Halloween Brings New Forms of Immersive Terror to Town

By Lina Lecaro
OCT 26

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Follow Romeo and Juliet into the underworld, party in one of the most haunted buildings in Los Angeles, and more to do and see in L.A. this week.

FEATURE
LINA LECARO dives into SoCal’s history of haunts as Halloween brings new forms of immersive terror to town.

EAT & DRINK
Kusina Filipina offers delicious and accessible cuisine in its humble location.

BY DANNY PALUMBO.

ARTS
Conceptual artist Charles Gaines’ system makes numbers beautiful at Hauser & Wirth.

BY SHANA NYS DAMBROT.

TELEVISION
Lead by Eddie Murphy in prime form, Dolemite Is My Name is a blast from the past in all the best ways.

BY ASHER LUBERTO.

FILM
NATHANIEL BELL explores the movies opening this week, including horror flick Countdown, and The Lighthouse is a master class in psychological horror.

MUSIC
The 10 best non-Halloween Halloween songs.

BY MORAT. Plus our guide to the best music shows in L.A. this week.
score — written for a string section instead of a typical orchestra — that imbues the film with its jaggedly creep drive and menace. The Theatre at Ace Hotel, 929 S. Broadway, downtown; Fri., Oct. 25, 8 p.m.; Sat., Oct. 26, 2 p.m. & 8 p.m.; Sun., Oct. 27, 2 p.m.; Wed., Oct. 30, 8 p.m.; Thu., Oct. 31, 8 p.m.; S39-S109. (213) 235-9614, laopera.org. —FALLING JANE

SAT 10/26

DANCE

Undead Lovers

What do Romeo and Juliet and the enduring zombie craze have in common? The Leigh Purtil Ballet Company combines the two in Sweet Sorrow, A Zombie Ballet. In choreographer Purtil’s interpretation of Shakespeare’s tragic love story, an apothecary leads the dead lovers into the underworld, followed by Benvolio and Rosaline, where they mingle with undead characters, including zombies, witches, vampires and gargoyles. Cast members Daniela Strong, Lana Nahapetian, William Reiss, John Lushefski, Corey McCullogh, Jenifer Marchain and April McLeod dance to not only Prokofiev’s famous score to the ballet, but also Beethoven, Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov. Purtil created the piece two years ago and has performed it at such places as the annual ScaredLA Halloween convention and on ABC’s The Gong Show in 2017, where it won. Based in La Cañada, Purtil’s amateur ballet company for adults has staged other original ballets, as well as The Nutcracker and Sleeping Beauty. AGBU Vatche & Tamar Manoukian Performing Arts Center, 2495 E. Mountain St., Pasadena; Sat., Oct. 26, 7-9 p.m.; Sun., Oct. 27, 4-6 p.m.; S35-S20. agbupac.org. —JIRAN BABAYAN

CULTURE

Little Tokyo Halloween Block Party

Little Tokyo has been prepping for Halloween all month, with a pumpkin patch, Japanese horror film screenings and “haunted” walking tours. Tonight, however, is the main event. Haunted Night in Little Tokyo: The Block Party features a 100-foot long beer garden that’s sure to get you properly buzzed, food from such local eateries as Hello Stranger, KASHI, Pikunico, Rice & Nori and Takoyaki Tanota, additional grub from food trucks, including Steamy Bun Truck and Takuma Burgers, and a live music stage featuring rapper Key Kool and DJ Phatrick. Since it’s a family night, kids can expect trick or treating, pumpkin and costume contest. Little Tokyo, 334 E. 2nd St., between Central and San Pedro; Sat., Oct. 26, 6 p.m.-2 a.m.; free. gotolittletokyo.com. —JIRAN BABAYAN

SUN 10/27

ART

See Me, Hear Me

There’s a rich and eclectic creative community active in the heart of the Skid Row neighborhood, with art, theater and music playing a huge part in its commitment to the dignity of every human voice. Now in its 10th year, the Festival for All Skid Row Artists places this creativity in the spotlight with a two-day festival of music and visual art in Gladys Park. The Los Angeles Poverty Department (aka “the other LAPD”) anchors the festival. A theater company founded in 1985 as a politically engaged repertory company comprised of local residents, LAPD partners with Studio 526 and United Coalition East Prevention Project (UCEPP) to produce the festival, and this year, the Goethe-Institut is an additional producing partner. Their “Worlds of Homelessness” project brings together artists, architects and experts in an ongoing series of talks and events culminating in a performance at the Festival on Sunday afternoon. Gladys Park, 808 E. 6th St., downtown; Sat-Sun., Oct. 26-27, 1-5 p.m.; free. (213) 413-1077, lapovertydept.org. —JIRAN BABAYAN

MON 10/28

ART

Occult of Personality

Our culture loves a retro moment, and not only

immigrated to America in 1920 and eventually settled in L.A. His artistic capabilities, inspired by Chinese classical art, especially calligraphy, led to a scholarship at Otis Art Institute, where he supported himself working as a janitor. Wong was hired at Walt Disney Studios during animation’s early days and would be best known as the lead illustrator on the 1942 film Bambi. (Wong was also a greeting card artist for Hallmark Cards, kite maker, set designer and storyboard artist, whose other credits included Rebel Without a Cause, Around the World in 80 Days, The Wild Bunch and Rio Bravo, among others.) The Huntington hosts co-authors Julie Leung and Chris Sasaki, who’ll sign Paper Son: The Inspiring Story of Tyrus Wong, Immigrant and Artist, their illustrated children’s book on Wong’s life and art. The Huntington, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino; Sun., Oct. 27, 2-3 p.m.; free. (626) 405-2100, huntington.org. —LINA LECARO
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in its fashion trends. A common social, cultural, and political phenomenon is the resurgence, or revival, of beliefs, practices, and aesthetics from bygone eras. And there's as much to learn about what these affinities say regarding the present moment as there is regarding history. One slice of this occurrence is the modern era's rediscovery of seminal psychedelic and visionary science fiction-inflected ideas from the 1970s, especially by authors like Philip K. Dick, Terence McKenna, and Robert Anton Wilson. Based on his recent book High Weirdness: Drugs, Esoterica, and Visionary Experience in the Seventies, Erik Davis lectures on the topic at the Philosophical Research Society in the presentation High Weirdness Then & Now: Occult Revival in the ’70s and Today. Arrive early for a music session featuring vintage and contemporary occult music curated by Davis, or stay home and enhance your mood as you see fit because there will also be a ticketed livestream. The Philosophical Research Society, 3910 Los Feliz Blvd., Los Feliz; Mon., Oct. 28, 7:30-9 p.m.; $10. prs.org.—ALEX DISE-FANO

**CULTURE**

**THU 10/31**

**BOOK**

Tangled Journey

Because Saeed Jones is a poet, his new memoir, How We Fight for Our Lives, crackles with rich, palpably real imagery that takes his book beyond the level of a typical autobiography. “Some songs take women places men cannot follow,” the Texas native marvels in the prelude about the way his mother dances and sings along when listening to a Prince song in their kitchen. Jones takes the reader along on a tangled journey through his life growing up gay and African-American in Lewisville, Texas. Jones discusses his book with the incisive writer-critic Roxane Gay in a presentation from Skylight Books. Barnsdall Gallery Theatre, 4800 Hollywood Blvd., Los Feliz; Tue., Oct. 29, 7:30 p.m.; $30 (includes a copy of the book). (323) 660-1175, skylightbooks.com.—FALLING JAMES

