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Sheng Wang WANTS TO CHILL WITH HIS EPIPHYTIC HOMIES

By Mark Stefanos

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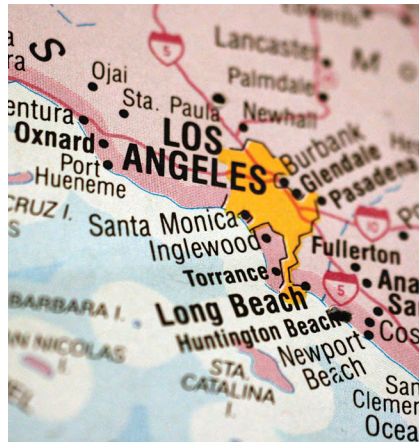
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EDITOR IN CHIEF: MARK STEFANOS
SENIOR EDITOR: MICHELE STUEVEN



MUSIC

COFFEE CHAT WITH NOSTALGIX: ON HER DEBUT ALBUM 'INFERNO' AND THE IRANIAN ROOTS THAT BUILT IT

BY CAROLINE CHANG

Nostalgix doesn't fit neatly into any box, and she never has. Born in Iran, raised in Canada, and now carving out serious real estate in the American dance music landscape, the DJ and producer has spent the last few years doing exactly what nobody told her she could: taking up space, making noise, and turning personal fire into a dancefloor experience.

Her debut album *Inferno*, out March 27 on Monstercat, is the cathartic record of that journey. We sat down with her at Alana's Coffee Roasters in West Hollywood to talk about where she came from, what she's burning down, and what she's building next.

LA Weekly: For readers who might be discovering you for the first time, tell us a bit about your story — growing up in Iran, moving to Canada, and eventually landing here in Los Angeles, making dance music.

Nostalgix: I was born in Iran and moved to Canada with my family when I was seven. I grew up loving art and always saw myself as a creative person. I was constantly trying and making different things. But growing up as an Iranian girl, that was never really a path that felt available to me. It's just not something that's accepted in that part of the world. So living in Canada, I really got to step into those parts of myself and learn to accept them.

I fell in love with dance music in 2016, my final year of high school. I started saving up all my money to go to festivals. I went to Tomorrowland, EDC, Ultra Music Festival, all by myself. I was on this path of just wanting to learn more and more about it, and the community just completely pulled me in. Eventually, I moved to Los Angeles in 2021, right after COVID, to pursue music and touring. It's been go, go, go ever since.

I also got into dance music originally going to festivals alone, and now when I tell people that, they think it's absolutely insane, but I was always so intrigued.



Nostalgix

That's the thing, I've always been just such a big fan, and I think my love for dance music is what drove me to become an artist.

Right, when something draws you in that hard, you have to —

Lean in.

You have to.

I honestly think that's the reason I have a career. I've always just followed my heart and what feels right. With life, everything is so unpredictable, and you don't know what direction you're supposed to go or how things will unfold but I think the best thing that you can do is follow your heart. I've done that, always leaned into what I'm passionate about, and it's led me here.

I love that. I really believe in doing the things that feel right, putting good energy and good work behind them, and then just trusting.

Yeah, trust the process. I'm the same way.

LA Weekly: So your debut album *Inferno* came out March 27th — congratulations, by the way — tell us how the record came to be and what inspired it.

Nostalgix: I started developing the concept about a year and a half ago. I'm an Iranian girl who moved to Canada and then moved to America by herself to follow her dreams. I've been touring since 2021. For years, I've been moving through the world alone, figuring everything out as I go. I've lived so many different versions of myself in that time. I've grown, I've changed, and I've had to let go of a lot of things I loved and cared about to stay on the path I'm on. The album is really about that — release and rebirth. It's about falling down, burning everything around you, and starting over. That's been the most persistent theme in my life. I keep reaching these points where I have to rebuild, and I keep getting back up.

I wrote down the lyric "To become the person I want. I must let go of who I was and all I've known." What do you feel like you're burning or releasing with this record?

It's more about acknowledging what no longer serves you, letting that go, and then leaning into what's next. The first song "Holy" is about being in love and not wanting to let go, but as you move through the album, you can feel that shift. You can't always hold onto everything you want. The record captures different versions of me and follows the common thread of having to release all of them.

