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Manila to Mojave

BINI CONQUERS COACHELLA

By Mark Stefanos



ON THE COVER:

Photo: Courtesy of ABS-CBN Music
 Design: Mark Stefanos

MUSIC 2-6

Mitski brings nostalgia and angst to Hollywood High.

BY SARAH MAHMOODI

P-pop darlings BINI makes history as the first all-Filipino group to play Coachella.

BY MARK STEFANOS

ENTERTAINMENT 7

George Schlatter socks it you at the Beverly Hills Film Festival.

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

FOOD - WHAT'S POPPING UP 8

A new spring menu at Linden and Florence Underground.

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

CLASSIFIEDS 2



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SENIOR EDITOR: MICHELE STUEVEN

LA WEEKLY CLASSIFIEDS

EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION

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MUSIC

MITSKI BRINGS 'NOTHING IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN TO ME' TO HOLLYWOOD HIGH FOR FIVE SOLD-OUT NIGHTS OF TEENAGE REVERIE

BY SARAH MAHMOODI

With the trauma, heart-break and awkwardness that come with the high school experience, who would ever go back after graduation? Mitski is who, and she invited nearly ten thousand fans to join her last week at a five-day residency at Hollywood High School, March 30, 31 and April 2, 3 and 4.

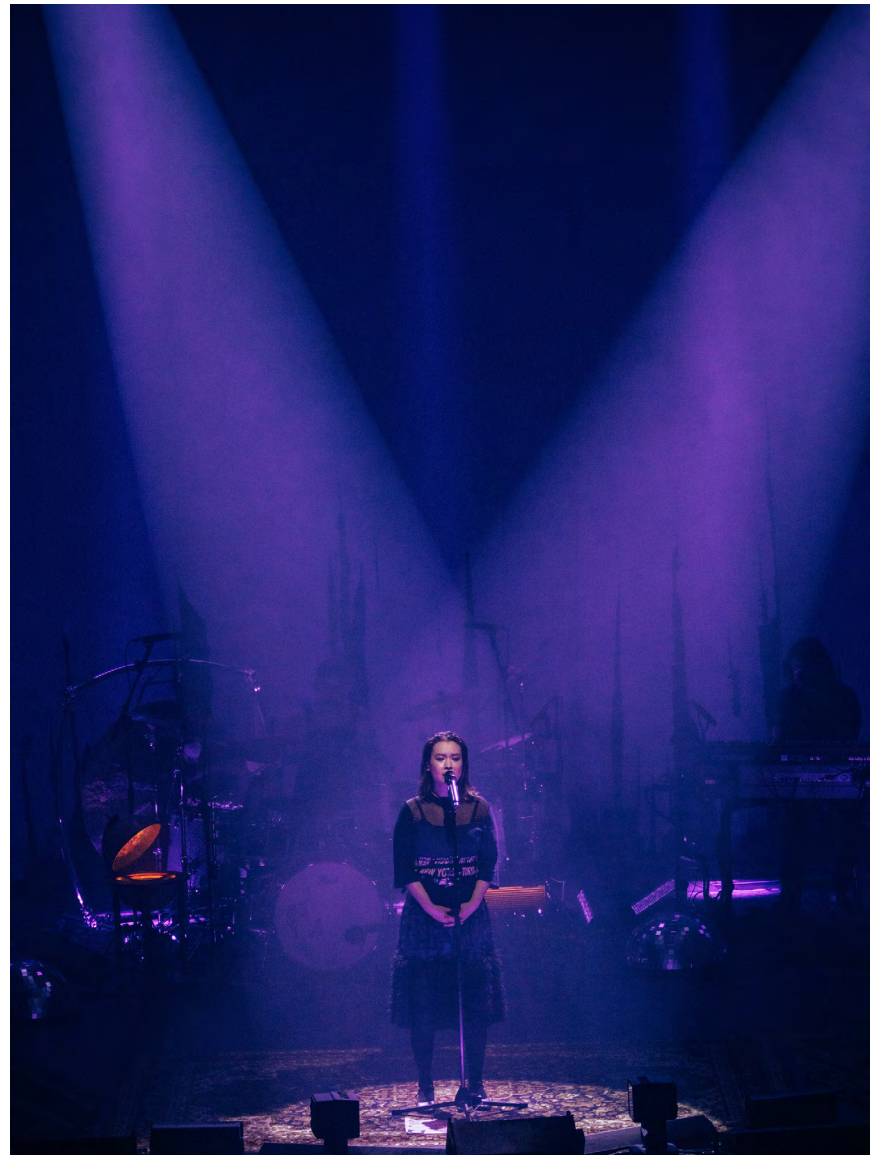
The singer-songwriter, born in Japan to an American dad and Japanese mom, held the run as part of the world tour for her eighth studio album, *Nothing's About to Happen to Me*. Known for her emotional depth, minimalist yet dynamic sound, and blend of indie rock, pop, and folk, her music centers on themes of identity, isolation, inner conflict and love.

