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INSIDE CAMPUS CIRCLE



- 04 **FILM CHANNING TATUM**
Falls for Amanda Seyfried in *Dear John*
- 06 **FILM PROJECTIONS**
- 06 **FILM SCREEN SHOTS**
- 07 **FILM DVD DISH**
- CULTURE SPRING BREAK TRAVEL**
- 10 **HOCKING HILLS**
- 10 **KENTUCKY**
- 11 **ST. LOUIS**
- 11 **MILWAUKEE**
- 12 **SONOMA**
- 12 **LAKE CHARLES: Mardi Gras!**
- 13 **CULTURE BEAUTY BEAT**
- 15 **MUSIC FREQUENCY**
- 15 **MUSIC MUSIC REPORT**
- 16 **MUSIC WILD BEASTS**
Make Their First Foray to the U.S.
- 17 **MUSIC CD REVIEWS**
- 18 **CULTURE ON THE MENU**
- 18 **CULTURE GAMES & GADGETS**
- 19 **CULTURE THE ART OF LOVE**
- 20 **SPORTS THE SPORTS WANDERER**
- 20 **SPORTS CENTER ICE**
- 21 **SPORTS SUPERBOWL PREVIEW**
- 22 **CULTURE FUN FOR LESS**
- 22 **CULTURE CURTAIN CALL**
- 23 **EVENTS THE 10 SPOT**
- 23 **CULTURE PAGES**

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FILMINTERVIEWS

Campus Circle > Film > Interviews



Channing Tatum and Amanda Seyfried star in *Dear John*.

CHANNING TATUM

Dear John's soldier falls for Spring Break love.

BY SASHA PERL-RAVER

"WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO TRULY LOVE ANOTHER?"

That's the question Nicholas Sparks – and his wily, tear-jerking ways – asks in *Dear John*, the most recent film adaptation from the author to arrive on the big screen. The movie, which tells the story of John Tyree (Channing Tatum), a Special Forces soldier, who falls in love with Savannah Curtis (Amanda Seyfried) while on leave at home in North Carolina, is about "first love, that one you cannot get right no matter how hard you try," Tatum, sporting a goatee and a luxurious black cashmere sweater, says after settling into a table at the Four Seasons in Beverly Hills.

The actor, who deftly exposes a masculine yet tender and vulnerable John Tyree, has been attached to the project since it began development four years ago, long before the studio had a script, a director or a co-star. He says it was the imperfection of the love story that first attracted him to the material.

"You're supposed to *not* do things right," Tatum smiles. "That's what I loved about reading the book, and that's what I love about the movie. It's not a fantastical box of a movie with a bow on top. It's real. It has more edge and darkness to it than some of [Sparks'] novels in the past."

Adding to the realism was the inclusion of Oscar-nominated director Lasse Hallström (*What's Eating Gilbert Grape*, *The Cider House Rules*, *My Life as a Dog*), a man who Tatum describes as having "a sort of allergic reaction to anything that's cheesy." It's an interesting affliction for the man who helmed a catalogue of ABBA videos during their prime years (circa 1974-1982), including classics "Dancing Queen" and "Super Trouper." Filled with soft focus, smoke machine haze, star filters and silver leisure suits, those videos made frequent appearances on the *Dear John* set.

"He'll show you on his iPod," Tatum laughs. "He'll be like, 'Hey guys, would you like to see my earlier work?'"

Having gotten any cheesiness out of his system with his early music videos – a time the director calls "film school" – Hallström was very concerned about how to walk the line between drama and romantic melodrama without making it seem forced.

"My number one challenge was to stay on the right side of that line," Hallström explains in a soft Swedish accent. "I am very drawn to strong sentiment, but I think I have an allergy to sentimentality. The difference, I think, is in the performances. I tried to stay real and honest with the performances and make it as authentic as possible. That's the trick. Anytime you do a false move, something pushed, stylized or affected, you're dead."

Hallström was unfamiliar with Tatum's work when he

was approached to direct. Before signing onto the project, he wanted to make sure he would be able to work with an actor he hadn't expressly chosen for the role.

"I watched his movies, and he was very real. I met him and just thought he was the best choice. He's a really great actor. He's so sweet and charming and gregarious and generous," the director enthuses.

Some of the best young talent in Hollywood auditioned for the female lead, but Seyfried brought a quirkiness to the part unlike any other.

"We auditioned lots of ladies, and she was the choice," Hallström says. "She was unpredictable."

"I got to read with all the girls," Tatum recalls. "It's very interesting to see these different Savannahs, and then one walks through the door and you're like, 'Ooooh. Right.' It's one of those ah-ha moments. [Amanda's] fantastic. She's hilarious and really weird at times, which kind of makes it great. She makes really interesting choices, goes away from the obvious all the time. She's got the voice of an angel, and she's beautiful. She's the perfect package."

Seyfried lights up at the mention of her leading man and is eager to return the compliment when she hears the praise heaped on her by Tatum.

