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## THE MARVEL REVOLUTION WILL BE TELEVISED

HOW WANDA VISION AND DISNEY'S  
UPCOMING THEATRICAL AND  
STREAMING ROLLOUT PROMISES TO  
BRING THE SUPERHERO-CHARGED  
MULTIVERSE TO THE MASSES

BY ERIN MAXWELL



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# THE MARVEL REVOLUTION WILL BE TELEVISED

How *WandaVision* and Disney's Upcoming Theatrical and Streaming Rollout Promises to Bring the Superhero-Charged Multiverse to the Masses

BY ERIN MAXWELL

Wanda and Vision get into a heated debate in *WandaVision*.



Already brimming with magic and mayhem, super-charged superheroes, and enough drama to fill a world or two, the Marvel universe is about to get much, much bigger. And it's all thanks to a little witchcraft.

While the Marvel Cinematic Universe's production schedule is currently on pause due to the pandemic, the Mouse House did take the opportunity in January to roll out *WandaVision* on Disney+ and the series has not only acted as an in-depth examination into the life of a lesser-explored Avenger, it also forms the connective tissue that will help introduce major themes and concepts for Phase Four of the MCU.

But before exploring the future of Phase Four,

an examination of Marvel's history and its ability to break down comic book lore is needed. Beginning with *Iron Man* in 2008, Marvel's film release was divided into distinct sections, each with themes and storylines that would encompass a massive overarching world in which heroes from each movie converge, blending elements from each narrative.

Phase One introduced the core characters — Thor, Iron Man, Captain America and the Hulk — and ended in the crossover, *The Avengers*. Phase Two dug deep into the Marvel backpages for additional heroes such as Guardians of the Galaxy and Ant-Man, while establishing more complex themes and exploring conflict between the icons. Phase Three would see disputes



between the heroes come to a head, initially splitting the super group, but later resolving their issues to fight a larger foe, Thanos. The phases allowed the audience to understand the heroes and their private battles, while inserting the drama necessary to allow the audience to become personally invested in each hero.

*WandaVision* is a culmination of the first three phases of the Marvel rollout, taking place after the events of *Avengers: Endgame*, which saw every hero from the MCU take the field to save the universe, ending with the loss of both Iron Man and Steve Rogers' Captain America. In the end, the heroes who survived were left to pick up the threads of new storylines and kick off Phase Four.

When we last saw Wanda Maximoff (Elizabeth Olsen), aka the Scarlet Witch, she was one

try by the studio. Set within different decades and using TV tropes that caricature family-friendly programming of the past, the show also hides a sinister secret behind its catchy theme songs and canned laugh tracks. The series cloaks deeper themes and offers an enticing mystery that invites fans to play Encyclopedia Brown in the MCU as they wade through the dozens of Marvel-related references hidden in its parody commercials and set design.

Though never stated, Wanda Maximoff is one of the most important players in the Marvel universe. With powers that include telekinesis, energy manipulation and the ability to change the perception of reality, Disney's Wanda is more powerful than originally conceived by Jack Kirby and Stan Lee's comics back in 1964. Wanda not only manipulates reality, she holds the future of the MCU in her hands.

"I think *WandaVision* is setting out to do what every entry in the MCU attempts to do: first, to tell a good, interesting story, and second, to further develop the larger world and push the story of the Marvel shared universe forward," states TV host/Marvel guru Hector Navarro. "But *WandaVision* also has another agenda: to finally and fully showcase the potential of the Scarlet Witch and the Vision."

"It seems like their goal is to blow the doors off the Multiverse, bring more of the magical and the mystical into the MCU, and finally establish Wanda's true power as one of MCU's most-formidable beings," adds John Humphrey, co-host of entertainment-driven YouTube channel, *The Reel Rejects*. "Based on the show, so far (and if the internet is to be believed), *WandaVision* appears to be a springboard for opening up the multiverse within the MCU as well as further expansion on the magical and mystical elements introduced in films like *Doctor Strange*."

In addition to continuing the ongoing superhero saga, *WandaVision* also feeds fans bite-size nuggets of necessary information in a colorful way that is easy to digest. Taking a tip from the storytelling structure of comic books, the MCU uses information gathered from previous films to set up future endeavors.

With *WandaVision*, as well as its upcoming slate of new television shows, Marvel is leaning into Disney+ to help set up the future phases of the MCU by introducing audiences, slowly, to new concepts and ideas that will propel upcoming storylines.

"Classic comic book storylines like 'Avengers: Disassembled' or 'House of M' couldn't really play out in the film franchise the way it was set up before," states Navarro. "But with the addition of Disney+ series' they can take their time exploring more character dynamics and relationships. Wanda losing her grip on real-

of the MCU's most tragic figures. Orphaned at a young age and brainwashed to become a weapon by Hydra, Wanda has had more than her fair share of devastating sadness. First with the death of her parents, then her brother, followed by the loss of her lover Vision (Paul Bettany) at the hands of Thanos. But what of her whereabouts after the Avengers assembled to defeat the Mad Titan?

During this time, Wanda herself became darker and more dangerous as she was consumed by her grief. All alone after the battle with Thanos, Wanda has been left to fester, choosing to create her own reality instead of facing her demons.

Disney+'s *WandaVision* is a truly unique en-

ity (and eventually coming back from those extremes) is now a story that can be properly told in the Marvel Cinematic Universe.”

By using its television efforts to support its theatrical endeavors, Marvel is creating an active entertainment experience that both engages viewers while steadily teaching them everything they need to know for the next film. It's homework, but without the work.