**WED 10/30**

**BUYING REAL ESTATE JUST GOT BRUTAL**

As the goblins, ghouls and witches prepare for a night of festivities and rituals this year, Zebulon will host A Devil’s Night of Movies, Music & Mayhem on Wednesday, October 30 with the premiere of Brutal Realty Inc., a short film starring actor and musician London May. The dark comedy centers around the odd pairing of real estate sales and Satanic black metal music; it has received critical acclaim from its appearances at international film festivals thus far. The short film is about a demonic black metal drummer known as The Summoner, a malevolent musical monster by night and a dignified real estate agent by day, with hilarious, bizarre and bloody results. Fans at this special event in L.A. will also get to witness the live debut of May’s newest band Symbolism — which features members of legendary death rock/punk alumni Adolescents and Christian Death. Arrive dressed to impress for the costume contest. The evening is set to feature special DJs, surprise guests and more. Fans will be sure to get a night full of laughter, and macabre blasphemous black metal music. This is a perfect way to spend the night before Hallo’s Eve. Satan would be proud. Zebulon, 2478 Fletcher Drive, Elysian Valley; Wed., Oct. 30, 8 p.m.; $10. zebulon.la/events.—ALEX DISE-FANO

**ART/LGBT**

We All Scream, Queen

The indie group show Scream Queen was curated by Dakota Noot and Christopher Anthony Velasco with an emphasis on queer representation in the horror genre — and an eye for the bloody, campy fabulosity that this particular intersection might produce. More than a dozen artists contributed work examining the ways in which identity, fear and reinvention play out in visual art. Fittingly, it opened right around National Coming Out Day and it closes on Halloween with a candy-coated performance-art party. (Tip: the gallery is also open for exhibition viewing on Sunday, October 27, 1-4 p.m., but there might not be candy.) Little Tokyo Art Complex, 262 S. Los Angeles St., downtown; Thu., Oct. 31, 7-10 p.m.; free.—JHANA HYŞ DAMBROT

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When John Murdy was an elementary school kid, his grandma would often don a monster mask, hide in the closet and scare the crap out of him when he got home, taking delight in his surprised reaction and startled screams — and showing dedication to the scare too, chasing him outside and sometimes even around the neighborhood. One night when his parents went out to dinner, granny had an idea. “Why don’t we all pretend like we were murdered?” she asked Murdy and his young sister. The children proceeded to lie down on the floor, splattered with ketchup while knives were placed around them. It made for quite a sight when mom and dad got home.

These experiences might’ve been traumatic for some kids, but for L.A. native Murdy — who shares his story in the documentary Haunters: The Art of the Scare (currently on Netflix) — they were formative. He would go on to create spooky environments for his family and friends for years to come, eventually turning his talent for terror into a career as creative director of Horror Nights, the highly successful haunt at Universal Studios Hollywood.

Murdy recounts his ghoulish grandma in the bonus footage on the DVD for Haunters, and the doc proves he is by no means alone when it comes to an enduring nostalgia-fueled passion for horror, haunts and the Halloween season that brings it all to the masses every year. Halloween in Southern California is particularly huge, with more things to do than maybe anywhere else. From home haunts to major theme park attractions to pop-ups to pumpkin patches to immersive theater experiences to horror screenings to art shows to VR to costume parties to family events, there is so much to do this time of year, it really is scary.

So why are so many of us fascinated with spooky stuff? “That’s the big question. My life has now been consumed with Halloween and designing fearful amusements, but I can’t tell you the reason exactly why I’m so drawn to this particular genre of macabre entertainment,” shares Jon Cooke of Plague Productions, the creative director of this year’s Los AngelesHaunted Hayride in Griffith Park. “My best guess is life can be tough [and] there is a lot of pressure with social expectations, but with horror all that goes out the window. It’s a raw, uncensored art form where we as people on both sides of the scare get to let loose, laugh, scream and have a good time, because at the end of the day that’s what this is all about — having fun.”

Haunters filmmaker Jon Schnitzer was obsessed with creepdom since he was a kid growing up Huntington Beach, making his own neighborhood haunted houses and eventually creating a production company called The Brain Factory — so he could do them bigger and better for corporate clients. Four years of filming and interviews led to the documentary, which provides an in-depth look at the people behind these frightful destinations and a history lesson about where they came from. He says home haunts began, ironically, via church groups — Campus Life Youth for Christ — who created them to raise money for charities and the church as early as the 1920s, while the amusement park world of wicked environments (“scare zones”), mazes and jump scares was first created by Knott’s Berry Farm in Buena Park in the early 1970s. Decades later, Knott’s continues to provide groundbreaking experiences in terms of themes, animatronics and scare actors. (Schnitzer says they were the first to use clickers and sliders to surprise and spook guests throughout the park.) Universal Studios soon followed with its cinematically-driven, high-production offerings, and the rest is haunted history. Queen Mary’s Dark Harbor, Six Flags’ Fright Fest and several others have thrown their witchy hands into the Halloween caul-
drone of events, which keeps everyone in the biz on their terror-ific toes. Universal, by the way, is consistently tops thanks its ability to get the actual effects people from its films involved in its thematic mazes, makeup and set-up. After seeing their scary slate this year with *Stranger Things*, *Killer Clowns From Outer Space* and Jordan Peele’s *Us* (our favorite filmic recreation) we bestow them with the killer creepster crown his year.

Though Disneyland never got into the biz of scaring people, the success of its legendary Haunted Mansion — currently celebrating its 50th anniversary — was surely a precursor that proved ghosts and ghouls had theme park appeal. In addition to the Mansion’s *Nightmare Before Christmas* makeover every year, Disneyland’s California Adventure has gotten into the season bigtime for 2019, with Halloween decor throughout and an “Oogie Boogie Bash” offering trick or treating with Disney villains and much more.

On the other end of the spectrum, Schitzner says the L.A. area has some of the best spine-chilling encounters in the country, some of which push the fear factor boundaries such as the 17th Door in Orange County (“an incredible full contact haunt”), Rotten Apple in the Valley and Reign of Terror in Thousand Oaks. These are seen briefly in his film, but more time is given to the most extreme haunts of all, such as New York’s brutal walk-thru known as Blackout (started in 2009) and the infamous McKamey Manor, a hellish house of horrors that seems more like an exercise in torture and humiliation than a traditional jump scare escape. The latter is so controversial it was forced to leave its homebase in San Diego and now has two locations — one in Nashville, Tennessee and one in Huntsville, Alabama. It’s become world famous regardless, thanks to creator Russ McKamey’s dreadfully dramatic videos, which get major viewing numbers on YouTube.

Though *Haunters* seeks to humanize McKamey somewhat, his brand of haunt is harrowing and even gross (people have been forced to eat their own vomit, and/or be submerged in foul-smelling liquids), which makes it pretty niche. Unlike many extreme haunts they didn’t even have a safe word if people decided they had enough. According to Schitzner, they do now.

In many ways the classic haunted house was the first example of immersive entertainment. You were put into a situation and you were made to react and interact. The extreme haunts do allow touching though often it is not a two-way street; the actors may touch you, but not vice versa. This is also the case with many of L.A.’s hot new theatrical submersions such as Haus of Creep (which takes you inside a den-mented — and deadly — art show), Bite (which invites you to have dinner with a family of vampires), House of Spirits (which meshes booze with “boost!” to spine-tingling effect), and Alt Delete (a time-travel themed production which evolved from the popular horror play known as Delusion).

Many of the actors in these productions got their start at Zombie Joe’s Underground Theatre in North Hollywood, which has been putting on wonderfully bizarre episodic productions for years, but stepped up their haunt game in 2005. Zombie Joe says his “French expressionistic tableau-style theater of cruelty and stage horror” became more streamlined when he joined forces with Jana Wimer in July 2005 to “bring a wordless, living-storied haunted-museum-coming-at-you presentation,” as he calls it, to the public.