"When I first met [Channing], I was like 'Oh, shoot, am I gonna fall in love with him?'" the actress beams. "He's so cute and so funny and really honest. He's the perfect co-star. We both really respected each other, and we had the same mentality on set. When you have an actor that just jumps in it with you, it's pretty cool."

Dear John releases in theaters Feb. 5.

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IN THEATERS FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12

SCREENSHOTS

SANDMAN GETS MORE SHINE

BY ZACH HINES

I'VE BEEN HARPING ABOUT SPIDER-MAN A LOT lately. I've been fascinated with all the recent developments with the franchise, and even though I really wanted to see Sam Raimi direct another installment with Tobey Maguire playing Peter Parker, I'm intrigued to see what happens with the planned reboot, which is to be directed by Marc Webb (*500 Days of Summer*).

I loved *Spider-Man*, and I loved *Spider-Man 2* even more. After the second one, the possibilities were limitless. When we finally got part three, the story felt crowded due to an overload of characters.

To wrap up my three-part *Spider-Man* column, I thought I would share what I would have done with *Spider-Man 3* had Sony called me up and asked me to write the script. This is not me complaining, this is me just toying with some creative possibilities.

I would have started the film with the "crane disaster," when a construction crane accidentally crashes into a building, causing people and debris to fall out. In this scene, Spidey saves Gwen (Bryce Dallas Howard) who happens to

be in the building. As much as I love Bryce, I would've axed her character from the script (There were simply too many characters.) and made him save a random girl.

Next comes the fight between Peter and Harry, who is pissed because Peter killed his father. Harry attacks Peter at night using his father's Goblin weapons. The action sequence is incredible, and I wouldn't change a thing, except I wouldn't have Harry get amnesia. Instead, he loses and is more bitter than ever that he can't beat Peter.

Which brings us to the introduction of Flint Marko (Thomas Haden Church), who later becomes Sandman. In the film, he has escaped from jail and wants to help his sick daughter. Marko is presented as a caring father with a conscience, but I would have him be more of a Tony Soprano thug type. In the film, he is chased by the cops and "happens" to stumble into a scientific testing area outside that he falls into and becomes Sandman. I would've had him go to the lab to collect a gambling debt from a scientist. Knowing he can't pay Marko back, the scientist lets him come into the closed lab and pushes him into the experiment, which turns him into Sandman. Marko discovers his new ability to transform and gets drunk off the power. He goes on the warpath, robbing banks and settling grudges, attracting the attention of Spider-Man. Spidey goes head to head with Sandman in the awesome "truck fight" sequence from the movie, which ends with Spidey realizing Sandman is too powerful for him. This attracts the attention of Harry, who sees an ally in Sandman against Spider-Man.

At this point, we bring in the alien symbiote. We can stick with the meteorite crashing to Earth, but instead of having it fall conveniently next to Peter, it lands somewhere random and jumps from person to person until it finds the best host: Spider-Man. The alien bonds with Peter and exponentially enhances his powers. Spider-Man goes on a supercharged

Campus Circle > Film > Screen Shots

crime-fighting spree, as he becomes emotionally consumed by the power of the new suit, which also affects his attitude.

During this part we develop Eddie Brock, who is competing with Peter to be the official the photographer at the *Daily Bugle*. Peter exposes Eddie in a scandal and ruins his career. After that, Spidey finally goes up against Sandman and Harry, but with the new powers from his black suit, kicks both of their asses. Sort of. The black suit has made him completely emotionally unstable, and while he wins the fight, he realizes the suit will ultimately destroy him. He escapes to a church bell tower, rips off the alien suit and discards it.

Sandman, who is now even more hell-bent on revenge, forces Harry to tell him how he can hurt Spider-Man, and Harry reluctantly tells him about Mary Jane. Sandman goes after Mary Jane with the intent to kill her. Out of shame for what he's done, Harry warns and teams back up with Spidey to go save her. The only problem is, Spidey doesn't have the suit that he used to beat Sandman the last time, which ramps up the stakes for the final battle.

It's Spider-Man and Harry vs. Sandman. Harry dies during the fight, but Spider-Man prevails, defeats Sandman and saves Mary Jane. Back at the church, a bitter and resentful Eddie Brock prays that something horrible befalls Peter. After hearing a strange noise, he walks into the bell tower, only to have the alien symbiote attach itself to him, causing him to become ... Venom!

We end there, and now we're all set up for Venom to be the main villain in *Spider-Man 4*. The bummer about Venom in *Spider-Man 3* was that, even though they nailed him artistically, he was squeezed into the story, which was already crowded and was reduced to a cameo in the third act when what we all really wanted was to see a whole movie with him as the main villain.

Send feedback to screenshots@campuscircle.net.