The slow introduction of information and world building is what sets the MCU – and its visionary guru Kevin Feige – apart from other franchises. Feige – who has been president of Marvel Studios and the primary mind behind the MCU since 2007, earning a combined worldwide box office gross of over \$26.8 billion for the franchise – has assembled a team of writers and directors who understand that fans need to be entertained as they learn, otherwise the story can become muddled as they struggle to retain all of the new details thrown at them. Because of this method, fans who follow it all walk into every Marvel film completely prepared, armed with the knowledge of Pym Particles and how time transpires in the Quantum Realm. These days, more MCU-versed moviegoers understand the importance of returning the Infinity Stones to the point of origin rather than the Pythagorean theorem.

“It's been fascinating to watch them build this apparatus over time, because its origins with Phase One are simple enough; but as the phases pick up momentum, you can see that, rather than simply adapting a certain story or character, they've managed to adapt an entire mode of storytelling,” explains Humphrey.

On *WandaVision*, the inclusion of Evan Peters as Wanda's brother Quicksilver in lieu of the MCU's Aaron Taylor-Johnson paves the way for Phase Four as it introduces the multiverse concept as cannon, while making the most out of the Fox and Disney merger. Not only does the cameo open the door to previous out-of-touch elements of the MCU, but it foreshadows the future of Marvel.

The Marvel Multiverse is the perfect opportunity to flex Disney's muscle and to show off its brand new shiny acquisition: Fox. It also gives



Falcon/Sam Wilson (Anthony Mackie) and Winter Soldier/Bucky Barnes (Sebastian Stan) in Marvel Studios' THE FALCON AND THE WINTER SOLDIER

PHOTO BY CHUCK ZLOTNICK. © MARVEL STUDIOS 2020. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



Loki (Tom Hiddleston) in Marvel Studios' LOKI

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the MCU the ability to mix and match characters from different franchises that previously were out of bounds. “It seems fairly clear the multiverse is now in play in the MCU,” notes Mike Avila, author and host of the comic book video series *Behind The Panel*. “The multiverse provides rather easy yet fascinating options for introducing the X-Men and the Fantastic Four into the MCU.”

“I think *WandaVision*'s success, combined with *The Mandalorian*, has proven the viability of the weekly release,” adds Avila. “The global popularity of Marvel almost guarantees each new episode of a series will dominate social media conversations. In this age of instant gratification where viewers can watch what they want when they want, Disney+ has figured out a way to revive appointment TV viewing.”

*WandaVision*'s inclusion of Fox's *X-Men* characters, as well as magic user/wicked witch Agatha Harkness (played by Kathryn Hahn), lays the multiverse groundwork for the upcoming *Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness* and possibly *Spider-Man 3: No Way Home*, which is set for a December release. Feige has implied that *WandaVision* would most likely be a lead-in for the upcoming *Doctor Strange* movie.

“Some of the shows that I mentioned that we are about to start filming, we are keeping in mind a structure that would lead into a season two or a season three in a more direct way compared to a show like *WandaVision* that goes into a feature,” he explained at the Television Critics Association's 2021 presentation.

But as Marvel likes to keep its plot points close to the vest, all fans can do is theorize, hypothesize and speculate while they tune in week after week, thus creating a more loyal audience for Disney+. Co-executive producer Mary Livanos believes that the show's current momentum is not just due to this kind of loyalty to the MCU, but also thanks to the compelling story at the heart of the show.

“One of the beautiful things about *WandaVision* is that it was really designed as its own, standalone complete story,” Livanos shares. “As far as how this story relates to future installments, we always knew that Wanda would segway into *Doctor Strange and the Multiverse of Madness*. The inclusion of Monica Rambeau and ties to *Captain Marvel 2* was an early discovery that has been so cool to help build to. Each case of connectivity is an ever evolving creative conversation that is designed to enhance how this installment of the story resolves, rather than fundamentally change it. As for lasting ramifications on future phases, the hope is that there are kernels of inspiration and story threads introduced here that help weave the larger tapestry in later installments, if and when the narrative alchemy is right.”

It should be noted that the success of *WandaVision* not only comes from the strength of the franchise, but from the pandemic as well. Due to the sheer numbers of at-home people consuming content, it had a literal captive audience in which to show off its wonders. Disney CEO Bob Chapek is using the opportunity to create a new focus that will lean into streaming, much like he did two decades prior when he created Disney's home video empire. But instead of *Air Bud*, Chapek has an entire MCU to play with. This new strategy will strengthen the symbiotic relationship between Disney+ and theatrical, feeding each other with each new release.

Marvel is moving full steam ahead with its small screen slate too. Up next is *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier* on March 19, with Anthony Mackie and Sebastian Stan reprising their *Avengers* roles. Much like *WandaVision*, the limited series will give the *Avengers* B-team a chance to shine as the duo try to find their place in a *Captain America*-less world. Like *WandaVision*, the series will take full advantage of its small-screen format to both tell a story while developing characters for their new roles in the MCU.

“The value of these series is that we get to spend a lot more time with these characters – we get to go deeper into their relationships, their fears, their wants, and have some fun putting them in unexpected environments,” reveals *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier* co-executive producer Zoie Nagelhout. “It also means we



have the time to invite supporting characters into their narratives, which not only makes the world of the show feel bigger, but also it adds layers to both Sam and Bucky as people. We get to understand them and the events of the show through multiple lenses.”

Following *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier* is *Loki*, which will debut in May. In his own outing, the God of Mischief (Tom Hiddleston) will likely use the serial format to establish his place within the new Marvel Universe. The series will also introduce the Time Variance Authority, a policing body from the comics that monitors the multiverse.

