Amin Joseph

Facing Dark Nights of the Soul on Snowfall

By Michele Stueven
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THURSDAY, MARCH 30
Artist Film Series: Sky Hopinka at MOCA. A screening of selected shorts by artist Sky Hopinka — Sunflower Siege Engine, Kicking the Clouds, Mnemonics of Shape and Reason, Lore, and When you’re lost in the rain — followed by a conversation with Hopinka and art critic Jonathan Griffin. Hopinka’s video, photo, and text work centers around personal positions of Indigenous homeland and landscape — designs of language as containers of culture expressed through personal and non-fictional forms of media. 250 S Grand Ave, downtown; Thursday, March 30, 6pm; free w/ rsvp; moca.org.

FRIDAY, MARCH 31
LAUNCH:LA 2023 Resident Artist Performances at L.A. Dance Project. LAUNCH:LA is a three-week residency program offering artists time and space to dive into a generative process, designed for early-career Los Angeles dance-centered artists. Chosen for their bold interdisciplinary approach to movement, visual art, and collaboration, 2023 LAUNCH:LA artists Megan Dohney and Luca Renzi + Mike Tyus have been creating new work at LADP’s downtown studio space for the month of March. Now it’s time to see what they’ve been up to. 2245 E. Washington Blvd., downtown; Friday-Saturday, March 31-April 1, 8pm; Sunday, April 2, 2pm & 6pm; $20; ladanceproject.org.

SATURDAY, APRIL 1
Kiss of the Spider Woman at A Noise Within. Set in an Argentinian prison cell in a country under authoritarian rule, two polar opposites discover that love may spring in the most unlikely of places. Poignant and chilling, funny and sensual, Manuel Puig’s intimate two-person drama is the story of Valentin, a macho political prisoner whose commitment to the Marxist cause takes precedence over everything else, and queer, movie-loving Molina, who escapes the harsh reality of prison life by retelling beloved film noir classics and emulating their glamorous leading ladies. 3352 E. Foothill Blvd., Pasadena; Performances through April 23; $25-$87; anoisewithin.org.

Patti Oleon: Other Side of Night at Edward Cella Art & Architecture. Evocative and mysterious, Oleon creates visual amalgams of interior spaces and exterior landscapes lit with the ethereal color and light found in nightfall and daybreak hours. Inspired by the landscape of Los Angeles — its architecture, its film sets, literary history, and her own experience with the city — her paintings are means to consider the outside world transmuted through the interior worlds she creates in her studio. Filled with associations and ambiguities, Oleon’s surreal paintings suggest memories or dreams and are emotionally charged. 1109 N. La Brea Ave., Inglewood; Opening reception: Saturday, April 1, noon-6pm; Artist Talk: 3pm; On view through April 15; free; edwardcella.com.

SUNDAY, APRIL 2
Maya: The Exhibition at the California Science Center. Featuring over 250 artifacts — many on tour outside of Guatemala for the first time — the exhibition highlights the ancient Maya civilization of Mexico and Central America. Through priceless artifacts and hands-on exhibits, discover how the ancient Maya built and sustained complex cities in the heart of the rainforest. With roots extending back 3,000 years, learn how the Maya live on today — in their inventions that continue to shape our daily lives and the millions of people who carry on the Maya tradition in language and lineage. Enhance the experience with the IMAX movie Mystery of the Maya. 700 Exposition Park Dr., Exposition Park; Opens April 2, $21.95; californiaScienceCenter.org.

Light, Space, Surface: Selections from LACMA’s Collection at LACMA. The art of Light and Space as well as related works with highly polished surfaces often referred to as “finish fetish,” arose in the 1960s and 70s, as Southern California artists began to create works investigating perceptual phenomena, many using then-new industrial materials — sheet acrylic, fiberglass, and polyester resin — in their work. Light, Space, Surface draws on LACMA’s deep holdings of this material, including works by Peter Alexander, Larry Bell, Billy Al Bengston, Judy Chicago, Mary Corse, Laddie John Dill, Fred Eversley, Robert Irwin, Craig Kauffman, John McCracken, and Helen Pashgian. 5905 Wilshire Blvd., Miracle Mile; On view April 2 - October 1; free-$25; lacma.org.

