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THE MELANCHOLY AND THE MIGHT OF JUNIOR H

BY MARK STEFANOS

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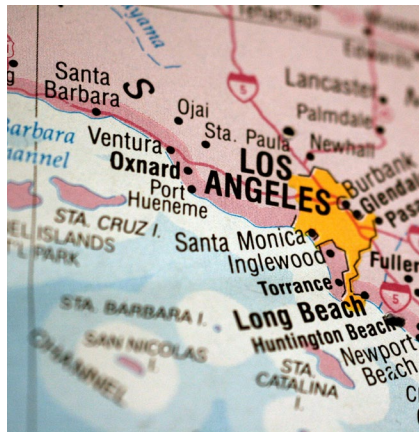
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Junior H, pioneer of corridos tumbados and sad boy, headlines the Hollywood Bowl.

BY MARK STEFANOS

LA WEEKLY

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ENTERTAINMENT

REVIEW: 'NOUVELLE VAGUE' IS AN ODE TO 'BREATHLESS' THAT'LL LEAVE YOU BREATHLESS

BY ASHER LUBERTO



COURTESY ©JEAN LOUIS FERNANDEZ

For those of you who know the difference between The French New Wave and a croissant, *Nouvelle Vague* is the movie for you. A rapturous homage to *Breathless*, an early pioneer of the French New Wave era of cinema, that'll leave you breathless. Entranced by a whimsical, playful, elegantly wistful style that evokes *Breathless* with almost impossible aplomb, *Nouvelle Vague* is made for those who spend countless hours on the Criterion Channel, who see movies as more than just entertainment but as an art form, an intersection between cinema, theater, painting, music and architecture, where every edit is a choice and every image is an extension of the director's vision. In

other words, Richard Linklater's wonderful movie is a glowing tribute to the art of arthouse cinema.

Of course, this might all sound nerdy. Who really wants to watch a cinematic essay on what went into the making of a movie — especially a movie shot in black and white, made in a different language, from a massively different era? *Nouvelle Vague* isn't for everyone, but those who are enchanted by its subject matter are bound to find themselves lingering in its atmosphere, like pillows of smoke stuck to the walls of a French cafe, soaking up every factoid and glorious recreation on screen.

A tragic love story between a gun-toting,

cigarette-smoking gangster and his illustrious blonde femme fatale, whose eyes paint more contradictions than Mona Lisa's, *Breathless* is considered the first modern film — the movie that invented the jump-cut and the entire language of modern cinematic editing. But how was it created? Richard Linklater dives into the details the way a scientist giddily explains quantum physics. When we meet Jean-Luc Godard (Guillaume Marbeck), he's lagging behind his fellow film critics at Cahiers du Cinéma, who have already made bona fide classics.

His best friend François Truffaut has just released *The 400 Blows*, a cool, crackling autobiographical feature about



COURTESY ©JEAN LOUIS FERNANDEZ

a young boy in Paris that valiantly went against the cinematic tropes of its era, leaving Godard in envy. The goal of French New Wave filmmakers was to up-end convention, to create a gritty, jazzy, spontaneous slice of life that reflects real experience instead of artificial melodrama, which is why Truffaut's based-on-a-true-story script made a perfect fit for Godard's first feature. After getting funding, he puts together a cast of soon-to-be legendary actors, including his friend Jean-Paul Belmondo (Aubry Dullin) and the already somewhat known Jean Seberg (Zoey Deutch), who is hesitant to join until Godard convinces her husband otherwise.

Soon, this cast of characters takes to the streets to create a movie, not knowing how to do so, making it up as they

go along. Godard starts each day with fresh ideas — when he runs out of them, he storms off set stammering intellectual drivel like “art is never finished, only abandoned.” With only 20 days to create the movie, there's a sense of tension lingering in the Parisian smog, but Linklater cleverly trades conflict for playful homages, evoking Godard's style with handheld cameras, unsynced sound, choppy editing and monochrome color, which gives *Nouvelle Vague* the texture of a genuine Nouvelle Vague picture.

It's a treat to watch these characters put together the film, which most can agree is a monumental production. There's a shared sense of reverence for the characters on screen, as well as the act of making and enjoying movies, that really shines through here. Godard himself would

have scoffed at this starry-eyed tribute, its lack of invention in particular (he was a notorious cynic, inventor and boundary-pusher, which Marbeck reenacts spectacularly behind ink-tinted shades), but for those of us watching from our couches, it's constantly enjoyable to see millions of details come together to create a grand cinematic tapestry. To see how Godard emulated guerrilla-style filmmaking, using a postal cart and cramming his cinematographer inside to hide the camera, is particularly fun to discover.

