FLASHBACK CITY

A guide to L.A.’s best nostalgic locales

BY NIKKI KREUZER AND LINA LECARO
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**LITERATURE**

**Acting Out**

Playwright Luis Valdez gained widespread attention with his 1979 play *Zoot Suit* — the first Chicano play to run on Broadway — which focused on the so-called Zoot Suit Riots, when U.S. military servicemen in 1943 went on a racist rampage in Southern California and attacked Mexican-American kids. He gained more fame when he wrote the script to the popular 1987 biopic *La Bamba*, about Ritchie Valens. But Valdez made a greater impact when he and Agustin Lira formed El Teatro Campesino, the influential Chicano theater company that documented the struggles of California farm workers. A Noise Within and L.A. Phil present a staged reading of five of Valdez’s mini-plays: “Los Dos Caras del Patroncito,” “Los Vendidos,” “No Saco Nada de la Escuelita,” “La Conquista de Mexico” and “Huelgustas.” A Noise Within, 3352 E. Foothill Blvd., Pasadena; Fri., March 13, 8 p.m.; $10. (626) 356-3100, anoisewithin.org/play-power-to-the-people. — FALLING JAMES

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**ART**

**Is That All There Is?**

Though he might be best known as the guitarist and singer for the pop-punk band Alkaline Trio, Matt Skiba is also a professional and formally trained artist, specializing in paintings and drawings. “I grew up with art everywhere, both my parents are artists and writers,” Skiba said. “I’ve been drawing and painting since I can remember. Before I began playing music professionally, I went to school for design. Like music, it just came naturally to me.” Skiba has been working on the *Is That All There Is?* show for about a year, with some tour dates in between. Altogether there will be about 30 new pieces on view. But as to whether all the paintings conform to one style — simply put, Skiba says no. “I have no particular style. Everything from film and punk rock, to pop culture and even war-themed. There will be a mix.” Lethal Amounts, 1226 W. 7th St., downtown; opening reception: Fri., March 13, 7 p.m.; free w/rsvp; lethalamounts.com. — ALEX DIJESTFANO

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**ART**

**The Incredibles**

Whatever the overlap is between fanbases of Palm Springs chic tiki-meister Shag and folks who think Jay and Silent Bob are superheroes, it will be on full display at the Shag gallery store in West Hollywood tonight. This counterintuitive but somehow completely perfect family circle will be turning out for the print release of Josh “Shag” Agle’s new print, “Jay & Silent Bob vs. Time and Space,” a cheeky, comic strip-style micro-story of unlikely bravado and hyper-styled action-movie fantasy. The artist and his eccentric muse will be in attendance. The Shag Store, 8443 Melrose Ave., West Hollywood; Fri., March 13, 7-10 p.m.; free; shagstore.bigcartel.com/events. — JHANA NYS DAMBROT

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**CULTURE**

**Tears of Laughter**

Paleyfest is like Christmas, New Year’s Eve and Valentine’s Day all rolled into one for TV fans, offering the gift of gab via panels with your favorite stars, a slew of party-like events and a look at crush-worthy new characters and content to fall in love with. This year, the fest lineup includes casts and creative teams from the likes of *Modern Family*, *The Boys*, *The Mandalorian* and *Star Trek: Picard* — the first promo panel of the festival! Paley Center for Media, 7920 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood; Fri., March 13, 7 p.m. — 10 p.m.; $20. musiccenter.org. Also hosts the 6:30 p.m. pre-show talk on March 13 with *Curb Your Enthusiasm* creator Larry David. Paley Center for Media, 40 West 52nd St., New York City; Fri., March 13, 6:30 p.m. — 8 p.m.; $20. musiccenter.org. — FALLING JAMES

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**TV**

**Get Ready to Binge**

Paleyfest is like Christmas, New Year’s Eve and Valentine’s Day all rolled into one for TV fans, offering the gift of gab via panels with your favorite stars, a slew of party-like events and a look at crush-worthy new characters and content to fall in love with. This year, the fest lineup includes casts and creative teams from the likes of *Modern Family*, *The Boys*, *The Mandalorian* and *Star Trek: Picard* — the first promo panel of the festival! Paley Center for Media, 7920 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood; Fri., March 13, 7 p.m. — 10 p.m.; $20. musiccenter.org. Also hosts the 6:30 p.m. pre-show talk on March 13 with *Curb Your Enthusiasm* creator Larry David. Paley Center for Media, 40 West 52nd St., New York City; Fri., March 13, 6:30 p.m. — 8 p.m.; $20. musiccenter.org. — FALLING JAMES

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**FOOD&DRINK**

**An Irish Feast**

This year, the biggest annual *St. Patrick’s Day Festival* in downtown L.A. will be held at Imperial Western Beer Co. and Union Station South Patio. Enjoy craft beer, cocktails, green beer, Irish whiskey and DJs spinning at the outdoor festival. Pregame at Casey’s Irish Pub or Imperial Western Beer Co., as both open their doors at 6 a.m. for all-day celebration. $20 cover starting at 1 p.m. with access to both locations available for purchase at the entrance. The menu features beer bratwurst or vegan sausages, both with Dijon and sauerkraut on a French roll, and corned beef sandwiches on rye with Swiss cheese, Dijon and sauerkraut. Complimentary shuttles will be running between Casey’s Irish Pub and Imperial Western Beer Co. from 11:30 a.m. — 11:30 p.m. at every 15 minutes. Casey’s Irish Pub, 613 S. Grand Ave., downtown; Imperial Western Beer Co., 800 N. Alameda St., downtown; Tue., March 17, 11 a.m. — mid.; $20. 21+. caseystpatricksday.com. — MICHELE STUEVEN

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**DANCE**

**Curtain Call**

The ever popular, always exciting Alvin Alley American Dance Theater returns with a program of new works, a program reprising last year’s hip hop hit from Rennie Harris, and a family-friendly program, with each of the three programs crowned by the company’s gospel-filled signature *Revelations*. Director Robert Battle has included dance from some of the hottest choreographers — Azurole Harton, Jamarr Roberts, Darrell Grand Moultrie, Jessica Lang and Rennie Davis who is considered the father of hip-hop. The weekend matinees and Saturday evening show also marks the last chance to see L.A. native Matthew Rushing, a powerful company performer, take his last star turn as a dancer before he becomes the company’s associate artistic director. Rushing also hosts the 6:30 p.m. pre-show talk on March 19 and March 22. Program and pre-show details plus video clips at the website. Music Center, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Wed.-Fri., March 18-20, 7:30 p.m.; Sat.-Sun., March 21, 2 & 7:30 p.m.; $34-$138. musiccenter.org. — ANN HAJKINS