Encounters in Video Art in Latin America at the Getty Center. Celebrating the recent publication Encounters in Video Art in Latin America, part of an ongoing research project at the Getty Research Institute that aims to chart the development of video as an artistic medium across multiple regions of Latin America, and to rethink canonical narratives of video art within the context of global practices. Stay after the program for a wine and cheese reception. 1200 Getty Center Dr., Brentwood; Sunday, April 2,
TUESDAY, APRIL 4
Woman, Life, Freedom, in collaboration with Middle East Images Foundation at Hamzianpour + Kia. The Woman, Life, Freedom exhibition tour is more than just a collection of photographs; it is a journey through the heart of the Iranian revolution, a tribute to the unbreakable spirit of the Iranian people, and a celebration of the power of art and photojournalism to inspire change. Featuring stunning and provocative photographs of the ongoing revolution in Iran and the role of women in the movement, the images capture the intensity of the massive demonstrations in Iran's streets, the bravery of women sharing stories of resistance, and the powerful moments of courage and resilience that define this movement. 5225 Wilshire Blvd., Miracle Mile; Tuesday, April 4, 5-9pm; free; hamzianpourandkia.com.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5
The Worst Witch at NeueHouse Hollywood. A screening of the short film The Worst Witch, an 8 minute two-channel video by Devin Troy Strother, Mandy Harris Williams, and Alima Lee, followed by a panel and Q&A with filmmakers Strother and Lee. In the film, a young black woman performs for the camera as a green witch, parodying the classic tropes of the Magical Negro. The fragmented video gives the metaphorical space of her psyche — a privileged and intimate site to which the viewer is magically drawn. Disrupting the wholeness of the subject, Strother leaves us with a dynamic representation of identity, forming and deforming as the witch slowly takes off her green makeup. 6121 Sunset Blvd, Hollywood; Wednesday, April 5, 6:30pm; free w/ rsvp; rsvp.neuehouse.com/infocustheworstwitch.

MUSIC
MARCH 31-APRIL 6
Carcass
The Observatory
At the end of last year, British death metal/grindcore legends Carcass were at the Forum, performing alongside Amon Amarth, Obituary and Cattle Decapitation. Their latest headline show at the Observatory with Sacred Reich and Municipal Waste looks equally impressive, if a bit more low key. Mega heavy metal from some of the masters. Don't miss. 6 p.m. on Friday, March 31 at the Observatory, $29.50, observatoryoc.com.

Betty Who
Novo
Rarely has an artist been so perfectly named. “Betty Who” is an appropriate moniker for the Australian synth-pop artist. Not because she’s an anonymous figure in the modern, brutal pop world but because she seems to have been spending the first few years of her career discovering herself, working out what she wants her signature sound to be and, of course, growing up. Hence, her last EP was called Betty, Pt. 1 and her album is called Betty, despite the fact that they’re preceded by two albums and two EPs for RCA Records. She’s an indie artist now, going it alone, and she’s at the beginning of a new chapter. Shea Couleé also plays. 8 p.m. on Saturday, April 1 at the Novo, $34.99, thenovodtl.com.

Dragonette
The Roxy Theatre
Dragonette returned last fall with her first album in six years, Twennies. The artists real name Martina Sorbara, worked on the project with Dan Farber (Dizzee Rascal, Lizzo), “The word ‘twennies’ comes up in a couple songs on the record, and felt like a theme that was taking dominance,” Sorbara said in a statement. “I think it has to do with a kind of reflection on this moment, right now, the 2020’s versus me in MY 20’s.” 9 p.m. on Thursday, April 6 at the Roxy, $25, theroxy.com.

Steel Panther
Whisky A Go Go
Nobody’s quite sure to this day if Steel Panther are a Spinal Tap-esque comedy routine, or a really real band. The truth is probably somewhere in the middle. Much like Tap, the joke wouldn’t work if the songs weren’t great, and Steel Panther’s foul-mouthed hair metal parody is superb. New album, On the Prowl, is out this year so expect some of that at the Whisky. Crobot, and Tragedy: All Metal Tribute to the Bee Gees and Beyond also perform. 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 6 and Friday, April 7 at the Whisky A Go Go, $40+, whiskyagogo.com.
PepsiCo launched year two of its signature Jefa-Owned campaign in support of Latina small business owners this week honoring Lucy Haro at her little corner of Peru, Qusqo Bistro and Gallery in West Los Angeles.

In partnership with celebrity chef and restaurateur Lorena Garcia, and powered by PepsiCo Juntos Crecemos (Together We Grow), the five-year $50 million program aims to provide access to business-building resources, opportunity and capital for Latina-owned businesses.