Obviously, not everyone is going to be as interested in these details, and many viewers are going to glaze over the specifics the way many film students pull out their phones whenever film history is mentioned. But Linklater is a master at making art accessible. He made

Rohmer-esque conversations mainstream in *Before Sunrise*, a strangers-on-a-foreign-train romance that served as a brief encounter to arthouse cinema for many young moviegoers, as well as experimental cinema sparkle with his 10-year-in-the-making picture *Boyhood*.

Nouvelle Vague is an energetically exciting, endearingly evocative ode to artistic creativity. Regardless of whether you audibly cheer when arthouse auteurs like Robert Bresson and Jean-Pierre Melville are trotted on screen like Marvel cameos or whether you have to Google “who the heck is Robert Bresson,” you'll likely end up being swept up by Linklater's breathless charm.

“*Nouvelle Vague*” is in select theaters now, and will be available for streaming on Netflix November 14. [A]

GETTING SOCIAL: MARIAH CAREY'S HOLIDAY BAR AND A GOTH XMAS

BY MICHELE STUEVEN



COURTESY BUCKET LISTERS

Pop-up pros [Bucket Listers](#) is bringing back Mariah Carey's Holiday Bar to Skybar at the Mondrian in Hollywood on Thursday, Nov. 20. The immersive winter wonderland is a festive, fully-decorated holiday oasis with wall-to-wall Carey-inspired holiday décor and interactive photo-ops throughout. The revamped experience includes an upgraded "Queen of Christmas" homage, Santa's Sleigh photo-ops, and a signature award wall, alongside album backdrop recreations.

Fan favorites from last year will return, like the All I Want for Christmas Is You theme played every 30 minutes, and a dedicated "Letters to Mariah Carey" station. The themed food and beverage lineup will feature holiday cocktails made with the diva's own Black Irish cream. For holiday shoppers, there will be new and exclusive Mariah Carey merchandise, along with vinyl records of both her holiday albums and her latest LP release, *Here For It All*. Get tickets [here](#).

On the flip side, if you're looking to explore the dark side of the holidays, Goth Xmas is a twisted holiday pop-up where merry meets the macabre on Hollywood Blvd. Opening on Black Friday, Nov. 28, guests will step into an immersive world of eerie cheer featuring black trees glowing under violet lights, towering black candy canes, gothic ornaments, and cocktails that bubble, smoke, and flame.

In Hollywood, Goth Xmas becomes a twisted gothic winter garden, complete with falling snow, black garlands, trees, and light inside Gothic Santa's Throne room. Don't bother telling him what you want for Christmas; he doesn't care. Snow machines fill the air, and the lighting shifts from midnight violet to candlelit crimson, and the entire space feels like a snow globe turned upside down.

Every night, there is a rave, and the themes change from *Nightmare Before Christmas* to a very Robert Smith holiday. Guest DJs and personalities lead the cheer and the drear. Get tickets and details at www.gothxmas.com. [L]



Mariah Carey's Holiday Bar

COURTESY DENNIS LEUPOLD

FOOD

WHAT'S UP POPPING UP

Girls Brunch With Chef Stephanie Izard And Hane-Style Gyoza Comes To LA

BY MICHELE STUEVEN



Stephanie Izard

COURTESY GALDONES PHOTOGRAPHY

Chef Stephanie Izard is hosting her annual Steph & Friends brunch at [Girl & the Goat](#) on Saturday, Nov. 8, at 11 a.m., in support of Common Threads, the nonprofit dedicated to bringing cooking and nutrition education to under-resourced communities.

Izard will be joined by fellow culinary stars Brooke Williamson, Shirley Chung, Michael Reed, and Shanna Lynn Milazzo for a family-style feast featuring seasonal dishes that highlight fresh, local ingredients and bold flavors. Beyond brunch, proceeds benefit Common Threads' mission to empower children and families through hands-on culinary and nutrition education. Tickets are \$143 per person and available on [OpenTable](#).

