtrack selections from the films of Stanley Kubrick, Fri., Nov. 23, 8 p.m.; Sat., Nov. 24, 8 p.m.; Sun., Nov. 25, 2 p.m., $20-$207. Walt Disney Concert Hall, 111 S. Grand Ave., L.A. See GoLA.

PRISM: L.A. Opera Off Grand and Beth Morrison Projects present the world premiere of composer Ellen Reid and librettist Rorex Perkins’ operatic look at the housebound life of a mother and her sickly daughter, Thu., Nov. 29-Sat., Dec. 1, 8 p.m.; Sun., Dec. 2, 2 p.m., $69. BEGAT: Roy & Edna Disney CalArts Theater, 631 W. Second St., L.A. See GoLA.

—FALLING JAMES

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