L.A. Art Show’s Beasts, Bytes and ‘Bergs

The stalwart fair returns with issues engagement and safety protocols
By Shana Nys Dambrot
L.A. COUNTY SETS SINGLE-DAY RECORD FOR POSITIVE COVID CASES

As the spread of Omicron continues, L.A. County sets another single-day high in positive cases Sunday, with more than 45,000 Angelenos testing positive for COVID-19.

BY ISAI ROCHA

L.A. Public Health reported 45,584 positive COVID-19 cases Sunday, breaking the previous single-day high of 43,712 from January 7. On Monday, January 4, the county reported 16,269 positive cases, a number that has more than doubled since.

“As the surge continues, we ask residents and businesses to continue following the public health safety measures that we know reduce spread and keep people safe,” Ferrer said Saturday. “This includes wearing a medical grade mask that is more protective against the Omicron variant and not spending time around others who are unmasked. These upgraded masks can be a surgical mask or an N95 or KN95 respirator mask.”

Hospitalizations also doubled over the past week, with the county recording 3,364 people with COVID-19 in hospitals, as of this writing.

In response to the recent surge, L.A. Public Health has encouraged residents to “upgrade their masks” and use either medical grade masks or N95 grade respirators.

Health officials also have advised against attending “higher-risk activities” that take place indoors, involve people being unmasked, or have large crowds.

L.A. COUNTY WILL REQUIRE EMPLOYERS TO PROVIDE MASKS FOR EMPLOYEES

In accordance with local health orders, L.A. County employers will have to provide employees with “high-quality masks when working indoors, or in situations where they come into close contact with others.”

Falling under the eligible mask criteria are medical grade masks, surgical masks, N95 or KN95 masks.

The modification to the mask mandate begins January 17, but Public Health encourages employers to provide employees with masks sooner.

“Public Health has modified its Health Officer Order to include additional safety measures to reduce transmission risks knowing that vaccinations alone are not sufficient to prevent spread of Omicron,” L.A. Public Health said in a press release. “These upgraded masks are better at blocking virus particles from going through the mask.”

Another modification to the L.A. Public Health Officer Order asks organizers of “mega events,” movie theaters and entertainment venues to designate separate eating areas.

A modification also will extend to indoor casinos, where masks will be required to be worn at all times, except when at a designated eating area.

These L.A. Public health announcements come just as California extended its indoor mask mandate until February 15, after previously being set to expire on January 15. Until then, masks will be required to be worn indoors at all times.

California Public Health said the extension was triggered by the recent surge in positive COVID-19 cases, which have increased by 410% since November 25, 2021. In that same time, COVID-19 hospitalizations have increased by 63% in the state.

2022 GRAMMY AWARDS SHOW TO BE POSTPONED AFTER OMICRON CONCERNS

The 64th Annual Grammy Awards
show will be postponed after the recording academy expressed concerns over the spread of COVID-19.

The Grammy award show was scheduled for January 31 at the Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles and while a new date has not been announced, the academy said it would soon release its plans.

“After careful consideration and analysis with city and state officials, health and safety experts, the artist community and our many partners, the Recording Academy and CBS have postponed the 64th Annual Grammy Awards Show,” the Recording Academy and CBS said in a joint statement. “The health and safety of those in our music community, the live audience, and the hundreds of people who work tirelessly to produce our show remains our top priority. Given the uncertainty surrounding the Omicron variant, holding the show on January 31 simply contains too many risks. We look forward to celebrating Music’s Biggest Night on a future date, which will be announced soon.”

Omicron has become the dominant variant in the U.S., leading to an increase of COVID-19 positive cases and hospitalizations. On Tuesday, L.A. County recorded 21,790 new single-day positive cases of COVID-19, with 1,994 people currently hospitalized with the disease.

This would be the first time the Grammy Awards schedule would be affected by the pandemic, as the 2020 awards took place before the U.S. placed COVID-19 restrictions on events. In 2021, the awards show continued with a live audience and its own COVID-19 protocols in place.

Comedian Trevor Noah was expected to reprise his role as host, as he did in 2021, with the show being aired on CBS and streamed on the Paramount Plus streaming service.