The show being held in a high school auditorium magnified the power of her lyrics, as her subject matter is ever-present in the minds of her young listeners, especially high schoolers, with most fans in attendance being teens and young adults (and their chaperoning parents).

One night, Mitski addressed the irony of holding her show in a high school. "We're basically bringing y'all to possibly one of the most traumatizing places, get you all in emotional turmoil, sit you down, and then unleash this music on you," she joked.

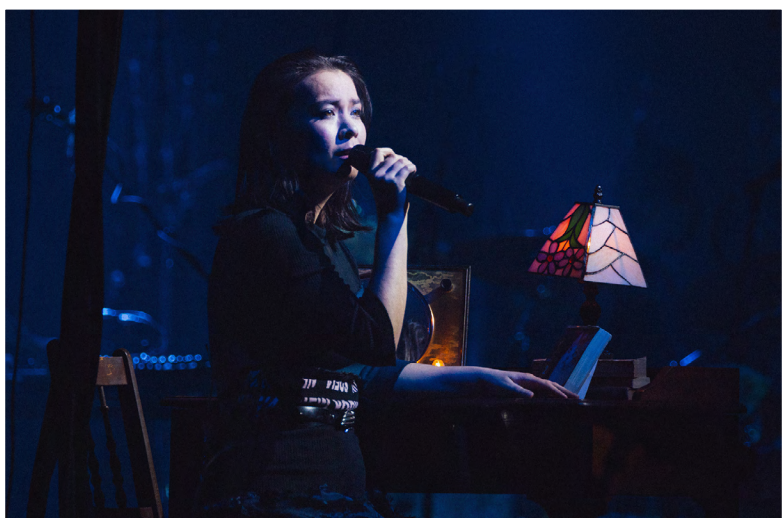
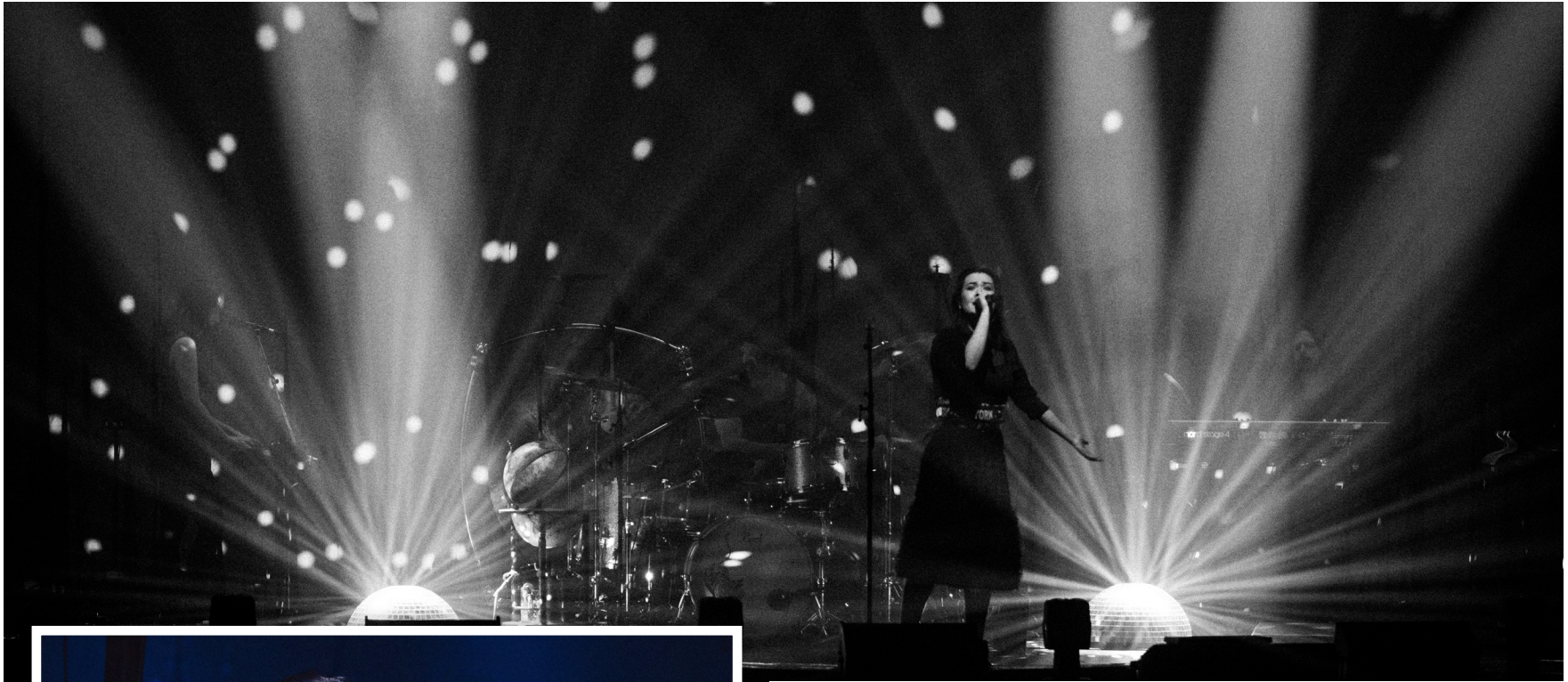
But she encouraged her fans to embrace their emotions. "You know, it's dark in here. No one can see you. You can cry," she laughed, "I'm crying on the inside."