Following *Loki*, *Hawkeye* eyes a late 2021 release, while *Ms. Marvel* also targets late 2021 for a debut. In addition to these character-driven series, the animated anthology series *What If...?* is set for a Summer 2021 release, unless unforeseen circumstances push it back. The series will tease endless possibilities of each hero and storyline by placing characters in odd-ball situations. Other Marvel series that are set for production (but are a bit far off) include *She-Hulk* in 2022 plus *Moon Knight*, *Ironheart* and *Secret Invasion*, the latter three still TBA in terms of production release schedule.

In addition to Disney’s own slate, Marvel recently retained the rights to *Punisher* and *Jessica Jones* back from Netflix, officially ending the multi-year deal Disney held with the powerhouse streaming service. As *Daredevil* reverted back to Marvel in 2020, this gives Disney the possible chance to flex a little *Defenders* muscle.

“The production quality of the Marvel shows should be an indicator to broadcast networks that they shouldn’t bother to try to do a mainstream superhero show unless they plan to

commit massive dollars to the effort,” states Avila. “ABC, NBC, CBS and certainly not the CW can compete with the types of production budgets Disney+ is giving to these Marvel shows.”

With each new series, the strength of the Marvel franchise grows. Each series will connect in a larger way to the theatrical efforts, either through characters or plotlines, and each will help the other grow, creating a constant flow of entertaining content that also schools audiences on Marvel 101.

“The MCU coming to Disney+ continues to change the game with the expansion of an already vast and unprecedented narrative odyssey,” Livanos says. “To have Disney’s unwavering support in this space now allows the MCU to showcase and celebrate what we love best about television and the episodic format. It’s exciting to be at the precipice of all of the opportunities this unlocks.”

The small-screen series will pave the way for the ambitious theatrical slate that is just on the horizon, a slate that includes the much-delayed *Black Widow* (currently set for this May) and *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings*, set for June. This will clear the way for the highly-anticipated A-list extravaganza *Eternals* on November 5, 2021, which stars Angelia Jolie, Salma Hayek and former members of House Stark: Richard Madden and Kit Harington.

If all goes according to plan, the series slate will complement the nonstop theatrical releases set for 2022, including *Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness* in March 2022 and *Thor: Love and Thunder* in 2022.

There’s not a lot known about Phase Five yet, but we do know that it will be marked by

Teyonah Parris as Monica Rambeau and Randall Park as Jimmy Woo in Marvel Studios’ WANDA VISION



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARVEL STUDIOS. © MARVEL STUDIOS 2021. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

the release of *Black Panther II* in July of 2022, followed by *Captain Marvel 2* in November of 2022. Other pics on the release schedule include *Guardians Of The Galaxy Vol. 3* and *Ant-Man 3*, and the revamp of *Blade*. Then there is the possibility of new X-Men and Fantastic Four flicks.

In essence, Marvel is building a franchise more ambitious than anything ever attempted in pop culture. An entire universe spanning decades that includes television and theatrical releases, using every resource Disney has in its deep, deep pockets. The end result is a fully-formed world filled with compelling stories and favorite characters that will last the ages. Mainstream audiences can easily understand and appreciate it and hardcore fans can delve into it all in a deeper, nerdier way. In exchange, Disney gets a solid revenue

stream and an unshakeable franchise that can result in more content, more fans, more theme parks, and a solid film and television slate for the next decade.

What Marvel is creating is not brand new, but it is revolutionary. A feat that has only been attempted on the pages of comics brought to screens of all sizes everywhere. And while the first step in this revolution might have started with an iron suit, credit to Marvel’s next phase must be given to a witch ... and a little vision.

“Hold on to your hats, because *WandaVision* is just the beginning. The upcoming MCU Disney+ and theatrical slate is absolutely unlike anything audiences have seen before,” touts Livanos. “Knowing what’s cooking, there really does seem to be something for every kind of audience member to relate to and enjoy. Prepare for delight.”



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NEWS

# A THIRD VACCINE GETS APPROVED IN U.S. AS L.A. EXPANDS VACCINE ELIGIBILITY

Johnson & Johnson gets their single-dose vaccine approved for emergency use in the U.S. while vaccine eligibility extends to teachers and first responders.

ISAI ROCHA

**L**.A. County expanded its vaccine eligibility to teachers, food and agriculture workers, childcare workers, emergency service workers and first responders, Monday.

Those in “Tier 1B” can now make appointments for their first doses, although health-care workers and people 65 and older will still be prioritized for their second doses.

“Our vaccination program has weathered many challenges, but we have made it clear that nothing will interfere with our mission to deliver this life-saving vaccine to Angelenos as quickly and as safely as possible,” Mayor Eric Garcetti said in a statement. “Opening eligibility to more groups of essential workers will save more lives and accelerate our recovery. We are encouraged to hear commitments for more vaccines coming from our federal and state partners, and stand ready to scale up our operations so we can end this pandemic.”

The county received 269,000 doses to be distributed this week, with 103,000 being allocated to first doses.

The city of Los Angeles said it will be receiving 70,000 Moderna vaccines for its six city-run sites, including Dodger Stadium and those needing second doses being prioritized.

L.A. residents needing first doses can make an appointment for the Pierce College vac-

ination site.

While the state of California announced that vaccination eligibility will expand to residents between 16 and 64 years old with certain disabilities or severe underlying medical conditions on March 15, L.A. County Public Health has not yet given guidance for that tier.

On February 28, 1,064 single-day COVID-19 cases were reported in L.A. County with 107 new single-day deaths. As of this writing there are 1,661 people in the county hospitalized with COVID-19, 32% of them being treated in an Intensive Care Unit.

## LAUSD Sets April Goal To Reopen

A goal to reopen schools in mid-April has been set by the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD).

LAUSD Superintendent Austin Beutner set the tentative goal to reopen schools on Feb. 8, saying the district planned to meet L.A. Public Health standards for in-person classes and have staff vaccinated for an April 9 reopening.