Leading the way in nominations was singer and composer Jon Batiste, grabbing 11 nods, followed by Justin Bieber, Doja Cat and H.E.R., with eight each.
The L.A. Art Show has been in continuous operation for decades. Their January 2020 edition was one of the last big events of the Before Times, had we but known it then. They pushed the 2021 edition to July, weathering the Delta variant with a smaller footprint and elaborate safety protocols. Two years later, the little big show that could will return to its January roots — with a thoughtful covid-safety plan including proof of vaccination and mask-wearing, and a futures-focused curatorial vision engaging with the threat of climate change and the promise of the metaverse.

One of the unexpected highlights of the rogue summer 2021 edition was the excitement around digital and crypto art — NFTS and otherwise — as galleries and independent projects devised mesmerizing and photogenic screen- and sculpture-based vessels for presenting disembodied work. Visitors dug these projects with their aura of newness and the pizzazz of luminosity and movement at a larger scale evocative of contemporary painting. Clearly, there will be plenty of that again this time, as multiple exhibitors explore the commonalities and contrasts between the new media frontier and the traditional art space.

Vellum LA — who led the previous edi-
tion's charge into the brave new world — is back, this time keying off their recently inaugurated brick-and-mortar space in West Hollywood. Elsewhere is a Negative Mirror is curated by cryptoart impresarios Jesse Damiani and Sinziana Velicescu, and features 10 artists exploring architectural motifs — and what if any rules exist for constructing place — in the new digital universes being built. Showing works by Saks Afridi, Kirk Finkel (untitled, xyz), Vince Fraser, Mari K, Petecia LeFawnhawk, Nate Mohler, Sabrina Ratté, Nicolas Sassoon, and Thato Tatai, Elsewhere is a Negative Mirror underscores the physical mutability of the future world by happening simultaneously as an in-person exhibition fair and also at Vellum LA across town, as well as in an online auction with SuperRare.

KP Projects’ Merry Karnowsky has been a destination for the vanguard of contemporary figurative painting, embracing new currents in visual culture from street, illustration, lowbrow, visionary and outsider voices for decades. Her program is known for featuring titans of narrative symbolism like painter and digital artist Johnny Rodriguez, aka KMNDZ, who in partnership with LGND, will be the gallery's first foray into the NFT space.

KMNDZ’s Little Beasts engages the energy of hybridity in a series introducing a cohort of robots and animal characters. Manifested first as hand-drawn mixed media works, before being raptured into the NFT energy field of the blockchain, the recombinant creatures themselves speak to the quality of the transcendent that propels the metaverse forward. Honoring the artist’s Latino roots in aspects of their colorful magical auras while also updating his favorite folkloric traditions in a post-Disney, post-digital mythos, it’s only fitting the works themselves would bridge the gap between history and the future in art historical terms as well as materials.

In another part of the show, the pervasive themes of the environmental crisis also find a tech-forward expression in Arts Help's presentation of Conscious Crypto Creator: ICEBERGS. The Con-
conscious Crypto Creator, aka CCC, is a platform dedicated to educating those who want to move into the crypto space, offering free resources to the NFT-curious that also focus on the environmental impact of the sector. Their digitally driven site-responsive piece ICEBERGS highlights the problematic energy-intensiveness of the blockchain through an interactive, multimedia installation.

Environmental accountability is also a major theme of this year’s DIVERSeArtsLA programming, as curator Marisa Caichio considers art’s power to affect change. Across eight participating interdisciplinary projects, courtesy of venues both international (Czech Republic, Mexico (Guadalajara), Argentina, Spain, and within mere miles of the show (Skid Row, Torrance), discourses on climate change unfold at a global and hyperlocal scale, showing how climate and economic justice are inextricably linked, the effects of drought in Jalisco and unhealthy heat in Skid Row, dynamics of waste and reclamation, literal melting ice, vectors of accelerated biological evolution, and the scaffolding of society’s failed cultural and even architectural propaganda of mitigation.

One highlight of the fair that has nothing to do with either disaster or digitalia will be the first appearance by the beloved family owned and operated Los Angeles institution that is Judson Studios, makers of the world’s most gorgeous and groovy stained glass for over 100 years. Their installation of major works by contemporary artists El Mac, James Jean, Shay Bredimus, Marco Zamora, Narcissus Quagliata, Alice Wang, Anne Elizabeth Sobieski, Indre Bilires, Reed Bradley, Sean Chao and Quentin Blackman show that it is indeed possible to innovate without ever losing sight of tradition.