“Since the beginning of time, men have always led kitchens as the professionals and the women cook in the house for the family,” Garcia told L.A. Weekly over a brunch of chica juice, plantanos, fried yuca, ceviche, lomo saltado and warm rice pudding. “Over time, women became inspired and empowered to start their own businesses, but statistically most kitchens and restaurants are owned and run by men. Then when our parents or our children get sick, we are the ones who end up taking care of everyone. I’m the only Latina who has a restaurant in Las Vegas out of about 4,000 restaurants on the strip. We’re trying to change the dynamic and those numbers and show that we can be leaders.”

On National Jefa Day, March 31, which was established in 2021 by L.A.-based Latina entrepreneur Patty Delgado whose lifestyle brand HijadeTuMadre includes apparel and accessories, PepsiCo Juntos Crecemos will cover the tab from pre-selected menu options at Qusqo Bistro and Gallery, for the first 200 guests. Limit one complimentary meal per person, while supplies last.

Lady boss Haro has represented the Latin community and has helmed the charming and colorful Qusqo Bistro and Gallery for 15 years on Santa Monica Boulevard.

“The pandemic was a real breaking point for us and we didn’t know if we could stay open,” Haro told the crowd, which included last year’s recipient Nayomie Mendoza, owner of Cuernavaca’s Grill. “We didn’t even have a functioning website. Then came this program offering support at the worst time. People think we’re out of the pandemic – we’re still rebuilding.

With customers increasingly online, PepsiCo has created business-building programs and education to help Hispanic-owned restaurants, bodegas and carnicerías make strategic upgrades to their technology, services and business models.

Applications for the PepsiCo Juntos Crecemos Hispanic Digital & Delivery Program are now open nationwide for Hispanic small business owners in the food and beverage industry. The personalized business-building program offers one-on-one expert consultation for delivery logistics, technology, marketing and search engine optimization.

Applications for The PepsiCo Foundation’s IMPACTO Hispanic Business Accelerator will open summer of 2023 in participating cities (Las Vegas, Dallas, Houston, Miami, Los Angeles, Albuquerque, El Paso, Chicago, New York City and San Antonio).

For more information about the Hispanic Digital & Delivery Program and to be notified when the application period opens for the IMPACTO Hispanic Business Accelerator, visit PepsiCoJuntosCrecemos.com.
When John Singleton's semi-autobiographical FX Snowfall series first debuted, it was about some kids from the projects selling pot behind their elders' backs from Stingray bikes in South Central Los Angeles. Now that the show is wrapping up, the family saga has exploded into a $72 million drug war fueled by the CIA that tells a tragic tale about how the crack epidemic destroyed a community.

In the sixth and final season of the Snowfall saga, a civil war threatens to destroy the Saint family led by Franklin, played by Jamson Idris, his Aunt Louie (Angela Lewis) and her husband Jerome (Amin Joseph). Rage, regret, love and savage behavior come to a head with some devastating results for fans. Franklin is faced with losing everyone he loves, everything he's built, and getting through it will mean outmaneuvering the KGB, the DEA and the CIA, as well as avoiding the LAPD's corrupt C.R.A.S.H units. There will be some shockers and there will be dark nights of the soul, as every action has a consequence.

Singleton was the first Black American nominated for an Academy Award for Best Director in 1992 for Boyz n the Hood. He died unexpectedly in the middle of the series in April of 2019 in the aftermath of a stroke, but the show he co-created with Eric Amadio and Dave Andron never missed a beat in its continuity and deep understanding of the L.A. he grew up in.

"John always had a way of putting people in position for them to succeed," says Joseph, who makes his directorial debut in one of the final and most pivotal episodes. "He was really a person that had a lot of forethought. When people say John gave us this story and we knew the story, we were able to run the play. He is sorely missed without a doubt, but he put enough people in place that we were able to continue on with integrity. You can't replace a mon-
ument of a man like that, but he really left things in place. He did that throughout the entire group of us, from the grip and electric crew to the producers and actors. Each was hand-picked by John and he put them in place. We kept with the integrity that he left us. We never felt rudderless."

A great part of the allure of the show for Angelenos is meticulous nostalgic detail to the early ’80s-era clothes, gold chains, locations and Jerome Saint’s Jheri Curl. It’s filmed almost exclusively on locations throughout Los Angeles that still exist from the ’80s, including dozens of restaurant scenes at Hawkins House of Burgers, The HMS Bounty and Astro’s Family Restaurant, as well as The Evergreen Cemetery in Boyle Heights and signature Compton cottages. Streets are lined with period cars. The amazing attention to detail suspends any sort of disbelief.

Loyalty is another strong key element of the show, with Joseph’s character displaying the same sort of unrealistic undying love for wife Louie that you find in the Yellowstone relationship between Beth Dutton and Rip Wheeler, something that Joseph acknowledges as a winning formula.