*Urban Death* grew out of a “hybrid-mutt-style West Coast theatrical brand of horror covering many different genres,” says Joe. “We wanted to present a universal horror show that all nations and languages could comprehend and enjoy, the dark language of the blackened heart. And we have since taken *Urban Death* all over the world.”

Though today’s haunts tout “immersive” forms of fear, Joe prefers the word “experien-
tial” for what he does. Zombie Joe’s plays with darkness, sound and disturbing imagery, even nudity, providing one of the more powerful and weird multi-sensory environments in town. His actors get up real close but (other than using their hands to gently guide people along) try not to cross the line of physically touching their audiences.

“It’s difficult for us to even define what ‘immersive’ actually encompasses these days,” Joe admits. “The term has expanded to have such a broad meaning. The most important thing is being transparent with everyone — performers and audience — as to what to expect and/or how everyone will be handled and cared for for each specific experience.”

“Immersive has been a buzz word for a long time now,” says Melissa Carbone, who created the Haunted Hayride and followed it up with a horror-themed camp out, also in Griffith Park. “It isn’t new, but the need for it has probably been the thing that has caused it to surge in topic. First, I think we are in a moment where we are coming full circle with technology and developing a need for visceral, unplugged moments in our lives. We want those moments to feel good and give us a break from the heaviness of politics, conflict, financial problems, tragedy. Entertainment that can achieve a suspension of disbelief that takes you out of the real world and into a fake one wins. Secondly, there is simply a chemical physical reaction to immersion into your senses; like a physical dopamine reaction — adrenaline. That’s always been something the public seeks out and is a byproduct of being immersed.”

The popularity of dark, menacing and even violent entertainment does seem to coincide with what’s happening in the world, and as Schitzner explains, that’s because “with horror we can face our worst fears and we can escape them. That’s catharsis.”

According to WalletHub, about 50 percent of Americans will decorate their home for Halloween, 45 percent will carve a pumpkin, 32 percent will throw a party, 48 percent will dress up, and a total of 41 million kids will trick or treat. Twenty-one percent will actually visit a haunted attraction. All this amounts to $99 billion industry that shows no sign of going away anytime soon, especially if the cure for what Schitzner says is a symptom of the holiday revelry and horror in general thriving in times of distress and uncertainty, is true.

It would seem as though, even outside of Halloween, love of horror is at an all time high, especially in Los Angeles. The “I Like Scary Movies” Pop-Up, for example, has returned for the season, but it had a highly successful run in the summertime. Monsterpalooza is one of L.A.’s most highly touted and best attended conventions and it happens nowhere near Halloween. It is instead a Son of Monsterpalooza. Monsters are in fact, so popular in Los Angeles, they’ve even made a home at the Natural History Museum. “Natural History of Horror,” a new exhibit which timed its debut to Halloween but will be on display through April 19, 2020, hopes to attract Angelenos with a “curiosity for mysterious, eerie and grotesque monsters,” according to press materials. The exhibition explores the scientific inspiration for classic monsters from Dracula, Frankenstein, The Mummy, and Creature from the Black Lagoon with rare movie props, film footage, hands-on activities, and museum specimens.

Though it’s based on the Celtic festival of Samhain, few of us ever think about the ancient tradition behind Halloween. Back when the holiday originated costumes were worn to frighten away ghosts, not to go door to door asking for candy. So in a very authentic sense, haunts and the scares they provide are the most reverent form of Halloween observance and celebration there is.

“Sometimes your need darkness to expose the light,” proclaims Schitzner, who plans to do just that with his next film projects, and says he’ll always be a fan of in-the-flesh haunted experiences too. “There’s so much scary, spooky fun that takes us away from the drudgery of life we can all get lost in. I love that cosplay is such a big thing now too. And that TV shows like The Walking Dead are still popular. We even have networks devoted to horror like Shudder.”

“People who create haunts have an unbridled enthusiasm and passion to entertain, the kind many of us only had as kids,” adds Schitzner. “They’re not thinking about making money. They’re thinking about giving you the time of your life.”

If you’re afraid for your life — even for one horrifically hot second — all the better.

**Haunters: The Art Of The Scare** is available on DVD, Blu-ray or iTunes; hauntersmovie.com.

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**Venue Information**

**Halloween Horror Nights at Universal Studios Hollywood,** 100 Universal City Plaza, Universal City. hhntickets.universalstudioshollywood.com. (Runs through Nov. 3)

**Haunted Hayride,** 4801 Griffith Park Drive, Griffith Park. losangeleshauntedhayride.com. (Runs through Nov. 2)

**Knotts Scary Farm,** 8039 Beach Blvd, Buena Park. knotts.com/tickets-passes/scary-farm. (Runs through Nov. 2)

**Six Flags’ Fright Fest,** 26101 Magic Mountain Parkway, Valencia. sixflags.com/magicmountain/special-events/fright-fest. (Runs through Nov. 2)

**Disneyland Halloween & Oogie Boogie Bash,** 1315 Disneyland Drive, Anaheim. disneyland.disney.go.com/events-tours/halloween-time-at-the-disneyland-resort/. (Runs through Oct. 31)

**Zombie Joe’s Urban Death,** 4840 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood. zombiejoes.com/ (Runs through Nov. 2)

**Haus of Creep,** 777 Alameda St., The Haunted Hayride, 2801 Griffith Park Drive, Griffith Park. losangeleshauntedhayride.com. (Runs through Nov. 2)

**Boogie Bash** Haunted Hayride, 2801 Griffith Park Drive, Griffith Park. losangeleshauntedhayride.com. (Runs through Nov. 2)

**The Queen Mary’s Dark Harbor,** 1126 Queens Highway, Long Beach. queenmary.com. (Runs until Nov. 2)

**17th Door,** 1851 W Orangethorpe Ave, Fullerton. the17thdoor.com/. (Runs until Nov. 2)

**Rotten Apple,** 907 N California St, Burbank. rottenapple907.com/. (Select dates through Oct. 31)

**Reign of Terror,** 197 N Moorpark Road, Thousand Oaks. rothenhouse.com. (Runs through Nov. 2)

**Bite Vampire Dinner Theater,** address upon ticket purchase. horrorascapesla.com/bite-vampire-dinner. (Select dates through Nov. 3)

**House of Spirits,** Secret location halfway between Culver City and downtown L.A. houseofspiritsla.com/. (Runs through Nov. 2)

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SUNDAYS AT KUSINA FILIPINA

Great food, perpetual birthday balloons and Imelda Papin on repeat — what more could one want?

BY DANNY PALUMBO

I'm at Kusina Filipina on a Sunday morning, and I'm staring at two giant, golden balloons, numbered "6" and "0," off to the side of the dining room. It feels like these balloons are here every time I come to this restaurant, although suggesting that feels paranoid. Cheap "Happy Birthday" decorations are hung up on the back wall behind a stage with a microphone stand, amp and stool.

Kusina is quiet at 11 a.m., and as I'm looking around, I notice an antiquated clamp-on spotlight situatedraftly in-between the ceiling tiles. Through the speakers, Filipino singer Imelda Papin bellows out a melodic and sad sounding love song, "Kung Iwag Lang Ako" (If Only You Were Me) over a generically simple karaoke track.