Los Angeles Convention Center, South Hall, 1201 S. Figueroa, downtown; Opening night: Wednesday, January 19, 7-11pm, $250 (includes weekend pass & early access hours); Fair hours: Thursday-Saturday, January 20-22, noon-8pm; Sunday, January 23, noon-6pm, $30/day; laartshow.com.
FOOD

SEVEN TASTY WAYS TO KICK OFF A HEALTHY NEW YEAR

It’s time to boost your immunity

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

While the pandemic is still very real and holidays of indulgence are just behind us, it’s time to seriously think about boosting our immune systems and cleansing our bodies of toxins. Here are seven ideas to help spice up your dry January, kick off a cleanse and plant yourself into Veganuary.

Sun Valley-based gourmet food service Z.E.N Foods (Zero Effort Nutrition) is designed for anyone struggling with their weight, on a strict calorie-controlled diet, families, and anybody who just wants to boost their immune system. The menu changes weekly with a variety of seasonal options like vegetarian, weight loss, healthy lifestyle — or you can design your own menu. They also have a juice cleanse and spa cleanse experience that includes cold-pressed juices, raw soup, salad, detox tea, and Himalayan detox bath salts.

Everytable meal service founded in South L.A.’s mission has always been to make sure everyone in all neighborhoods has access to nutritious, fresh food at affordable prices. Select from a rotating menu of more than 28 locally prepared hot plates, salads and wraps, breakfast dishes, and more. Get $10 off your first order of $40 at Everytable.com. They also have 25 locations across Los Angeles where you can pick up.

To kick off dry January, pop superstar Katy Perry has launched De Soi, a line of sparkling ready-to-drink non-alcoholic aperitifs with natural adaptogens.

Perry and co-founder Morgan McLachlan have combined ethnobotany and natural distilling practices to create tonics intended to promote relaxation and revitalization.

The De Soi product line is vegan, gluten-free, non-GMO and contains no artificial flavors or colors, served in ready-to-drink cans and bottles.

De Soi Golden Hour is made with a blend of l-theanine derived from green tea, with notes of strawberries and grapefruit. The Purple Lune elixir is a blend of ashwagandha, tart cherry and l-theanine, with notes of blackberry nectar, vanilla oak and rose petals. The brand’s three expressions are available at www.drinkdesoi.com in 750 mL bottles or 4-packs of 8 oz. cans.

Veggie Grill is participating in Veganuary and will be celebrating with the return of their Orange Chickin’, and a special VG Rookie Day where each guest who eats at a Veggie Grill with a vegan first-timer will receive a BOGO meal for their friend (in-store only, all locations!). VG Rookie Day is on Wednesday, January 12.

The Italian-based Flower Burger West Hollywood + Flower Burger Ghost Kitchen are serving those ultra-colorful, IGG-worthy plant-based burgers at their new brick-and-mortar location in West Hollywood using 100% natural and vegan ingredients. A few menu highlights include The Jungle Burger, which features an oat and red bean patty along with oven-baked zucchini and a green bun colored with spirulina powder and turmeric, as well as the Cherry Bomb made with a lentil-based patty with a pink bun, colored with cherry and beetroot extract.

Plant-based Honeybee Burger is launching the new “Piggy Bee” sandwich in partnership with OmniFoods. The vegan “Piggy Bee” will be made using two pieces of OmniPork Luncheon with melted cheddar cheese, their JUST egg souffle with a fire roasted pepper sauce. Plant-based OmniPork Luncheon contains 0 mg cholesterol, is rich in protein, and provides dietary fiber, potassium and calcium. Compared with canned pork counterparts, OmniPork Luncheon has far fewer calories, total fat and sodium levels. It also is cruelty-free, non-GMO and Buddhist-friendly, without added hormones, antibiotics or MSG, and does not use any carcinogenic nitrate as preservatives.

If you’re looking to add a healthy recipe to your breakfast rotation, try this tahini date smoothie bowl to kick off the day:

Preparation:

1. For the Sesame Oat Crumble: Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Heat a medium nonstick skillet over medium-low heat and melt butter. Add the sesame seeds, oats and walnuts, and allow to toast until fragrant, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the maple syrup, cinnamon and salt, and stir to coat. Allow to cool until the oats are covered in the maple syrup and slightly caramelized, about 2 minutes. Spread the mixture onto the prepared baking sheet to cool completely. Set aside.