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**FILM**

**Painting Madness**

Paul McCarthy shambles through his bizarre 1991 film *Bossy Burger* like an out-of-control bear at a picnic or perhaps a besotted bull in a china shop. Wearing a rubber Alfred E. Neuman mask and a white, stained chef’s outfit, the longtime L.A. artist-provocateur draws a penis and other crude images, tears up the set and otherwise acts like a boorish saboteur in a glorious fuck you to the mainstream art establishment. McCarthy dons a clown nose and wields an oversized paintbrush in the similarly rude-hilarious 1995 film *Blood* starring Douglas Fairbanks. *Painting Madness* was restored/renovated by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and will be screened at the LA Film Festival *in person* at the Egyptian Theatre. Also screening at the Logan Theatre in Logan Square, Chicago; March 14, 11 a.m. — 1 p.m.; $20. lafilmfestival.com. — KATE KAGLIOZZI

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**ART**

**On the Outside**

In keeping with their ongoing mission to install and perform unusual interdisciplinary art in even more unexpected locations, Other Places Los Angeles returns to the decommissioned military outcropping at the Angels Gate Cultural Center with a new edition of the *Other Places Art Fair*. The two-day festival of magical oddities, site-specificity, food, fun and fractal creativity unfurls across the slightly feral grounds, as a dozens of independent artists, collectors and artistic adventurers convene for architectural and landscape interventions that reinvent the structure and experience of what an art fair can be in the weirdest of all possible worlds. Angels Gate Cultural Center, Battery Leary-Merriam, 3601 S. Gaffey St., San Pedro; Sat.-Sun., March 14-15, noon-6 p.m.; $5. opaf.info. — JHANA NYS DAMBROT

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**ART**

**Kiss Me, I’m a Street Artist**

If you are somehow planning on venturing out into the beer world this St. Patrick’s Day, we wish you good luck and plenty of blarney, and suggest dropping into Angel City Brewery for an early start time. Cheers in the company of the good people from Paint the Town Podcast — L.A.’s favorite street art (and music interview) show — as they host a sticker-swap and inspiration collage meet-up at the graffiti- and mural-covered arts district neighborhood’s favorite beer palace and revolving gallery, Angel City Brewery, 216 S. Alameda, downtown; Tue., March 17, 5-9 p.m.; free; facebook.com/LASTreetArtGallery. — JHANA NYS DAMBROT

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**SPORTS**

**March Madness**

Did we mention that Duke is back in action? The Blue Devils are the top seed in the NCAA men’s basketball tournament, and will take on No. 16 seeds Liberty and Abilene Christian in the first two rounds. The无忧博客 tournament tips off this week on the road, but fans will be able to watch the March Madness on TV. NCAA March Madness, various sites; nationwide. — FALLING JAMES

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**FOOD&DRINK**

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A guide to L.A.’s best nostalgic locales

BY NIKKI KREUZER AND LINA LECARO • PHOTOS BY NIKKI KREUZER

Those of us who lament all the beautiful old buildings or cool cultural landmarks knocked down to erect another condo development in Los Angeles must remember that many intriguing locales filled with history and charm remain. For L.A. natives, many of these are not just part of the landscape, they are part of who we are, backdrops to our lives as we grew up here. Despite this connection, we drive by them today and take them for granted, distracted by traffic and the stresses of life in the city. Then there are the hidden gems, largely unknown destinations that only a few might know about or remember.

All of these still-standing vintage venues reflect not only our city’s cultural evolution but conjure a sweet simplicity that many of us find comforting, especially when contrasted with the sometimes soulless-feeling, technology-driven chaos we’re all surrounded by these days. With the help of Offbeat L.A.’s Nikki Kreuzer, L.A. Weekly put together this collection of 20 cool and nostalgic places — some popular, some forgotten and a few somewhat secret — all offering flashbacks to eras past (from the ’20s to the ’80s). Visit or just marvel at them while they’re still here.

‘20s & ‘30s

THE EGYPTIAN THEATRE

The Egyptian Theatre was restored/renovated back to its 1922 glory, re-opening in 1998. The home of the American Cinematheque is sometimes taken for granted as it’s a prominent part of Hollywood Boulevard, surrounded by modern day candy and beckoning light-up adverts. But it’s the best place in town to soak up Hollywood’s Golden Age (its very first movie premiere was Robin Hood starring Douglas Fairbanks). With multiple screening formats including 35mm (and nitrate film), 70mm and DCP, the Egyptian is not only a museum-like reminder of the past; when it comes to cinema and festivals (Beyond Fest and Noir City; Hollywood), it is leading the city, showcasing the best of the movie world, old and new. 6712 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood; americancinemathequecalendar.com/egyptian_theatre_events. —L.L.

THE WITCH’S HOUSE

The Witch’s House was built in 1921 by Hollywood art director Harry Oliver, who made more than 30 films between 1919 and 1938. Originally constructed as offices and dressing rooms for a nearby silent film studio, it was moved to Beverly Hills shortly after and converted into a private home. Designed with a lopsided roof, tiny windows (No two are alike!), overgrown garden, functioning moat and storybook bridge, it looks like something out of a fairytale. Harry Oliver was also the architect of the Tam O’Shanter restaurant in Los Feliz. 516 Walden Drive, Beverly Hills; private residence, please do not disturb. —N.K.

GREYSTONE MANSION

Commissioned by oil tycoon Edward L. Doheny (inspiration of the film There Will Be Blood) for his son, Ned, the 46,000-square-foot Greystone Mansion was built in 1928 by Gordon Kaufmann, well-known architect of the Hoover Dam and the L.A. Times building. With incredible decor, an original Brunswick bowling alley and sprawling multilevel terraced neoclassical gardens providing spectacular citywide views, the history of the property even includes an early L.A. murder scandal. Admission to the grounds is free, but tours of the house are scheduled in advance with a fee. 905 Loma Vista Drive, Beverly Hills; greystonemansion.org. —N.K.

THE LOS ANGELES POLICE ACADEMY

The Los Angeles Police Academy was built in 1935 and its beautiful stone work was apparently laid by men doing hard labor after being arrested for public drunkenness. Framing its entrance are tall stone gates that many may recognize from the opening credits of the 1970s TV show Charlie’s Angels. Inside, a fairytale-like rock garden has multiple maze-like levels, charming rustic stone staircases, waterfalls, ponds, hidden seating areas and trails. It was designed in 1937 by landscape architect François Scotti, who went on to design the 20-foot waterfall downtown at Clifton’s Cafeteria. 1880 Academy Drive, Elysian Park. —N.K.

OVIATT BUILDING

Built in 1928 to house an upscale men’s clothing store, the Oviatt Building is a gorgeous example of surviving Art Deco architecture in Los Angeles. Filled with original glasswork by Deco craftsman Rene Lalique, ornate chandeliers, opulent dark wood and exquisite details throughout, even the exterior or inside lobby is a wonder to behold. Tours are given by local architectural preservation groups, but the Cicada Club also offers dinner, dancing and live vintage-themed music on Friday and Saturday nights. 617 S Olive St., downtown; cicadaclub.com. —N.K.