PROJECTIONS

THE FILMS OF DANIEL BURMAN

Feb. 3, 10, 23, 28 @ Skirball Center

BY CANDICE WINTERS

SO I KNOW I'VE LINGERED ON THIS SUBJECT several times, but it's something everyone should think about as he or she buys the popcorn, finds a seat somewhere in the theater and prepares to enjoy the next 100 minutes of his or her life. Every film has a creator or an author who is formally known as its director. There are plenty of opportunities in this town to meet and greet with these people, to hear what they have to say about film and to take from them their experiences via firsthand accounts. I am all about seminars and Q & As with big directors. Those types of screenings and events litter my calendar book.

However, there is something special about learning about a director solely through his/her work. By watching someone's films, you are granted a look into their personalities, their tastes and their humor. In some regards, a film can strip a person bare.

Each director inevitably has a style unto his or herself. Steven Spielberg is all for action-adventure. Martin Scorsese has directed for the dramatic. Stanley Kubrick is the master of beauty, suspense thrillers, drama ... he really did it all, and he did it well.

These bigwig Hollywood royals, and others like them, are now household names. But what about the directors who are working just as hard for their money without the recognition, the ones who have to find their own funding for their films or the ones who aren't always able to hire Javier Bardem to star opposite Penélope Cruz?

Because we don't see these artists on the red carpet or at junkets often, it does not mean they are less talented. One of my favorite things to do after I've seen a film by a relatively obscure new director is to go home, IMDb them and Netflix every movie they've made. Marathons of movies in consecutive order allow us, as the viewers, to see a film style.

The small, independent films that have come swiftly into popularity following the rise of the Sundance Film Festival in the '80s have also ushered in the celebrity of directors of independent films. Wes Anderson is an example. Quentin Tarantino was one early in his career, before he became a Hollywood sell-out. One artist who is slowly trying to make a name for himself is Daniel Burman. He's a 36-year-old writer, director, producer whose films have focused primarily on life in Buenos Aires. Central to the New Argentine Cinema Movement, Burman has received critical acclaim for his largely autobiographic trilogy.

The three films star Daniel Hendler as the lead character named Ariel who represents Argentina's lively Jewish community. The stories are not necessarily a continuation of each other, but varying stories about a character named Ariel who is forced to deal with issues of family dynamics, questions of ancestry, death and suicide and the ways in

Campus Circle > Film > Projections



Empty Nest screens on Feb. 28.

which fate weaves a thread among us all.

For four evenings in February, the films of Burman will be screened, including the Ariel trilogy: *Waiting for the Messiah*, *Lost Embrace* and *Family Law*. This Wednesday, Feb. 10, the film *Lost Embrace* will be screened followed by a Q & A with Burman, himself! This film, in particular, is a testament to the longing for finding one's culture, though it is also very much a black comedy in the tradition of Woody Allen. *Lost Embrace* even won the Grand Jury Prize at the 2004 Berlin Film Festival.

You could stay at home and watch *A Clockwork Orange* followed by *The Shining* followed by *Eyes Wide Shut*. Or you could leave Kubrick for a rainy day and discover a newly emerging director who, despite immense talent, is struggling to raise awareness about his films. It's a win-win decision. And sometimes it pays in cinematic gold to be different for a change.

Skirball Center is located at 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., Los Angeles. For more information, visit skirball.org.

DVDDISH

SPECIAL FEATURES

BY MIKE SEBASTIAN



My Funny Valentine: Mira Nair (*Monsoon Wedding*) and Shekhar Kapur (*Elizabeth*) are among the filmmakers showing the City That Never Sleeps some love in *New York, I Love You*. Picking up where *Paris, je t'aime* left off, the anthology film shows several different kinds of love stories set in the same city. The all-star cast includes: Ethan Hawke, Bradley Cooper, Natalie Portman, Julie Christie and more.

Love Happens is a romantic drama starring Jennifer Aniston and Aaron Eckhart. A self-help guru dealing with his wife's death falls for a woman who has sworn off men.

From Nia Vardalos, writer/director/star of *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, comes *I Hate Valentine's Day* (Feb. 9). "SNL"'s Rachel Dratch and "30 Rock"'s Judah Friedlander co-star.

The Anti-Valentine: *I Hope They Serve Beer in Hell* is the first feature adaptation of cult blogger Tucker Max's tales of remorseless sexual depravity.

The Horror! The Horror! Before the remake hits theaters, check out the *Man of a Thousand Faces*, Lon Chaney Jr., in the original Universal horror classic *The Wolf Man* (1941). Included in this two-disc Legacy Edition are featurettes on the werewolf myth, the life of Chaney and legendary makeup artist Jack Pierce.

The House of the Devil: It's never good to be a babysitter in a horror movie. Samantha takes a gig at a house in the middle of nowhere in the dead of night. She then finds out the owners don't actually have a child. The effortlessly creepy Tom Noonan stars.

The Vault: The latest wave of *TCM Greatest Classic Film Collections* include: Romance, Sci-Fi Adventures and four from the Marx Brothers. Spend Valentine's Day with some classic love affairs, including: Elia Kazan's *Splendor in the Grass*, starring Warren Beatty and Natalie Wood and Billy Wilder's *Love in the Afternoon*. Some of the other classics in these sets include: *Them!*, *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*, *A Day at the Races* and *Room Service*.