“Selfishly, as a black actor, it was really important playing a flawed drug dealer to try and infuse as much humanity to create a three dimensional portrayal,” says Joseph, who was born to Antiguan parents in Queens, New York, and is a Howard University graduate.

“Often, when we look at people who are the pariahs and underbelly of society, their character is called into question,” he says. “Sure, they can do this bad thing because they’re a bad person. I think life is a bit more nuanced than that. With Jerome and Louie, while they might argue, I thought that it was really important that they have a connection and bond that was bigger than the next drug drop. He has an undying love for her and, yes, it is toxic and dysfunctional, but it is passionate and eternal. That’s something both Angela and I were very intentional about. You care about them. When you have people that love each other and won’t leave their side because they made a poor decision or have a checkered past. It’s true in our stories but probably hard to live up to in real life.”

Joseph directs episode eight out of 10, right at the climax of the end of the Snowfall story, with factions warring against each other, including the CIA, DEA and KGB all within the cross hairs of the main protagonist. The stakes have never been higher for the show in which all the characters have evolved - for better or for worse.

“Working with Amin was the closest thing to working with John,” Gail Bean, who plays Wanda on the show, tells LA Weekly. “John was the only director who was keenly knowledgeable about the storyline and its characters. Every other director may come in and out, not sure if they’d watched other episodes. John personally knew these characters in this world, in this city, in this time period. He created this from something real and Amin has been there from day one. It’s real to him.! He was able to move so effortlessly throughout the scenes to be able to direct and allow us the space to breathe...
and be ourselves. Shooting with him was fun. In between scenes he'd play music off the boom box and make sure everybody's happy to be there. It gave us a very nostalgic feeling of when John was there on set. He's definitely an actor's director."

Isaiah John, who plays Franklin's loyal friend Leon, has been on the critically acclaimed show since the first episode alongside Joseph, Idris and Singleton, and credits Joseph with directorial instinct since the pilot episode.

"I've had so many moments with Amin before his directing episode," says John. "My performance in the finale of season two in the jail scene would not have been performed the way it ended up if it wasn't for Amin. It was fine, but he urged me to go all out and really let loose with the emotions of this character. He has a way of communicating to actors what he sees in a scene and is very open to hearing what we have to say. He has a gift he's just starting to tap into. My performance was definitely heightened because of those conversations. It was amazing to work with him as a director; it's very instinctive for him."

As the series comes to an end, it will have a noticeable effect on jobs in the local Black and Brown communities of L.A. Hundreds of cast and crew were employed on the show, as well as the businesses in the inner city neighborhoods where it was filmed.

"The absence of Snowfall will leave a void in certain communities when it's over," says Joseph, who also currently plays Mohammed in the film To Live and Die and Live produced by Forest Whittaker. "The season during the pandemic, we shifted more work onto sound stages, but the majority of what we do is on location. During that season, we found our way to still be impactful to local neighborhoods and created an economy for them."

The Singleton legacy will live on and the cast collectively agrees that the legendary producer and screenwriter would be 100% satisfied with the season finale and the tale it tells about his neighborhood and thoughts of what it may have been like without a crack epidemic and the effect it had on families and communities.

"John was a really good storyteller," says Joseph of some of his fondest memories. "He loved to sail. One of my favorite pastimes was to go out on his boat with him on a regular afternoon and watch the sunset. We'd crack open a bottle of wine and he'd tell me stories. He said one day I'd be a great director and was so encouraging and supportive. He was such a charismatic and energetic force. He was enchanted with the possibility of creating more and being more and standing up for something. He was a true renaissance man. I really miss that perspective more than anything. I always relied on his point of view and the opportunity to debate that. It was an honor living in the shadow of someone as dynamic as him."

"SELFISHLY, AS A BLACK ACTOR, IT WAS REALLY IMPORTANT PLAYING A FLAWED DRUG DEALER TO TRY AND INFUSE AS MUCH HUMANITY TO CREATE A THREE DIMENSIONAL PORTRAYAL,"
SENSEITIVE LAPD OFFICER INFORMATION LEAKED

LAPD admits to accidentally giving critical officer information to an anti-police organization.

BY ISAI ROCHA

Los Angeles District Attorney (LADA) George Gascón said threats have been made to LAPD officers after names and photos of more than 9,000 were published online.

The information was unintentionally released by LAPD after a records request, with a site later publishing the officer names and information, including agents working undercover.