CHATEAU MARMONT

Still one of the most glamorous destinations in town, the Chateau Marmont plays host to fabulous parties and events on a regular basis. Hanging at Marmont is a very Hollywood thing to do, but it’s also a divinely nostalgic experience that can’t be knocked, as the grounds and building (erected in 1927) are as beautifully preserved as the patrons who frequent it. La La Land aside, the Chateau is another one of those places you probably drive by constantly, giving it little thought. But it’s one of our most historic locales, a place where decadence and the dark side of Hollywood have manifested, keeping the mystique of the past alive. 8221 Sunset Blvd., West Hollywood; chateaumarmont.com. —L.L.

THE FAIRFAX FARMERS MARKET

In spite of, or maybe because of, its proximity to the fancy Grove shopping mall, The Fairfax Farmers Market, which opened in 1934, has a certain retro magic about it that’s palpable when you walk inside of it to this day. As a kid growing up in L.A., we have several memories of eating there, buying produce (before farmers markets became a thing) and most importantly, seeing celebri-
ties on break from the nearby CBS studios. In later years, E.B.’s Beer & Wine provided an opportunity to sip craft beers in a lively family environment, often enlivened by live music, especially during Mardi Gras and St. Patty’s Day; it’s truly a holiday ritual for locals. The place gets bonus points for the old-school goodness of adjacent Dupar’s, which has and still does put modern ’50s diners to shame. 6333 W. Third St., Fairfax; farmersmarketla.com. —L.L.

40s & 50s
FOSSELMAN’S ICE CREAM
Bringing warm and fuzzy memories to generations of Southern California children, Fosslman’s Ice Cream turned 100 years old last year. Though it was a couple decades later that this Alhambra shop opened in 1941, it is the oldest surviving ice cream parlor around. With its tubs of homemade ice cream, candy counter, vintage decorations and small cafe tables, ordering a scoop will take you right back to being a kid. 1824 W Main St., Alhambra; fosslmans.com. —N.K.

MOONLIGHT ROLLERWAY
Moonlight Rollerway is one of our area’s only surviving vintage roller skating rinks, a place where time stands still and where laughter echoes from behind its doors. Built in 1950 during the post-WWII roller skating boom, it was renamed Moonlight Rollerway in 1963 and has kept the original interior mostly intact, right down to the original tongue-in-groove wooden skate floor. The current owner, Dominic Cangelosi, bought the rink in 1985, but has been playing the vintage Hammond B3 organ there since the 1960s. 5110 San Fernando Road, Glendale; moonlightrollerway.com. —L.L.

TRAVEL TOWN
Tucked away in the northwestern corner of Griffith Park, Travel Town has been entertaining children and adults since 1952. Focusing on train history from 1880 to the 1930s, with special attention to Southern California, this outdoor museum displays 43 full-scale railroad engines, passenger cars and more. A working miniature train is quite fun and can be ridden for a fee, giving two circles around the museum grounds. An exhibit room displays artifacts relevant to the history of the railroad in the United States. 5200 Zoo Drive, Griffith Park; traveltown.org. —K.K.

BIG DONUT DRIVE-IN
Randy’s Donuts, built in 1953, is an iconic symbol of L.A., but it isn’t our only giant donut. There are four others, all built in the 1950s as part of a 10-store chain called Big Donut Drive-In. Opened by a donut machine salesman, the 32-foot roof-mounted donuts are made of steel covered with gunite, a material used to build swimming pools. The first Big Donut, now called Kindle’s, is still operating in South L.A. The other survivors are in Compton, Gardena and Bellflower. Randy’s, 805 W. Manchester Blvd., Inglewood; Kindle’s, 10003 Normandie Ave., Westmont; Dale’s Donut, 15904 Atlantic Ave., Compton; Donut King 2, 15032 S. Western Ave., Gardena; Bellflower Bagel, 17025 Bellflower Blvd., Bellflower. —K.K.

GRANDMA PRISBREY’S BOTTLE VILLAGE
Grandma Prisbrey was 60 years old in 1956 when she began building retaining walls from springs and her Headlight Planter was made from doll’s heads and car headlights. A photo of one of Grandma’s doll head sculptures was used for the cover of the 1982 record “Mexican Radio” by the band Wall of Voodoo. 4595 Cochran St., Simi Valley; bottlevillage.com. —K.K.

OLD TRAPPER’S LODGE
The Old West comes to life in a bizarre and slightly creepy sculpture park located in a remote corner of Pierce College. Old Trap-

per’s Lodge was created and run by Burbank motel owner John Ehn from 1951 to 1981. This surreal collection was created to stir up business for his motel, Old Trapper’s Lodge, which was eventually razed for the Burbank Airport. A self-taught sculptor, Ehn crafted larger-than-life depictions of tall tales, such as the battle between Peg Leg Smith and a Native American named Big Bear. —N.K.

THE DRESDEN RESTAURANT & LOUNGE
Charming old bars are a dying breed in L.A., but as we celebrated in our book Los Angeles’ Best Dive Bars: Drinking and Diving in the City of Angels, many remain. The book is 10 years old but we’re happy to say drinking holes such as The Frolic Room, HMS Bounty and Tiki Ti are still alive and swiggin’ in L.A., plus they boast original decor. If you’re looking for a nostalgic cocktail vibe, though, we must remind you to hang at The Dresden Restaurant & Lounge. The family-owned establishment opened in 1954 and though old, it’s really quite a luxe little environment. Yes it’s the bar from Swing- ers (1996) that made retro culture and hipster culture synonymous (not the case anymore, unless you’re over 40) but the draw remains the live music courtesy of the ever-sprite jazz duo of Marty and Elyane, who’ve been performing there for almost four decades! 1760 N. Vermont Ave., Los Feliz; thedresden.com. —L.L.

‘60s, ‘70s & ‘80s
MONSTER PARK
San Gabriel’s Monster Park is a magical children’s play park created in 1965 by 70-year-old master concrete sculptor Benjamin Dominguez, who had immigrated to the U.S. from Mexico eight years earlier. Modeled after a lagoon, the incredible climbing equipment is eccentric and surreal, consisting of 14 pieces, including a sea serpent frolicking in a sandy sea, a giant octopus, a lighthouse with a sea serpent slide, a cement mountain with a large fanged sea monster slide and an enormous whale, whose tongue functions as a slide. 300 W. Wells St., San Gabriel. —K.K.

GOLF N’ STUFF
Opened in 1969 and still possessing most of its original vintage sculpture, the kitschy 18-hole mini-golf course at Golf N’ Stuff is full of magic castles, a haunted mansion, pirates with treasure, a reproduction of Big Ben, a Dutch-style windmill and a 1.5-foot-tall tree house which gave it a Guinness World Record in 1983 after a publicity-seeking actor lived there for nearly a year and a half. Scenes from the movie The Karate Kid were also filmed here in 1984. 10555 Firestone Blvd., Norwalk; golfnstuff.com/norwalk/info.html. —K.K.