2. For the Tahini Date Smoothie Bowl: To a blender, add dates, yogurt, POM Wonderful 100% Pomegranate Juice, frozen bananas, tahini, vanilla, cinnamon, and almond milk ice cubes. Blend until smooth, adding more POM Juice if needed.

3. Divide the smoothie between two bowls and garnish with extra fruit, POM POMS Fresh Arils and the sesame oat crumble.

Tip: Make into a traditional smoothie by adding 1/2 cup unsweetened almond milk or water for a thinner consistency.
THE YEAR IN DOCUMENTARIES
Exploring Best and Worst in Contemporary Culture
BY LINA LECARO

Last year started off with a lot of reflection and also a lot of hope—for our country, for our health, and for our humanity. Maybe it wasn’t transformative enough for most of us, but it was a start. And as we slowly got back something close to normalcy, we held on tighter than ever to the little things (eating at a restaurant, toilet paper on the shelves, self care). If entertainment was a lifeline in 2020, it was nearly as essential as it happened, but seeing it all put together chronologically is as stunning as it is disgusting. Digital blueprints of the capital and its entryways provide a clear explanation on how the building was breached by organized groups that clearly planned to do it all along. Some Trump supporters got swept up in the mob mentality, duped by “the big lie,” but the Times research also shows that as many went to D.C. that day with sinister intentions, prepared to cause physical harm even to the police officers they claim to support. As right-wingers continue to downplay the violence and hate on display that day, this short-form doc suggests 4chan/8chan’s Ron Watkins was the mastermind all along. The inside look into the conspiracy group and its origins and key players was nearly as convoluted and WTF-inducing as Tiger King.

As we wrote back in March when the series debuted, the code words, the wild theories, the in-fighting and, of course, the salaciousness involving movie stars and baby blood drinking are fascinating to hear explained by people who actually believe it. You might even have to re-watch this one a couple times to fully understand the computer nerd/web-centric components and how everyone fits together.

Director/narrator/interviewer Cullen Hobart was mostly focused on one question: who is Q? The doc suggests the Qanons and its origins and key players was nearly as convoluted and WTF-inducing as Tiger King.

As we wrote back in March when the series debuted, the code words, the wild theories, the in-fighting and, of course, the salaciousness involving movie stars and baby blood drinking are fascinating to hear explained by people who actually believe it. You might even have to re-watch this one a couple times to fully understand the computer nerd/web-centric components and how everyone fits together.

Q: Into the Storm – This look at the conspiracy group and its origins and key players was nearly as convoluted and WTF-inducing as Tiger King. As we wrote back in March when the series debuted, the code words, the wild theories, the in-fighting and, of course, the salaciousness involving movie stars and baby blood drinking are fascinating to hear explained by people who actually believe it. You might even have to re-watch this one a couple times to fully understand the computer nerd/web-centric components and how everyone fits together.
took the city. Creating unforgettable work that challenged society's indifference to what was occurring in the gay community, it also tackles the discrimination that LGBTQ+ people were suffering in general, and offers hope that art can still make a difference. Watch it on YouTube.

MUSIC

The Beatles: Get Back – Watching Peter Jackson's docu-series over Thanksgiving weekend was like food for the soul after another stressful year of political division and health concerns. The three-part TV event provides context for The Beatles breakup and their interpersonal relationships, but mostly it's just a magical, musical experience. John, Paul, George and Ringo are so ubiquitous to culture, we feel like we know them. But as Get Back illustrates, we didn't really. They weren't gods, they were human beings – insanely talented but flawed (as we all can be) when it came to creating and performing, with differing perspectives. Throw in industry and fan expectations, drug use, girlfriends (Yoko, Linda), and production crews, and the strained dynamics could've easily become total dysfunction. Instead, the Beatles' last working sessions yielded some of the best music of all time. Seeing their work evolve on film is as beautiful as it is bittersweet, and if you're a music lover, more than worth the 8+ hour time commitment. Watch it on Disney+.