Supported by opener, singer-songwriter [Haley Heynderickx](#), Mitski's 90-minute sets featured tracks primarily from her albums *Nothing's About to Happen to Me* and its predecessor, 2023's *The Land Is Inhospitable and So Are We*. Other notable inclusions were "I Bet On Losing Dogs," "Francis Forever," and "Working for the Knife."



Mitski performs at Hollywood High School

COURTESY OF LEXIE ALLEY



PHOTOS COURTESY OF LEXIE ALLEY

The stage design for the show included a tattered silkscreen backdrop, with unique visuals for each song: scenes from old Hollywood films, plus cats and ocean waves interspersed with intense strobe lights. The stage was adorned with a vintage desk, rugs, lamps, and two half-dome disco balls that were beautifully illuminated during the song “My Love, Mine All Mine.” She choreographed deliberate movements that set the tone of each song, whether dancing and twirling, stumbling disoriented at times, or standing tall, gazing deep into the audience.

The concert also had an interactive fan experience called the Tansy House, a whimsical walk-through space and photo opp. The gold velvet-draped path to Tansy House led into a deconstructed house with mock stained-glassed doors, vintage desks full of photographs, books, cat food, hanging apples, and a 1998 iMac G3 desktop computer covered in Post-It Notes. Paper was left out for fans to write letters to Mitski, as well as vintage rotary dial phones, where fans could listen to a message from the artist, or leave her a message of their own.

Hollywood High School has a history of hosting popular artists in its theater. We spoke with **Principal Samuel Dovatian** about the school’s history. “When Mitski’s team reached out to us a year ago to hold the concert series here, I was thrilled that the tradition continues,” he said. “From iconic performers like Elvis Costello in the 70s and Morrissey back in 2013, I think it’s

neat that artists want to come back to the smaller venue, the smaller setting, and give the audience members that experience. I think it really adds to the memory and the value.”

He also mentioned how much it meant to him to bring the show to the school, where his own students were able to attend. “I love my parents, students, and school community. I want to do what’s best for them.” He continued, “Concerts like Mitski’s are an opportunity for students to see that high-value, high-production, concert experiences are possible for them. My hope is that they are inspired by Mitski to continue to pursue their own singing, dancing, technical work, and set design studies.”

