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## SKYLINE

# DOWNTOWN IS THE DANCEFLOOR

BY MARK STEFANOS



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ENTERTAINMENT

# REVIEW: EMERALD FENNELL TURNS ‘WUTHERING HEIGHTS’ INTO A BODICE-RIPPING, EYE-ROLLING AFFAIR

BY ASHER LUBERTO



Jacob Elordi in “Wuthering Heights”

Emerald Fennell’s adaptation of *Wuthering Heights* is a rip-roaring, bodice-ripping romance that centers on differences in class structure, gold diggers, marital abusers, and two of the most reprehensible characters in movie history. Happy Valentine’s Day, folks! Marketed as “the most romantic story ever told,” it might very well be the least romantic. As Emily Brontë wrote (with wonderful prose) of her immoral lovers, whatever their souls are made of, they are made of the very same thing — judging by these self-centered twats, that thing is mold.

Brontë’s novel has been the subject of controversy dating back to 1847

— banned in schools, panned by critics — so it makes sense that one of cinema’s most controversial directors would tackle such a controversial novel. With smut, yearning and opulence, Fennell uses Brontë’s rain-soaked vessels of physical beauty as decor rather than people. Their relationship is easy on the eyes yet tar on the heart.

Partially because Fennell only uses 10% of Brontë’s original story, focusing on the toxic tug-of-war between Cathy (Margot Robbie) and Heathcliff (Jacob Elordi), forgoing the side characters that surround their lives, this *Wuthering Heights* gives the protagonists a lot more space

for venomous debauchery. It starts with Cathy’s father bringing home a young boy, who is introduced to her as her new “pet.” She names him Heathcliff, and the two share a playful banter as children, but grow to have feelings for one another. Over the years, their mansion withers immensely as her father gambles away their fortune, forcing Cathy to marry into a rich family instead of to her childhood crush-turned-beautiful-hunk.

As Cathy becomes a gold digger, Heathcliff flees the countryside only to reemerge with revenge and some kinky sex on his mind. They stumble into each other amidst lush fields, light mists and

COURTESY OF WARNER BROS. PICTURES



Margot Robbie

COURTESY OF WARNER BROS. PICTURES



COURTESY OF WARNER BROS. PICTURES

castle ruins that resemble their broken dreams and fertile new beginnings, staring at each other from a distance, unable to say a word for such a prolonged period of silence that I nearly shouted at the screen, “get it on already!” That they do. Trading childhood bonds for corset bondage, they rekindle their old flame until Cathy’s husband blows their flame back out.

It’s at once remarkably tepid yet explicitly raunchy for a *Wuthering Heights* affair, trading Brontë’s controversial ideas on colonialism and race (Heathcliff was far from white) for scenes of graphic sex that play like Georgian cosplay. This may very well be the most expensive soft porn ever produced, and with nothing nearly as outrageous as the bathtub slurping in *Saltburn*, there’s not much here that’s actually shocking. Fennell’s adaptation amounts to something oddly shallow and staid. Heathcliff, known for his primal rage, is played with one-note drabness by Elordi, who certainly looks hot while picking up Cathy by her velvet red strings, but is about as bland as unseasoned porridge. He’s mainly just here to get teenage girls in the theater.

Robbie is much better as Cathy, nailing her character’s bored, vindictive scheming that eventually marks the downfall of these deranged lovers. For the most part, they have zero chemistry, though there were some scenes of lens-melting body-licking, sweat-trickling-down-the-corset eroticism that had me thinking otherwise. Even less cohesive is the pop art style, which looks like a fairy tale book meets a corny romance novel, an MTV music video meets a Cinderella wonderland. Linus Sandgren’s cinematography offers spectacular color to the film, and some landscape compositions are ripe for museum comparisons, but there’s still the unmistakable sense that we’re watching nothing more than erotic fan fiction, as all this glamour is merely a backdrop for Robbie’s sexual punishment.