The district’s plan for reopening has been approved by L.A. Public Health as filtration systems have already been installed in school buildings and a contact tracing system is underway.

As of Monday, teachers are eligible for vac-

cinations, fulfilling another one of the priorities for what the district and county consider a safe reopening.

“Providing vaccinations for school staff in an organized manner will help Los Angeles Unified open schools sooner. Most importantly, the effort recognizes how all staff are connected at schools,” Beutner said Monday. “Coordinated vaccinations for school staff will help open schools quickly so we don’t have a situation where teachers at the school are vaccinated, but not the bus driver or vice versa.”

SoFi Stadium in Inglewood opened a vaccination super site, specifically aimed at vaccinating teachers and school staff, Monday. With Gov. Gavin Newsom promising a 10% vaccine allocation going toward vaccinating teachers, LAUSD will have access to 25,000 doses over the next two weeks.

The Los Angeles district will also have dedicated vaccination sites at Panorama High School, Roybal Learning Center where school nurses have already started receiving vaccinations and the Diego Rivera Learning Complex, as they attempt to vaccinate more than 86,000 school staff.

United Teachers Los Angeles has been opposed to reopening schools while the county remains in the “Purple Tier,” which indicates the highest level of COVID-19 transmission and positive cases.

UTLA has challenged what the state, county and LAUSD consider safe and have asked that teachers take a vote on returning to in-person instruction, which may occur on Monday.

“While the virus outlook in Los Angeles has improved since last month ... L.A. continues to record more new viruses each day than any other county in America,” UTLA President Cecily Myart-Cruz said in a February briefing. “We remain firmly in the ‘Purple Tier’ which indicates extremely high risk levels and health officials are concerned that the more contagious variants spreading in our community could lead to another spike.”

Gov. Newsom announced a \$6.6 billion legislative initiative that incentivises California schools to reopen for in-person education by April 1.

“Since the height of the winter surge, we have successfully shifted the conversation from whether to reopen schools to when,” Newsom said. “Now our collective charge is to build on that momentum and local lead-

ership ... do whatever it takes to meet the mental health and academic needs of our students, including over the summer.”

The proposal offers grants to schools that open from grades TK-2 transitional kindergarten by the April 1 deadline. The grants would extend to districts in counties that are still in the state’s purple tier, such as L.A. County.

If the LAUSD does reopen schools in April, by county regulations, in-person attendance will not be mandatory and 100% distance learning will still be provided for students and parents who opt-out.

### Rare Syndrome Linked To COVID-19 Found In 100 L.A. County Children

Los Angeles County Public Health recorded 10 more cases of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome (MIS-C) in children last Friday, bringing the total to 100 during the pandemic.

The condition is considered rare, but the CDC has found a link to the pandemic as a majority of the children had also been exposed to the COVID-19 virus during, or prior to, the MIS-C diagnosis.

“We do not yet know what causes MIS-C,” the CDC says. “However, many children with MIS-C had the virus that causes COVID-19, or had been around someone with COVID-19.”

According to the CDC, the syndrome affects those under 21 and symptoms include fever that does not go away, inflamed body parts that include the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes and internal organs.

In July 2020, L.A. Public Health informed physicians to MIS-C in patients under 21, as at the time, 15 had been diagnosed with the syndrome.

L.A. Public Health saw a 77% increase in cases over the last month and attributed the jump to a lag in the COVID-19 surge from late December and early January.

As of this writing, L.A. Public Health recorded one death due to MIS-C and all children infected have had to be hospitalized, with 40% being treated in the ICU.

Of the reported cases thus far, 30% were under the age of 5 years old, 40% were between the ages of 5 and 11 years old and 30% were between the ages of 12 and 20 years old.

Latino/Latinx children account for the highest percentage of reported MIS-C cases at 71%.

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ART

# FROM ANOTHER DIMENSION: AR STREET ART AND 3D GRAFFITI

Muralists and writers are working off the wall and in the metaverse

BY NICHOLAS WHITE



L.A.'s 3D public art scene increasingly spans the spectrum from 3D graffiti to augmented reality murals. More dimensions can mean long-term art installations and high compensation, two often-elusive goals for street and graffiti artists.

"Art becomes a really powerful glue between public entities and future technologies," said Justin Fredericks, Co-Founder and CEO of the L.A. digital firm Art House, which collaborates with street artists to add augmented-reality components to their works. "There are art pieces existing on buildings that become that layer between the physical and what then can be digital, which is only limited by the imagination."

Fredericks says they've seen this coming for a while. In the past year, Art House teamed with popular L.A. street artists James Haunt and WRDSMTH on augmented reality versions of their murals and pieces, which have technical effects on top of existing content to create a new experience. These work by syncing a phone with an art piece and pointing at it, and animation or original content appears. For example, WRDSMTH's typewriter letters are animated to type, and the eyes on Haunt's faces blink.

In August, a high-profile, well-funded AR 3D street art installation will debut at Inglewood's 100-unit Fairview Heights Housing Development at 923 E. Redondo Blvd. The four-story main mural piece will be by accomplished L.A. artists Ryan "Yanoë" Sarfati and Eric "Zoueh" Skotnes, whose three-part work *Rise Above* will

incorporate LED light panels with a nightly show with circling lights. It is a collage of diverse, intertwined forearms and hands, with poppy flowers, clouds, a green field, blue shapes and painted Aztec and African symbols, according to a meeting report of Inglewood's Art Commission.

L.A. designates a 1% tax on new or redeveloped properties valued at more than \$500,000 for public arts. Proceeds can number into the millions of dollars for artist disbursement. The Fairview Heights project is part of this Percent for Arts L.A. ordinance. The aim is to put a hard-to-define value on local arts culture, linking land costs with city-authorized art placement. The Percent for Arts rule valued the Fairview Heights project in July 2020 at \$153,000, according to the city's planning department. The city of L.A. also has sheltered public money for city-sanctioned street art through its Public Works Improvement Art Program, which sets aside 1% of the budget of city construction projects for public art.