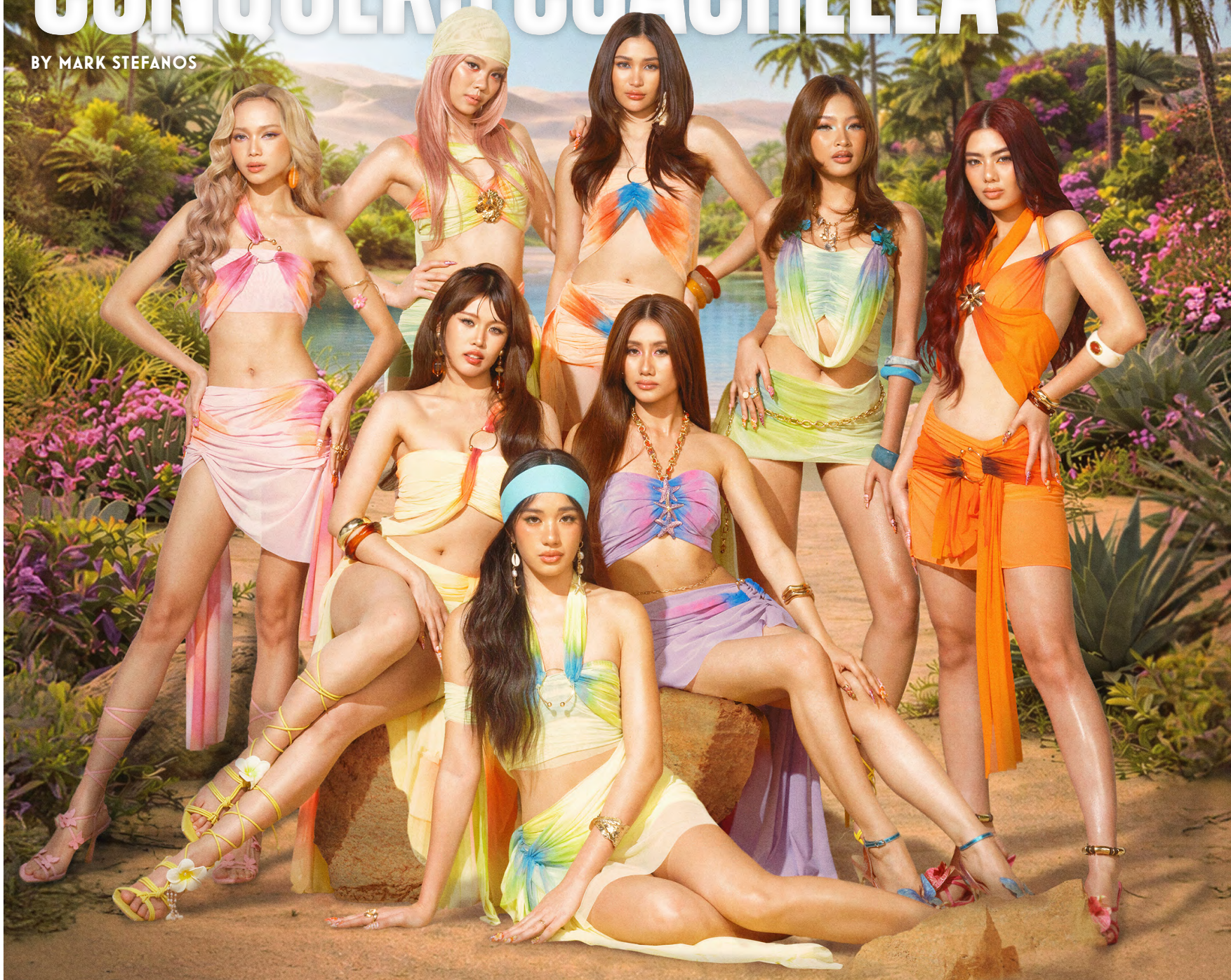
Hollywood High prides itself on its rich history and continued legacy of providing vigorous arts, theater, and production programs. Dovatian shared that fifty students were awarded tickets to the shows in a raffle, adding to the positivity and excitement the shows brought to campus, and rental fees for the auditorium were used to pay for the 2026 graduating class’s caps and gowns. Fans of all ages packed the shows, with a notable demographic of youths and teens chaperoned by their parents.

