

LA WEEKLY

OCTOBER 11-17, 2024 | VOL. 40 / NO. 49 | LAWEEKLY.COM



MUSIC

RAIA WAS IS BADU FOR GOOD

BY BRETT CALLWOOD



Raia Was

COURTESY HUNTER KAUFMAN

NYC-based songwriter/producer Raia Was on seeing some life-changing Erykah Badu performances.

Raia Was: The best gig I ever saw is the collection of Erykah Badu shows I've gone to since age 17. My first show of hers was part of The Sugar Water Festival in 2005 (full disclosure: this whole article has required a lot of googling to remember the years/locations!) and though I barely knew her music, I was hypnotized by her as a performer. Really, she's a performance artist, slipping between stations at the theremin and sampler and cups of tea. The way she spins the room. I saw this and thought, "How do I do that?"

I saw her next in New Orleans at Voodoo Fest in 2008. I was a student then and

the rumor amongst the crowd was that her drummer got delayed or couldn't show up for some reason and there was a young local drummer on the festival crew who she looked at and said, "Do you know all my songs?" And thus he lived out every young musician's dream of being pulled on stage with their own musical hero to save the day. She was also very pregnant. I don't think I had ever seen before or since, an artist perform pregnant. And her pregnancy wasn't at all what the show was about. I remember thinking, "This is a person, inside her life, doing her job as an artist and also living all at once."

It was while I was still in New Orleans that *New Amerykah Part One (4th World War)* came out, the first time she dropped an album amidst my active fandom. I

devoured it and also couldn't imagine how she'd perform it live. It was so sonically different, such an exciting departure from her previous records. I needed to know what that show would look like.

I went to her 2011 show at Palladium (then called Best Buy Theater or Nokia Theater or PlayStation Theater — my god what utter nonsense these companies make of NYC). It was a medley kind of set, a mix of songs from all her records. I liked it, but it didn't really make a mark on me until the end of the show when she broke script. We were coming up on New Year's Eve and as we all pondered our resolutions, she wanted to impart some advice to us with an addendum to one of her lyrics. She said, "Stay out your mind... 'cause that's where all the time traveling happens." She said it slowly, she looked right at me. Of course, it's been said before — worry, anticipation, anxiety keeps us perpetually in the future and out of the present. But the honesty of her connection to the audience makes a moment like that near life-changing. Perhaps indeed, life-changing. And what is that? How does an artist play so well in the surf between the crowd and the work, how does she so thoroughly put on a show and also let her guard down? And she does it differently every time.

When I think back on her shows it's that breadth of change, that she is always doing it differently, that has most inspired me and made me brave in my own approach to performance. And perhaps no show has had the most lasting effect on me as a performer as seeing her play *New Amerykah Part One* with the Brooklyn Philharmonic in 2013. My brain was practically on fire finally hearing this album live, but even more so, hearing a complete departure from the original production, swapped for an orchestra. The show's success was an ode to her work, to its enduring creativity and its fertility as source material for performance, no matter the mode. I could feel how special that night was for her personally. She bashfully accepted our insistence on an unplanned encore by straight-up just playing "Soldier" all over again. And at the end she gestured toward her mother in the crowd, reminding us all to do our work, to take our encores, and thank our mothers.

Raia Was' Captain Obvious (Piano Version) EP is out now. [A]

OCTOBER 11-17, 2024 // VOL. 40 // NO. 49
LAWEEKLY.COM

CONTENTS



ON THE COVER:

Images provided by ABImages;
cover designed by Laura E White.

MUSIC.....2

Never the same show twice, Badu performances continue to inspire Raia Was.
BY BRETT CALLWOOD

ENTERTAINMENT3

Winslet as Lee Miller brings focus to a lifetime of breaking boundaries.

BY ERIN MAXWELL

FOOD - WHAT'S POPPING UP ..4-5

Canned Bloody Marys, chocolate treats, and Dia De Los Muertos celebrations.

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

FOOD6-7

Raising money for childhood cancer one little plate at a time - Lemonade Fest.

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

ENTERTAINMENT8

A movie with too much going on offers too little.