The restaurant begins to fill up as the time approaches noon, and a table next to me is served their canton noodle pansit, which has no trouble filling out an oversized oval dish. It is a staggering amount of noodles, and the price of the pansit, I see, is completely reasonable. Then again, everything here is. This is a friendly restaurant serving sincere food. The vibes at Kusina Filipina are decidedly Sunday, although it's not the one I grew up with. This is somebody else's Sunday, and I feel lucky to be a part of it.

With 70-plus items on Kusina's menu, there's a lot to try at Jun Miranda and Gareth Cañiera's restaurant, but it's perhaps best to begin with the Filipino hits — starting with the wildly addictive crispy pork sisig. The pork cheek is rendered perfectly — fatty yet still crispy, and served with chile, caramelized onion and scallions. No egg on top — instead it gets cracked and fried on the bottom of the skillet before the pile of pork lardons are added.

The egg-on-bottom approach explains everything you need to know about Kusina, and it's why I love this place. Yeah, your Insta pic might lose a few likes without that seductive and oozy egg, but blindly topping everything in egg yolk is deinitely a little hazardous to eat, but it's rare that just the mere sight of a dessert makes you laugh joyfully. I challenge you to find a more fun dish than halo-halo.

Kusina food has been championed as "the next big thing" for years now by chefs, authors, and TV hosts — which, dirty little secret, just means that it's the next cuisine to get elevated and sold at a high price. Declaring a culture's food as the haute new ticket, as a lot of Filipino chefs will tell you, is usually hasty and reductive. While it's undeniable to ignore the trendy appeal of dishes like pork sisig and oxtail kare kare, it's also interesting that Filipino food exists in this curious gray area where it's being elevated before most people have even grasped the traditional concepts and flavors.

I know a lot of people who are totally green to Filipino food, and they're headed to Ma'm Sir to get the slender and golden lumpia made with shrimp mousse and sea urchin. While they are delicious, those lumpia also run 14 bucks without added salt or oil. "Me and my family are going to eat this, too," he tells me as if to say, "Why on earth would I sabotage my own body with vegetable oil?"

You'll notice the lack of grease on everything Jun and Gareth serve, and that's intentional. Kusina also does right by halo-halo, a sundae dish filled to the brim with Jell-O cubes, beans, corn flakes, flan, purple potato ice cream, evaporated milk and crushed ice — it looks superfluous and is definitely a little hazardous to eat, but it's rare that just the mere sight of a dessert makes you laugh joyfully. I challenge you to find a more fun dish than halo-halo.

Filipino food has been championed as "the next big thing" for years now by chefs, authors, and TV hosts — which, dirty little secret, just means that it's the next cuisine to get elevated and sold at a high price. Declaring a culture's food as the haute new ticket, as a lot of Filipino chefs will tell you, is usually hasty and reductive. While it's undeniable to ignore the trendy appeal of dishes like pork sisig and oxtail kare kare, it's also interesting that Filipino food exists in this curious gray area where it's being elevated before most people have even grasped the traditional concepts and flavors.

I know a lot of people who are totally green to Filipino food, and they're headed to Ma'm Sir to get the slender and golden lumpia made with shrimp mousse and sea urchin. While they are delicious, those lumpia also run 14 bucks compared to Kusina's $9. Start at the spots with humble roots, the down-to-earth family restaurant selling dishes at an affordable price — the place with the makeshift stage, eternal 60th birthday balloons and rigged up speakers blasting Imelda Papin.

Kusina Filipina, 4157 N. Eagle Rock Blvd., Eagle Rock; (323) 229-0228.
I

FOOD

ably feeds two. Kusina isn't a pricey restaurant you get a meal that, if you add rice, comfort—squeezing a lemon wedge /f_irst again. For $13.99, and you'll never be able to eat pork fat without

is all about utilizing acidity and sourness. Use it sisig and Kusina Filipina isn't about trends. these days is an easy substitution for creativity, egg, but blindly topping everything in egg yolk lose a few likes without that seductive and oozy

thing you need to know about Kusina, and it's

lardons are added.

the bottom of the skillet before the pile of pork

on top — instead it gets cracked and fried on

chile, caramelized onion and scallions. No egg

perfectly — fatty yet still crispy, and served with

sisig crispy pork Filipino hits — starting with the wildly addictive

restaurant, but it's perhaps best to begin with the

a lot to try at Jun Miranda and Gareth Caf_irma's

elites Sunday, and I feel lucky to be a part of it.

Kusina Filipina are decidedly Sunday, although

restaurant serving sincere food. /T_he vibes at

/T_he egg-on-bottom approach explains every-

Filipina

BY DANNY PALUMBO

only Y ou Were Me) over a generically simple

sounding love song, "Kung Ikaw Lang Ako" (If

Imelda Papin bellows out a melodic and sad

ing tiles. /T_hrough the speakers, Filipino singer

ing around, I notice an antiquated clamp-on

are hung up on the back wall behind a stage with

paranoid. Cheap "Happy Birthday" decorations

this restaurant, although suggesting that feels

— the place with the makeshi/f_t stage, eternal

— 60th birthday balloons and rigged up speakers

— the place with the makeshi/f_t stage, eternal

- DR购买in 11 a.m., and as I'm look-

no trouble /f_illing out an oversized oval dish. It

served their canton noodle

pansit

approaches noon, and a table next to me is

karaoke track.

Only Y ou Were Me) over a generically simple

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Imelda Papin.
Lauded conceptual artist Charles Gaines’ system makes numbers beautiful at Hauser & Wirth

BY SHANA NYS DAMBROT

Paint by Numbers

Lauded conceptual artist Charles Gaines’ system makes numbers beautiful at Hauser & Wirth

BY SHANA NYS DAMBROT

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he term conceptual art is often associated with non-material-type situations, where object qualities like beauty or physical presence come second to the primacy of a more esoteric or abstract idea. So when a noted devotee of rigorous conceptual strategy produces lofty, hefty, brightly hued, image rich, emotional, experiential mixed media works such as those currently on view at Hauser & Wirth, it’s worth noting. This is Charles Gaines, for whom it has always been important to reconcile what he sees as a false dichotomy between idea and aesthetic.

“I’m not anti-beauty,” Gaines tells the Weekly. “I just require that it be presented within a rigorous critical system.” Indeed the new Gridwork pieces in Palm Trees and Other Works — plexiglass, acrylic paint and photograph constructions all made in 2019, each between nine and 12 feet tall — are both compelling, prismatic visual feats as well as direct expressions of a very specifically devised and strictly followed formula for their production.

“It’s using certain a certain idea of geometry to construct a system that is about translating an idea without losing sight of the object,” says Gaines. “I can do this and call it art.”

The towering works are shallow clear boxes, each a stack of two, at the back of which are life-size, high contrast, black-and-white photographs of trees from dry Palm Springs desert regions. The boxes are skewed with a fine black filament in a grid-like math paper or a Thomas Guide, lettered and numbered. On the hovering front, plexi face are paintings of the same trees, executed in a paint-by-numbers-like application of color-coded hues, corresponding to the system Gaines set in place and to which all the “Numbers and Trees: Palm Canyon, Palm Trees Series 2” works adhere.

The overall effect is an auric pixelation that spreads into something microscopically gestural as one approaches close enough to appreciate the tension between the mechanical grid and the slightly variegated hand-applied pigments, each marked with its tint number. By leaving the system and process prominently in place in the finished work, Gaines makes sure people can never escape or overlook it. It’s actively operational in the image, both interrupting and creating itself at the same time. For Gaines, this is all about giving people insight into the origin story of the object as well as to their experience of it.