I'm trying to remember a quote specifically about getting rid of the things in your past life to make room for the new things that are coming...



"Your new life is going to cost you your old one."

Yes, exactly, that's the one.

LA Weekly: You've described your Iranian heritage as one of the most important parts of who you are. You're releasing this album about empowerment and rebirth during a really turbulent moment in Iran's modern history. What is that like?

Nostalgix: It's very hard. A lot of my family is in Iran and I'm watching what's happening in real time. It's heartbreaking. But I'm very hopeful. Iranian people are some of the warmest, most incredible people you'll ever meet, and they deserve the best. I'm hopeful that positive change will come.

I know Iranian women have been at the forefront of the resistance movement in a very powerful, courageous way. Do you feel that spirit living within you?

Absolutely. Growing up in Iran, I was suppressed. It took me a long time to find my voice, to believe that I was allowed to go after what I wanted — that I could have a big impact, help people, take up space. That wasn't the norm I was raised in. So being where I am now, actually having a platform, it means a lot to me to lift other people up and speak up. I feel like I'm representing a group of people that's not commonly heard, and I want to be impactful in that.

I love to see talented women take up space in this industry, and I've



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TESSA PAISAN @TESSAPAIISAN

really noticed you over the years as such a strong female presence in dance music, so it's a real treat to get to talk to you today. Thank you.

Thanks, that means a lot. Being an Iranian woman in dance music, a space that's still overwhelmingly male, gives me even more drive to put out the best art and shows I possibly can. I want to use my voice in a strong and impactful way.

Next up: Nostalgix closes out the *Inferno* tour at EDC Las Vegas — the festival where her love for all of this began, and a fitting place to land after everything she's burned down to get here.

Follow Nostalgix on Instagram @nostalgixmusic. [Instagram icon]

WHAT'S POPPING UP

Greater Palm Springs Restaurant Week and Hollywood Farmers Market Turns 35

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

Greater Palm Springs Restaurant Week returns from Friday, May 29, to Sunday, June 7, with participating restaurants featuring special prix fixe menus and exclusive offerings.

Among the many participating restaurants are Susan Feniger and Mary Sue Milliken's Alice B in Palm Springs, Café One Eleven in Cathedral City, Seven Olive Modern Gastropub in Indian Wells, and Double Date in Rancho Mirage, inspired by the Coachella Valley's legacy as the Date Capitol of the World. There's also Mole Mexican Kitchen in Palm Desert, the Coachella Firehouse Bar & Grill, the colorful Delicias Mexican Cuisine in Desert Hot Springs, and Jackalope Ranch in Indio.

Prix fixe lunch menus will be priced at \$15, \$25, or \$35, and dinner menus at \$29, \$39, \$49, or \$59. Select restaurants will also offer restaurant week specials. For a complete list of participants, menu previews, and to make reservations, visit www.dinegps.com.

For every reservation made through dineGPS.com, \$1 will be donated to FIND Food Bank, helping to fight hunger throughout the Coachella Valley.

The Hollywood Farmers' Market celebrates 35 years this May, and Food Access LA is marking the milestone with a month of weekly activations starting Sunday, May 3, to celebrate one of LA's largest and longest-running farmers' markets, featuring more than 150 vendors and expanded food access efforts.

Throughout May, the market will increase Market Match for all EBT customers, offering an additional \$5 in matching funds to help stretch grocery budgets while directly supporting California farmers.



Susan Feniger and Mary Sue Milliken at Alice B

COURTESY OF MICHELE STUEVEN

Upcoming 35th Anniversary Programming Schedule

Sunday, May 10

- Trash-sorting competition with prizes, hosted by The Dirt Girls in partnership with LA Compost
- Food-eating competition with prizes

Sunday, May 17

- Blind taste test comparing farmers' market produce with conventional grocery store produce, highlighting quality and freshness

Sunday, May 24

- Natural dyeing workshop hosted by Hecho by Caye

Sunday, May 31

- Hands-on wax sachet workshop hosted by Serein Botanicals

Today, matcha is enjoyed around the world, yet the tools behind creating a perfect bowl of tea, particularly the *chasen* bamboo tea whisk, are less well known outside Japan. The delicate art of *chasen*-making began 500 years ago in Takayama, now part of Nara Prefecture, where generations of artisans have refined the art using locally prized bamboo. The 20th-generation *chasen* master, Tango Tanimura, will travel from Takayama to give a talk and live demonstration at [JAPAN HOUSE Salon | Level 5](#) on Sunday, May 31, offering rare insight into this enduring, deep-rooted tradition.