The Sparks Brothers – Ron and Russell Mael moved to England back in the '70s and saw some success there, but it took years for the L.A. band to hit in the U.S. From their U.K. Top of the Pops performances to their role as the amusement park band in the '70s cult classic Grease, Edgar Wright's film highlights the bros' story like the wild ride it was. The director of Scott Pilgrim vs. The World and Baby Driver showed us the band's real life journey and artistic perseverance, with talking heads including Weird Al, Beck, Flea, Bjork, Jane Wiedlin (who shared the hit "Cool Places" with the duo), Mike Myers, Todd Rundgren and more, all in stark black and white, contrasted by archival footage and very groovy animation. Watch it on Netflix.

Summer of Soul (…Or, When the Revolution Could Not Be Televised) – This astounding Disney/Searchlight documentary features footage that is almost hard to believe hadn't been seen much before. The Roots ubiquitous drummer Ahmir Questlove Thompson serves as director, and his choices make an inspiring look at life and racial issues in 1969. This is much more than a concert film. Set at the 1969 Harlem Cultural Festival, which took place over six weekends in Mount Morris Park, New York, it's full of epic performances from Stevie Wonder, Nina Simone, Mahalia Jackson, Gladys Knight & The Pips, The Staple Singers, The 5th Dimension, Sly & The Family Stone, and more. Providing powerful context with news clips and personal stories, SOS is the best kind of cultural commentary, revealing tough truths while providing incredible entertainment and hope via the universal language of music. Watch it on Hulu.

POP CULTURE

Britney vs. Spears – From director Erin Lee Carr featuring Rolling Stone's Jenny Eliscu, this look at the situation is a far better documentation than Hulu's Framing Britney Spears, covering the singer's career and her fight for freedom. It also reveals that the journalist and many others in Spears' circle had been concerned about the control her family had over her for a very long time. Mostly, it's a beautiful, cut-throat story with sensitivity and empathy concerning all that she went through – her marriage break-up, the custody battle for her kids, her drug use (ok, this is glossed over a bit), and her loss of autonomy as an adult, thanks to greedy lawyers, power-hungry management and overreaching parents. It's a heartbreaking film, but thankfully, it has a happy ending, as the 14-year conservatorship ended back in November of this year. Watch it on Netflix.

Show Me the Picture: The Story of Jim Marshall – He's not as well-known as Mick Rock or Annie Leibowitz or even Ethan Russell or Bob Gruen, but Jim Marshall took some of the most shared photographs of rock stars out there today. The famous Johnny Cash shot flipping off the camera at San Quentin? That was his. The backstage antics of The Rolling Stones that we've all seen hundreds of times? Him. The Beatles playing Candlestick Park? That was Jimbo, too. This doc attempts to capture the brash photo's work and often tempestuous nature, which ultimately led to drug use and jail time. Marshall died in 2010, but he left behind a badass legacy on film. This bio-doc highlighting this amazing work featuring the likes of Janis Joplin, Miles Davis, Jim Morrison, The Who and The Grateful Dead, is a nice way to honor his pioneering fly-on-the-wall approach, which so many shutterbugs continue to strive for. Watch it on Apple TV+.

Like a Rolling Stone: The Life and Times of Ben Fong-Torres – Those of us who actually get to write about music know we're a lucky bunch. Interviewing your idols about their sonic visions and actually making a name for yourself (and getting paid for it), is, we can all agree, the coolest thing ever. Ben Fong-Torres definitely had name recognition, even before Cameron Crowe immortalized him as his Rolling Stone editor in Almost Famous. As we learn in the new-ish doc about his life, he was an important presence and voice for the publication in its infancy, starting in 1967. Interviewing the likes of The Doors, Marvin Gaye, Elton John, Tina Turner, and Ray Charles, in thoughtful and insightful stories, the Chinese-American writer made an impact in more ways than one. Suzanne Kai's documentary tells his life story, which is as much about his culture clashing experiences and family life as it is his work. It's a heartfelt and fascinating feature thanks to Torres himself, who shares stories about his writing process and rock n' roll experiences. In theaters. More info here.

CRIME

Allen vs. Farrow – In the HBO docuseries Allen vs. Farrow, Woody Allen's son Ronan Farrow (known for his work writing about victims of sexual assault) presents eyewitness accounts and piles of research to back up its stance that the famous director is in fact, a predator. The four-part doc directed by Kirby Dick and Amy Ziering (who tackled Michael Jackson, Harvey Weinstein and the NXIVM cult) is a fascinating reconsideration of an iconic filmmaker's sometimes questionable artistic choices and character. Watch it on HBO Max.