“When you go into an art gallery you’re not necessarily thinking of that experience as being part of this whole accumulation of knowledge,” Gaines observes. “Essentially you’re in there to be aesthetically entertained. So the risk is that people will dismiss the critical component of the work and just deal with the aesthetic, so it’s very important that the system be accessible so that you can’t separate it from the effects of its conduction. What you see when you look at a work of art is an encounter with the imagination and intuition of the artist.” What interests Gaines are strategies that take that into account, positing the gallery as a site for the acquisition of knowledge.

Speaking of which, Gaines is also a teacher, a legendary CalArts professor whose investment in critical thinking and philosophy has influenced generations of artists from Mark Bradford to Edgar Arceneaux and Andrea Bowers. In this spirit, Gaines repurposed the gallery’s Book & Printed Matter Lab into a classroom, where he has been offering the free, public “Library of Ideas” lecture series on “the tenets of aesthetics and critical theory in art,” most Thursday nights through December 9. The sessions are recorded and played during gallery hours throughout the run of the exhibition.

These lectures are not about his own work; instead, they cover relevant topics in recent art history, while offering an implicit critique of the gallery as a transaction commercial space, and revives it as a potential place of learning.

“I’m not advocating any certainty way of making art over any other,” Gaines says. “But just for me, I found a way of making art from a particular standpoint that was influenced by non-western thinking about what can be art, that sees art as a universal practice, not any one specific cultural practice. The very definition of what was considered ‘universal’ had itself been informed by the restrictive and racist history of imperialism.” And Gaines is looking for something with a more expanded range of social and cultural functions that western capitalism has mostly offered.

This cultural vigilance is even more apparent in another work on view. "Manifestos 3" (2018) also uses an original notational system to translate — but instead of numbers and colors, it’s text and music notes. The text of Martin Luther King Jr’s 1967 speech at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, wherein King calls out the pernicious threats of racism, poverty, and war; and James Baldwin’s 1957 essay “Princes and Powers,” are each transcribed into sheet music (in the form of large-scale drawings) using a system of A-H and rest spaces, before the compositions are played on piano. The effect is organic but asymmetrical like a raga, soft music with a loosely speech-like poetic pattern transmuting words of powerful intensity and urgency.

And that’s the other thing — there’s another long-term aspect to Gaines and his creative outlets, and that is music. Specifically jazz. It’s canonical elevation of improvisation is a reliable metaphor for the complex interaction of structure and freedom in art and in life, but jazz for Gaines is more than an allegory. He drums and composes with a rotating cast of gifted players in The Charles Gaines Ensemble, and yes he would agree that he’s attracted to the idea that a jazz solo, an elegant seemingly ad hoc riff, is not possible without the support of a system. “Improvisation also has a structure,” Gaines says, “as well as the freedom not to follow certain practices. But when there is a strategy in place, a sense of possibility unfolds, grounded in the system you have internalized.”

With that, Gaines leaves the table. His band is playing at the opening that night and it’s time to go rehearse.

Palm Trees and Other Works is on view through January 5 at Hauser & Wirth Los Angeles, 901-909 E 3rd St., downtown Arts District; hauserwirth.com/hauser-wirth-exhibitions/25281-charles-gaines-palm-trees-works.
Blast from the Past

Eddie Murphy is at his best in Dolemite Is My Name

BY ASHER LUBERTO

Netflix-produced period piece set in 1970s Los Angeles, Dolemite Is My Name is a blast from the past, and it keeps the sparks flying from start to finish. The Eddie Murphy vehicle is so over the top, yet soulful, in its message on perseverance, it’s easy to forgive its shortcomings, which include about a zillion too many F-bombs.

Fans of blaxploitation will recognize the name Rudy Ray Moore. His work would go on to inspire Samuel L. Jackson and Murphy in the way they spoke, acted and projected. Black exploitation as genre has always been about color, and not just skin color — which is important — but multicolored mise en scène, which attempted to reflect sexual liberation and hedonism. These types of films filled the frame with confetti hues, splashy suites, sparkling Cadillacs and sexy polyester frocks, the latter done right by the costume work of Ruth E. Carter (Black Panther).

This Dolemite’s intelligent characters are even brighter than the retro visuals. Back in the day, exploitation audiences didn’t care about character development. As long as they could see black people on screen, and as long as they could see something that stuck-it-to-the-man, everyone left happy despite shallow storylines and heroes. Here, however, one of the era’s biggest heroes is humanized.

Blaxploitation could be stupendously superfluous. Thankfully, director Craig Brewer grounds his modern take beyond biopic conventions. As to not make his hero immortal, Moore starts at the bottom. During the day he’s got a job at a record store, where his stories about working with the great James Brown play like a broken record to customers. At night he tries comedy. His jokes bomb. That is, until one day he hears the local homeless man rambling like a crazed preacher. (“He heard yo daddy’s a pimp and yo momma’s a whore! He saw you in the jungle selling yo ass door to door!”) Moore steals the explicit rap, reshapes it as stand-up comedy, then sells it to the public.

This wouldn’t be the first time Eddie Murphy sold us a foul-mouthed good guy. The 58-year-old comedy icon has made a living playing characters that speak their minds, no matter how dirty those minds may be. Murphy is so damn likable that it doesn’t matter what he says. Whether he’s insulting an aristocrat’s wife in Trading Places, or roasting cops in Beverly Hills Cop, his goofy smile and giddy persona work as a get-out-of-jail-free-card.

“I’m the baddest motherfucker who ever lived,” Moore tells a studio producer. He and his pals have been the talk of the town because of their rhymes, but can they sell a movie? That’s where the story connects with the original Dolemite (1975). Moore tries to sell Dolemite as a pimps, drugs and kung-fu flick, but what he really wants to direct is a brand of entertainment that reflects urban culture.

Brewer, working with screenwriters Scott Alexander and Larry Karaszewski, has made Dolemite Is My Name its own sort of party. There’s groovy music, flashy dancing, a number of nude album covers that will remind some viewers of Jackie Moon, and more Hollywood personalities than Altman could fit in The Player. It’s a treat to see so much talent in one place.

Craig Robinson is terrific playing off of Murphy as his sidekick. Keegan-Michael-Key plays Dolemite’s substitute screenwriter, Wesley Snipes is back as a movie star turned director, Da’Vine Joy Randolph nearly steals the show as the infamous Lady Reed, and Snoop Dog and Chris Rock play the coolest radio hosts ever.

What’s special about this project is that the cast is all said to have an infinity for Rudy Ray Moore. “I didn’t have to do any studying, since I’ve been watching his movies since I was a teenager,” Murphy told Variety at the Toronto International Film Festival, when the film debuted. Murphy’s performance is a loving ode to one of cinemas’ greatest underdogs and his admiration for the character is obvious.

By making his film both a product of the exploitation genre and a satire on it, Brewer avoids being self-deprecating while always being hilarious. But it has to be said — Moore’s original work wasn’t very good most of the time. Still, his art featured an on-the-fly sensibility, much like this film does. Yes, those who have seen the original will chuckle at the clumsiness of it all. The recreation of Dolemite ripping a man’s heart out is priceless. But what we take away from it — beyond some indelible rap lines and badass swagger — is a sense of who Moore really was, and the power of his drive to make a name for himself. He obviously did that very well.

Dolemite Is My Name | Directed by Craig Brewer | Written by Scott Alexander and Larry Karaszewski | Netflix, available for streaming October 25
Ai Weiwei Executive Producer
with Director Andy Cohen, Co-Director Gaylen Ross presents

**XIMEI**

October 25 - 31 Laemmle Music Hall
9036 Wilshire Blvd, Beverly Hills, CA

*A Chinese woman’s fight for the lives of impoverished peasants, hundreds of thousands sickened with HIV by China’s blood scandal.*
Welcome to L.A. Weekly's Movie Guide, your look at the hottest films in Los Angeles theaters this week — from indie art house gems and classics to popcorn-perfect blockbusters and new movies garnering buzz. Check here every week before you make your big screen plans.