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has plenty of iconic still-standing structures where historic music moments took place, but the Whisky a Go Go rocks to the top in terms name recognition and stellar shows on stage. And the cool part is it’s been largely unchanged since its second reign as a rock hub — there’s still the wood paneling, tacky neon and bad sight lines on the second level, which fans of retro atmosphere gotta respect, even if we don’t respect its pay-to-play-ish ways these days. We all know about the ’60s and ’70s heyday when the Doors, the Byrds, Led Zeppelin and Kiss wowed crowds, but the ’80s rock scene saw an equally formidable flood of superstars — Guns n’ Roses, AC/DC and Mötley Crüe — and the venue milks its metal vibes to this day with jam nights and tribute bands regularly. 8901 Sunset Blvd., West Hollywood; whiskyagogo.com. —LL.

THE WESTIN BONAVENTURE HOTEL AND SUITES

It’s been outdone by several structures in downtown since it was constructed in 1976, but The Westin Bonaventure Hotel and Suites is still one of our most special buildings. Those of us who grew up in L.A. can probably still recall the wonder of driving by it on the 110 freeway as kid, its shiny cylinders gleaming in the sun as the elevators that separate each column moved up and down. Designed by architect John C. Portman Jr., the Bonaventure sort of represented L.A. to outsiders in the ’70s, especially since it was seen in so many of the era’s TV shows. Located on the 34th floor, the hotel’s revolving lounge and restaurant has seen some changes over the years, but one thing that remains is the gorgeous view of a city which has changed a lot since the ’70s, but still feels both cinematic and nostalgic. 11222 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles; westin.com. —LL.

THE BRADY BUNCH HOUSE

When it comes to iconic domiciles in L.A., there are many that top architecture fans and pop culture junkies’ visit lists; the gorgeous Sowden house (1926) on Franklin Avenue, Danzig’s creepy house, also on Franklin (he sold it a few years ago, though), the Stahl house (1960) — a modern glass-paneled oasis overlooking Sunset Boulevard — and, of course, the Playboy Mansion. But there is an even more famous home that we all know and love here, and if it doesn’t evoke nostalgic pangs you must have been Amish and not allowed to watch television as a child. We’re talking about The Brady Bunch House — the place where a man named Brady and a lovely lady raised six kids in the ’70s. After HGTV replicated the interior sets from the show into the rooms of the Studio City home used for exteriors, it has been more popular than ever as a drive-by tourist attraction. Sadly there are no tours inside happening at this time, but at least you can watch the show. 11222 Dilling St., Studio City. —LL.

LITTLE TOKYO MARKETPLACE

Mall culture was huge in the ’80s, thanks to Moon Unit Zappa’s “Valley Girl” immortalizing the lifestyle, but since then pretty much every one of the spots we hung out in as kids has seen a sleek white Apple Store-style remodel in efforts to compete with online shopping dollars. That’s why we love the three-story Little Tokyo Marketplace. Originally called Yoyo Plaza, the building opened in 1985 and looks largely the same as it did then. The retro-futurist environment houses lots of Asian merchandise and vendors, including a Daiso, as well as a market, karaoke studio and of course lots of great sushi options. 333 S. Alameda St., downtown; littletokymarket.com. —LL.
FOOD

FINDING L.A.’S HISTORIC SOUL IN ITS EATERIES
From 1900s to 1960s
BY NIKKI KREUZER

There’s something magical about a vintage restaurant that has managed to survive as the city around it grows and changes. Besides nostalgia and memories, our longstanding eateries conjure ghosts of history and are time machines back to the decor and architecture of early Los Angeles. Here are a few special restaurants that continue to serve as examples of the times they were created.

1900s
The French dip sandwich got its juicy start in downtown L.A. Cole’s claims that the gravy-dipped roll was requested by a customer with sore gums who couldn’t eat crunchy bread, while rival restaurant Philippe says that their cook accidentally dropped a roll into a bubbling vat of au jus. Both restaurants opened in 1908. Cole’s (118 E. 6th St., downtown) in L.A.’s tallest building at the time, 10 towering levels, has been restored to its original glory with its wooden bar, crimson wallpaper and stained glass. Philippe (1001 N. Alameda St., Chinatown) is slightly more rustic, with long communal wooden tables, sawdust on the concrete floors and a few vintage wooden booths.

1910s
Fair Oaks Pharmacy (1526 Mission St., South Pasadena) opened in 1915 when this stretch of road was still called Route 66. It’s one of the only surviving soda fountains in the area, fully restored a few decades ago with heavy oak doors, tin ceilings, honeycomb tile floors and vintage soda fountain equipment.

1920s
The two oldest surviving Mexican restaurants in L.A. opened during the 1920s. El Cholo (1121 Western Ave., Harvard Heights) got its start in 1927 and claims to be the first in town to serve nachos, beginning in 1959. La Golondrina (17 Olivera St., downtown) opened in 1928 and is located in the city’s oldest brick building, built in 1855.

1930s
The Derby (233 Huntington Drive, Arcadia) was opened in 1938 by celebrated Seabiscuit jockey George Woolf. Filled with vintage horse racing memorabilia, this steakhouse exemplifies 1930s elegance with brick walls, beamed ceilings and burgundy leather booths. The Galley (2442 Main St., Santa Monica), Santa Monica’s oldest restaurant, opened in 1934 featuring a nautical theme, windows resembling portholes and set pieces from the 1934 film Mutiny on the Bounty. This steak and seafood spot became a hangout for film stars of the era, including Errol Flynn, Carole Lombard, Edward G. Robinson and Charles Laughton.

1940s
Chili John’s (2018 W. Burbank Blvd., Burbank) opened in 1946, serving a limited menu of chili dishes topping spaghetti noodles. The diner-style layout has a U-shaped counter, orange vinyl stools and a rustic mural of mountains and sky. With a similar U-shaped counter, The Apple Pan (10801 W Pico Blvd., West Los Angeles) opened in 1947 and has an equally small menu consisting of hamburgers, fries and pies. Langer’s Deli (704 S Alvarado St., Westlake), known for its pastrami and matzo ball soup, was opened in 1947 by a New Jersey transplant. It’s kept its original appearance with vintage signs, multicolored tile behind the deli counter and knobby wood room dividers.

1950s
The Hat (1 W. Valley Blvd., Alhambra) opened in 1951 as a small corner burner stand selling 25¢ hamburgers, 56 cups of coffee and massive pastrami sandwiches. Almost demolished in 1981, it was rescued and has expanded into a small local chain of 11 restaurants. Remnants of Eagle Rock’s Italian past still exist in Colombo’s (1833 Colorado Blvd., Eagle Rock), opened in 1954 and Casa Bianca (1650 Colorado Blvd., Eagle Rock) opened 1955, both serving goopy Italian deliciousness. Colombo’s is dimly lit with red leather booths, wood paneled walls, iron chandeliers and live jazz, while Casa Bianca has amazing vintage neon and a casual family vibe. Dal Rae (9023 E. Washington Blvd., Pico Rivera) is the place to try some of those classic 1950s menu items that you’ve only heard of: oysters Rockefeller, sauteed frog legs, duck a l’orange or flaming cherries jubilee. It was opened in 1958 when an ashtray on every table and a martini with lunch were the norm.