Mitski’s ongoing world tour just completed its North American stops in New York, Mexico City and LA, and now moves to Turkey, Europe and the Pacific Rim. Though, fans abroad probably won’t get the chance to sit in a school auditorium to reminisce on their high school days. 📺

MUSIC

MANILA TO MOJAVE: BINI CONQUERS COACHELLA

BY MARK STEFANOS



BINI

COURTESY OF ABS-CBN MUSIC

This weekend at Coachella, eight young women from the Philippines will etch their name into music history when they step onto the Mojave stage. BINI — Aiah, Colet, Gwen Jhoanna, Maloi, Mikha, Sheena and Stacey — becomes the first all-Filipino girl group and the first P-pop act ever to perform at the iconic festival, performing on Friday both weekends.

It's an uncanny achievement for them. "Coachella was something we used to talk about, almost like a dream moment, where we asked each other, 'What if one day?'" leader Jhoanna says. "So, when it actually became real, there was a mix of disbelief and sincere gratitude. It's one of those milestones that reminds us how powerful manifestation and hard work can be."

Known as the "Nation's Girl Group," BINI crafts high-energy pop that fuses polished production, sharp choreography, and a sound that blends global pop with Filipino sensibilities — bright melodies, layered harmonies, and bilingual lyrics that move seamlessly between English and Tagalog. Tracks like "Pantropiko," "Blink Twice," and "Cherry On Top," have sparked massive TikTok dance challenges, leading their catalog to surpass 2 billion global audio streams. With a fanbase of over 20 million followers across social platforms, BINI is transforming from a home-grown sensation into an international pop force.

Formed in 2019 through the Filipino network ABS-CBN's idol training show "Star Hunt Academy," the members spent years in intensive training before debuting in 2021. Early viral moments and steady releases built momentum, but 2023's "Pantropiko" marked their explosive breakthrough. Since then, they have achieved a string of firsts: opening at KCON LA, selling out the 50,000-capacity Philippine Arena as the first Filipino act to do so on their BINIverse World Tour, and winning MTV EMA's Best Asia Act, with many more accolades notched. Their world tour took them to stages across Asia, Europe, and North America, strengthening a devoted international fanbase called Blooms.

Their Coachella billing is especially meaningful in California, home to the largest Filipino American community in the U.S. Roughly 1.6–1.7 million Filipinos live in the state, about 38% of the entire U.S. Filipino population. The Los Angeles metro area alone is home to over 500,000 Filipino residents, representing the largest concentrations of Filipinos outside the Philippines.

This vibrant diaspora has long sustained cultural traditions through family, food, and an unmistakable passion



BINI

COURTESY OF ABS-CBN MUSIC

for music — from robust church choirs to heartfelt ballads crooned at karaoke sessions that echo the Philippines' deep love of song. BINI's Coachella appearance will be a spark of Pinoy pride for the community, a rare moment of large-scale visibility reflecting a culture long present but often underrepresented on global stages.

BINI's indie debut comes a day after the release of their new EP *Signals*, a six-track project that captures those big-feel moments "before emotions are fully expressed." Tracks range in flavor — lead single "Blush" bumps a tropical vibe, "Unang Kilig" (in English, "first thrill") is a playful pop standard, while "Step Back" closes out the EP on a sultry hip-hop note. The project builds on their previous album *Flames* with more fluid bilingual storytelling and bolder expressiveness, shaped in part through work with international producers.

The release lands at the perfect moment. "Coachella represents a new chapter for us globally," says Stacey. "*Signals* reflects where we are artistically right now, and releasing it right before that stage feels like we're introducing the world to the next version of BINI in real-time."

We spoke with BINI ahead of their Mojave sets and performance at the GRAMMY Museum on April 21. They opened up about crafting their Coachella set, the creative heartbeat of *Signals*, their unbreakable sisterhood, and the message they hope to leave with both longtime Blooms and first-time listeners.

LA WEEKLY: Being the first Filipino group to perform at Coachella is huge. What does this moment mean for you and for P-pop and Filipino artists globally?

AIAH: It means everything. We carry this moment not just for ourselves, but for Filipino artists everywhere. We hope it shows that Filipino music has a place on the global stage, and that our language, our stories, and our culture can resonate far beyond the Philippines. It's bigger than BINI!

Have you approached this set differently knowing it's a lot of people's first time seeing BINI live?