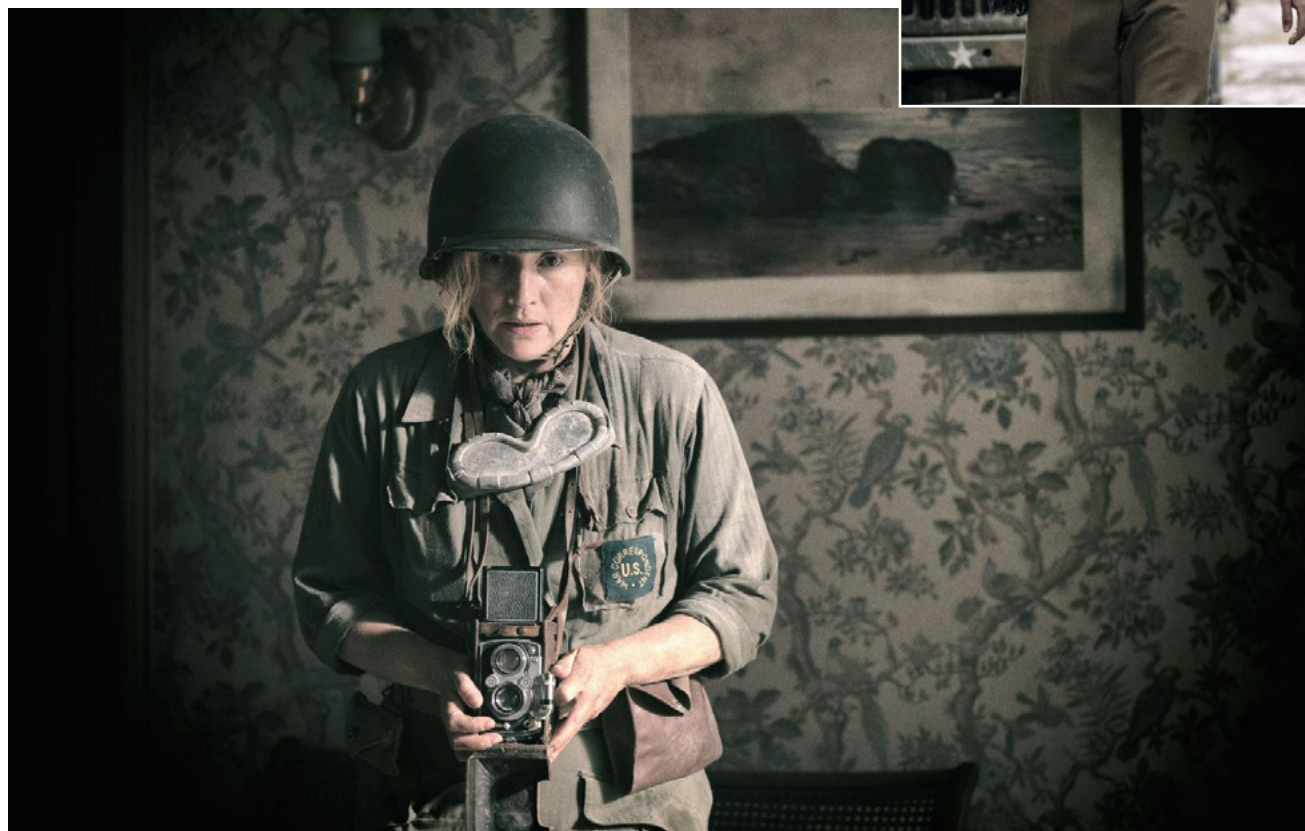
BY MICHAEL ATKINSON

PRODUCTION AND DESIGN
LAURA E. WHITE FOR STREET MEDIA



KATE WINSLET SHINES AS A FORGOTTEN ICON IN 'LEE'

BY ERIN MAXWELL



IMAGES COURTESY SKY CINEMA

As Lee Miller is introduced to future husband Roland Penrose (Alexander Skarsgård) at an idiosyncratic picnic of free spirits, viewers are given an abridged synopsis of the life of the model-turned-artist. Brazen, brassy and a tad belligerent, the former glamor girl who was once known for her racy photos impresses the gallery owner with her current output of behind-the-camera work. As she sits topless among her bohemian consorts, moviegoers are given a strong impression of Miller as an American living in France on the cusp of World War II just as she is about to begin her second act in life.