1960s
Casa del Campo (1920 Hyperion Ave., Silver Lake) was opened in 1962 by dancer Rudy del Campo, who played, one of the Sharks in the film version of West Side Story. Serving Mexican food, its romantic dining room consists of knobby wood and red leather booths. La Dolce Vita (9785 Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills) was designed in 1966 by famed art director Lyle Wheeler, winner of five Academy Awards and responsible for set design on 361 films, including Gone With The Wind, The Seven Year Itch and The King and I. This fancy Italian spot was frequented by Frank Sinatra, George Raft, the Kennedys and the Reagans.
PART ONE: THE BOTS
CHAPTER ONE:
PETRA THE HOT BLOND

My name is Petra the Hot Blond. I first was tasked to hang out with Donny way before Obama was elected President, and my assignment was to create a monster. BTW, we call him "Donny" because that is what his dad, Fred, called him.

As a Hot Blond, I have it all. Long honey-blond hair, wide cobalt-blue eyes, ample tits, endless legs, a tiny waist, and that kind of face you want to fall into. Plus, I know all the ways to captivate weak men like Donny. Praise them a lot; that is what they want: the praise Mommy and Daddy never gave them.

And of course, really nasty sex.

As a sex partner, Donny was lousy: wanted a quick fuck or blowjob. And his penis was laughable (Source: Stormy Daniels interview on Jimmy Kimmel TV show, 10-2-18): short, skinny, a tiny toadstool.

Besides, he cared nothing for my pleasure, not that it mattered. I am a bot. I only pretend to have feelings.

To Be Continued...

*Editors Note*
From the Author:

Trump’s Hot Bot is a graphic satire novel I wrote that explores the intersection of technology and our current political situation through fiction. What if bots—internet robots—are the first step in Artificial Intelligence controlling humanity? That would explain a lot about our current president. That’s how the idea started and that sets up the first chapter of the book presented here. Enjoy.

I’d love your feedback on the book as I aim to publish it later this year. So please email me at: trumpshotbot@gmail.com
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To Be Continued ...
LAUREN HALSEY’S ARTFUL MAPPINGS

The Crenshaw native archives her neighborhood

BY WYATT CLOSS

To walk through the current Lauren Halsey exhibit at David Kordansky Gallery is to consider much about black life, specifically South L.A. black life, in an outsized, candy-colored way. A mirrored wonderland, you find yourself looking at modern-day hieroglyphics that will undoubtedly need their contexts explained in the centuries to come.

What happens when you gather these signs and symbols, enlarge, raise, stack and arrange them like so many Rem Koolhaus buildings, is a beautiful disproportion of the everyday. In vibrant colors and various jiggly fonts, they amplify the words of one of the signs in this show: “We are Still Here.” This is an exploration of South L.A. through the lens of an anthropologist in technicolor. And, as George Clinton put it in a song, Halsey is “Doin’ it to you in 3-D, so groovy that I dig me.”

“Basically, I’m making monuments to black people,” says the 33-year-old Los Angeles native, repping Crenshaw to the fullest in a recent gallery interview with the Weekly. But this is no memorial or historic preservation endeavor in the traditional sense. Nor has that been the case for prior projects of hers like “we still here, there” at MOCA in 2018 and “The Crenshaw District Hieroglyph Project” at the Hammer Museum, also in 2018. There are similar topics and references within the new work on view, but with constant unpacking and evolution of thought about her place called home. “Crenshaw, over and over again?” some may ask. But consider Monet and his umpteen lily ponds.

Upon entering the space (with special booties to walk on the iridescent floor), you see a variety of “stacks” as Halsey calls them. Various types of signage arranged on cubes of different sizes piled as much as 14 feet high it seems. To some, the signs are mundane — a giant soda bottle, beauty salon signage, mixed with advertising for “We Buy Houses” in a telltale sign of gentrification and “Buy Black”-type shout-outs. But to others, it is an affirmation of existence.

The signage is an amalgamation of gathering and collecting for years. The stacks are a reflection of the neighborhood as dreamscape — not only because of the vibrancy but because many of the businesses and posters are for things that no longer exist. For Halsey, it’s a curiosity and fascination with a sense of place that started more place-specific soundscapes that came to mind. “Um, you know it’s the corn man, the tamale man, helicopters, the corner preacher, backyard fight parties,” she said. Indeed, it is an orchestra of a different stripe.

“For the future, Halsey wants to get closer to architecture, she says, and you get the sense that the collecting and mapping and signing is on a track to meet up with early aspirations of hers to build a sense of place. One example of that is a project she’s working on to create a community center in South L.A. for teens to hangout. As she described it, we recall a sign that says “Welcome to...Chill House.” And that is exactly what she was thinking about.

Somehow, it’s not unreasonable to imagine in the not-so-distant future an actual structure like the Arc de Triomphe, made up of technicolor signs and symbols, a black mythography hovering over a section of Crenshaw, and etched into stone in a cursive black hair-care package font, the words “We Still Here.” Until then, we have these wondrous stacks, these towers of flava and liberation, to guide us.

On view through March 14 at David Kordansky Gallery, 5130 W. Edgewood Place, davidkordanskygallery.com.
By Wyatt Closs

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Italy, as a favorite. “I started with models in 2012 a Radical architecture coterie of the 1960s in 

presentation. She cites the work of Superstudio, 

blocks, “Halsey says, when she was creating this case for prior projects of hers like “we still here, 

in the not-so-distant future an actual structure in a stack over a “Waz Up” store sign — showing 

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backyard /flyness as well as a cautionary future 

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Even the promotion of this show was given 

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WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

COMPANIES AND COLLEGES ARE COLLABORATING MORE CLOSELY THAN EVER

BY PAUL ROGERS

With so many Americans faced with crushing student debt for qualifications often out of step with current employment realities, the federal government is encouraging educational institutions and employers to collaborate in developing curricula that address the knowledge, skills and training actually required in today’s rapidly-evolving, tech-driven workplaces. For while the U.S. unemployment rate hit a half-century low of just 3.5 percent in December, there were still 6.4 million unfilled jobs, with employers reporting insufficient qualified labor to meet demand.

The 2018 Executive Order Establishing the President’s National Council for the American Worker included among its initial tasks “increasing the number of partnerships around the country between companies, local educational institutions and other entities … in an effort to understand the types of skills that are required by employers so that educational institutions can recalibrate their efforts toward the development and delivery of more effective training programs.”