Of the non-AR, handmade L.A. 3D street art is artist Punk Me Tender, who constructed two recent Hollywood murals that incorporated layers coming off the wall, made with items such as plywood, aluminum, plexiglass and 2x4's.

"On the technical concept, it's much work on prep, installing and making the wall," Punk Me Tender said of building his sprawling "Human After All" wall on Amoeba Music. "It took more time to prepare it than to install it. ... It took a lot of money and a lot of energy."

Asked about mapping street art's future, the artist points to elements being used, coincidentally, in the Fairview Heights project.

"We started from street art, it was for the eyes," Punk Me Tender said. "With 3D, we're adding the touch and movement to it. Then obviously, film, numerics, visuals and will be the next step, I think. Then, also light at night, neon stuff and things like that."

Street art observers have noticed the 3D and AR push. Although L.A. does not use the style as often as in Europe, it has the potential to become more ubiquitous here, said Fredrik Lidskog, who runs the "Impermanent Art" street art photography Instagram account and mural agency.

"With 3D street art, when it's done well, which is not always the case, there is sort of an added layer of fun to it, of discovery and interactivity than 2D art," Lidskog said. "I've seen more examples recently of augmented reality, enhancing the mural in a way where

if you look through your phone, it's literally moving or coming off the wall on your phone, which seems like the future."

Often, glimmers of street art overlap with graffiti art. Unlike 3D or augmented street art, 3D graffiti art has sustained itself for years without much public or private investment.

L.A. has numerous expert 3D graffiti artists still pushing boundaries. CBS Crew's 3D graffiti artist Mers creates haunting worlds within worlds. One of Mers' alley pieces in Koreatown has his name spelled in 3D piping, appearing to be levitating.

"I'm really influenced by modern design, like '50s architecture and furniture, and that whole kind of 'Jetsons' thing is fascinating to me," Mers said. "I've been trying to fuse that with my graffiti, which is a strange thing to morph because those are almost polar opposites." Mers' recent L.A. pieces include a striking 3D green lettering of his name hovering above a large, red circular background.

"I've done 3D graffiti since the beginning, since early on, and for me, I gravitated toward the freedom," Mers said. "I liked the 3D aspect because it gave me more to play with, expand and contract, forward and backward, as opposed to just side to side and up and down."

Another L.A. 3D graffiti artist is CBS and Wai crews' Tewsr, who had a mind-blowing co-production with Brazilian graffiti artist Binho at downtown's Container Yard. A building interior corner was used as a 3D illusion for an alien invasion, where painting on opposite walls connected in the middle so convincingly, it looked like it could be touched.

"I was doing the traditional graffiti and was like, 'Alright, it's fun to do, and there are a lot of techniques to it, but it didn't seem you could push it further than being two-dimensional,'" Tewsr said. "I wanted to push it further. ... I was rendering [characters] out with shadow and light, as opposed to doing them flat without light."

Ironically, graffiti is the seeming anthesis of AR murals and "smart cities," which may leave a data trail through phone apps. Graffiti is anonymous due to its often unauthorized or quasi-authorized nature.

"To me, the commercial work is a little more feasible to do three-dimensional stuff," Tewsr said. "To people who don't really speak the language, 3D [graffiti art] is a good in-between because to most people, it looks like a sculpture, whether or not they can read it. If it's done well, it has its own statement."



The Fairview Heights mural rendering of the work in Inglewood

COURTESY OF ART HOUSE

# BANGIN' BUNS

How Armenian Teenagers Landed In L.A.'s Nashville Hot Chicken Scene

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER



Martin Luther King Hospital

Los Angeles was a different place in 2018, and little did L.A. know then, that a group of Armenian teenagers were busy creating the next Nashville hot chicken empire, in an East Hollywood backyard. That empire is quickly growing and is known today as Bangin' Buns. Thanks to clever Fortnite-inspired name alliteration, and a tasty signature Nashville hot chicken recipe, Bangin' Buns has quietly amassed a cult-like collection of followers, surpassing 120,000 on Instagram.

Additionally, Bangin' Buns namesake rests on the incorporation of a Hoagie-style French roll — in place of hamburger bun — on their Nashville hot chicken sandwich, a trait Sam Manvelyan, CFO and co-founder of Bangin' Buns, believes is a unique intricacy that Bangin' Buns has originated in the Nashville hot game.

"We put our own twist on your regular chicken sandwich, usually you have it in a burger bun, but we were the first to come up with the hoagie — French roll," Manvelyan said in an interview with *L.A. Weekly*.

Now, with two locations, one in North Hollywood and the newest in South L.A., Bangin' Buns is working to establish their identity as a Nashville hot chicken juggernaut, hungry

and willing to take on all contenders — large and small.

In an interview with the *L.A. Weekly*, Bangin' Buns CEO and Co-founder, Nick Nshanyan explained L.A.'s famous Howlin' Rays has become one point of inspiration behind why this group of childhood friends sought to bring better Nashville hot chicken to the peckish hot chicken fiends of Southern California.

"We went to Howlin' Rays, and we waited in a two, three hour line, so at the time, Howlin' Ray's was the one selling hot chicken, so we thought, 'OK, instead of waiting in a two-three hour line — why not make it ourselves?'" said Nshanyan. "From that point we realized that if we come up with a good recipe, there's a high demand in the market — we could do our own chicken joint."

Also taking inspiration from Prince's Original Nashville hot chicken, the founders of Bangin' Buns recipe features a cayenne pepper base, with garlic, paprika, and can go all the way up the spice ladder up to Carolina Reapers and along with Trinidad Scorpion Peppers.