Opening wide Friday, October 25

*Black and Blue* stars Oscar-nominee Naomie Harris as a rookie police officer who witnesses a murder committed by her fellow men in blue. Her body cam recorded the incriminating footage and the perpetrators put a price on her head, making her the target of not only the corrupt cops but her New Orleans neighbors who resent her role as enforcer and incarcerator. Deon Taylor directed this action-packed drama from a script by Peter A. Dowling.

In *Countdown*, a nurse downloads an app that predicts when a person will die. When it reports that she's only got a few days left to live, she embarks on an increasingly desperate mission to avoid her fate. This ersatz *Twilight Zone* premise is played straight with splashes of humor intended to alleviate the moments of throat-grabbing horror. If it encourages people to limit their screen time, so much the better. Written and directed by Justin Dec.

*The Current War* finally reaches screens after two years on the shelf. The fanciful dramatization of the rivalry between Thomas Edison (Benedict Cumberbatch), George Westinghouse (Michael Shannon) and Nikola Tesla (Nicholas Hoult) over electrical power systems was poised for an Oscar push when the Weinstein scandal orphaned it. 101 Studios acquired the distribution rights to the tune of $3 million. Since its debut at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2017, director Alfonso Gomez-Rejon added five additional scenes and trimmed ten minutes from the total runtime; this version is also known as *The Current War: Director's Cut*.

**Limited**

Friday, October 25

François Ozon's new film, *By the Grace of God*, is an understated yet powerful study of three men (Melvil Poupaud, Denis Menochet and Swann Arlaud) who join forces to expose the priest who abused them as children, and who is still working with kids in the local parish. As they break the church's deafening code of silence, they form powerful bonds that threaten to overpower their other relationships. Something of a departure for the 51-year-old French director, *The Current War* comes at a time when the Catholic Church is struggling to define itself in relation to an informed and activated culture.

**Also opening Friday, October 25:**

*John Carpenter's 1998 horror film Vampires* is a sci-fi thriller about a resort from hell. A young woman (Emma Roberts) awakes to discover that she's been transported to the titular facility on an uncharted island, where she is treated relentlessly to etiquette classes and beauty treatments. So, you think you want to be a princess? Danielle Macdonald, Awkwafina and Milla Jovovich co-star in this heavily designed dystopian exercise — the feature debut of fashion photographer Alice Waddington. Monica Film Center, 1332 2nd St., Santa Monica, Fri., Oct. 25, various showtimes; $9-$12. (310) 478-3836, laemmle.com.


The American Cinematheque concludes its brief retrospective of Italian auteur Lina Wertmüller, whose provocative films were a vital part of 1970s art-house conversation. The 91-year-old filmmaker is scheduled to appear in person to introduce two of her best known features: *Seven Beauties*, which strands Giangaroo Giannini in a Nazi concentration camp, and *Swept Away by an Unusual Destiny in the Blue Sea of August*, which pits Giannini against a gorgeous but spoiled aristocrat (Mariangela Melato) in an erotic battle of wills. Aero Theatre, 1328 Montana Ave., Santa Monica, Fri., Oct. 25, various showtimes; $9-$12. (310) 478-3836, laemmle.com.

**Sunday, October 27**

John Carpenter's 1998 horror film *Vampires* is actually a Western, with the title creatures filling in for evil gunslingers and the “slayers” (led by James Woods) doubling as the law. Shot in New Mexico, this underrated genre blender will be screened in 35mm at The Autry, with an introduction by Brad Sykes, filmmaker and author of *Terror in the Desert: Dark Cinema of the American Southwest*. Tickets are free with museum admission. The Autry in Griffith Park, 4700 Western Heritage Way, Griffith Park; Sun., Oct. 27, 1:30 p.m.; free with museum admission. (323) 667-2000, theautry.org.

**Also opening Friday, October 25:**


© JCEEN GEMS
The Lighthouse is a master class in psychological terror that showcases director Robert Eggers’ dedication to atmosphere

BY NATHANIEL BELL

The Lighthouse can be enjoyed on dual levels — as a thickly atmospheric exercise in psychological terror, or as a compendium of seafaring legends, jokes and clichés. However you choose to consume it, there’s nothing else remotely like it in the vicinity. Its fuzzy visuals, arcane references and plodding pace make it a difficult sell for a wide audience, but a delight for in-the-know film buffs. Its very existence is inspirational, an act of courage from A24, the company that bravely bankrolled it.

The sophomore effort of 36-year-old Robert Eggers, writer-director of the 2016 horror film The Witch, The Lighthouse is an equally confident piece of chicanery, though it seems destined to fall short of its predecessor’s popularity if only for the fact that the imagery and lore from which it siphons its creative energy — seagulls, sirens and, of course, the title building with its foghorn and beacon light — are more marginal in the cultural imagination. Everyone knows what a witch is, but how many can explain the natural phenomenon known as St. Elmo’s Fire? And no, it has nothing to do with the Brat Pack.

Two lighthouse keepers, or “wickies,” are assigned to a remote island. The older man, Thomas (an impressively bearded Willem Dafoe), is a crusty sea salty fellow fluent in nautical slang. The younger Ephraim (Robert Pattinson) is skeptical of tall tales and wants nothing more than to earn enough money to begin his life afresh. As soon as they arrive, Thomas begins to act suspiciously, spending too much time in the lantern room and guarding the light from his younger colleague like a jealous lover. He informs Ephraim that the previous first mate went mad after becoming obsessed with the bright beam emanating from the lamps. Meanwhile, Ephraim, in a simultaneously horrible and hilarious long take, kills a seagull and keeps the act a secret from his superior.

Apparently, he doesn’t know that it’s very back luck to kill a sea bird. What proceeds isn’t so much a slow descent into madness as a series of sharp, sudden drops into pandemonium, each one more perilous than the last. Trapped by a storm, the two roommates begin to unravel, and Ephraim is visited with visions of a mermaid (Valeria Karman) which drives him into a state of sexual panic and existential horror.

Though it proceeds at a slow pace appropriate to its subject matter, The Lighthouse is good fun throughout. The film has a wonderful texture and tactility. You can practically feel the cold spray of sea air lashing against the weathered faces of the two leads. Eggers and his cinematographer, Jarin Blaschke, shot in black-and-white using archaic film equipment to achieve an authentically antique veneer, and the effect is reminiscent of the poetical horror films produced by Val Lewton in the 1940s, or Curtis Harrington’s Night Tide, to cite a slightly more recent example.

Eggers’ deep dedication to sweat, stubble, farts, piss pots and whiskey bottles conjures a credible, early-20th century vibe (the film was shot in Nova Scotia), and you can be sure that the tunes Dafoe hums are historically accurate. Maintaining this fastidious devotion to authentic detail, Eggers draws much of his material from classic literary sources (Herman Melville) and old journals, and the film features what must be the longest and most hilarious insult ever hurled by an ancient mariner. It all comes close to self-parody, but that’s also to the film’s advantage; a rich vein of dry wit keeps it afloat during the occasional longeurs.

Perhaps the most surprising source of inspiration is the fiction of Sarah Orne Jewett, whose novels and short stories set along the crumbling fishing villages of Maine frequently deal with the effects of isolation upon its inhabitants. For Halloween viewing, The Lighthouse is decidedly highbrow.