For most, Lee Miller is probably best

known for her work as a model with artist and confidante Man Ray, which earned her the epithet of “Surrealist Muse,” or for stripping naked in Hitler’s bathtub in a photo taken by Life magazine’s David E. Scherman (portrayed in the biopic by Andy Samberg). But Miller’s contributions to history reach far deeper than her mere image. In Ellen Kuras’s biopic *Lee*, the forgotten legacy of Ms. Miller is now cemented into the cultural zeitgeist, thanks to a first-rate performance from Kate Winslet.

Based on Antony Penrose’s book *The Lives of Lee Miller*, *Lee* follows Miller in her midlife, long after her career as a model has reached its sunset. Self-

described as “good at drinking, sex and taking pictures,” Miller has settled into a vagabond lifestyle as a photographer of some note, which comes to an abrupt half due to the rise of Adolf Hitler, placing Miller at the right place in the right time to become one of the most significant chroniclers of World War II. Capturing images of worn and weary nurses, the horrors of Dachau, and disfigured soldiers, Miller brought the brutality home in black and white.

As a film, *Lee* is a throwback to the films of yesteryear when biopics focused on celebrating a person’s life with little or no personal conflict to hamper good storytelling — think *Yankee Doodle Dandy*

or *The Glenn Miller Story*. *Lee* lauds Miller’s life with no real stakes other than the occasional Nazi invasion or the odd era-appropriate misogynist who scoffs at women in the workplace/battlefield. The film is without any true antagonist or adversity to speak of. Instead, *Lee* isn’t a remembrance of an event that Miller had to defeat or any internal strife she had to overcome, but rather, stands as a monument to a person. But to be sure, that person deserves a monument.

Winslet is well cast as the fearless Miller as she captures the Poughkeepsie native’s moxie and fortitude, but the pic never allows her to become fully realized, choosing to embrace her flaws rather than mend them. As Miller states at the beginning of the film, she’s never wrong, and the film stands by that assertion, holding her in the highest regard. Even in times when she is impetuous and rash in her decisions, others apologize to her, surrendering to her audaciousness. However, Winslet’s portrayal of the intrepid photojournalist who traversed war-torn Europe with Scherman is nothing less than outstanding and gives the biopic the legs in which it stands. Winslet channels Miller’s charisma while conjuring both the chutzpah and indestructible verve that propels the photojournalist in her passions.

Lee is a well-crafted, visually-striking biopic that is moving in its depiction of the atrocities of World War II and near worship in its characterization of Lee Miller, who without a doubt deserves to be recognized for her achievements. And though the film has its fair share of well-worn tropes and treats its subject with the reverence of a demigod, the extraordinary true story shines thanks to Winslet’s performance, a turn that will certainly not allow Lee Miller to ever be swept under the carpet of history again. **A**

WHAT'S UP POPPING UP

Mini Mary In A Can And Chocolate For Dia De Los Muertos

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

Learn the art of chocolate sculpting and decorating from award-winning pastry chef and master chocolatier [Francois Behuet](#) at Sendero at The Ritz-Carlton, Los Angeles on Sunday, Oct. 27. The hour-long class gives a hands-on look at how the French born Behuet creates show-stopping drama for holidays and award show weekends and is known for his masterpieces for Pastry Team USA and The Ritz-Carlton, Los Angeles. Priced at \$180 per person, the fall class will focus on building a Dia de los Muertos-themed creation. Beginners welcome. The price includes a logo apron to take home, water, and sparkling wine on site. [Book via Resy for October 27.](#)

Corrie Scully and Renie Schoenkerman, co-founders of [MiddleBar](#) and creators of the popular bloody Mary