“LADA is aware that a searchable online database published photos of more than 9,300 Los Angeles Police Department officers, complete with name, ethnicity, rank, date of hire, division/bureau and badge number, including those officers who work undercover,” Gascón said in a statement. “LADA is also aware that threats have been made against officers whose names and information were disclosed on this website. LADA takes the safety of police officers seriously and is working with law enforcement to ensure that anyone threatening to harm law enforcement officers will be held accountable.”

LAPD Chief Michel Moore said the request was made by the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, who state their purpose as “building power toward abolition of the police state.” It is not unusual for the community organization to express their disdain for LAPD initiatives at Los Angeles City Council meetings, most recently with the robot dog the department has attempted to deploy for its SWAT team, as well as LAPD budgeting.

The officer information is being published in the organization’s “Watch the Watcher” tool, which allows users to look up officer information based on their name or serial number. The website claims that using records requests, it is planning to further its database with officer payroll and disciplinary records.

The organization’s Twitter account was removed after a request from the Los Angeles Police Protective League, and Moore said LAPD is working with the FBI and the District Attorney’s Office to not only retrieve the sensitive information, but make sure violent threats against officers are not met.

LAUSD WORKERS AGREE TO $22 MINIMUM WAGE AFTER STRIKE

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and its essential workers reached a new contract agreement after a three-day strike forced a shutdown of
all its schools.

The contract was years in the making, as workers represented by Service Employees International Union Local 99 (SEIU-99) sought wage increases, additional staff support and health insurance for part-time employees.

Negotiations between LAUSD and SEIU-99 reached an impasse this year, which eventually led to the three-day strike.

On March 23, the final day of the strike, Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass met with both sides in an attempt to help reach an agreement.

"On behalf of all SEIU Local 99 members, including the 30,000 members we represent at LAUSD, I appreciate Mayor Bass for stepping in and allowing us to find a pathway to communicate and reach an agreement.

"On behalf of all SEIU Local 99 members, including the 30,000 members we represent at LAUSD, I appreciate Mayor Bass for stepping in and allowing us to find a pathway to communicate and reach an agreement that is historic at LAUSD," SEIU 99 Executive Director Max Arias said in a press conference Friday. "I also want to appreciate the 30,000 members that sacrificed three days of work, despite low income, to raise the issue... that we as all society need to do better for all workers."

Superintendent Alberto Carvalho explained some of the terms of the new contract, including a 20% raise with a $2 per hour increase taking effect January 2024. A breakdown of the raise shows a 6% ongoing increase retroactive to July 1, 2021, a 7% ongoing increase retroactive to July 1, 2022 and a 7% ongoing increase expected for July 1 of this year.

The minimum wage for employees will now be $22.53, which outpaces not only the city, but the state's minimum wage standard.

LAUSD employees who worked through the pandemic in the 2020-2021 school year also will be receiving a $1,000 bonus, per the agreement.

The district will invest $3 million in an Education and Professional Development Fund for SEIU members, and an increase in hours and compensation will be given to paraprofessionals who work with special needs students.

"I am appreciative of SEIU Local 99's leadership for coming back to the table to negotiate an agreement that addresses the needs of our employees and brings students back to the classroom," Superintendent Carvalho said. "We also thank Mayor Bass for her support and leadership in facilitating negotiations. When we started negotiating with SEIU, we promised to deliver on three goals. We wanted to honor and elevate the dignity of our workforce and correct well-known, decades-long inequities impacting the lowest-wage earners. We wanted to continue supporting critical services for our students. We wanted to protect the financial viability of the District for the long haul. Promises made, promises delivered."

**A TORNADO RIPS THROUGH THE CITY OF MONTEBELLO**

On March 22, a 110-mph tornado touched down in the city of Montebello, a very rare occurrence according to the National Weather Service Los Angeles.

Dozens of videos circulated social media showing the tornado making its way to the ground, as well as roof pieces from several Montebello buildings being blown off and swirled around.

"At any place, in particular in California, a tornado is very highly unusual," NWS forecaster Dr. Ariel Cohen said in a press conference. "However, if we look over a broader area of California in general, we do tend to see a number of tornadoes that occur, really each year, especially in the winter and early spring time."

The reported wind funnel in Montebello was the second investigated in California on March 22, with another occurring in the city of Carpinteria.

Dr. Cohen said tornadoes in California typically spin upward quickly and do not allow enough time to provide proper warnings to residents. In comparison, tornadoes in midwest states tend to form at a slower pace, allowing for tornado warnings.

Although rare, especially in cities such as Montebello, there have been 45 tornadoes reported in Los Angeles County since 1950.