Fennell’s provocations are certainly pleasing to look at, but her scripts haven’t been up to the task since her breakout film, *Promising Young Woman*, in which Carey Mulligan’s heroine took a knife to the throat of rapists — that I can get behind. What I can’t get behind is Barry Keogan’s social climber in *Saltburn*, who literally has sex with a corpse, nor could I find myself rooting for these self-destructive debutantes. *Wuthering Heights* is a psychedelic fever dream of scintillating passion, but my goodness, I couldn’t wait for these sad-sacks — and the movie — to finally climax. **👎**



FOOD

# WHAT'S UP POPPING UP

## Food Festivals For Good

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

The **Masters of Taste** outdoor luxury food and beverage festival returns for its eighth annual event, taking place on Sunday, April 19 from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. once again on the field of the Pasadena Rose Bowl Stadium, with 100% of the proceeds directly benefiting **Union Station Homeless Services**, a non-profit organization providing more than 50 years of homeless services and housing for thousands of neighbors.

The 2026 host chefs include husband-and-wife team Chef Thomas and Chef Vanessa Tilaka Kalb of Agnes Restaurant & Cheesery. As the founders of the celebrated Old Pasadena restaurant and cheese shop, the Tilaka Kalbs have a devoted following for their Californian comfort food rooted in classic American regional cooking.

Masters of Taste 2026 is expected to bring more than 3,000 food and beverage enthusiasts together for one afternoon, featuring tastings from no less than 100 top culinary masters and restaurants, and

desserts prepared by LA's top sweet masters. There will be signature handcrafted cocktail tastings from over 25 spirit brands and top cocktail bars, select wineries, local craft breweries, cold-pressed juices, cold brew coffee, live entertainment, and more.

The 21+ event includes a VIP Hour that will be held from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m., and general admission will be from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Early bird tickets are available now only through the official Masters of Taste App on the AppStore or Google Play. Tickets are on sale now, and for more information on Masters of Taste 2026, visit [mastersoftastela.com/tickets](http://mastersoftastela.com/tickets).

Another culinary event for a cause, **The Taste of the Nation** and the **No Kid Hungry Dinner, Night Out for No Kid Hungry!** will take place on Saturday, April 11, at Rolling Greens in Downtown LA.

The event will bring together more than 50 of the best chefs, restaurateurs, taster-makers, and mixologists from around the

Masters of Taste

COURTESY MASTERS OF TASTE



No Kid Hungry

COURTESY NO KID HUNGRY

country to serve guests bites, craft cocktails, and desserts all in support of No Kid Hungry, a national campaign to end childhood hunger in America.

Participants include Netflix's BBQ Showdown Judge and James Beard Pitmaster Kevin Bludso, Master Chef Ludo Lefebvre, Michelin Star restaurants including Osteria Mozza and Kali Restaurant, and multiple James Beard Award winners and finalists.

The fundraiser offers two styles of savoring by attending, either The Tasting, a sampling event similar to the popular

Taste of the Nation event, or The Dinner, an intimate, multi-course sit-down experience. Guests attending The Dinner will experience a one-time-only multi-course meal. Award-winning Los Angeles chefs will pair up with culinary stars like Dominique Crenn and Michael Mina. The bites will range from Jitlada's southern Thai cuisine to Heritage Barbecue's classic backyard, Texas-style BBQ dishes. The night concludes with an after-party hosted by chefs Duff Goldman and Michael Voltaggio. Visit [nokidhungry.org](http://nokidhungry.org) for more information. [E]

MUSIC

# DJ CASSIDY BRINGS 'PASS THE MIC LIVE!' TO LA FOR A STAR-STUDED VALENTINE'S DAY TAKEOVER AT NBA ALL-STAR 2026

BY MARK STEFANOS

Los Angeles got passed the mic. Last Saturday, Feb. 14, Black Promoters Collective debuted “DJ Cassidy’s Pass The Mic Live!” in LA, taking over the Kia Forum for a one-night-only Valentine’s Day spectacle timed perfectly with NBA All-Star Weekend. The all-star celebration of love and music united Hip Hop and R&B royalty on one stage in a continuous, collaborative experience that has become DJ Cassidy’s signature.

For DJ Cassidy, the moment was personal. “I moved from New York to Los Angeles nearly ten years ago and created ‘Pass The Mic’ in my LA home, so to finally debut ‘Pass The Mic Live!’ in LA is a dream come true,” he tells *LA Weekly*.