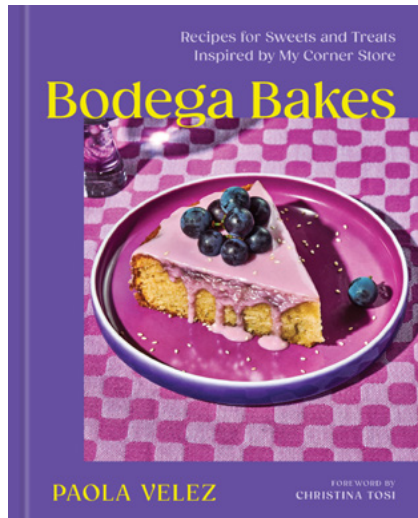
Mocktail are bringing a sleek new 7.5oz aluminum can of Mini Mary to the market. The multiple award-winning Bloody Mary mix will be available on Amazon, fine liquor shops, and gourmet markets in mid-October. The women-owned LGBTQ company evolved from a love of music, cooking, design, and hospitality. MiddleBar has grown from a food lab and blog to an underground private supper club and a boutique cocktail catering service. They developed the Los Angeles Farmers Markets product line and opened the since-closed jazz bruncherie [MIDDLEBAR on MARKET St in Inglewood in 2018.](#)

A limited-time pop-up at Sushi Roku's Santa Monica Robata Bar will feature 2019 James Beard Award Winner Chef Tony Messina from Thursday, Oct. 17



Oktober Fondue Fest

COURTESY MELTING POT



Bodega Bakes

COURTESY PAOLA VELEZ

through Saturday, Oct. 19. Inspired by Messina's time in Boston, the dinner combines modern sashimi with charcoal-fired street food, showcasing top-tier Japanese fish. Menu highlights include beef carpaccio with shellfish vinegar, black garlic tare, and uni, chicken liver toast with milk bread, strawberry, and smoked onion, lobster skewers with rosé butter and roasted tomato with an aerated miso cheesecake with apple and dulce de leche for dessert. Reservations can be made via sevenrooms.com.

[Melting Pot Thousand Oaks](#) is celebrating Oktoberfest with an [Oktober FondueFest](#) menu that runs through Thursday, Oct. 31, and features Bavarian beer cheese fondue paired with dippers like pretzels, hot-off-the-grill bratwurst, braised short rib, summer sausage along with choice of salad and decadent Black Forest chocolate fondue. The 3-course meal includes cheese fondue, salad, and chocolate fondue for \$53. Premium entrées can be added to make it a 4-course experience for \$71. Wash it down with a Black Forest old-fashioned, ginger peach blitz cocktail or a seasonal Sam Adams Oktoberfest.

Fatburger and Buffalo's Express located at Central & Slauson, 5867 Central Ave., has added [Hot Dog on a Stick](#) to their space. The new tri-branded location will offer classic Hot Dog on A Stick menu items, including hot dog and cheese on a stick and the signature hand-stomped lemonade made with Ventura County lemons. The location will now be open for breakfast as well.

Pastry chef and social justice activist Paola Velez is now a cookbook author. Velez will bring her [nationwide tour](#) for *Bodega Bakes: Recipes for Sweets and Treats Inspired by My Corner Store*, to Los Angeles, celebrating her Afro-Latina heritage during Hispanic Heritage Month.



Chocolate Master Class

COURTESY RITZ CARLTON, LOS ANGELES

Here's the schedule:

Cookbook Club with Velez in Conversation with Kay Lopez on Friday, Oct. 11 at [Carla's Fresh Market](#), via [Eventbrite](#), includes a meet and greet.

Velez in Conversation with Roxana Julapat on Saturday, Oct. 12 at [Now Serving](#) via [Eventbrite](#), includes a meet and greet.

Bakery Pop-Up with Paola Velez on Sunday, Oct. 13, at [Friends & Family](#)

[California Pizza Kitchen](#) is celebrating the National Pizza Month of October with a new BOGO for the Bold. For October, order the new burnt ends BBQ pizza or returning fan-favorite bacon and Brussels pizza in a participating restaurant or online and get a free take-and-bake pizza from one of five best-selling flavors. The new burnt ends pizza comes with smoked brisket burnt ends, smothered in signature BBQ sauce and topped with smoked Gouda and Mozzarella cheeses as well as pickled red onions. The returning bacon and Brussels pie is a combination of goat cheese, roasted Brussels sprouts, applewood smoked bacon, caramelized onions, Romano, and Parmesan cheeses.

ART NIGHT

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18
6-10 P.M.