The [Tastemakers](#) series at the Getty Center continues on Mother's Day Weekend on **Saturday, May 9, with [Tastemakers: Earth Mother with Paige Emery](#)**, which celebrates Mother Earth in a culinary event featuring the ecological artist and herbalist, which will include a talk and brunch inspired by historical cookbooks from the Getty Library collection.

While visitors enjoy select recipes, Emery will be joined in conversation with Melissa Goldstein, founder and editor of *Mother Tongue* magazine, to explore rituals of remembering the earth. Together, they will reflect on how art, healing practices, and ecological thought can reconnect us to ancestral memory and inspire more just and embodied futures.

Following the talk, Emery will perform a sound piece in the Getty Central Garden, weaving together the healing arts and critical ecology, ecopoetics, and socio-environmental practice. [\[L\]](#)



Matcha Master comes to LA

COURTESY OF JAPAN HOUSE LA



Vulcan taco at Delicias

COURTESY OF MICHELE STUEVEN

CULTURE

COMEDY Q&A: SHENG WANG WANTS TO CHILL WITH HIS EPIPHYTIC HOMIES

BY MARK STEFANOS

Sheng Wang seems like that unassuming dude at a party vibing in the kitchen while loud drunks suck up attention. You'd think, "Oh, he seems chill?" Then you eventually talk to him and become absolutely rapt.

His stand-up is genius in that way. With a calm cadence but wild mind, he takes a microscope to the most relatable, mundane things in life, and finds all sorts of hilarious chloroplasts and ribosomes of profound takeaways.

Wang's newest special *Purple*, streaming now on Netflix, tackles the day's pressing topics ranging from how kids are wasteful with berries, shoes on in the house, to the shrinking icons when you open too many browser tabs, all articulated with an incredible vocabulary. The name comes from the special nature of getting to use the purple toothbrush from the variety pack you buy in bulk.

After his first Netflix special *Sweet and Juicy*, a Taiwanese friend with great comedy taste blew up our group chat with his clips, telling us how significant and relatable the show was for Asian millennials like himself. We took his rec and dove into Wang's catalogue, then caught him live, and found his comedy universal.



Sheng Wang



PHOTO BY DUSTIN RABIN / @DUSTINRABIN

Wang's buddy Ali Wong produced both specials. He's the godfather to her kids, and dedicated his last two specials to his nieces and nephews, family and friends. (And to his favorite tree, which so far, goes unspecified.)

This graciousness carries to his audience, who Wang thanks on *Purple*, telling them how much the ushers love his shows given their loving, wholesome vibe. "You guys are kind, you respect yourselves, you respect others, and you just want to go to bed early," he says about his audience, before he launches into another hyper-specific and accurate bit about bedtime routines.

Of course, the audience is responding to the man they're watching on stage wearing a flowy button-up fit, like the best dressed man at a sleepover. His zen-like stage presence is a highlight in the global comedy scene, and a welcome change of pace, especially if the comic energy you typically gravitate towards is angry, sarcastic or farty. Some stand-ups need to jump around and yell and shock you — and we love that! But it takes a special act like Sheng who can get you in tears with the most subtle and precise act-outs.

Born in Taiwan, raised in Houston, college at UC Berkeley, and with stints in SF and NY, we're thankful Sheng Wang now calls the Westside of LA home, which means we can catch him popping up at shows around town pretty regularly. This week, he was featured at a few shows at the prolific Netflix is a Joke Fest.

Read on as we dive a bit into his infatuation with plants, his journey in comedy, and his employment by a Vietnamese cokehead:

LA Weekly: You have great diction. How did you become so verbal?