L.A. County has set up resources for those affected by the tornado.
Musical talent has always been on the rise. Prior to the pandemic, momentum was building for the besuited Wisconsin-born rapper; his song "Long Live the Chief" raised eyebrows when it showed up on the Marvel/Netflix show Luke Cage, and he also appeared on the Daily Show.

A Coachella appearance in 2018 further cemented his standing as he toured the previous year's The Chief album, and his reputation further soared in 2019 with the release of the 85 to Africa album. He was on his way. Then COVID happened and stunted his growth for a while.

"I think for me and some artists who had already been establishing a rhythm, it felt like that," Jidenna says. "I think for new artists, COVID was the opposite. That was a moment for new artists to really emerge, and some of my close artist friends were able to do that. It's been dope to watch. I think for me it was more than just a joke among friends. It's been more about pleasure than it is just work. So I think that pretty much sums up what I've been up to."

Good for him! That refreshed chill is evident on "Blush," a song that was born out of a joke among friends.

"It started out as a joke about people not blushing the way that they did in the '90s or the '70s," he says. "I wasn't alive in the '70s, but I really always felt a kinship with that era. We joked about how nowadays people don't blush or beg as much, especially cisgender heterosexual men, because everyone is swiping on everybody. Everybody's explore page on IG is littered with all sorts of people, whereas back in previous times, there was no explore page so if you saw somebody you were attracted to, this might be the last chance you have to ever see them. So we started out just by joking about that, about blushing, and the importance of men, specifically black men, to feel free to gush and get giddy about somebody they're interested in. That's how we came up with the song." The song, Jidenna says, is one of three singles on the docket, and all are representative of the forthcoming album.

"They come from different angles of it," he says. "I'd say that the album by and large is a sensual, dreamy, funky but psychedelic album. A lot of my friends have described it as psychedelic soul. So I'd say that is the dominant sound, and essentially, it's a story of me moving away from my fuckboi origins and a ho phase that I had right before the pandemic, and growing into somebody who could actually commit to somebody. The album is scenes from that kind of maturation process."

Not only has Jidenna matured, and in turn his lyrics, but the music has noticeably evolved, too. The artist says there is a variety of reasons for that.

"I think that first of all, one stark difference is that the last record, I worked predominantly with Nana Kwabena, who is an amazing producer, DJ, director," Jidenna says. "He's always executive producing my projects. On this one, although he's still executive producing, Roman GianArthur [Wondaland labelmate] took lead on the actual hands on production. That creates a difference in sounds, and you can hear Roman's tastes throughout it, which is all those words I described – the funkiness, the soul, the depth, the playfulness. Also, I was producing the original sounds of this project. I've produced most of my life, but since becoming an artist, I've been on the road more and not as hands-on as I used to be. So this one, I started by being hands-on and then Roman kind of took it away."

While we had him on a call, and because it was Women's History Month when we spoke, we asked Jidenna about the incredible female talent currently blessing hip-hop.

"Women obviously have always been amazing writers, artists, producers, but men have historically blocked access," he says. "Literally blocked access to the computer in my generation. We have less than 2 percent of engineers and producers in the industry that are women. That doesn't reflect how many women are able and willing to create sound design. It means we're missing out on a whole bunch of music designed by women. That'd change the face of music production. But in addition, I'd say that a lot of my favorite artists from the US or UK, like Little Simz for example, are women rappers. Women in the US are on a whole other level because there are so many now. I can't wait to see how it evolves in the next few years."

Jidenna has a US tour lined up for the summer, and Europe is next. He's back on track, up and running. The album, he says, will be a soundtrack to people's summer – and more.

"Most of all, for their baby-making moments or their love-making, or their road trip moments," he says in conclusion. "And as soon as this album rolls out, I'm going to hit people with another one. Since I've been quiet for so long."

He's not quiet now! Jidenna's "Blush" single is out now.
A BRAVE NEW TEMPEST AT THE SHAKESPEARE CENTER

Of all Shakespeare’s plays, *The Tempest* is the readiest to go immersive

**BY SHANA NYS DAMBROT**

Oh brave new world, that has such people in’t.

The Tempest begins with a shipwreck in a massive and sudden storm at sea. After that, there’s magic, sorcery, bewitchment and enchantment galore — all taking place on a remote tropical island. Between the rollicking squall and the windswept shores always just offstage, locations like a monster’s cave, a fairy’s nest and a magician’s cabin to work with, it fairly begs to be turned immersive. And building a walk-through, music-infused, tech-enhanced, exploration-ready environment for the audience to wander around in before the play starts is so perfect, it’s hard to imagine ever doing it another way again. But the play’s the thing, and as lively as the staging is, the success of Shakespeare Center LA and After Hours Theatre Company’s *The Tempest: An Immersive Experience* still rests on the performance.