"Our recipe, the ingredients we use, is what makes our chicken *Bangin'* chicken, chicken that you can't get anywhere else." Nshanyan said.

Prior to the brick and mortar, the East Hol-



Jakob Layman 0221 Bangin Buns

lywood-born Nashville hot chicken concept, grew like a rose in concrete — except the rose was a hot chicken business and the concrete was a parking lot on Lankershim Blvd. and Victory Blvd. in North Hollywood.

Originally founded in 2018, Nshanyan explained that the Bangin' Buns concept was a collaborative effort between him and his group of childhood friends, who all grew up on the same street in East Hollywood.

The tight-knit group wanted to find a way to work together, and as young entrepreneurs — 18 and 19-years-old in 2018, they decided to start a Nashville hot chicken concept under the name, Bangin' Chicken.

It was only when the group decided to incorporate the hoagie that made Bangin' Buns the official name.

Despite warnings from friends and family, who urged doing business with friends at such a young age could lead to conflicts, the group of East Hollywood entrepreneurs were all in. Diving in without permits or permission, Bangin' Buns began setting up in a parking lot near the neighborhood they grew up in.

In the early days, it was not uncommon for the group to face hefty fines, and unwanted attention from the Los Angeles Police Department for operating their food business illegally.

Still, by continuing to dish out their signature Nashville hot chicken, the soon-to-be Bangin' Buns concept began to gain attention.

Despite any concern over legality, the concept began to generate long lines that merged outside of the founder's original circle of friends and family, reaching the most in-the-know food fanatics who managed to seek out the underground trend, before the Bangin' Buns brick and mortar concept was established.

"We would operate from 6:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m.," Manvelyan said. "We served over 1,000 customers in six hours."

In just a few years, it seems Bangin' Buns has proved its worth to L.A., with aspirations to take on the corporate chicken giants, like Raising Canes, and are even betting on themselves to become the local favorite, in place of landmarks like Howlin' Rays.

"I see our competition as anyone who serves chicken, whether it be Raising Canes or Chick-Fil-A. They're competitors because they do a great job at marketing and expansion," Man-

vilyan explained. "Who says that we can't beat corporate as well, and have as many locations as corporate — they inspire us to be that big."

Andrew Sears, Marketing Director for Bangin' Buns shared the company wide goal of opening six additional stores in 2021.

However, the challenge will be creating consistency, which will help create established roles. In doing so, Sears says this gives the team an ideal environment to institute company wide department leads, in order for the process of each position to be clear across the board — regardless of the number of locations.

While Sears admits this mimics corporate structures, he is confident this will help build the Bangin' Buns brand identity, while creating safeguards for roles and responsibilities for future growth.

One might recognize Sears' point of emphasis in the incorporation of similar processes, after hearing a Chick-Fil-A employee repeat, "My Pleasure," after a customer says, "Thank You."

"While we only have two stores, I'm thinking it's the best opportunity to fix that issue before we start opening up more," Sears explained. "Because we start to fix these little issues, and stop putting band-aids over them, we're going to create an environment where it's like, now we don't just have the best chicken — we also have the best customer service."



Royal Key Organics Veg Garden



CANNABIS

# THE LADIES OF THE HEAT

We spoke with three of the best female cannabis cultivators in the world ahead of International Women's Day

BY JIMI DEVINE

**I**nternational Women's Day has arrived and we're celebrating the ladies at the top of the mountain when it comes to indoor cannabis.

There are a lot of women crushing the game across various sectors of the cannabis industry and they've provided their voice and perspective at every step of the process over the last few years, helping craft what cannabis looks like at this moment. But the indoor cultivation scene can sometimes feel like a bit of a boy's club, so here are a few of the women growing some of the best cannabis on the planet.

**Erin Hamilton – Royal Key Organics**

Erin Hamilton started Royal Key Organics

alongside her husband Josh in 2014 after originally making her way to Humboldt from Texas where her closet grow was too sketchy after college. Since the day she entered the market, Hamilton has been at the top of the mountain when it comes to extracts and eventually flowers. The in-house work they do at Royal Key and the collaborations happening under the Surprize Surprize flag are some of the highest quality flowers and hash ever available to the legal market.

Right when you walk in the grow you can see the visual arts that have been intertwined with her life for more than 20 years. It looks more like an art gallery than the lobby of a commercial cultivation facility.

Hamilton has spent three years in complete control of Royal Key's cultivation facility while husband Josh handles the business development side. "And I do all of our packaging design because I have an art background. And then I jump into the office and I run payroll and deal with insurance. And so yeah, I have my hands on a lot of it."

We asked Hamilton what the view is like from the top?

"Pretty awesome. It's daunting. It's scary. Scary because you know you have to scale. We're growing organically, so should be fine, but it's daunting," Hamilton said. "It's like there's pressure and there's people that have a lot of high expectations so it sort of scares me but it's exciting too."

We asked Hamilton if never taking the big money that's been thrown at them made it feel artsier?

"I love the struggle, right?" she replied. "We love to be starving artists. I'm used to that. I've done enough of that in my life. I can take a low payment while I'm waiting. I have a long-term vision. Neither one of us is in it for a quick cash payout. I'm okay being a broke-ass artist for a little bit longer."

**Anna Cozy – California Artisanal Medicine**

After being the first woman to open a dispensary in Colorado, Anna Cozy brought her famed heat to California in 2018. In the years since, Cozy has arguably become Colorado's finest export to California.

We asked Cozy how much the breakdown between men and women had changed over the years. She pointed to the hiring process as part of the problem.