The lineup read like a definitive playlist of the last four decades: **Ashanti, Busta Rhymes, En Vogue, Fabolous, Ja Rule, Lil Kim, and Mya** — plus special surprise guests. Cassidy as maestro weaved their culturally definitive anthems into one uninterrupted musical journey.

“Sharing a stage with my musical heroes remains my life’s greatest honor,” Cassidy told us ahead of the show. “Each one of the music legends on this bill — Ja Rule, Ashanti, Busta Rhymes, Lil Kim, Fabolous, Mya, and En Vogue — has helped shape who I am as a deejay and a music lover, which makes me even more excited to debut ‘Pass The Mic Live!’ in this magical town during

this magical time of Valentine’s Day and NBA All-Star Weekend.”

The venue itself adds another layer of symbolism. “From six Lakers championships, to Michael Jordan’s first Bulls championship, to Marvin Gaye’s national anthem at the 1983 NBA All-Star game, to Prince’s twenty-one-night stint, and beyond, so much sports and entertainment history has been made at the Kia Forum,” Cassidy said.

The Los Angeles debut follows a string of sold-out triumphs: a historic celebration of Hip Hop’s 50th birthday at New York’s Radio City Music Hall, three sold-out nights at Newark’s Prudential Center, and a groundbreaking Las Vegas residency at Planet Hollywood that united rap luminaries for a Rat Pack-inspired run on the Strip.

“Last year, ‘Pass The Mic Live!’ headlined the NBA All-Star Halftime Show in San Francisco with a tribute to the Bay Area,” Cassidy noted.

What began in 2020 as a virtual experiment during a global pandemic has since evolved into a viral phenomenon, a BET television series, a sold-out national tour, and a culture-driving brand. Within ten televised episodes alone, Cassidy passed the mic to 220 legendary artists spanning five decades of music, reshaping how audiences experience the songs they love.

On Valentine’s Day in Los Angeles, the celebration came home. 🎧



DJ Cassidy’s Pass the Mic Live!

DJ CASSIDY’S PASS THE MIC LIVE!

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- Free shuttles run 6-10 p.m., with stops at each venue.
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MUSIC

# SKYLINE FESTIVAL 2026: DOWNTOWN IS THE DANCEFLOOR

BY MARK STEFANOS

In the heart of downtown Los Angeles, where blue-collar industry works in the shadow of graffiti masterpieces, **Skyline Festival** lands as an ode to LA's dance scene. For its fifth edition, coming Feb. 28 and March 1, the festival levels up with a move from Gloria Molina Grand Park to Ace\***Mission Studios**, a sprawling creative campus along the LA River, bordering the Arts District. Originally a beverage distribution hub, the venue's raw topography is steeped in the mug of the city's underground warehouse scene, where music and misfits bash in bass. Organizers hail it as a "natural new home," offering expanded dance floors, immersive light shows, and proximity to the throbbing core of the city's electronic pulse.

Produced by **Insomniac** under its underground-focused **Factory 93** banner, this two-day fest unites over sixty artists amid art installations and local eats. Attendees can expect over ten hours of nonstop music daily, followed by official afterparties in an indoor warehouse that will keep the vibe alive until 3 a.m., on both Saturday and Sunday.

Skyline will have four distinct stages this year that channel the city's multifaceted nightlife, each with its own sonic identity, pulling together a lineup that balances global firepower with local underground heroes.

The East Side stage pumps house anthems and rave-ready grooves, drawing in globally acclaimed selectors like **Dennis Cruz**, **Chris Stussy**, **Beltran**, **Marco Carola**, and high-energy standouts such as **I Hate Models**, **KI/KI**, **Eli Brown**, and **DJ Gigola** — plus electrifying B2B pairings like **The Blessed Madonna** B2B **HAAi** and **Toman** B2B **Miguelle & Tons**.