Japan's cult-following gyoza brand arrives in LA for the first time. [Ajinomoto Hane-Style Gyoza](#) are the only gyozas on the market featuring the signature hane, a delicate, crispy lace skirt that forms as they cook. To celebrate the milestone, dumpling lovers can indulge in [free, public pop-up activations in Los Angeles](#):

- Friday, Nov. 7: **Baldwin Park's Walmart** (3250 Big Dalton Ave., Baldwin Park), 2 p.m. – 6 p.m.
- Saturday, Nov. 8: **Cerritos' Walmart** (12701 Towne Center Drive, Cerritos), 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- Sunday, Nov. 9: **Sherman Oaks' Pavilions** (14845 Venture Blvd., Sherman Oaks), 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

The activations will include Ajinomoto food trucks, chef-led demos, tastings, photo-ready social media moments for fans and foodies, games, prizes, and more. [\[A\]](#)



Hane-style gyoza

COURTESY AJINOMOTO

MUSIC



THE MELANCHOLY AND MIGHT OF JUNIOR H

BY MARK STEFANOS

As the sun dips behind the Hollywood Hills, **Junior H** will, once again, prepare for the limelight. He's headlining the Hollywood Bowl tonight and tomorrow, capping his \$AD BOYZ LIVE & BROKEN TOUR, a sprawling U.S. run that follows earlier triumphs at Crypto.com Arena and a main stage set at Coachella earlier this year.

With over 30 billion streams across platforms, the Mexican-born, LA-based artist has amassed a fervent global fanbase, particularly among young Latinos grappling with the raw edges of emotion. His accolades include multiple No. 1

debut on Billboard's Top Latin Albums chart and a pivotal role in elevating *corridos tumbados* from underground niche to mainstream force. At age 24, Junior H, born Antonio Herrera Pérez, has become a household name in música Mexicana, going from working in food service to headlining iconic venue after venue in six short years.

Today, after five years in LA, he reflects on the improbability of it all. "It's surreal, honestly," Junior H tells *LA Weekly*. "I came from Utah, where I first started recording in my bedroom, dreaming about one day performing in other big cities, to now be playing at places like

the Hollywood Bowl, it's crazy. It's one of those moments where you stop and realize — all that work, all those late nights — it really meant something."

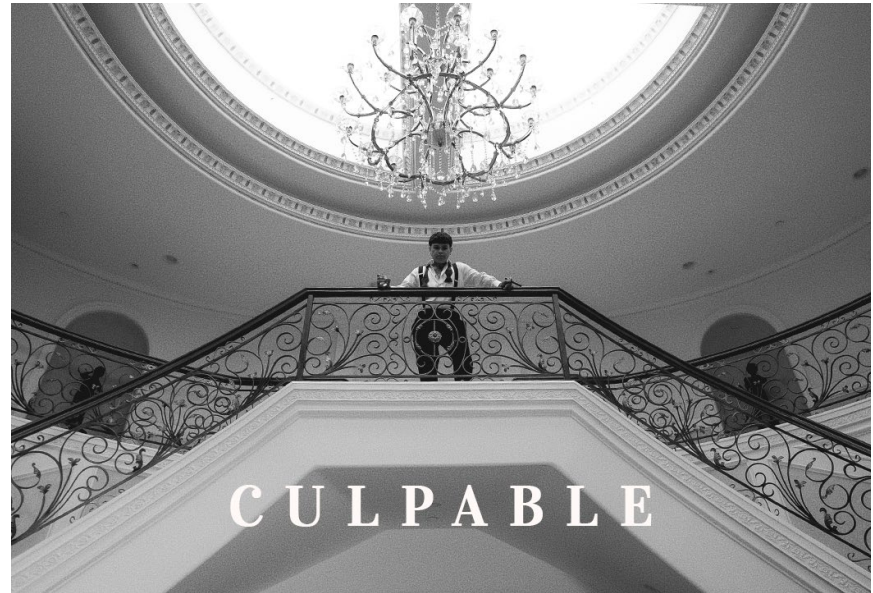
Born in a pastoral town in Guanajuato, Mexico, Junior H grew up in a working-class family amid economic hardship. At 15, he migrated with his family to Utah in pursuit of greener pastures — the quintessential immigrant story — but also a jarring shift from rural Mexico to the American West. At 17, still in high school and juggling a part-time job at a local restaurant to support his family, he began experimenting with music, teaching himself how to play

accordion and guitar from YouTube videos. With a computer provided by his family, he put beats together on FL Studio, blending regional Mexican corridos — narrative ballads of outlaws and triumphs — with gritty trap and rap sounds.

Admittedly shy about his musical ambition, and shy in general, he one day decides to upload a song he built to YouTube under the moniker "Junior H" (he is, in fact, the Junior to his father, also Antonio Herrera Pérez). When he checked back later, the track "No Eh Cambiado" had racked up over a million views. Encouraged by the response



PHOTOS COURTESY JUNIOR H (CARLOS S. REYES @CLOSRY)



and supportive comment section, he dropped more music, eventually catching the ear of independent label Rancho Humilde.

Relocating to Los Angeles around 2020, Junior H transformed from viral upstart to prolific hitmaker, delivering a bevy of releases that left an imprint on the charts. By 2023, he had over 28 million monthly Spotify listeners. His latest single “CULPABLE” has debuted at No. 1 on Billboard’s Hot Latin Pop Songs chart.