Sheng Wang: I'm not a voracious reader in practice, but I really like the idea of books! I love how reading can help you notice things that are part of your world, but went unappreciated until they were revealed by a writer who articulated them. I love the beauty, power, and diversity of language, and finding the perfect word to describe something. Some words I'm currently feeling are "sop," "deft," "patina," and "murmur."

Speaking of, in both your last specials, you talk about gluts of information that you never get through — books and browser tabs. (Very relatable!) What is

it about information that seems to overwhelm you?

There's so much to learn and so little time!

You seem so chill on stage. What makes you laugh out loud?

Hearing my friends share stories about their wild and exciting lives. Hanging out with my nieces, nephews, and godchildren and watching them be honest and vulnerable and silly.

If you could be a plant, what would you be?

A big old oak or redwood covered in epiphytic homies like mosses and ferns.

What cities have the best gardens?

I've yet to visit them all but I do like Portland, Denver, SF area, Dallas, St. Louis, Seattle, Vancouver, BC.

What are your favorite gardens in LA?

I love the LA Arboretum for its sizable offerings and accessibility. It was one of my first loves, garden-wise. I do also particularly enjoy the party-like atmosphere of the desert garden at the Huntington Library. So many different succulents with their own looks and personalities.

What was the worst job you ever had?

Worst job I ever had was trying to sell

LA WEEKLY CLASSIFIEDS

EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION

Harman Professional Inc. seeks a **Principal Acoustics Engineer** in Northridge, CA to design and develop complex acoustic systems. \$146,786 - \$146,786. Apply @ [#18186](http://www.jobpostingtoday.com).

Carvana, LLC seeks a **Manager, Engineering** in Los Angeles, CA, to be responsible for the end-to-end software development life cycle (SDLC) for the team. \$237,500.00-\$280,000.00. Telecommuting is permitted. Apply at <https://www.jobpostingtoday.com/Ref/#33499>.

Beverly Hills Medical Imaging (Beverly Hills, CA) F/T positions. **Chief Medical Sonographer:** perform specialized ultrasound exams & comprehensive echocardiograms to assess heart function + structure + blood flow; req Bach or equiv + 6 months exp + spec skills; \$83,242-85k. Visit www.beverlyhillsmedimaging.com or send resume to: careers@beverlyhillsmedimaging.com. Principals only. EOE.

Property Manager: Bach. in Business or related + 6 mos. exp. in job offered or any supervisory/mgmt. position. Mail resume to Rosano Property Mgmt. Attn.: President. 338 N. Vermont Ave., L.A. CA 90004.



PHOTOS BY DUSTIN RABIN / @DUSTINRABIN

newspaper subscriptions door to door in high school. We worked in crews and were driven around town and dropped off at various neighborhoods and apartment complexes by a Vietnamese cokehead. I was terrible at selling and interacting with strangers. Because we worked on commission, I made mostly nothing for months.

What kind of person were you in high school?

I was not a class clown. I was pretty timid and avoided pulling attention. I generally was a good kid with good grades, and did what you were supposed to do to apply for college. High school was a relatively calm period between my wannabe bad boy days in middle school and drunken tomfoolery in college.

Who's the funniest person in your family?

My dad, according to my dad. My cousins find him funny, too.

How was your approach to comedy different in SF vs. NYC vs. LA?

Approach is the same. I generally have

the same approach in every city. Just try to be the funniest you can be that night.

How'd you learn to be a better comedian?

I started out by being very detail-oriented and getting as many reps as I could. But I think comedians grow in different ways during different parts of their career. I still really find joy in writing and articulating a joke, but more recently, I think I've started to appreciate being on stage and delivering the material with more thought about the performance and my physicality.

Favorite drama movie: *Yiyi* by Edward Yang.

Favorite TV comedy: either the BBC version of "The Office," or "Stranger with Candy."

Favorite sport to play: pickleball.

Favorite video game: Rocket League.

Favorite song: "Close to Me" by The Cure.

Watch Sheng Wang's *Purple* streaming now on Netflix and follow him on Instagram @shengwangtime. 📺