Stranger Than Fiction: A fitting farewell to the King of Pop, *Michael Jackson: This Is It* highlights the show that could've been. The documentary shows Jackson developing and rehearsing his sold-out comeback tour. Also included are featurettes spotlighting the audition process for backup dancers and a tribute to Jackson.

Also available: History Channel's *WWII In HD*, *Pawn Stars: Season One*

British Invasion: One of the great English satirists of the 20th century, Evelyn Waugh comes to DVD in adaptations of two of his great works, *A Handful of Dust* and *Scoop*.

The first film stars Kristin Scott Thomas (*The English Patient*) as a society wife who has an affair out of boredom, precipitating the downfall of her marriage. Along the way, some savage swipes are taken at the idle rich. The top-notch cast includes Alec Guinness, Judi Dench and Anjelica Huston.

Scoop examines the absurd interplay of politicians, journalists and the gullible public when a naïve journalist goes to a war-torn African republic.

A precursor to "Cracker," *A Mind to Kill: Series 1* is a gritty cop drama with a focus on character and intricate plots. Philip Madoc ("Doctor Who") stars as a Welsh detective, a widower who uses his instincts to solve brutal crimes while shielding his daughter from his world.

The finale of the David Tennant-era of the long-running "Doctor Who" comes to DVD in *The Complete Specials*, containing *The Waters of Mars* and *The End of Time*. The hit revamping of the cult classic follows "The Doctor" and his compatriots as they travel across time and space to save Earth from otherworldly threats.

Made in Japan: New anime available: *Rin, Daughters of Mnemosyne: The Complete Series*, *Sands of Destruction: The Complete Series*, *One Piece: Season Two, Fifth Voyage, Sgt. Frog: Season Two, Part 1*