What distinguishes Junior H in the crowded field of Latin music is his unflinching embrace of vulnerability — a “sad boy” archetype that upends the machismo long codified in corridos, showcased in his breakthrough album, 2021’s *Sad Boyz 4 Life*, and its sequel in 2023. Corridos tumbados, the trap sub-genre he helped pioneer, swaps braggadocio for confessional lyrics about love’s wreckage and quiet longing, set against hazy trap production. He has tapped into swelling undercurrent — fans, many in their teens and 20s, see themselves in these tales. Sold-out arenas pulse with crowds reciting lines about emotional exile as if they were anthems of survival.

In a culture dominated by machismo, the tough, masculine stoicism that defines men in Mexican and many traditional cultures, being a sad boy requires bravery. But for Junior H, it came naturally. “Sad Boyz started with that idea — that being emotional isn’t weak. It’s real life. We all go through stuff, and instead of hiding it, I wanted to get all the emotions that I’m sure we’ve all felt before and turn it into something powerful,” he says.

This connection runs deep in LA’s Mexican-American and broader Latino

enclaves, where Junior H’s sets feel like communal therapy. “It means everything,” he notes. “I came from Mexico to the U.S. when I was 15 — I know what that change feels like. So when I see fans who went through something similar, or parents who brought their kids here for a better life, it hits home. Performing for them feels like giving back, like saying, “We made it here together.”

In an era of relentless artist visibility where social media can dictate careers, Junior H stands apart by design. His social media footprint is sparse, with official accounts centered on music drops rather than daily vlogs. He saves the limelight for his performances, and this restraint, he argues, fosters deeper bonds. “I think it keeps things pure. I’m not chasing fame or trends — I just focus on the music,” he says. “When people listen, they feel that. It’s not about being perfect online, it’s about being real in your songs. That’s why the connection with fans feels strong — it’s based on emotion, not hype likes, or comments.”

The Hollywood Bowl dates arrive amid a flurry of expansion that extends Junior H’s influence beyond songs. In June, he launched Sad Boyz Clothing with LA-based streetwear brand LRG, a line of hoodies, tees, and accessories infused with his moody aesthetic — graphics evoking rainy nights and resilient hearts. The first drop of the collab sold out within minutes.

“I grew up loving streetwear — New Era hats, hoodies, jordans — that West Coast vibe,” he says. “Sad Boyz Clothing came from wanting people to wear their story, to show their mood and mindset. If you love music and if music runs through your soul and veins why, not wear the music too?”



The brand's Sad Girlz extension for women underscores a message of emotional fortitude: "I want everyone who wears Sad Boyz or Sad Girlz to feel strong — like they own their story. Emotions are part of who we are. For women especially, I love seeing them rock Sad Girlz because it carries that same energy — soft but powerful. That's real confidence."

The gear has become a uniform for sad boyz and girlz across borders, representing a collision of cultures: "It's crazy. It feels like my worlds connecting — where I came from and where I am now. Seeing people in Sad Boyz gear is like seeing part of that journey walking around. It reminds me that we built something bigger than just songs or a t-shirt with graphics — it's a movement."

True to his roots, Junior H channeled the line's ethos into activism. A limited-edition New Era hat collab directed 100% of proceeds to the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights, aiding families with parallel stories to his coming out of Guanajuato. "That collab was close to my heart. I came to this country with my family — we didn't have much, and I know how hard it is for

immigrants. CHIRLA helps those families. So giving back felt natural. Fashion can make noise, and I wanted that noise to mean something," he says.

Parallel to fashion, Junior H has stepped into mentorship with his own label, Sad Boyz Entertainment, signing his first artist Gael Valenzuela earlier this year and guiding a roster of hungry talents. He prioritizes raw drive over polish. "I look for hunger — people who are doing it because they love it, not just for fame or Instagram likes. I tell them, 'Stay true to your sound and your story.' That's what lasts. The industry moves fast, but authenticity always cuts through."

As light casts Junior H's shadow on the Hollywood Bowl's shell this weekend, Junior H's ethos will echo for anyone needing a pick-me-up, a way of telling their crush they exist, or an umbrella for the tears. "Sad Boyz is more than a logo," he says. "It's for anyone who's gone through pain and still found a way to keep going. Whether you're from Guanajuato, Utah, or LA — it's that same story of trying, struggling, and growing. That's what the brand, and my music, will always represent." 🇲🇽



PHOTOS COURTESY JUNIOR H (CARLOS J. REYES @CLOSRY)