PASADENA
CALIFORNIA - WWW.CITYOFPASADENA.NET

ENVISION THE NIGHT

Enjoy an evening of art, music, and entertainment as Pasadena's most prominent arts and cultural institutions provide special programming and free admission from 6-10 p.m.

ArtNight is produced by Pasadena's Cultural Affairs Division in partnership with many cultural institutions.

For information on ArtNight, please call the ArtNight Pasadena Hotline at (626) 744-7887 or visit ArtNightPasadena.org. For information on accessibility and/or to request written materials in alternative formats, please call the City of Pasadena at (626) 744-7062.

PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

A Room to Create, Alkebu-Lan Cultural Center, Armory Center for the Arts, ArtCenter College of Design HMCT Gallery, ArtCenter College of Design Mullin Gallery, ArtCenter College of Design Williamson Gallery, ArtWORKS Teen Center, City of Pasadena City Hall, Jackie Robinson Community Center, Light Bringer Project, Pasadena Museum of History, Red Hen Press, Reminders Creative Reuse, and The Gamble House.

FREE SHUTTLES

- Free shuttles run 6-10 p.m., with stops at each venue.
- Limited shuttle service due to regional bus and driver shortages.

PASADENA TRANSIT

Pasadena Transit Route 10 runs along Colorado Boulevard and Green Street until 8 p.m. Schedule at: PasadenaTransit.net

METRO GOLD LINE

Attend ArtNight by taking the Metro Gold Line to Pasadena: Metro.net

artnightpasadena.org
[ArtNightPasadena](#)
[ArtNight_Pasadena](#)

FOOD

THE TOP TEN TASTES AT L.A. LOVES ALEX'S LEMONADE FEST

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

L.A. Loves Alex's Lemonade, hosted by James Beard Foundation award-winners Chef Suzanne Goin and partner Caroline Styne along with Chef David Lentz returned to UCLA's Royce Quad on Saturday with a culinary superstar lineup of chefs donating their time and services to raise funds and awareness for Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation and its mission to find better treatments and cures for all kids with cancer.

Food, wine and cocktails were prepared by the nation's best chefs, wine-

makers and mixologists, with returning chefs Michael Cimarusti, Chris Bianco, Adam Perry Lang, Donald Link, Nancy Silverton, Jon Shook, Vinny Dotolo, Rocco Whalen, and Marc Vetri. First-time participants included Michael Mina, Nina Compton, Fred Eric, Kris Longley, Michael Reed and Vivian Ku. The event raised a whopping \$1.7 million with auction items, including lunch with Phil Rosenthal and dinner with Jimmy Kimmel. Dinner with Kimmel and his wife, Molly, at their barn in the Holly-



IMAGES COURTESY ABIMAGES



wood Hills sold to the winning bidder for \$80,000. The Kimmels donated the dinner featuring food prepared by star chefs Marc Vetri, Adam Perry Lang, David Chang, Jon Shook, Vinny Dotolo and Chris Bianco. The always popular women chefs dinner featuring Nancy Silverton, Suzanne Goin, Sherry Yard, Nancy Oakes and Alice Waters along with wines curated by Caroline Styne, was sold to two bidders, raising \$160,000. The

mens chefs dinner featuring Josiah Citrin, Walter Manske, Michael Cimarusti, David Lefevre, and Three-Star Chef William Bradley of Addison raised \$40,000. Each year the culinary bar gets raised a bit higher and this year's event may have been the best yet. It was tough to narrow down the favorites, but here are our top ten. Check out the photo gallery and [Kwini Reed's](#) video for more behind-the-scenes. [LA](#)