COLET: Definitely. We've been very intentional about creating a set that introduces who we are right away — showcasing our energy, our sound, and our identity. We want someone who's never

heard of BINI to walk away feeling like they get us. There's a lot of thought put into pacing, transitions, and moments that feel instantly connecting.

What kind of experience are you building for the Mojave crowd? And what have rehearsal sessions been like?

GWEN: We want the Mojave tent to feel like a full-on BINI world with high energy, emotional moments, and a sense of connection even in a huge crowd. Rehearsals have been intense but really exciting. We've been pushing ourselves physically and creatively, fine-tuning every detail so that everything feels effortless on stage.

Are there any songs off *Signals* you're most excited to debut?

MALOI: We are excited to perform "Blush" for the first time at Coachella. It has wonderfully intricate choreography that we hope the audience will enjoy watching. Some songs will feel familiar yet new. There are songs that build slowly and then explode, which we think will translate really well live. Maybe a few surprises!

The new EP focuses on emotions "before they're fully expressed." How did that concept come together creatively?



BINI in Seattle on the BINiverse World Tour 2025

PHOTO: DAVID LEE, CC BY 4.0, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

MIKHA: We were really inspired by those quiet, in-between moments and feelings you don't always say out loud right away. Creatively, we explored softer tones and lyrics that feel a little more introspective. It's a different kind of vulnerability for us.

Was having the project blend English and Tagalog more fluidly a conscious move for global audiences?

JHOANNA: It was natural because that's how we speak and express ourselves, so it felt authentic. At the same time, we wanted to show that language isn't a barrier since it's part of what makes the music richer. We love that people can connect emotionally even if they don't understand every word.

How does Signals build on or differ from Flames in terms of identity and storytelling?

SHEENA: *Flames* had songs like "Infinity" and "Katabi" which were more subtle and reflective, while *Signals*, with "Blush" and "Step Back," are more emotionally confident and expressive songs. We'd like to think of *Signals* as a continuation of *Flames*, in terms of the narrative of the songs in those EPs.

How did working with international producers push your sound evolution from Flames?

COLET: It is always a great learning moment working with international

producers. It opened our eyes — and ears — to things beyond our usual boundaries, creatively speaking. Working with international producers challenged us to experiment more with structure and even how we deliver vocals. It pushed us outside our comfort zone in a good way, while still keeping our identity intact. We're fortunate that we have collaborative producers who allow us to learn and experiment.

When did it start to feel like things were truly going global?

MALOI: There wasn't just one moment as it happened gradually. But performing outside the Philippines from our world tour last year, seeing fans from different countries singing along ... that's when it really hit us. It made everything feel real.

How has your relationship as a group evolved now that you're on a global stage?

GWEN: We've become even closer now as a group because of the shared experiences that are unique to us. There's a deeper level of trust now because we're navigating bigger stages and bigger pressures together. We really rely on each other and our team.

When things get overwhelming, what keeps the group grounded?

STACEY: Each other, always. We remind ourselves why we started, and we

try to stay present. Even small moments like laughing together backstage, enjoying meals together, help keep everything balanced.

Is there a new group tradition or inside joke from this LA prep period?

MIKHA: We've had a lot of long rehearsals, to random food runs, to integrating with LA culture, like trying to visit an amusement park, and somehow those always turn into inside jokes. There's definitely a few phrases we keep repeating that only we understand now and when we look at each other, we get it.

How do you maintain individuality while presenting a unified identity?

JHOANNA: Over the years, we have learned to respect each other's differences. Each of us has our own personality and strengths and this allows us to learn from each other. Instead of trying to blend that out, we highlight it. That's what makes BINI feel complete.

What would surprise your younger selves about where you are now?

SHEENA: Probably how far this dream has taken us in such a short time and how many people we've been able to reach. We knew then that we would be able to achieve our big dreams, Coachella included. But seeing it happen in 2026, with BINI barely five years old, is something of a pleasant surprise still. We are extremely grateful for this.

After Coachella, what's the next milestone you're dreaming about?

AIAH: We want to keep growing globally with doing more tours, more music, and more opportunities to connect with people everywhere. The dream just keeps expanding!

If someone discovers BINI for the first time at Coachella, what do you hope they take away?