With some contemporary companies boasting economies and workforces equivalent to those of significant countries (Walmart’s 2019 revenue of $514 billion exceeds Belgium’s GDP, while its workforce of 2.2 million is roughly equivalent to that of Ireland), they have increasingly become major players in shaping how and what we learn. Tech-centered mega-companies such as Amazon, Google, and Facebook are highly incentivized to encourage schools and colleges to produce workers well versed in both using and creating the latest digital technologies. Simultaneously, major employers are also changing the strategies and scope of their own educational benefit programs in a bid to reduce staff turnover, fill skill gaps and diversify their leadership pipelines.

What do such “workforce development initiatives” mean for students, schools, and for the businesses themselves? We picked the brains of four education experts to find out.

In layman’s terms, just what are “workforce development initiatives” in the modern sense of these being partnerships between companies and colleges?

Marvin Martinez, Chancellor, Rancho Santiago Community College District in Orange County, Calif.: Simply put, workforce development initiatives are programs that align educational offerings to employer’s needs. These initiatives may entail basic skills training, retraining the underemployed and unemployed, and/or training for specific skills within specific industries.

Michael Cohen, aka The Tech Rabbi, Los Angeles-based education technology consultant and trainer: With the rapid pace of technological growth, including automation and AI, there are many companies seeking to collaborate with colleges to design educational pathways towards professions that pay more and tend to have a limited pool of potential candidates. This shift in who is creating the new workforce seems like workforce development 2.0 to me.

What has been the trend in such relationships between businesses and the education community?

Ron Umehira, Dean of Career & Technical Education at Leeward Community College in Pearl City, Hawaii, and Executive Director for the Hawaii Association for Career & Technical Education: We’ve seen a definite increase in interest from business and industry over the past five years. The partnerships are evolving. At first, it was simply having business partners sit in on advisory boards to review curriculum. Companies are now increasing their involvement by offering scholarships, internships, equipment, supplies, and site visits to our faculty and students.

Martinez: We’re seeing a rise in such partnerships as business becomes even more competitive for talent — as technology progresses, and as customer service standards increase. Business and industry need to “up their game” so to speak, in order to attract and retain the best talent — and community colleges stand ready to help.

Cohen: Students under 30 don’t know what life is like without the internet, and students under 18 don’t know life without the word iPhone. This has caused a shift in the approach of many companies, notably Microsoft, to not just create opportunities for technology literacy, but to create pathways of a much higher caliber that focus on using technology to become creators not just consumers.

What are some prominent recent examples of such initiatives?

Cheryl Holcomb-McCoy, Ph. D., Dean of the School of Education at American University in Washington DC: One example that illustrates a K-12-university-business partnership is the P-Tech Program at Dunbar High School in Baltimore, Md. P-Tech is a four- to six-year program during which students earn a high school diploma, no-cost associate’s degree, and first-in-line status for job placement. At Dunbar, P-Tech focuses on health sciences and has partnerships with Johns Hopkins University, University of Maryland, and Kaiser Permanente.

Umehira: We’ve been working closely with the Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation — a new light rail system for Oahu. Even before construction began, our faculty worked with the industrial part-
Collaborating more closely than ever, companies and colleges are initiating workforce development initiatives to address the knowledge, skills, and training actually required in today's rapidly-evolving job market. For while the tech-centered mega-industries such as Apple, Google, and Amazon have increasingly become major players in shaping how we live, work, and learn, they have increasingly been strengthened by the collaborative efforts of educational institutions and employers to step with current employment realities, including automation and AI, there are more immediate threats to the American workforce. In the words of Michael Cohen, aka The Tech Rabbi, and educational consultant and trainer from Los Angeles-based education technology company, “As technology consultant and trainer: We picked the brains of four education experts to find out. We picked the brains of four education experts to find out. We picked the brains of four education experts to find out. We picked the brains of four education experts to find out. The 2018 Executive Order Establishing a National Council for the American Worker included among its initial tasks “increasing the number of American workers who are eligible for federal training programs.” The order also directed the federal government to “collaborate … with educational institutions and other entities … in an effort to understand the types of skills and training needed to meet demand.”

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In Orange County, Calif.: “workforce development initiatives” mean for students, schools, and communities… in an effort to understand the types of skills and training needed to meet demand.”

Simply put, what do such “workforce development initiatives” mean for students, schools, and communities in the new workforce seems like workforce development 2.0 to me. The partnerships between companies and educational institutions can recalibrate the workforce for the future. It’s time for businesses and educational institutions to work together to ensure the delivery of more effective training for specific skills within specific industries.

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Transitioning Toward Success at Cal State LA Downtown

Determined, and wise beyond her years, Cal State LA Downtown psychology student Roshawn Davis is creating her own destiny. After aging out of the foster care system and experiencing homelessness, she sought stability that she never found as a child. Opting not to rely on others for help, she realized that her life experiences were a springboard to a future that would allow her to share strength with others. Higher education was a necessary first step toward transforming past struggles into fuel for the future.

While earning her associate of arts degrees in both social services and psychology at Pasadena City College (PCC), an advisor counseled Roshawn on academic next steps and career goals. “Studying psychology really helped me better understand where I had come from and where I was at that point.” Quietly insightful by nature, Roshawn realized that by continuing her studies in psychology, she could combine her knowledge with an innate understanding of people and human behavior to evoke change in the lives of others.

After leaving PCC, Roshawn became one of 25 current and former foster youth accepted into a paid career development internship with the Los Angeles County Public Defender’s Office. “Being around professionals and being included on a team reminded me of why education is so important and how the work keeps the system going,” says Roshawn.

While working at the Public Defender’s Office, Roshawn discovered Cal State LA’s downtown location that was convenient to her home and job. “The staff at Cal State LA Downtown take the time to get to know you and are knowledgeable about financial aid. They make it easy to be successful.”

As she enters her final year in the Bachelor of Arts in Psychology program at Cal State LA Downtown, and continues her work with the Public Defender’s Office, Roshawn has taken a deeper interest in human behavior. She plans to pursue her doctorate in Industrial-Organizational Psychology, the science of behavior in organizations. “In order for organizations to be successful, they have to train and coach their managers on how to impart their knowledge among their employees,” says Roshawn. Her interest in company values and direction, including the value of human capital in organizations, stems from her desire to impact the system in a meaningful way. “What I’ve experienced and learned in life, at school and at work has given me the power to help propel others to be the best that they can be.”

In addition to the Bachelor of Arts in Psychology program, other degree programs offered at Cal State LA Downtown include the Fully-Employed MBA, Master of Public Health and Bachelor of Arts in Communication degree programs, among others. Certificate and professional training programs are also available.

Cal State LA Downtown is located at the corner of 8th Street and Grand Avenue. To learn more about application deadlines or register for an upcoming information session, visit calstatela.edu/dtla or call 888-541-DTLA.