Clark Staub, Full of Life Flatbread
COURTESY MICHELE STUEVEN



Michael Reed, Poppy & Seed
COURTESY MICHELE STUEVEN



Bruce Kalman's pork belly
COURTESY MICHELE STUEVEN



Susan Feniger, Socalo
COURTESY MICHELE STUEVEN

TOP TEN TASTES from Lemonade Fest

- 1 The duck confit taco nestled in a crispy rye crepe shell with soft herbs, apple relish, pickled chili and onion from [Poppy & Seed](#) in Anaheim.
- 2 Bourbon glazed smoked pork belly with Italian Chioggia beet salad from Bruce Kalman's [Soulbelly](#) in Las Vegas
- 3 Uni in the shell from [Sea Stephanie Fish](#), David Lentz, and Harry Liquornik
- 4 Jitlada's Spicy Noodles
- 5 Adam Perry Lang's Flintstone-sized beef ribs (always the longest line)
- 6 Refreshing summer melon gazpacho from [Full of Life Flatbread](#)
- 7 Pizza from [Speak Cheezy](#) - Chorizo verde with fiore di latte mozzarella, shishito rajas, spring onion, caramelized corn crema and fermented Fresno dust
- 8 Steve Samson's Sicilian swordfish meatballs with tomato, capers, olive and mint from [Rossoblu](#)
- 9 The [a.o.c.](#) Fiesta Jalisco with tequila, lime, watermelon and hibiscus
- 10 [Valerie Gordon's](#) lemon ice cream with chocolate chips

ENTERTAINMENT

'THE UNIVERSAL THEORY' SUFFERS FROM OBSERVER EFFECT

BY MICHAEL ATKINSON



COURTESY OF OSCILLOSCOPE LABORATORIES

You could be forgiven for thinking initially that the new German film *The Universal Theory*, with its epic Alpine vastness, sweeping historical milieu, and heady quantum mechanics context, is one of those ambitious projects that will, ultimately, strive to turn your head inside out. But it is actually a very modest movie, whose old-school filmmaking ambitions are inversely proportional to what the screenplay finally delivers. It bears every

sign of lusting to be Christopher Nolan-*esque* — but whereas Nolan's high-concept sci-fi ventures (*Inception*, *Interstellar*, *Tenet*) always ended up swapping out coherence and common sense for “Look at me, Ma” CGI flourishes, Kroger's movie begins with close to no concept at all.

You shouldn't name-check physicist Werner Heisenberg unless you've got a high-voltage quantum-y idea in your back pocket, but co-writer/director Timm Kröger, in his second film in 10

years, leans instead on wide-screen spectacle. Getting serious visual mileage out of Alpine scenery is probably not hard, but even so, Kroger and DP Roland Stuprich make a lavish Ansel Adams banquet out of it, in high-contrast black and white; even the looming Old Euro interiors (churches, hotels, caverns, etc.) are lit with intense shadowy menace. Leaning hard on neo-Hitchcockian style, the film's visual character ends up feeling overwrought, with even minor

moments, like walking across a room, bulked up with portentous dolly shots and dramatic shock cuts. You can virtually smell the doubt Kroger had about his story, by way of how he's compensating with cinematographic cartwheels.

That story concerns a young physicist-in-training (Jan Bülow), who in 1962 trains it to a conference in the Alps to introduce his paper on a revolutionary post-quantum multiverse-adjacent theory he “feels” is correct, even if he's still working out the math. His craggy mentor (Hanns Zischler) thinks it's balderdash, but another old crow (Gottfried Breitfuss) thinks it's brilliant. Our hero meets and becomes obsessed with the hotel's pianist (Olivia Ross), who no one else seems to see, and who knows impossibly intimate things about his childhood past. Avalanches, ski debacles, drunken arguments over black-tie dinners: You are there. Eventually, slowly, Bulow's po-faced newbie (he has the pouty opacity of Franz Rogowski, but duller) starts seeing doubles, murdered bodies start turning up, the pianist disappears, skin rashes become a thing, and there's some kind of conspiracy boiling in the old uranium mines nearby.

You squint through the over-backlit fog of over-smoking in hopes of finding out exactly what mystery the protagonist is trying to solve, what the conspiracy is, what's happening underground, and what any of it has to do, even glancingly, with quantum mechanics. Traces of WWII espionage scarring and survivor's guilt arise, and hints of time travel are in the air. Bask, if you will, in the darkling panoramas and proto-Fritz Langian couture, but before long you'll realize the film is not going to answer any of its own questions. If the hero is going mad, and the narrative's business is a subjective nightmare, then you'd expect a *Shutter Island*-style gotcha. Instead, Kroger climaxes with a narrated mini-history of the hero's petering-out life through the rest of the 20th century, suggesting rueful historical fallout that could've resonated, in a German context, if the screenplay had taken history, or science, seriously in the first place. **D**