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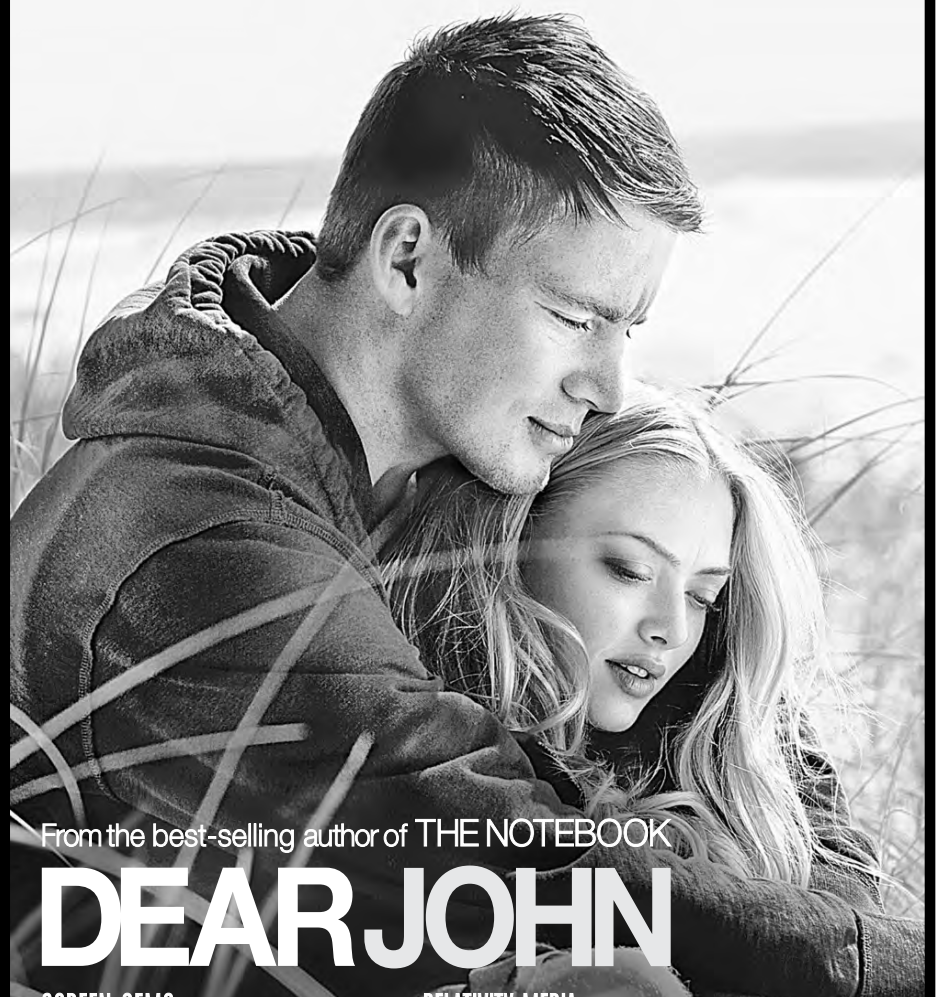
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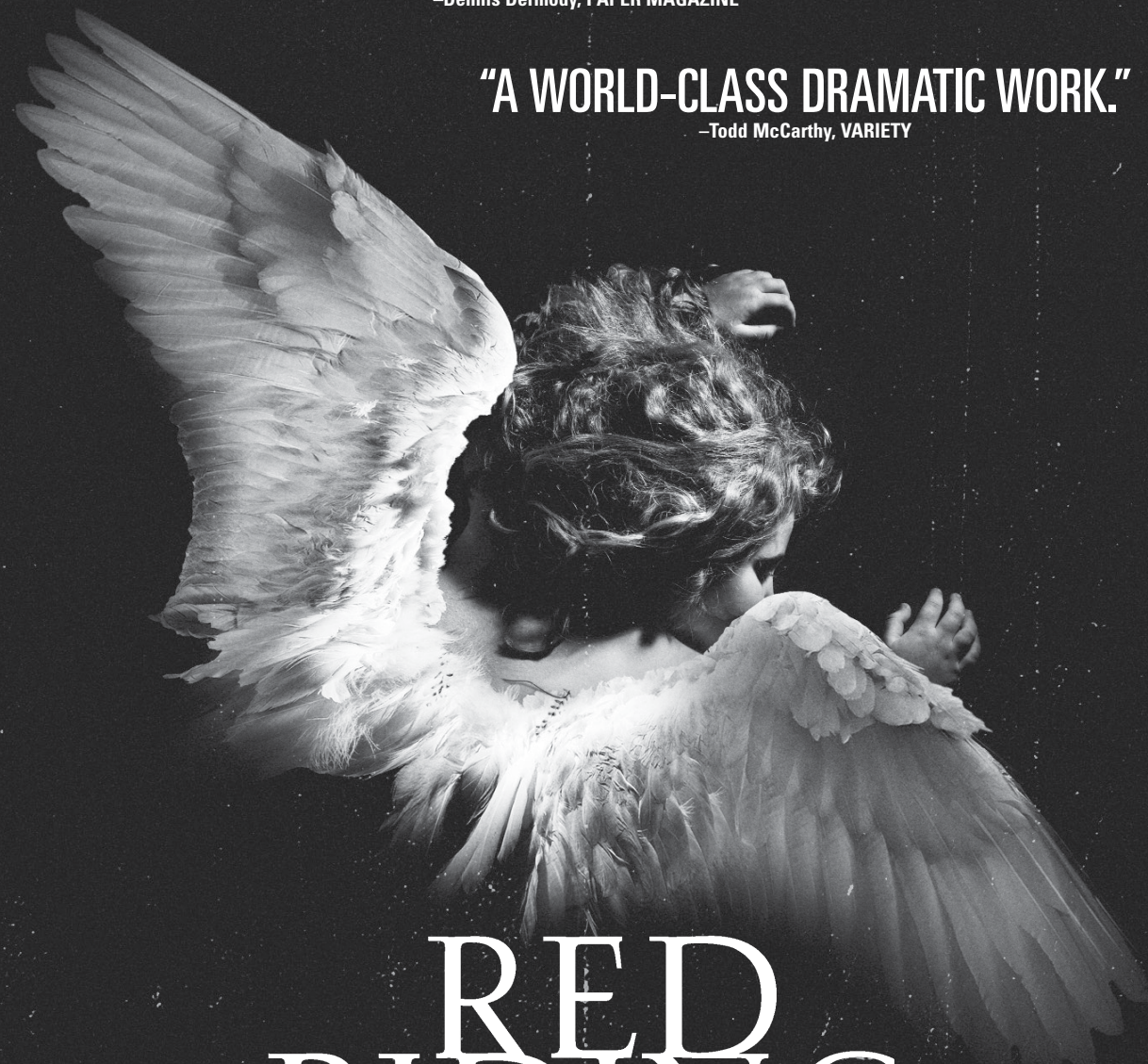
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JETSETTER



Kevin Wierzbicki

Hocking Hills Canopy Tours was named "Ohio's Best New Outdoor Attraction."

A ZIPPY TRIP

Outdoor Adventure in Ohio's Hocking Hills

BY KEVIN WIERZBICKI

UNLESS YOU'RE A SQUIRREL OR A MONKEY YOU PROBABLY DON'T spend much time gliding from treetop to treetop. But that type of activity really isn't limited to animals with furry tails; humans too can experience the thrill of flying through the air with the greatest of ease! It may sound like a wild dream but people do it every day in the Hocking Hills.

Located in southeastern Ohio about an hour's drive outside of Columbus, the Hocking Hills area is a paradise for outdoor enthusiasts. The thickly wooded hills are easily explored by land (hiking) by sea (OK, by river in a canoe) and most uniquely by air on the network of zip lines at **Hocking Hills Canopy Tours** (hockinghillscanopytours.com) in the village of Rockbridge.