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Some places you have to experience first-hand to understand just how special they are. The first thing you will notice about Pacifica is the beauty of our campuses: richly green, peaceful, a bounty of organic fruit trees, flowers, and the Santa Ynez Mountains rising above us. The campus at Lambert Road is a restored 1920’s-era estate, and higher up toward the mountains is the beautiful retreat of the Ladera Lane campus. One of these campuses will be the setting for your Pacifica Experience Day. When beginning your journey toward richer knowledge of depth psychology, you may need guidance to decide which program, professors, and place would be the best fit for you. As Pacifica president Joseph Cambray says, “Our Pacifica Experience Days give potential applicants an opportunity for a brief but rich immersion into student life on our campuses. As Pacifica’s president, I happily welcome attendees, along with our provost. This is followed by a faculty presentation on a topic of broad interest, which replicates the graduate classroom experience.” This gives you the opportunity to experience what it feels like to be in a classroom, having a dialogue with a scholar who has made depth psychology their life’s work.

The value of a graduate degree rests not just on academic excellence but the richness of connections to professors, the bonds formed among cohort members, and the sense of a place where you belong. Explore the possibilities of all three as you enjoy a catered lunch and speak informally with our faculty. The afternoon is also an opportunity to speak further with faculty and admission coordinators about which program might be right for you.

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  - Ph.D. in Depth Psychology with Specialization in -Integrative Therapy and Healing Practices
  - M.A./Ph.D. in Mythological Studies
  - M.A. in Engaged Humanities and the Creative Life

A Pacifica Experience Day usually ends with a campus tour and time to delve into our libraries. Walking into the special collections room at Lambert, you are surrounded by Joseph Campbell and Marija Gimbuta’s personal books and the intangible sense of knowledgeable inquiry of two minds who shaped this field. On our Ladera Lane Campus, you can tour OPUS Archives and Research Center, where the collections of Joseph Campbell, Marija Gimbutas, James Hillman, and Marion Woodman are housed.

Join us on March 20th and April 15th, 2020 to get the feel of Pacifica. We hope you’ll join us soon.

Umehira: Our Office of Continuing Education & Workforce Development offers short term courses and customized training for many industries… Businesses see the return on investment when they cover the cost of training current employees for promotions. Employees feel a deeper sense of commitment to an employer when the employee pays for additional training.

Who gains, and how, from such company-college workforce development initiatives? First off, the companies themselves – what do they gain from teaming with colleges in this way?

Umehira: The companies gain as their employees receive [training in] current and new exciting technologies from certified and industry experienced instructors. These incumbent workers truly appreciate their employer’s investment in their professional growth and reciprocate in improved productivity and attitude.

And what about the colleges? What’s in it for them, both in terms of finance and in keeping themselves relevant to workplace realities?

Martinez: Obviously, from a financial standpoint, we want to fill our classrooms and we want our students to be well-equipped to either continue their education at a four-year university or enter the job market. Offering relevant and in-demand programs actually helps us achieve both goals.

Cohen: Colleges need to do whatever they can to be relevant. For $10,000 someone can take a three-month coding boot camp and find a software job making $70-$120,000 a year including benefits and compensation packages. Colleges leave students with a paper degree and $120,000 in debt or more. Colleges better act quickly because I question their relevance in a decade — and this is coming from someone with a Master’s degree.

And how to students benefit from such partnerships, both in school and once they enter the workforce?

Umehira: Our students have financial benefits in terms of scholarships or receiving tools of the trade (especially important in areas like automotive). They also have first chance at internships, job opportunities, and — what’s becoming more and more important — early networking that often helps them land a job.

Martinez: Quite simply, the more hands-on training, the more exposure our students can have in their chosen field (i.e. internships), the better equipped, the more confident, and ultimately the more successful they will be once they enter the workforce.

Cohen: If students are given a new scope of ready-to-use skills in the world of work, that is a huge win. Schools need to do a better job of nurturing a culture of lifelong learning in students so that they don’t look at “learning time” as this thing you do in school or when your job is about to be taken over by a robot.

Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos has recently talked about “the importance of building strong relationships between local businesses and the education community.” Is the current administration putting palpable focus on such workforce development initiatives and, if so, is this having a real-world impact?

Cohen: I believe the quote to be critical but have yet to see significant change occur on the ground. Schools need to look at the cutting edge of industry. Companies on the other hand have a moral obligation to look ahead even further to see how they can support employees as their business decisions obsolete their roles.

Finally, what do you see as the near future for business-education relationships?

Holcomb-McCoy: I see business partnerships as the wave of the future for K-12 schools and in higher education. These partnerships offer for all involved — win-win. However, it’s important that K-12, universities and businesses work together to set shared goals, align their existing policies and resources, and use labor data to inform programming.

Cohen: I am excited to see how community colleges aggressively partner with businesses, since they are affordable and do not crush graduates in debt. If those graduates can leave a local college and go make six figures at a tech company or start up, then what real relevance does college have outside of traditional professions like law, medicine and finance?
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A controversial modern twist on the classic tale arrives

BY TARA FINLEY

L.A. Weekly’s Movie Guide is 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, March 13

As “the most talked about movie of the year is one that no one’s actually seen,” The Hunt finally opens wide in theaters this week. Based on 1942’s famous short story, The Most Dangerous Game, by Richard Connell, The Hunt’s release was pushed to 2020 following criticism from President Trump. Said to be a thriller that serves as a satire on America’s political divide, viewers are along for the ride as 12 strangers mysteriously awake in a clearing to find they are being hunted for sport by the “elite.” Tables are turned when Crystal (Betty Gilpin) decides to fight back. Produced by Blumhouse Productions and directed by Craig Zobel.

JJ (Dave Bautista) is a gruff CIA operative that has been tasked with surveilling a family, a mission he accepts begrudgingly. Things don’t go smoothly, and the family’s precocious 9-year-old daughter Sophie (Chloe Coleman) discovers the hidden CIA cameras in her home. In exchange for not blowing JJ’s cover and sinking the whole operation, Sophie brokers a deal with him to spend his time training her to be a spy. Charming and determined, JJ finds he has a soft spot for his new pint-sized protege in My Spy.

An action-packed film based on the best-selling comic book, Vin Diesel plays Ray Garrison, a soldier killed then reanimated by a team of scientists working for the RST corporation. Brought back to life as the superhuman Bloodshot, Ray has newfound abilities thanks to the army of nanotechnology in his veins. No longer in control of his own body or mind, Ray is on a mission to figure out what’s real and what’s not — including the truth behind his own death.

Limited releases
Friday, March 13

This “found footage” psychological thriller follows a distraught mother who is concerned that her teenage son is a psychopath. Convinced that he plans on shooting up his school and murdering his classmates, Abbey Bell (Melinda Page Hamilton) tries and fails to get her son (Bailey Edwards) metal help. He is too cunning for treatment, outsmarting the system and forcing his mother to take matters into her own hands. M.O.M. Mothers of Monsters paints a gritty picture of every mother’s worst nightmare. Arena Cinelounge, 6464 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood; Fri, March 13, 9 p.m.; $16. (323) 924-1644, arenascreen.com.