Crime Scene: The Vanishing at Cecil Hotel – The Cecil Hotel in Downtown L.A. saw its sinister reputation solidified after Canadian tourist Elisa Lam went missing while staying there back in 2013. Her body was eventually found lifeless and decaying (spoiler alert if you don't know the story) in the hotel's water tank on the building's roof. Thanks to overzealous web sleuths and true crime fans, the story with the rabbit hole story sucked into the wall continued to synergize, and got even creepier, as new-ish doc about his life, he was an important presence and voice for the publication in its infancy, starting in 1967. Interviewing the likes of The Doors, Marvin Gaye, Elton John, Tina Turner, and Ray Charles, in thoughtful and insightful stories, the Chinese-American writer made an impact in more ways than one. Suzanne Kai's documentary tells his life story, which is as much about his culture clashing experiences and family life as it is his work. It's a heartfelt and fascinating feature thanks to Torres himself, who shares stories about his writing process and rock n' roll experiences. In theaters. More info here.

ME, MYSELF & M3.0

Are You Someone That Uses Meth?

The UCLA Vine Street Clinic is conducting a paid research study. Participation involves a consecutive 14 day/night hospital stay for blood and urine sampling. Eligible participants will be compensated up to $2400 for your time. For more information or to see if you are eligible.

CRIME

Allen vs. Farrow – In the HBO docuseries Allen vs. Farrow, Woody Allen's son Ronan Farrow (known for his work writing about victims of sexual assault) presents eyewitness accounts and piles of research to back up its stance that the famous director is in fact, a predator. The four-part doc directed by Kirby Dick and Amy Ziering (who tackled Michael Jackson, Harvey Weinstein and the NXIVM cult) is a fascinating reconsideration of an iconic filmmaker's sometimes questionable artistic choices and character. Watch it on HBO Max.

Crime Scene: The Vanishing at Cecil Hotel – The Cecil Hotel in Downtown L.A. saw its sinister reputation solidified after Canadian tourist Elisa Lam went missing while staying there back in 2013. Her body was eventually found lifeless and decaying (spoiler alert if you don't know the story) in the hotel's water tank on the building's roof. Thanks to overzealous web sleuths and true crime fans, the story with the rabbit hole story sucked into the wall continued to synergize, and got even creepier, as new-ish doc about his life, he was an important presence and voice for the publication in its infancy, starting in 1967. Interviewing the likes of The Doors, Marvin Gaye, Elton John, Tina Turner, and Ray Charles, in thoughtful and insightful stories, the Chinese-American writer made an impact in more ways than one. Suzanne Kai's documentary tells his life story, which is as much about his culture clashing experiences and family life as it is his work. It's a heartfelt and fascinating feature thanks to Torres himself, who shares stories about his writing process and rock n' roll experiences. In theaters. More info here.
Internet sensation Rebecca Black Invites You to Read Her Mind

BY BRETT CALLWOOD

Pop singer Rebecca Black was just 13 years old when her single “Friday” blew up in 2011. Many critics were quick to jump on the track, with some even labeling it the “worst song ever.” Everyone is certainly entitled to their opinion. It’s definitely not the best song ever. But what it is, is the sound of a young teen having fun while singing about the joy of the weekend, creating something super-infectious, and finding an audience for the catchy pop tune. It really wasn’t intended for the adults who were irritated by it.

Fast forward a decade and Black (not to be confused with fellow SoCal artist Beck Black) has continued along the pop path. She’s 10 years older which, when 13 is your starting point, is a lot of maturing. And her sound reflects that. Last year she released the excellent Rebecca Black Was Here EP, and she has just released the wonderful “Read My Mind” single alongside Slayyyter (another pop star who blew up online). Haters beware – she’s not going anywhere.

“I started performing when I was 3 years old,” she says during a Zoom interview. “I was a dancer for the majority of my childhood, and then that naturally progressed into singing around the time I was about 9 or 10. That was when I really found a love for it. I started performing in performance groups in Orange County where I’m from, and that naturally progressed. I was 9 or 10 when I started doing lessons and I think that would technically be when I started doing it professionally. Maybe unknowingly, because ‘Friday’ happened somewhat soon after that and I guess that started my ‘professional’ career.