It's easy to see why the tour was named "Ohio's Best New Outdoor Attraction" last year – the generous course of 10 zip lines and five "sky bridges" offers an incredible bird's-eye view of acre after acre of lush woodland. By the time you finish the course, you'll have soared over a cave and a waterfall, zipped past fern-covered rock formations and zoomed high alongside the Hocking River.

The first launching site is on a hillside, but that zip line takes you to a landing platform in a huge tree and you never touch the ground again until near the end of the course. The lines get progressively longer and faster as you go along, and there's a leap-of-faith line that's so lengthy that you can't see the landing platform from where you launch. And the line called "The Screamer" is self-explanatory!

Everything on the course (including the swaying sky bridges) is built to be thrilling but not scary. The guides who are with you up in the trees are well-trained, professional and very personable, and all of those qualities make it easy for even a first-time zipper to relax and enjoy the rides and scenery with confidence.

The tour finishes with participants using a rappel line to get back to the forest floor where everyone is given a nice certificate for having completed the course. But being back on solid ground doesn't mean your adventure has to stop!

Just a short drive away in nearby Logan is the ATV playground known as **Hocking Hills Nature Trails** (hockinghillsnaturetrails.com). ATV riding here is another activity that you can indulge in whether you're a beginner or very experienced since they have trails suitable for all skill levels and thorough training is provided before you get started. Your big Suzuki King Quad ATV 4X4 will get you through anything the Hocking Hills can throw at you and expert riders will find challenging trails full of twists and turns, ruts, cambers and embankments.

And while you'll find a few minor ruts on the "easy" trail, it's mostly a not-too-bumpy voyage through the forest that allows you to appreciate the nature around you, including curious wildlife (The Hocking Hills are full of deer.). All of the trails at one point come to a large open field where riders can open the machines up a little since there is only grass and no obstacles. The field has one area that is especially popular if you want your ride to get rowdy – the mud pit! Many of the trails here have naturally muddy spots, but the pit has been purposely dug for riders to muck through. Needless to say, if you plan on doing this, you need to bring a change of clothes.

Don't let all the daytime excitement give you the wrong idea about the Hocking Hills; this truly is an area where you can get away from it all if you want. At night it's so quiet that if there's a deer nearby eating his supper, you can hear him chewing! The outdoor fun goes on all year in the Hocking Hills, but if you want to ride the zip lines you need to visit from April through November.

For more information, visit 1800hocking.com.

JETSETTER

THANK YOU, DANIEL BOONE!

Music and Art on Kentucky's Wilderness Roads

BY KEVIN WIERZBICKI



Kevin Wierzbicki

Banjos on display at the Kentucky Music Hall of Fame and Museum

DANIEL BOONE: THE MAN HAD QUITE A LIFE. HE FOUGHT IN THE Revolutionary War, served several terms working for the government of Virginia and was captured by (and escaped from) Shawnee Indians.

But the coonskin cap-wearing surveyor will probably always be best known for having built the **Wilderness Road**, the pathway through the Cumberland Gap in the rugged Cumberland Mountains that allowed settlers to pour into southeastern Kentucky. These days, travelers come to the area and look down at the Cumberland Gap from the Pinnacle Overlook in the **Cumberland Gap National Historic Park**, taking in a scenic view that probably wouldn't be possible today if not for Boone's intrepid exploits of more than 200 years ago. In fact, everything is easier in southeastern Kentucky today because of Boone — it's pretty much guaranteed that you won't have to clear any timber in order to explore your own wilderness road!

Kentucky is very rich in musical heritage, and you'll find the state's homegrown music capital in a surprising place: the tiny village of **Renfro Valley**. A couple-hours drive north of the Cumberland Gap and just off I-75, Renfro Valley earned a reputation for being the place to go to hear mountain music thanks to its being the one-time home of the "Renfro Valley Country Store Show," a daily program that was broadcast on the CBS radio network in the 1950s.

The radio show no longer exists, but the **Renfro Valley Entertainment Center** (renfrovalley.com) houses the remnants of the original studio and an adjoining theater that comes alive every weekend with some kind of hoedown. The barn dances, jamborees and gospel jubilees held at the center present the kind of homespun fun that has been enjoyed in the Kentucky Hills since you-know-who blazed his famous trail.

Not everything is old-timey in Renfro Valley though. The Entertainment Center also hosts national touring acts of all genres and the very modern **Kentucky Music Hall of Fame and Museum** (kentuckymusicmuseum.com) is also located in the small town. The Hall of Fame honors Kentuckians like Dwight Yoakam, Ricky Skaggs, Merle Travis and "Yakety Sax"-man Boots Randolph. Jazz greats Lionel Hampton and Les McCann are H.O.F. members as are a wide range of country acts like Red Foley, the Judds and Montgomery Gentry.