Special Screenings
Saturday, March 15

On Saturday, March 14, Noir City: The 22nd Annual Los Angeles Festival of Film Noir is taking place at the iconic Egyptian Theatre. A five-film noir marathon presented by the American Cinematheque and the Film Noir Foundation, viewers will enjoy masterpieces restored in 35mm. Films include: Out of the Past, The Guilty, High Tide, The Prowler, and Try and Get Me. Ranging from sexy, dark, witty and mysterious — these classic films tell the most compelling of tales. Without a doubt, these are some of noir’s most potent treasures. Egyptian Theatre, 6712 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood; Sat., March 14, 2 p.m.; $20-$25. (323) 461-2020, americancinemathequecalendar.com

Part of the Women to the Polls: A Suffrage Film Festival, UCLA Film & Television Archive, The League of Women Voters of Los Angeles and The Wonderful Company will be presenting a free screening of The Bosstonians along with an in-person Q&A with top female historians and authors, including Lois Banner, professor emerita of history at USC and Brenda Stevenson, UCLA professor of history. Based on the 1886 novel by Henry James, The Bosstonians centers around the culture surrounding women’s rights in the U.S. during the late-19th century. UCLA’s Billy Wilder Theater, 10899 Wilshire Blvd., Westwood; Sat., March 15, 1 p.m.; Free. (310) 206-8013, cinema.ucla.edu.

Thursday, March 19

Head to Alex Theatre in Glendale for a special screening of the classic thriller The Night of the Hunter starring ’50s film legends Robert Mitchum and Shelley Winters. This 1955 film is based on the novel by Davis Grubb and has a reputation for being a classic American thriller — one critics argue may be the best of all time. Mitchum gives a stellar performance as the Reverend Harry Powell, a villain searching for a stash of stolen money and relying on unscrupulous means to get his hands on it. Screened in 35mm and directed by Charles Laughton. Alex Theatre, 216 N. Brand Blvd., Glendale; Thur., March 19, 7:30 p.m.; $11-$16. (818) 243-2539, alextheatre.org.
KIM SHATTUCK’S MUSIC LIVES

A tribute concert to late musician will raise funds to fight ALS

BY BRETT CALLWOOD

When Kim Shattuck succumbed to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), the disease that she had been privately struggling with for two years, it’s not an exaggeration to say that Los Angeles was shaken. Fans all over the world, in fact; but here, in her hometown, it was and is particularly painful.

It was October 2 of last year, and the news came as a complete surprise to all but her family and close friends. As our own Falling James wrote in an obituary the following day: “Throughout the course of her life, the Los Angeles native created an impressive body of work — primarily with The Muffs but also with The Beards, The Coolies and The Pandoras, not to mention a puzzling and brief digression as a member of Pixies — that influenced countless garage rock, punk, pop and riot-grrl bands.”

On March 15, the El Rey Theatre will host a tribute to Shattuck which will raise awareness and much needed funds to combat ALS, while celebrating her life. Her former bandmates in the Pandoras, the Muffs and the Coolies will perform, as will friends Redd Kross, Veruca Salt, Vicki Peterson of the Bangles and Kathy Valentine of the Go-Gos, among others. The Coolies are particularly important; the band was set up by Shattuck, Melanie Vammen (who also played in both the Pandoras and the Muffs) and Palmyra Delran (the Friggs) to specifically raise money for ALS research.

“At the time, nobody knew that Kim was sick, and Wicked Cool Records 100 percent supported us in putting it out,” says Vammen. “We already had that, and myself, Hillary Burton who I play with in The Pandoras, we got to talking and we said wouldn’t it be cool if we put on a show to raise more money? We started brainstorming and decided to have a celebration of Kim’s life, and let’s bring all the people that were most important in her life to her and all of us, and make it a really special event. That’s really what we did. These are all people that meant something to her, that have been a part of her life, that she’s played with or great friends with.”

Anybody who lives with ALS, or who lives with it through a family member knows that, similar to MS, it’s an unimaginably cruel disease. It’s also mysterious in that, despite years of research, little is known about it and it affects people differently.

“It baffles all the sciences,” says Delran. “People don’t even know what it is. So they look it up and they see how horrifying it is. Sometimes people don’t want to talk about it because it’s so scary and just so tragic, but I think that’s exactly what needs to be done. The ice bucket challenge was amazing for the cause, and I just think that if people really focus on what this is — Kim’s family had it running through their genes so that was the 5 percent, but 95 percent is completely random. It’s scary but I feel like diseases can be cured so let’s develop cures or at least treatments so whoever’s afflicted with it can have a better quality of life.”

“Where there’s other people that have lived 10 years, Kim was diagnosed and the sequence of what happened was immediate,” adds Vammen. “She was able to hold on to a plateau for a while, but it took its course about what she predicted. I do want everybody to know that she has donated her brain and spinal cord for research because her type of ALS was so extremely aggressive — they want to study it and they want to be able to find a way to cure it and be able to help people. If she can give that ultimate gift, we can raise a few dollars.”

That is testament to Shattuck’s strength and spirit — that she was looking to help other people during her worst days. Delran also points out that she never stopped working; indeed, the final Muffs album was released the week that she passed away. And the Coolies was among her main concerns toward the end. Therefore, it must be strange for Delran and Vammen to contemplate performing those songs without her this week.

“I’ve known Kim and Melanie for 30 years or something,” says Delran. “We were always joking around that we’d have a band someday, like, ‘Agghh, why can’t we live next door to each other, we’d have such a great band.’ Then when she got sick it was like, ‘OK, we have to do it now.’ So to me, this is a promise that we made to her. We’re gonna do it, and it’s really been so much fun. Working exclusively with Melanie obviously now, I really feel like it’s a celebration. I think about Kim every single day. I celebrate her and her friendship, and the love she had for people and for music, every single day. So of course it’s gonna be weird. But I am looking at this as a celebration, a promise we made to her, and it’s gonna be good. No, it can’t be good, it’s gonna be great.”

Evenings such as this one generally generate a whirlwind of emotions. Of course, there’s an air of sadness. Kim Shattuck will be missed. But there will inevitably be a celebratory feeling — which Vammen says is exactly how Shattuck would want it.

“She would want it to be fun — for her and me and all of us it’s all about laughing and having fun, and making fun of a situation,” she says. “I was with her every day for two years holding her hand while she was sick, and I know she would be happy and that she loves us. She’ll be there with us that night. She’ll be with Palmyra and I on stage, I know. This was her wish — for Palmyra and I to continue our band that the three of us put together and she wanted us to play live. She picked out songs for us to do in the future and put out more music, and she wanted us to tour.”

So there you have it — the Coolies will continue beyond this tribute show, because the band was designed to do so. Shattuck has set them up with enough material for a new album, and they’ll tour. And Kim Shattuck’s music will live on.

Celebrate the Life of Kim Shattuck: Create a World Without ALS takes place at 3 p.m. on Sunday, March 15 at the El Rey Theatre.
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