Black was born in Irvine and raised in Anaheim and, while the two counties sit side by side, she didn’t come to L.A. until she was 11 or 12.

“Orange County is and has been quite different ideologically as well, and coming to L.A., I felt much more aligned with how I felt about the world,” she says. “I met a lot of people that I felt were more aligned with what I believed. So there’s a lot of differences. California from top to bottom is completely different every couple of hours that you drive.”

The performer says that her sound is always developing, as she seeks to create something that she hasn’t heard before. No easy task with this genre.

“Everybody’s inspired by the things that they’re inspired by and, just being a fan of music and caring about music so much, I have my inspirations as much as anybody else,” she says. “But I try to make a version of that and what I envisage it to be. It’s definitely pop, and I love pop. But I also am trying to challenge myself in terms of what that label might mean for the music I make.”

That said, Black believes that pop is one of the most exciting musical genres to be involved with right now.

“I think it’s always in flux, and the only people who can really continue to push it forward are the people who care to,” she says. “I think with pop music, it’s really easy to do what works and I’ve had many people around me throughout my time growing up that I had to do what worked, that I can tell you every single one of them was so wrong. Pop music is to me one of the most exciting genres of music to be a part of, and just as a listener. That’s only been because of the people who have really thrown all caution to the wind and just done really what they felt was pushing it forward or challenging the idea of pop music itself. I think pop music could continue to develop and become a really beautiful, intrinsic piece of ourselves and music, but really you have to look in the right places, and it’s not always what’s obviously in front of you.”

To that end, her new single with Slayyyter, “Read My Mind,” has a definite punk lean. There’s some glass in the banana pudding.

“It wasn’t really our intention when we created the song actually,” Black says. “If you listen to the first demo of the song, it was actually a lot more sweet and hyper-pop than what it turned out to be. But I really enjoyed working with Slayyyter because she had found her way with those kinds of scenes and references, with her latest music as well. I really love the grittiness of the song while also being a very polished, clean, beautiful pop song. I find that exciting.”

So all signs point toward a successful 2022 for Black. She certainly has an online community that will have her back. Aspiring artists might wonder how you build that.

“I think my relationship with that might be different than other artists and maybe everybody else’s is different,” she says. “But for me, the biggest challenge was overcoming what people had already made up their minds to be about what I was. Working backwards in that sense to not only figure out as I grew up from when I first made my debut, I had to figure out what I had to say and what that would mean to other people, and doing that while you’re a teenager and also while people really feel like they have a definition of who you are already – it’s definitely difficult. I always just came back to trying to be honest and any time I strayed from really following my instincts, that was always where I took missteps.”

Next year will see Black working on her full-length album, and then she has a date at the Troubadour on Jan. 21 (COVID permitting).

“That’s the final show of the tour, so I’ll be pulling out every stop and then some,” she says. “Hopefully having a few special guests come on.”

See you there. Rebecca Black’s “Read My Mind” single with Slayyyter is out now. She performs on Jan. 21 with Alice Longyu Gao at the Troubadour.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST
Injured at work? Workers Comp Law Firm READY TO HELP!

For a FREE consultation, please call 310-664-9000 x 101 or text 310-849-5679
Website: www.workinjuryhelp.com

Warning:
Making a false or fraudulent claim is a felony subject up to 5 years in prison or a fine up to $50,000 or double the value of the fraud whichever is greater, or by both imprisonment or fine.

SECURITY GUARDS NEEDED
Rio Gentlemen’s Club - 13124 S Figueroa St, Los Angeles, CA 90061 $18 to $20 an hour. Outside security needed for patdowns, ID checks and monitoring parking lot of the club. Please contact Dave Carlson at Rmckinney@jjmfirm.com.

Thank you Saint Jude, Saint of the Impossible, EC

WANTED HOTWHEELS
1968-1985
COLLECTOR WILL PAY TOP DOLLAR
(562) 708-9069

In a recent sale, this 1984 Hot Wheels was estimated to sell for $500 but ended up selling for $41,000. If you own a Hot Wheels or any other precious toy, please contact Rmckinney@jjmfirm.com.