Cases full of memorabilia from each inductee are on display and include items like one of Merle Travis' fancy guitars with his name inlaid on the fret board and one of Dwight Yoakam's typical stage outfits of well-worn boots, cowboy hat and threadbare jeans. The real stars of the museum, however, are the dozens of guitars, mandolins and fiddles on display along with a wall full of banjos of various sizes and vintage. The Hall's attached gift shop offers lots of music on CD so you can take some Kentucky music with you as you head back out onto your wilderness road.

Another thing that southeastern Kentucky is famous for is its locally made handicrafts and artwork. You can find the usual touristy-type souvenir anywhere in the area, but if you want to take home something representing Kentucky that's of lasting value, you'll find lots of opportunities to suit every taste and pocketbook.

At **Red Dog & Company** (reddogchairs.com) in London, Ky., you'll find a large selection of handcrafted "mule ear" chairs made out of oak, ash, cherry, walnut or hickory. Red Dog also makes everything from stools to benches to saddle racks and all of these items will last to pass down to future generations.

East Bernstadt is where you'll find **Money's Folk Art** (moneysfolkart.com) and a coterie of whimsical animal carvings painted in bright, nearly psychedelic colors. And if you really want to remember Kentucky in a creative way, then stop in at the workshop of William A. May in downtown Berea. May handcrafts some of the world's finest dulcimers and if you ask him nicely, he'll even show you how to play a little tune on one.

Maps of the KAHT (Kentucky Artisan Heritage Trail) are widely available in the area and they'll guide you along your wilderness road to whatever type of craftwork you're interested in.

For more information, visit tourseky.com.

JETSETTER

SCRUMPTIOUS ST. LOUIS

Gateway to the West (and Good Eats!)

BY KEVIN WIERZBICKI

FINISHING AN ICE CREAM CONE BEFORE THE dribbles soak your hand (and everything else in the near vicinity) can be a frustrating but enjoyable challenge. It probably wasn't nearly as much fun to eat ice cream before 1904; that's when the serving of the frozen treat in a cone was first popularized by food vendors at the St. Louis World's Fair. No one knows exactly how many of the fair's nearly 20 million visitors tried an ice cream cone for the first time that year, but one thing is for certain: For many, that initial taste was the beginning of a lifelong love affair.

The World's Fair also inspired the popular song "Meet Me in St. Louis," a title that really could be amended when you realize how much St. Louisans know and love good food. How about "Meet Me in St. Louis (and We'll Do Lunch)!"

Ask a dozen people in St. Louis where to get the city's best pizza, and you're likely to get 12 different answers. Ask President Obama the same question, and you'll quickly get a resounding response: "Pi!" The president and his entourage feasted on several varieties of pizza from **Pi Pizzeria** (6144 Delmar Blvd.; restaurantpi.com) when they

were campaigning in St. Louis last year, enjoying it so much that the Commander-in-Chief has since had Pi owner, Chris Sommers, come to the White House and prepare more of the pies.

Located in the hip entertainment district known as the Loop, Pi specializes in deep dish pizza with a crust made of cornmeal, and if you ask which one is the president's favorite, you'll have to choose between a vegetarian deep dish and a chicken-topped thin crust. Pi is also popular because they are extremely environmentally conscious, even to the point that their wine list is entirely "green." Pi doesn't take reservations (unless you're, ahem, the Leader of the Free World...) so arrive here at 11 a.m. for lunch and just be prepared for a bit of a wait during dinner hours.

St. Louis is, of course, home to the iconic **Gateway Arch**, the symbolic gateway to the west that's formally known as the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial (11 N. 4th St.). Taking a ride to the viewing area in the top of the arch is a must-do St. Louis experience and from the high vantage point you can see the city's downtown area stretching out on one side and the mighty Mississippi River on the other.

Underneath the arch you can sample olden-day St. Louis by visiting **Levee Mercantile**. The shop is set up to resemble an 1870s-style general store and you can buy some of the same goodies here that patrons could back then; stick candies, pralines and fresh ground coffee are among the favored souvenirs, all of which will whet your appetite for a taste of modern-day St. Louis.

If lunchtime finds you craving good organic food, then a stop at the **Local Harvest Café** (3137 Morganford Rd.; localharvestcafe.com) is called for. True to its name, the eatery uses at least 50 percent locally grown ingredients in its menu items, and you can even pop next door to the Local Harvest Grocery and purchase ingredients for your own home cooking.

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Stop by Ted Drewes Frozen Custard Shop for ice cream.

Meat lovers are well advised to head to **Pappy's Smokehouse** (3106 Olive St.; pappys-smokehouse.com) where the food has repeatedly earned the restaurant the "Best BBQ in St. Louis" label. Be aware though, like Pi, Pappy's is no secret – be prepared for a line out the door!

And you can't really take a food tour of St. Louis without indulging in the gooey butter cake sold at **Goopy Louie's** (6483 Chippewa; goeyleouiecake.com). The cake's origin came about when a cook accidentally added too much butter to the recipe and inadvertently created a St. Louis tradition. Full-sized and mini-cakes are available in a dozen different flavors at the bakery's outlet and they also have a shipping service so you can send a Goopy Louie or two back home.