"They're usually like, 'Oh it's a lady, market-

ing for her!' or sales rep or packaging, or distribution – basically anything paper-oriented," Cozy told *L.A. Weekly*. Cozy continued that when it comes to plant management, ladies have more than proven they can produce the highest quality product.

Cozy recommends that women who want to get their foot in the door do the research. There are more entry-level positions than ever, and much of the time you won't have to learn things the hard way as people did in the past.

"Just be passionate, like you want to learn something and do something," Cozy said. "I don't think that is saying, 'Oh, I'm not going to go do it because I'm a girl' or 'I won't get enough opportunities.' I think it's more so to say you just got to work a little harder and that's okay too."

**Chloe Healy – Fig Farms**

As regularly noted by a variety of California cannabis personalities, Fig Farms is in the conversation when you're talking about the best pot in California. Chloe Healy, half of the husband-and-wife combo that founded Fig Farms in the medical era, continues to make sure they pump out the heat with their award-winning genetics or exciting new cuts of the moment.

We asked Healy what it's like being a lady in a male-dominated sector of cannabis.

"It can be a little difficult at times, but you know Keith and I have always said the plants like the girls better, but all of our garden hands are men, and it can be a little bit of a juggle," she replied with a laugh. She's said there is definitely a growing population of women finding their way into the garden.

# N8NOFACE ISN'T PLAYING

Screamers-Loving Punk Loves Screaming

BY BRETT CALLWOOD



**N**8NOFACE (who, for the record, absolutely has a face) first came to the public's attention thanks to the Tucson, Arizona outfit Crimekillz. That duo coined the term "Gameboypunk," incorporating those old Nintendo ditties into their aggressive punk rock in a manner that preceded and arguably foretold the 8-bit scene.

"We were just a mess, so we ended up breaking up and went our own ways," N8NOFACE says. "I'm always going to make music – I have to, it's a fucking passion of mine. I was like, 'I still want to do this.' So I bought me some synthesizers and started going with synth-punk on my own. Started doing my own thing. In the same vein as what Crimekillz was doing, but that's how the solo stuff came about. I don't make music, I don't make beats. I'm really a vocalist and writer first. But I was like, nobody's gonna make the shit I hear in my head."

The vocalist describes his solo sound simply as synth-punk, heavily influenced by under-recorded but much loved '70s L.A. punks the Screamers.

"Kinda what they were doing sonically," he says. "The only difference is the subject matter, which is something you might find in an outlaw country song, or a rap song. Tales of drugs and streets. Things I've seen my friends do growing

up in Tucson, Arizona. I just tell those stories. I've heard it called rapping on synth-punk beats. To me, I don't know if I'd call it rapping but it's subject matter you would find in that so maybe that's why people address it that way. Just a couple of Synthesizers and some drum machines, and me screaming my head off. I cover the Screamers' '122 Hours of Fear' in every show I do. It's a must."

As a solo artist, N8NOFACE says that he feels less constrained than he did as a member of Crimekillz – he's free to sample anything and not restricted to those damn Gameboys.

"I'll sample something," he says. "When you try everything you get my sound. I definitely think going solo helped my sound. No shots fired at my buddy, but it helped me."

Now based in Los Angeles, N8NOFACE is finding that there is a scene for him here – a number of like-minded musical experimenters – even if he's kind of out there on his own sound-wise.

"It's just crazy that I'm getting thrown into the scene with – there's the whole *Cyberpunk 2077* video game coming out and I was featured on that with a collaboration with the band HO9909," he says. "Now the whole world started to notice me during COVID because they all had to stop. Earlier, maybe a year and a half, two years ago, the way you would get noticed was to play shows and network in clubs. Either I was battling addiction, so I never showed up to shows (I'm

good now), or I'm just not a social person so I just wasn't out there. With COVID, everything stopped and they had to look at their phones, look at the internet, and there I was lurking. So it made everyone take notice of me."

He's 45 years old, but finding himself collaborating with hip-hop and punk kids. He says that he's benefitting from the new breed's apparent desire to do away with genre restrictions completely.

"Back in my day genres were really, 'you're over there, you're over there, you're over there,'" he says. "This new generation, they're embracing it all. Sonically and even performance wise, you'll see someone like Tyler, the Creator open for [Sacramento hardcore punk band] Trash Talk. It's like all these different bands playing on one stage. So I think the sound is everything melted together. Punk – there's some dope sounds coming out. Some of these kids don't do their research – they think I invented synth-punk. Man, bands have been doing this since the '70s. So I'm glad that I'm bringing it to some kids who want to do punk, don't know how, don't have a band, and they can turn some drum machines and some samplers."

The collabs with fellow crossover enthusiasts and cookie-cutter defiers HO9909 makes complete sense, and the relationship has been blossoming for years.

"Eddy from the band followed my band Crimekillz since the Myspace days," N8NOFACE says. "I really met him through Myspace. He just wrote me one day and said 'this shit is amazing.' We just kept in touch online. When he showed up in L.A. one day, I was happy to be living here for a couple of months. He said, 'Hey man, me and my buddy are doing a band, you want to open for us?' I didn't even know they did music, but I opened for them and it's been a friendship ever since. When 'Punk Police' came about, two mixtapes ago, it was from something I saw Eddy wrote to somebody on the internet. I wrote the song and showed it to him. Eddy heard it, and said 'we want to get on that.' They added their verses to me. I did 'Flesh and Blood' on their latest drop. Now me and the OGM have a project that's gonna be dropping February 19. Distorted 808s [Roland drum machines] and us screaming our heads off."

N8NOFACE's new solo album is *Bound to Let You Down*, out now. The artwork is BDSM-centric, but the artist says that's more of a metaphor than a theme.