COLET: We hope they feel our energy and sincerity. Even if they don't know us yet, we want them to leave feeling something real and hopefully curious to learn more about who we are. We hope they discover that Filipino music is something that they can get into and discover, not just BINI's music but the many talented Filipino artists out there as well.

What message do you want to send to Blooms as you debut on the world stage?

MALOI: To our Blooms, thank you for believing in us from the very beginning! Your untiring support and love is really what keeps us going. We are taking that love with us when we go on that stage! We hope to make you proud!

Follow BINI on Instagram @bini_ph, and catch their Coachella set live on YouTube at 4:15 p.m. (PDT), today, Friday, April 10, and in Manila, 7:15 a.m., Saturday, April 11. 📺

THE BEVERLY HILLS FILM FESTIVAL WILL SOCK IT TO YOU STARTING MONDAY, APRIL 13

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

Sock It To Me, a new documentary on producer/director/showrunner and Godfather of Comedy, George Schlatter, will open the 26th Annual Beverly Hills Film Festival on Monday, April 13, which runs through Sunday, April 19, at the TCL Chinese Theater.

At 96, legendary producer Schlatter reflects on a lifetime of groundbreaking television, from *Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In* to *Real People* and the creative revolution that followed, paving the way for shows like Saturday Night Live.

The film offers rare archival footage and candid interviews with artists who have known Schlatter, including Goldie Hawn, Tom Hanks, Lily Tomlin, Martin Short, Billy Crystal, Jay Leno, Jimmy Kimmel, Lionel Richie, Berry Gordy, and Clive Davis.

Schlatter revolutionized television with pre-TikTok rapid-fire satire, bold political humor, and a visual style that captured the spirit of a changing America. At the height of the cultural upheaval of the late 1960s, *Laugh-In* became a national phenomenon, launching careers, putting the establishment and hippies on the same screen, and getting President Richard Nixon to say "Sock It To Me" on national television.

"The women on that show were responsible for its success more than anything," Schlatter, who started his career as a bouncer at Ciro's nightclub, which ironically, is now The Comedy Store, tells *LA Weekly*. We had some very funny ladies. Goldie, Lily, Ruth Buzzi, Jo Anne Worley,



Rowan and Martin's "Laugh-In"

Teresa Graves, and Judy Carne. Goldie alone was a goldmine and was probably the brightest woman on television. She was easily confused, and the secret was to keep her confused. She was about as ditzzy as I am skinny, and that laugh was pure gold. Joanne was an air raid siren, and Lily was super informed about everything that was going on. Teresa Graves was amazing. We were doing humor with a gorgeous black lady, which was unheard of at that point."

PHOTOS COURTESY OF GEORGE SCHLATTER

The documentary is a continuous parade of stories and humor from those who have worked with Schlatter over his decades-long career, including his wife of 70 years, Jolene Brand.

"*Laugh-In* was a romp," says Schlatter, who equates humor with longevity, citing comic legends like Betty White, Norman Lear, Mel Brooks, and Milton Berle, among others. "Everybody needs to laugh. When you see a baby laugh, you know it's a bright child. Laughing and comedy are the best

therapy. If you can make somebody laugh, they're well on their way to recovery."

With 450 films representing more than 65 countries, other highlights at the festival include:

- **Eddie Cochran: Don't Forget Me**, directed by Kristy Bell, starring Kiefer Sutherland, Keith Richards, Ronnie Wood, Roger Daltrey, Billy Idol, John Waters, Linda Perry, Sting, and Yungblud.
- **The Highest Stakes**, directed by Tony Dean Smith, starring Seth Green, Kevin Dillon, Charlie Weber, and Dylan Walsh.
- **Crystal Cross**, directed by Richie James Follin, starring Rubyrose Hill, Missi Pyle, Samantha Robinson, and Lukas Haas.
- **Elvis, Rocky, & Me: The Carol Connors Story**, directed by Alex Rotaru, starring Carol Connors, Barbi Benton, Mike Tyson, Dionne Warwick, and Diane Warren.
- **Boris is Dead**, directed by James Cullen Bressack, starring Dane Cook, Cam Gigandet, Jesse Metcalfe, James Duval, Steven Bauer, and Martin & Jesse Kove.
- **Bonding**, directed by Victoria Trofimenko, starring Jefferson White, Gloria Reuben, Tate Donovan, and Alexandra Doke.