Over on the West Side, the focus shifts to intense, emotionally charged techno and hard-hitting sounds, featuring heavyweights **999999999**, **Joseph Capriati**, **VTSS**, **Quest**, **DJ Seinfeld**, **Ahmed Spins**, and B2Bs including **Adrián Mills** B2B **Cloudy** and **DJ Tennis** B2B **DJ Boring**.

The new Downtown stage, hosted by **Resident Advisor**, dives into eclectic, avant-garde, and boundary-pushing



**CQUESTT**

COURTESY OF CQUESTT



**Dee Diggs**

COURTESY OF DEE DIGGS

electronic strains, spotlighting pioneering icons **Richie Hawtin**, **Ben UFO**, **Avalon Emerson**, **MCR-T**, **SPFDJ**, **Nick León**, **Verraco**, **tINI**, and inventive collaborations like **Danny Daze** B2B **Ryan Elliott** and **Jyoty** B2B **Zack Fox**.

Rounding it all out, the community-focused Arts District stage spotlights some of the most renowned names in the LA scene — and this year it will be fittingly be in an indoor warehouse. Saturday highlights include **Victor Rodriguez** B2B **Perfect Lovers**, **Mez Monty**, **CQUESTT**, **Juliet Mendoza**, **Gay Felony**, and **TAJ**. Sunday brings **Star Eyes**, **DJ Warning**, **Mesmé**, **Mapamota**, **BB Shaine**, **Alex Casillas**, and additional alumni, proving Skyline's commitment to elevating the voices shaping the city's scene right at home.

At its core, this curation of international heavyweights and local innovators creates a melting pot that amplifies LA's

underground on the world stage, while keeping the festival deeply rooted in the creative cauldron of downtown.

Below, artists **CQUESTT**, **Dee Diggs**, **HAAi**, **Mapamota**, **Mesmé**, **Mez Monty**, **Perfect Lovers**, **Star Eyes** and **Victor Rodriguez** ground our understanding of the underground scene, and give us a preview of what they have in store for Skyline and beyond.

## **CQUESTT of Baile World: Arts District Stage on 2/28**

Can you share a bit about your collective **Baile World** and how it ties into the broader LA creative community?

**Baile World** is a global sounds dance party born out of the desire to create a space where identity, community, and rhythm collide. **Baile** celebrates the sounds of the diaspora — genres including **Reggaeton**,

**Dembow**, **Dancehall**, **Baile Funk**, **Ghetto Tech**, **Jersey Club**, & more! We highlight artists from LA and around the world, making global music accessible and prioritizing the city's POC LGBTQIA+ community.

What does it mean for you to play **Skyline**?

It's an honor to play for Skyline! This festival really embraces the city and not only hires local talent, but uplifts them! And to be a part of the Arts District stage that highlights LA's community leaders, around so many that have inspired my own journey, really feels full circle.

## **Dee Diggs: West Side Stage on March 1**

Why are you excited for Skyline and to play in Los Angeles?

I always love playing in Los Angeles



HAAi

COURTESY OF SOPHIE WEBSTER

and exploring different sides of what the city's nightlife and underground scenes have to offer. I've had many magical nights here, so I'm always intrigued at the opportunity to come and bring some of my "heavy, yet soft" East Coast energy with me.

It's my pleasure to bring my airy and patient old-school way of DJing to the center stage in a musical landscape in DJ culture that tends to center those who play music that is of faster pace. I like to slow it all down and remind people that dancing with their whole body feels better than fist pumping through every set of the festival. Rest assured, the raising of energy and tempo happens and is guaranteed, but I do it in a way that feels gradual and unifying.

### **HAAi: playing B2B with The Blessed Madonna - East Side Stage on Feb. 28.**

**Why are you excited for Skyline and to play in Los Angeles?**

2026 will be my first Skyline and I'm so happy to do it with one of my best friends, The Blessed Madonna. I have had such an amazing run in LA over the past several years having only really previously played eight hour sets here, I'm really buzzing to see what the festival scene is like in LA.

**What else do you have coming up this year?**

This is a big year for me! I have another album in the works that I'm super excited about, I have a new immersive live show

that we're working on bringing over to LA and I have about 40 (DJ) shows locked for the summer which feels really exciting!