The Lighthouse | Directed by Robert Eggers
Written by Robert Eggers and Max Eggers | A24 | ArcLight Hollywood and The Landmark
10 NON-HALLOWEEN HALLOWEEN TUNES

It's that most wonderful night of the year

BY MORAT

It's the most wonderful time of the year! No, not Christmas! You can keep your jingling bells, your ding-donging merri-ly and your awkward family gatherings to exchange gifts that no one actually wants. We're talking about Halloween, boys and ghouls, the night when every trick is a treat. And whether you celebrate by dressing up as your favorite horror character (or, for some reason, a scantily clad nurse) and going out on the town, or by staying home and watching scary movies (Netflix and kill), you'll need some suitable music.

As such, there are countless tunes that have been written about that special night, and some bands have made entire careers out of it. (We're looking at you Misfits!) But today, to put you in the mood for all things spooky, we will be looking at a handful that, while not actually about Halloween, are nonetheless downright creepy and guaranteed to send a shiver down your spine.

1. The Police: “Every Breath You Take”

It's difficult to ignore the creep factor of this 1983 Police mega-hit once you know it's true meaning. Apparently the most played song in radio history, and frequently employed at weddings, it is far from being an ode to love and instead tells a tale of jealousy and obsession. As Sting told BBC Radio 2: “I think the song is very, very sinister and ugly and people have actually misinterpreted it as being a gentle little love song, when it's quite the opposite.” Considered to be the band's “signature tune” and by all accounts earning Sting something in the region of $2,000 a day in royalties, it is also the ultimate stalker's anthem.

2. Necro: “Dead Body Disposal”

Taken from the 2001 Gory Days album, this rap-metal/horrorcore track pretty much does what it says on the packet, being, as it is, instructions on how to dispose of a corpse. First it suggests that one strips naked so "you don't get blood on ya new shirt", before hacking up the body, placing it in trash bags and dispersing them in different areas, because "that shit's hilarious." As is the sample from Snatch. What isn't funny is that in 2012 Necro was cited as the inspiration for the murder of eight-year-old Tori Stafford in London, Ontario, which forced the rapper to issue a blindly obvious statement that his songs are not supposed to be taken literally.


Oakland oddballs G.G.F.H (Global Genocide Forget Heaven) made something of a career out of writing creepy tunes, including samples of exorcisms, and one song in which a mentally unstable person claims that the Cookie Monster is the devil. Perhaps their most creepy offering, however, is “Room 213,” the title being a reference to Jeffrey Dahmer’s apartment, and the song employing excerpts from Dahmer’s trial, along with chilling samples from “O Eucahi, in lea via” by Hildegard von Bingen, a German nun and composer who died in 1179. Probably not samples of the original, it’s safe to say, but nonetheless eerie as hell.

4. The Beatles: “Revolution 9”

All things considered, the “creep factor” of the Beatles’ White Album is pretty high, what with the whole Manson Family Helter Skelt-er/Piggy thing and all. But “Revolution 9,” another “song” said to have inspired Manson, is just plain weird. An eight-and-a-half minute “sound collage,” featuring looped vocal samples, backwards music, and bizarre sound effects, it is perhaps as close to the sound of madness as one would ever hope to come. When the track itself was played backwards — because that's what perfectly sane people do with their records — it fueled conspiracy theories that Paul McCartney was dead after all. The inspiration for the murder of eight-year-old Tori Stafford in London, Ontario, which resulted in life sentences, while “Night Shepherd” featured, although the investigation was hampered by viewing nine times before he was arrested, Peter Sutcliffe is currently serving 20 consecutive life sentences, while “Night Shepherd” featured, by singing siblings Patience and Prudence in 1956, selling over a million copies, because, hey, who could be sweeter than a couple of unnervingly happy children — 11 and 14 respectively — uttering the lines, “My honey I know, with the dawn that you will be gone. But tonight you belong to me”? Not surprisingly, this rendition is now better known from two episodes of American Horror Story and The Last Supper episode of Bates Motel. Oh, and an episode of the psychological thriller You. Definitely creepy.

5. Steve Lawrence: “Go Away Little Girl”

Maybe, as many of the comments on YouTube have suggested, this was written in a more innocent time, if such a time ever existed. But there's no getting away from the fact that the lyrics are profoundly disturbing, “Go away little girl, I'm not supposed to be alone with you” being just one example of its wrongness. Sure, the protagonist is resisting temptation — just about — but, all the same. Ew! Despite this, the song reached number one in the U.S. charts by two different artists (Lawrence in 1962 and Donny Osmond in 1971) and has yet to be utilized in a horror movie...

6. Patience and Prudence: “Tonight You Belong To Me”

...Which should perhaps be a good gauge for whether or not a supposedly innocent song has creepy undertones. Originally written in 1926, “Tonight You Belong To Me” was rerecorded by singing siblings Patience and Prudence in 1956, selling over a million copies, because, hey, who could be sweeter than a couple of unnervingly happy children — 11 and 14 respectively — uttering the lines, “My honey I know, with the dawn that you will be gone. But tonight you belong to me”? Not surprisingly, this rendition is now better known from two episodes of American Horror Story and The Last Supper episode of Bates Motel. Oh, and an episode of the psychological thriller You. Definitely creepy.

7. Slayer: “Dead Skin Mask”

L.A. titans Slayer have penned all manner of disturbing ditties over the course of their career, not least the controversial “Angel Of Death,” which concerns itself with the horrific human experiments of Nazi physician Josef Mengele in Auschwitz during World War II. But perhaps more spine-chilling — at least in a musical sense — is the slower “Dead Skin Mask” about murderer/grave robber Ed Gein, the title being a reference to the fact that Gein fashioned masks out of human skin. Listen carefully, and at the end of the song you’ll hear a voice saying, “I don't want to play anymore, Mr. Gein. Let me out!”

8. AC/DC: “Night Prowler”

The final track on their aptly named Highway To Hell album, AC/DC's “Night Prowler” was obviously intended to sound rather ominous, even if the intent was rather lost at the end with a bizarre “Shazbot. Nanu nanu” reference to the sitcom Mork & Mindy. The song took a far more ominous turn, however, when it was linked to serial killer Richard Ramirez, a fan of the band who had, according to police reports, left an AC/DC hat at the scene of one of his crimes. Faced with a wave of adverse publicity, including one headline declaring “AC/DC made me kill 16,” the band claimed that the song was in fact about a boy sneaking into his girlfriend's bedroom at night. Like that makes it any better.


While the obvious choice from the Banshees classic Juju album of 1981 would be “Halloween,” we are, if you recall, steering away from tunes about that night in particular and delving instead into the general sinster. And it doesn't get much more sinister than this haunting number about Peter Sutcliffe, AKA the Yorkshire Ripper, who was convicted of murdering 13 women and attempting to murder a further seven, insisting that God had instructed him to kill prostitutes. Remarkably, Sutcliffe was interviewed nine times before he was arrested, although the investigation was hampered by hundreds of hoax callers, and letters from Weasend Jack, who claimed to be the Ripper. Sutcliffe is currently serving 20 consecutive life sentences, while “Night Shift” featured, appropriately enough, on the second series of Mindhunter.