The new production leans into the magic wielded by Prospero and his captured servant, the fairy Ariel, who does the man’s bidding in a so far fruitless quest to gain their freedom. It was they who concocted the storm in order to wreck the boats carrying the magician’s old enemies. He is the overthrown Duke of Milan, whose exile was the result of a political coup led by his brother, Antonio, in conspiracy with the King of Naples. As a dedicated scholar, Prospero is deeply knowledgeable in a range of fields, including magic, philosophy and literature. After being marooned in the coup, he’s spent much of his time on the island studying and reading books, as well as experimenting with his acquired magical powers — which he exercises to create the storm.

We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep.

The work’s intriguingly designed set, accessed through a soon-to-be shipwrecked vessel and a watery passageway, is a quirky island landscape with secret codes, clues, and a bar. The audience is seated almost in the round, very close to the actors, in between the set pieces between the rows. This staging also incorporated technology to great effect, with projections and sounds that amplified the immersive quality of the experience well beyond normal theatrical production. And the performances, every one of
them, was on point.

Helmed by Ben Donenberg and Graham Wetterhahn, the stellar cast includes Chris Butler as an imposing, brilliant, vengeful, but witty and charismatic Prospero; Wayne T. Carr as Caliban, the creature whose righteous anger conceals a noble soul; Kay Sibal as Prospero’s wry, intelligent and self-possessed teenage daughter, Miranda; Rodney Gardiner as a telegenic, treacherous Antonio; Jin Maley as a soulful, nonbinary Ariel both flighty and substantial, dangerous and honorable; Dan Parker as Trinculo and KT Vogt as his mate, Stephano — their comedy was showstopping, their political corruption, greed and alcoholism making for belly laughs and perfect satire.

The past is prologue

The play follows Prospero’s spiritual journey as he navigates his drive for revenge and the importance of forgiveness, freedom and imagination. His closing monologue is one of the most famous speeches in Shakespearean literature — a powerful statement on the nature of forgiveness and the redemptive power of compassion. His cardinal story arc, unfolding in the context of a sorcerer’s powers that both enhance and obscure his sense of himself, is not only a timeless allegory of human nature, with instantly recognizable resonance to the thorniest parts of our current culture, but also the kind of materialization of an inner journey in tandem with hidden sources of magic and power that lends itself to an experiential, aesthetically imaginative, all-consuming presentation — very like the stuff dreams are made on.

Shakespeare Center LA, 1238 West First St., downtown; Performances through April 16, Thursday-Saturday, 7 p.m.; Saturday matinee 1:30 p.m.; Sunday 2 p.m.; $35-$125; shakespearecenter.org/the-tempest.
We talked with Predictmedix Inc about the future of testing people for impairment at work and on the road.

BY JIMI DEVINE

Predictmedix Inc. may have the answer to squash concerns about stoned driving.

The lack of a validated mechanism to test someone’s level of impairment from cannabis use on the spot has complicated the national rollout, as regulators and elected officials vent their fears about stoned driving. You can test someone’s saliva, urine, blood or hair, but these detection methodologies are too dated for the modern era. If you were to base impairment on those tests, you would have a ton of false positives because, with the broader use of cannabis, more of the workforce are enjoying off-the-clock and have those spent metabolites in their system.

The same people who don’t want to change drug testing laws to protect off-the-clock use are ironically well-versed in the reality of current testing not truly benefiting public safety in real time. But what if you could use artificial intelligence to determine someone’s level of impairment in 20 seconds?

Predictmedix labels itself an emerging provider of rapid health screening, medical devices, and remote patient care solutions globally. Over the last three years, the now publicly traded company has raised $3 million. “And all that money has gone into developing the technology. And now we’re commercially deployed,” Toronto venture capitalist Steve Singh told L.A. Weekly. He went on to break down the difference between their tech and the breathalyzer tech that’s been in development for years. “With the breathalyzer and you get a result in 20 minutes that’s biased, with Rahul’s technology, it’s 20 seconds and unbiased.”

The Rahul that Singh mentioned is Dr. Rahul Kushwah who founded Predictmedix after leaving academia to pursue AI-based impairment testing. To date, 50,000 people have now been screened by his Safe Entry Stations.