### **Mapamota of Serenity Link: Arts District Stage on March 1**

**Can you share a bit about your collective Serenity Link and how it ties into the broader LA creative community?**

My collective Serenity Link started after the pandemic, during a time when in-person communal gatherings were desperately needed. Our number one goal has always been to create a space with love and care where people, especially femme, queer, and POC, could feel celebrated, feel joy, and connect with like-minded individuals. A space where they could form friendships at a party with a really good sound system and DJs who understand the intensity and hunger of our crowd, all while honoring and upholding the Black roots of electronic music.

**What does it mean for you to play Skyline?**

I really appreciate the way a big player like Skyline has taken the time to highlight and give recognition to local DJs and organizers. I think that's why our scene has been so welcoming to a larger, more commercial festival coming to our city and booking the DJs who usually play our parties. I'm so excited to be part of a festival of that size, with that level of production, alongside some legendary international DJs, all in my backyard.



Mesmé

COURTESY OF MESMÉ



Mapamota

COURTESY OF MAPAMOTA

### **Mesmé, resident of Into the Woods: Arts District Stage on March 1**

**Can you share a bit about your collective Into the Woods and how it ties into the broader LA creative community?**

I'm a resident DJ at Into The Woods, which is an underground electronic music series founded by New York-born producer and DJ Jimmy Maheras, who has been deeply embedded in the LA scene for years. The series launched just under a year after I moved to Los Angeles, and I attended one of the very first parties they ever threw. Luke Hess was headlining that one. That was December 2016, nearly a decade ago. I'm pretty sure I met Jimmy that night, and we connected professionally from there.

**What does it mean for you to play Skyline?**

I'm genuinely excited! I don't often step outside the warehouse context as an LA DJ, so playing in a festival environment feels expansive. I'm used to intimate, late-night rooms where I can build slowly and deliberately. Bringing that approach into a larger setting presents a different kind of challenge, which

I really welcome.

Festivals offer scale. As someone whose sound sits slightly outside the mainstream festival template, I don't always get to present what I do on a stage like this. A festival like Skyline gives me the opportunity to share that sensibility with a broader audience. There's something powerful about introducing nuance and narrative pacing into a big environment. I'm really looking forward to that exchange. Thanks so much to Kyle Arthur for believing in me! He's been working really hard to rep the LA underground on these stages, and I feel honored to have made the cut.

## Mez Monty of Signal Underground: Arts District Stage on Feb. 28

Can you share a bit about your collective Signal and how it ties into the broader LA creative community?

Signal is a melting pot of identities across the spectrum-queer and straight, younger and older heads, dolls and trans men — all coming together around a shared love of house music. Bringing different types of people together has been the intention since our very first party, and it has been amazing to see it come to life.

What does it mean for you to play Skyline?

It's always nice to be recognized for your work at home. Kyle, who's been a real bridge between Skyline and the LA underground, has always been super supportive of that work and what we're building. It means a lot to be included on this lineup alongside my peers and some of the best DJs in the industry.

## Perfect Lovers of Por Detroit: playing B2B with Victor Rodriguez - Arts District Stage on Feb. 28

Can you share a bit about your collective Por Detroit and how it ties into the broader LA creative community?

I am part of the collective Por Detroit which I feel attracts a weirder, wilder and more eclectic group of people with a lot of diversity very representative of LA. We like to include other artistic formats such as performance art, installations, fashion shows, pop up art shows, tattoos, etc which brings in more expression from the creative community.

What does it mean for you to play Skyline?

I love LA and the community here and it's great to see more intentional queer and local representation alongside bigger international names. Excited to see LA out in full force.

## Victor Rodriguez of Bears in Space: playing B2B with Perfect Lovers - Arts District Stage on Feb. 28

Can you share a bit about your collective Bears in Space and how it ties into the broader LA creative community?

We have been part of the queer LA scene for many years, across multiple parties, and I have to say LA is one of the tightest night-life scenes I have ever come across. Some of the ways we try to help is we have always offered free entry to our trans brothers and sisters, and also started a mutual aid program giving people in our community micro grants for times of need. These are very scary times and in the end we only have each other to watch out for us. It's truly a family affair.