Just because a song is kinda creepy doesn't mean that it can’t also be darkly sexy and, quite frankly, a work of genius. Such is the case with this Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds classic from the Let Love In album of 1994. Sadly, a quick poke on the internet suggests that it is now more familiar as the Peaky Blinders theme tune, with many a listener oblivious to its origins, and thanks to that series there have been numerous futile covers of the song (Arctic Monkeys? Seriously?)... But still, this deliciously dusky dirge remains unsurpassed, as foreboding as it is fantastic.
MUS I C

GO FEAR

FRI 10/25

Danny Brown
@ THE REGENCY

Danny Brown has one of the most distinctive voices in hip-hop and, when he’s in full flow, is seriously impressive. The Detroiter might be best known to the mainstream as the guy who raps the theme to Fresh Off the Boat, but he’s been making waves since his 2010 full length debut The Hybird. That record forced him into the ears of hip-hop heads nationwide but it was his third album, 2013’s Old, where he really hit his stride. Receiving mass critical acclaim, the likes of Purity Ring and ASAP Rocky guested on what was arguably that year’s best hip-hop release. His latest, U Know What I’m Sayin’, dropped earlier this month and it’s typically brilliant. This L.A. set should be stellar. — BRET C ALWOOD

Messer Chups
@ MOROCCAN LOUNGE

Messer Chups are not just any surf-garage-trash-roots-horror rock trio from Russia. On the Saint Petersburg band’s latest album, The Adventures of Zombierrla and Guitaracula, there are all the requisite retro-surf elements — reverb-drenched guitar shivers, side-winding bass lines, and fast drum rolls revving up and spinning around like motorcycles in the Globe of Death. Leader Guitaracula and bassist Zomberrella instill a campy mood of B-movie horror on such mostly instrumental tracks as “Chupacabra vs. Batman,” “Insonmia of the Mummies” and “Dracula Hates Photoshoots.” Guitaracula tears it up rockabilly style on “Cheap Holidays on the Moon,” but Messer Chups are also affecting when they occasionally slow things down, such as the dreamy surf idyll “Surf de L’amour.” They’re even more enchanting on the unexpectedly poignant and languidly noir-ish sections of their recent “Twin Peaks Twist” single. Also at Alex’s Bar, Saturday, October 26. — FALLING JAMES

SAT 10/26

Animal Requiem
@ ROYCE HALL

The kids — goats, dogs, kittens, birds and other darling creatures — are alright in composer-pianist Rachel Fuller’s Animal Requiem, a work that is a tribute to all the pets and beloved animal companions who have died, as well a form of empathetic musical closure for their human champions. Inspired by the deaths of six of Fuller’s aging dogs over the course of five years, the piece will be delivered at Royce Hall by tenor Bruce Sledge and soprano Caroline McKenzie and narrated by Jane Lynch, and features such performers as Tionality, the Hollywood Studio Orchestra, and Fuller’s husband, Who guitarist Pete Townshend. The program also includes renditions of Paul McCartney’s “Blackbird” and Camille Saint-Saëns’ whimsical evocations of denizens of the animal kingdom, The Carnival of the Animals. — FALLING JAMES

Social Distortion
@ FIVEPOINT AMPHITHEATRE

O.C. punks vets Social D are celebrating their 40th anniversary this party in Irvine, and why the hell shouldn’t they? Even considering the wealth of punk talent that has emerged from the otherwise conservative confines of Orange County, few bands have been as influential for so long, worldwide, as Mike Ness’ crew. They might not be as forthcoming with the new material anymore — they’ve released two albums in the past two decades — but what they do put out is always superb. At this gig they’ll be joined by Joan Jett, The Distillers, The Kills, Frank Turner, Eagles of Death Metal, Black Lips, Plague Vendor, Bully, and Mannequin Pussy, highlighting the fact that this is indeed a full-on anniversary party, and attendees should arrive ready to dance and sing. — BRET C ALLWOOD

SUN 10/27

Lucy Dacus
@ MOROCCAN LOUNGE

“I’ll be your historian, and you’ll be mine/And I’ll fill pages of scribbled ink, hoping the words carry meaning,” Lucy Dacus promises on “Historians,” from her similarly titled second album, Historian. The Richmond, Virginia, native charts her personal history with
thoughtful lyrics and lilting melodies. Songs range from the intimate confessional “Night Shift” and the gentle ballad “Yours & Mine” to relatively rocking tracks such as “Addictions” and the uptempo pop tune “Next of Kin.” The seven-minute “Pillar of Truth” evolves from starkly austere folk into shuffling chords and a surging burst of passion. Even as Dacus touches on loss and themes of racism and injustice, she eventually finds hope in our shared modern histories. —FALLING JAMES

MON 10/28

Kristeen Young
@ THE SATELLITE

Whether she’s backed by a full band or performing solo, Kristeen Young unlocks a puzzle box of dense, intricate sounds and surreal, allusive lyrics. On her latest album, The Subset, the singer-keyboardist-producer crafts a disparate range of moods and textures, from the glittery dance-pop of “Pretty Twogether” and the funky “Distraction Breakdown” to much stranger landscapes, such as the enigmatic new-music chimes of “Marine Dad” and the undulating twists and turns of “Less Than.” Some tracks, such as “St.” Even more overtly beautiful, as Young unfurls her pliable, soaring vocals dreamily. Her delicately played piano, vibraphone and ukulele, McKay's interludes were the best thing about the album. In fact, the NYC singer-pianist's charming plays were linked by short songs written and performed by Joaquin Phoenix a run for his money in the gritty clown stakes, it’s Monkey. Live, The Adicts always deliver, so don’t miss this one. —BRETT CALLWOOD

THU 10/31

Oh Sees
@ TERAMAGRAM BALLROOM

As leader of the San Francisco-founded, L.A.-based garage-punk/neo-psychedelic band Oh Sees, John Dwyer has amassed a sizable and mostly consistent catalog, releasing 19 LPs since 2006. The past year or so bore witness to singer/guitarist Dwyer at the height of his mind-bending powers, with the appearance of two of Oh Sees’ best albums, Smote Reverse and Face Stabber. These latest records draw heavily from prog rock and experimental electronic music, and they benefit in no small part from contributions by keyboardist Tomas Dolas. Oh Sees’ show at the Teragram last Halloween was absolutely electric, and we expect this year’s set to be another thrill ride. —MATT MINER

TUE 10/29

Nellie McKay
@ CATALINA BAR & GRILL

In Ethan Coen’s recent theater piece A Play Is a Poem, the five mostly lighthearted one-act plays were linked by short songs written and performed by the madly talented Nellie McKay. In fact, the NYC singer-pianist’s charming interludes were the best thing about the otherwise unremarkable plays. Alternating on piano, vibraphone and ukulele, McKay purred with a jazzy aplomb, her delicately pretty melodies arcing gently across the Mark Taper Forum’s round room. And yet, just when you might be tempted to write her off as witty but retro sentimentalist, she’d slip in a sharply cutting line about Donald Trump, George Bush and people who eat meat. McKay’s most recent album, Sister Orchid, finds her putting her distinctive spin on a set of jazz and pop standards, but her sophisticated original songs fit alongside seamlessly with her classic inspirations. —FALLING JAMES

WED 10/30

Skizzy
@ THE ROXY

Hailing from New York, singer-songwriter Skizzy Mars is best known for his unique sultry vocals within a pop/R&B soundscape — touching on all things life has to offer. And those things aren’t always positive. Skizzy’s vulnerability and honesty in his own journey with addictions, fears and expectations is what fans love most, a layer of realness and authenticity that is much appreciated. This year, Skizzy unleashed his full-length debut titled Free Skizzy Mars, a 13-track project that showcases his perspective and wisdom on the state of hip-hop. He says, “I’m free from caring about what everybody thinks of me all the time. I’ve detached myself from results and focused on the process. I just want to deliver the best music possible.” —SHIRLEY JU
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