In addition to high-profile premieres, there will also be filmmaker Q&As, curated panel discussions, and industry networking events designed to spark collaboration and spotlight bold new voices. Outdoor programming and special events across Beverly Hills are also planned. [A]



Lily Tomlin and George Schlatter in "Sock it to Me."



'Air raid siren' Jo Anne Worley in "Sock it to Me."

FOOD

WHAT'S UP POPPING UP

A New Spring Menu at Linden and Florence Underground

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

Kicking off on Wednesday, April 8, Chef Jonathan Harris at **Linden** in Hollywood will launch his new spring menu and revive some of the cozy restaurant's cult favorites.

Each of Harris's inventive dishes comes with stories of his life and travels, like the lamb tartare, paired with Luxardo cherry chutney, mint, fennel, and cured egg yolk, served with house-made focaccia. It's his play on the traditional midtown Manhattan expense account beef tartare lunch.

The Concrete Beach is a Linden-style surf and turf with Manila and smoked pas-trami, and the Cali-Flower is cauliflower in four ways—puréed, grilled, pickled, and fried, finished with a Southern-inspired collard green verde topped with fried parsnips

Returning favorites include the dairy-free, Sweet Corn & Pea Agnolotti, and the 24-hour strained Rice Over Lamb, rib topped with fried, puffed saffron rice, the chef's take on memories of late-night street stops at the Halal Guys at 53rd and 6th in Manhattan.

The German

Chocolate tart
COURTESY OF LINDEN



Chocolate Tart is a glis-tening dark chocolate creme set in a house-made sable crust, finished with a coconut pecan topping, fresh chili cream, and a dusting of powdered sugar.

Signature dishes on the menu not to miss are the breaking bread appetizer, featuring a trio of house-made breads—warm cornbread, herbed focaccia, and an everything bagel, all served with a trio of savory spreads like fried chicken butter, schmaltz cream cheese, and extra virgin seasoned olive oil, reflecting the Jewish and Italian cultures Harris grew up with on Long Island.

The Not a Pot Pie is always a sellout. Inspired by the meat pies of the UK and the Caribbean, it features Wagyu oxtail in a deep oxtail demi-glace, balanced by a sweet plantain chutney that nods to his Costa Rican roots. Only 25 are made each night and take two full days to prepare, from the 24-hour slow-cooked Wagyu oxtail to the hybrid puff-croissant pastry.

Herbed Duck Fat Fries are mashed potato-style fries double-fried in duck fat and tossed with herbs and served with an elegant lemon caviar aioli.

Launching on Friday, April 24, **All'Antico Vinaio** in Santa Monica will be launching Florence Underground, a new dinner series that transforms the space into



The Concrete Beach
COURTESY OF LINDEN

a late-night Tuscan table, built around one of Italy's most legendary dishes: bistecca alla Fiorentina.

Running on the last Friday of every month, the reservation-only experience is \$65 per person, with an additional \$35 for a wine pairing, and is designed for groups of two to ten and served entirely family-style. With just 30 seats available per seating, the format is intentionally intimate with shared plates and a menu that unfolds the way it would in Florence: abundant, fuss-free, and anchored in tradition.

The evening begins with a spread of cured meats and cheeses alongside All'Antico Vinaio's signature house-made schiacciata, before moving into the main

event, a thick-cut, Tuscan-style T-bone, grilled over high heat and served rare to medium-rare. No marinades, no heavy seasoning, just salt, olive oil, and technique. Classic sides and dessert follow, with optional wine pairings and a curated selection of beer, wine, and non-alcoholic offerings available.

At the center of Florence Underground is the bistecca alla Fiorentina itself, a dish with roots tracing back to the Renaissance and a defining symbol of Tuscan cuisine.

Available exclusively at the Santa Monica location and offered on limited dates, Florence Underground marks the first time All'Antico Vinaio has introduced this immersive, dinner-only format in the U.S., shifting from its fast-casual roots into something slower, more intimate, and harder to access. It's Florence, after dark. Reservations are now available for April 24 through June 26, 2026, on **Toast**. 🍷



Lamb tartare
COURTESY OF LINDEN



Florence Underground

COURTESY ALLANTICO VINAIO