What does it mean for you to play Skyline?

I'm very thrilled to be included in such a jewel to the LA music crown.

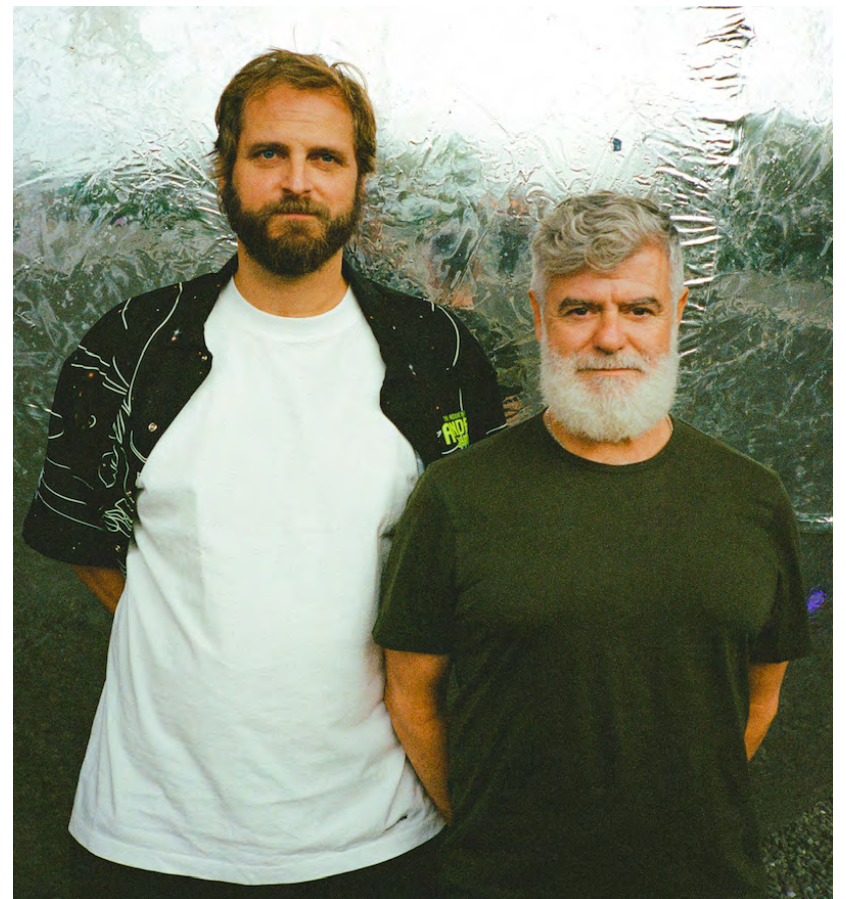
## Star Eyes of Warp Mode: Arts District Stage on March 1

Can you share a bit about your collective and how it ties into the broader LA creative community?

My crew is called Warp Mode. It's myself, Bianca Oblivion and AK Sports; we throw events and release our own music. Warp Mode is a home for our sound — a cross-genre of bass, breaks, rave and harder global club sounds — and was also created as a response to a lot of the parties we played pre-pandemic, which were largely straight male-dominated. With our events, we strive to be more inclusive of femmes, queer folks, and POC, and just generally create a more fun and less formulaic atmosphere in the lineups we book, the people we invite and the overall vibes.

What does it mean for you to play Skyline?

The curation of the Arts District stage is such an amazing representation of our local underground community and I'm so stoked to be playing alongside DJs like DJ Warning, BB Shaine, CQUESTTt, Mapamota and Juliet Mendoza, among others. The whole lineup is also world-class so it will be fun to run around to all the stages and get my dance on. I love playing music outside so I'm looking forward to playing in the middle of downtown, an area at the heart of a lot of what we do. AND! It's always something special to play for Factory 93/Insomniac because I was a regular at the early Insomniac raves (when they were 400 people not 40,000 people!) and they had a huge musical influence on me, so it's nice to be home. ;) 🏠



Victor Rodriguez and Perfect Lovers

COURTESY OF ZACH STAHL



Star Eyes

COURTESY OF HARP DIGITAL MEDIA