"That was just the label doing the art," he says. "My 'bound to let you down' was addiction, and my personality is I'll probably let somebody down if they rely too much on me. So I wrote about that, and they added this bound girl. It works, it's amazing, I love it."

While restricted by lockdown like everybody else, N8NOFACE says that he pretty much spends all his free time working on music anyway. That's what he's been doing, as he waits for the opportunity to tour.

"The release with the OGM of HO9909, that comes out February 19, and then I'll hopefully play some screen shows until the bars and everything open up," he says. "I was supposed to go on tour with HO9909 but COVID happened. That would have been my first tour ever. They're speaking about late '21, early '22, doing that again. Really, I'm just riding this wave of the love I'm getting. I'm so grateful for it. I'll be making music until I'm 80, man."

N8NOFACE's *Bound to Let You Down* album is out now.

LA WEEKLY

## Classifieds

### EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION

Fluxa, Inc has openings for the position **Application Architect** with Master's degree in Computer Science/ Applications, Engineering any, Technology or related and 2 yrs of exp to design, architecture, development, and administration of software applications in the life sciences space, across functional areas such as R&D, Manufacturing, and Quality. Work closely with development teams as well as customers, to implement application features, modules, and integrations for use in regulated GxP environments. Work location is Glendale CA with required travel to client locations throughout the USA. Please mail resumes to 500 N. Brand Blvd, Suite 2000, Glendale, CA 91205 (or) e-mail: Suraj@fluxa.io

**COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST** For Media Latino Communications INC., a California Co. located at: 9025 Wilshire Blvd, Ste 500, Beverly Hills, CA, 90211. Req: BS, 2 yrs. of exp. as social media advisor, strategy leader or rel. for the LATAM market. Exp w/ Hootsuite, Google Adwords, Google Analytics, Agorapulse, Topicflow, NUVI, Facebook Insights & Facebook Business manager tools, Social Bakers. Mail resume to Co: 9025 Wilshire Boulevard, Ste. 500, Beverly Hills, CA, 90211. Ref: CMS

**FINANCE** Media Res Studio, LLC has an oppty in Los Angeles, CA for a Dir, Fin & Ops. Mail resume to Attn: N. Petrosova, 6255 Sunset Blvd, Ste 680, Los Angeles, CA 90028; Ref #LAPMO. Must be legally auth to work in the US w/o spnsrshp. EOE

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**Chaplain:** Apply by mail to Presbyterian Theological Seminary in America, 15605 Carmentia Rd., Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670, attn. President

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**Construction Audit Specialist-** Prepare construction cost audits and project management audits. Classify, record & summarize data findings. Bachelor's degree in engineering or equivalent req'd. Mail resume to: Tax & Accounting Offices, Inc., 3701 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 200, Los Angeles, CA 90010. Attn. Mehrad Fahim.

**Interior Designer:** Plan and design the internal space of rooms. Bachelor of interior design or related. Proficient in related design software. Worksite: El Monte, CA. Send Resume: HR, Wall & Floor Tile, 4279 Shirley Ave, El Monte, CA 91731.

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Vasantas Software Inc. seeks **Master's +2 yrs/Bachelor's +5 yrs exp/equiv:** Systems Engineer (VSSE21): SOAP, REST, XML, XSLT, SAP/ECC, WSDL. Mail resume with job ID # to HR: 3142 Pacific Coast Hwy., Suite 205, Torrance, CA 90505. Unanticipated work site locations throughout U.S. Foreign equiv. accepted.

# LA WEEKLY Classifieds

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**Mechanical Engineering Supervisor** sought by Wheel Pros LLC in Buena Park, CA, who will guide a team of engineers in new product design, QC, & troubleshooting. Applicants must possess a Master's deg in Mechanical Engg + 1 yr exp as a mechanical engineer. Please send resume to ATTN: HR, 5347 S Valentia Way, Ste 200, Greenwood Village, CO 80111.

**Budget Analyst** sought by Relo Redac, Inc. in Torrance, CA to prep & analyze annual budget, oversee the Co's financial activities re property mgmt activities. Bachelor's in finance + 1 yr exp coordinating financial activities, monitoring expense, directing preparation & review of financial reports; 1 yr real estate property mgmt exp incl arranging repairs/maintenance, creating lease agreements, selling & leasing properties in preparing & overseeing monthly & annual budgets. Email CV: rshimizu@redacinc.com

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**Staff Accountant**, required by Tri Star Sports and Entertainment Group, Inc. in West Hollywood CA. Resp. for prepare tax and tax comp for ind, corp, trust, fid. Send resume to Attn: 1234 H. Kinder, 11 Music Circle South, Nashville TN 37203. NO Phone calls or emails. Ad paid by an equal opportunity employer.

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CohnReznick LLP seeks an **Experienced Senior 2** in Los Angeles, CA to understand the purpose of accounting and general ledger recordation procedures. Requires up to 30% domestic travel. Send resume to Cassie Wilson, CohnReznick LLP, 1301 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019.

## LEGAL NOTICES

**ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME Case No. 21STCP00458** Superior Court of California County of Los Angeles located at: Central District Central Courthouse 111 North Hill Street, Department

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74, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Filed On February 11, 2021 - In the matter of petitioner ANNA V LITAVRINA. It is hereby ordered that all persons interested in the above-entitled matter of change of name appear before the above-entitled court as follows to show cause why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Court Date: 04/26/2021, time: 9:00 a.m., located at Central Courthouse 111 North Hill Street, Department 74, Los Angeles, CA 90012. And a petition for change of name having been duly filed with the clerk of this Court, and it appearing from said petition that said petitioner(s) desire(s) to have her name changed from: ANNA V. LITAVRINA to ANNA RIVERA. Now therefore, it is hereby ordered that all persons interested in the said matter of change of name appear as indicated herein above then and there to show

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