Since launching the Safe Entry Station, Predictmedix has worked to scale down the machines to something a bit more manageable. They’ve not reached the point where they’ll release a phone app that pairs with a small multispectral camera you plug into your phone. “You put the camera in front of you, you look at the camera, you say a few sentences that are popping up on your phone and that can be used to identify impairment in 10 to 15 seconds.”

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you look at the camera, you say a few sentences that are popping up on your phone and that’s it, and that can be used to identify impairment in 10 to 15 seconds,” Kushwah said.

Kushwah explained the reason for using multispectral imaging is because they don’t really care about how you look on top of your skin. He argues there is no such thing as looking stoned.

“IT’s more about, how are the changes in the underlying blood flow patterns that we are able to identify. And that’s part of the reason that our technology, I mean, is a bit Star Trek in a way. I mean, just think about it. Not only the technology can tell you if you’re impaired if you’re fatigued, but it can also tell you your heart rate, breathing rate, temperature and a lot of your vitals, without even touching you,” Kushwah said. “And we have completed a few clinical studies in different parts of the world where we have had medical institutions basically signing off on this technology and saying how this is the future and the future is now.”

The app could certainly be a game changer. Imagine police officers being able to give people impairment tests without even getting out of their cars. If they fail, they can do a full sobriety test that would confirm the test or catch a false positive.

“We’ll continue to keep an eye on how this plays out.”

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**LATWEEKLY CLASSIFIEDS**

**EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION**

**Senior Construction Project Manager Los Angeles, CA**: Analyze and approve architecture and structural drawings for plans from Architects and Structural Engineers. $162,500/yr. Resumes: HR, Hello Group, 2989 Overland Ave., Ste. 104, Los Angeles, CA 90064.

**System Integrity Engineer, Inc dba Structural Integrity Engineering Inc, in Nashville, TN**: seeks Structures Design Engineer to plan, conceptualize, & create mechanical designs for new products. No bld, no WIFI, $137,691/yr. Send CV: nartonanale@siene.com


**ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE**: Req. Any Bachelor’s degree wage $71,336/yr. Mail resume: SPACO, INC. 5461 E. 14th St., Los Angeles, CA 90023

**Business & Integration Architecture Manager ( Accenture LLP, Los Angeles, CA)**: Define, analyze, solve, and document the business requirements and processes for Accenture or our clients’ program/project specifications and objectives. Must have willingness and ability to travel domestically approximately 40% of the time to meet client needs. Multiple Positions Available. For complete job description, list of requirements, and to apply, go to: www.accenture.com/us-en/careers (Job ID: RO20149559). Pursuant to the California Transparency in Billing, the offered wage for this role is $184,000.00 per year. Equal Opportunity Employer – Minorities/Women/ Vets/Disability.

**D Element Group LLC/Project Managing Engineer, Comm. w/delators to determine project resp. & obj., Dev. project plans, select vendors or consultants to meet project needs, Propose, rev., & approve mods. to project plans. Produce & distribute project docs. Req: Bach. deg. in Ind. Eng., or rel. field, Exp. 16 mos. exp. in Ind. Eng. or rel. field. Mail resume to: D Element Group LLC, 611 Reyes Dr., Walnut, CA 91789.

**Zwift, Inc. seeks Lead QA Engineer**: Automation in Long Beach, CA (Various Unanticipated Worksites) to create comprehensive written test plans & test cases. Req: Bachelor’s degree or foreign equiv in Computer Science, Software Engineering, or rel. field & 5 yrs’ post-baccalaureate experience as Quality Assurance Engineer or rel. role. Exp. must incl. AWS API Gateway/AM User Role Testing, Subnets, Cloud Formation Configurations, REST API, Automation Test Scripts w/ Selenium Java API & Eclipse IDE. Position will be headquartered in Long Beach, CA, but is a telecommuting position, allowing for remote employment from various unanticipated worksites throughout the U.S. Salary: $154,967 to $155K/yr. Email resume: People@Zwift.com

**RED ENGINEER, Valencia, CA**: May require travel to telecommute. $38,156 to $100,000 per year. Design, develop, & refine technologies, products, specifications, materials, test methods, processes, & equipment. Contact Sarah Okusanya, Boston Scientific Corporation, application@bosc.com. Please include reference HRE72-00148. (562) 708-9069

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Senior Security Engineer at Los Angeles, CA: Analyze & resolve security threats by performing various tests, n/work reconnaissance, & incident response, etc. Needs a Master's deg in Info Systems & Technology + 2 yrs’ exp as security engineer or related. Salary - no less than $152,000/yr. Email resume to accounting@anm-theogino.com, Singularity Ventures, Inc., Los Angeles, CA 90005.


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