Oh, and about that ice cream cone? **Ted Drewes Frozen Custard** (multiple locations) has the best ones, dribbles and all.

For more information, visit explorestlouis.com.

JETSETTER

WHAT MADE MILWAUKEE FAMOUS?

The Answer: Harley Davidson

BY KEVIN WIERZBICKI

Piano pounder Jerry Lee Lewis once had a big hit with a song called "What Made Milwaukee Famous," a beery ode to a city famous at the time for being the home of big breweries like Miller, Pabst, Blatz and Schlitz. And while Milwaukee is still very proud of its well-deserved reputation as America's beer capital, there are many other things that the city is known for, including its attention-grabbing calling card that's been heard in every single corner of the world: the distinct rumble of the Harley-Davidson motorcycle!

It was in 1903 that William S. Harley and Arthur Davidson, both in their early 20s, first made Harley-Davidson motorcycles available for sale to the public. Back then the men had nothing more than a small shed to use as their workshop, and it's amazing to think that one of the first things you see when you visit **Milwaukee's Harley-Davidson Museum** (400 W Canal St.; harley-davidson.com) was created in that tiny building; the oldest known Harley in existence, "Serial Number One." The cycle looks like little more than a motorized bicycle, but it was the beginning of

a great success story that comes to life as you navigate the multiple floors of the museum where hundreds of Harleys of every vintage are on display, including dozens of one-of-a-kinds like Evel Knievel's Wembley jump bike and the 13 1/2-foot long "King Kong."

The museum's Engine Room is full of interactive exhibits that show how the powerful Harley engines work as well as an "exploded" view of a Knucklehead that has been dismantled. Other rooms feature everything Harley, including a room full of posters, a wall lined with gas tanks featuring custom art and even a room full of Harleys that you can hop onto for a photo opportunity. The actual Harley-Davidson factory is at a separate location but the museum has information on factory tours.

Other museums that are fun to visit include the **Milwaukee Art Museum** (700 Art Museum Drive; mam.org), where the building itself is a piece of art that features the Burke Brise Soleil, a wing-like sunscreen that can be raised or lowered creating a unique moving sculpture. You can't miss the museum silhouetted against Lake Michigan – the movable wingspread is as wide as a Boeing 747!

Then there's **Discovery World** (500 North Harbor Drive, discoveryworld.org), also located along side the lake, with its hands-on exhibits in which you do things like operate a robot in the Techno Jungle area or create your own DVD in their fully-rigged television studio. Discovery World is also home to the Virtual Les Paul, an extensive exhibit dedicated to Wisconsin native Les Paul. The display overflows with memorabilia from the late guitarist and inventor and includes dozens of guitars, many autographed by some of the world's greatest rock guitarists.

If your visit to Milwaukee is timed for late June or early July, you'll find that the whole city is enthralled with another noise it makes that equals the thunder of a Harley – the

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Cruise into the Milwaukee Harley Davidson Museum.

annual music festival known as **Summerfest** (summerfest.com)! Billed as the world's largest music festival, Summerfest keeps Milwaukee rockin' for a full 11 days as more than 700 bands take the stage at the Marcus Amphitheater and 10 additional stages. The Summerfest grounds are huge and feature all the food and fun of a state fair along with music for all tastes. And speaking of tastes, you can't leave Milwaukee without trying a local favorite; fried cheese curds! You'll find the tasty morsels at Summerfest and at dozens of eateries throughout the city.

And yes, Milwaukee still makes beer. Take the tour at **Lakefront Brewery** (1872 North Commerce St.; lakefrontbrewery.com) and you can sample some of the best.

For more information, visit visitmilwaukee.org.

JETSETTER

SONOMA COUNTY

Taste. Ride. Hike. Smile.

BY JESSICA KOSLOW

INTRIGUED BY THE MYSTIQUE OF THE CALI—fornia wine country? The rolling hills of Sonoma County, with over 300 award-winning wineries, are the perfect launching pad for your journey.

Because there's so much to sip, it might be wise to do some research before you go. *Spectacular Wineries of Sonoma County* contains breathtaking photos of over 50 local wineries, plus insightful interviews with winemakers. Its 300 pages also include pairing ideas for food and wine.

Located 30 miles north of San Francisco, the best way to get to Sonoma is ... via road trip. There are direct flights into the **Charles M. Schulz Sonoma County Airport** (sonomacountyairport.org), but nothing beats the idyllic scenery of cruising up the coastline on Highway 1, or taking in the pastoral setting of the faster route, I-5 to Highway 101.

One of the most well-known towns in Sonoma is Bodega, made notorious in Alfred Hitchcock's thriller, *The Birds*. Many of the buildings featured in the film (i.e., the Potter School House built in 1873) remain intact as though preserved in a time capsule.

After a brief tour, head over to **Sonoma Coast Villa &**

Spa (16702 Coast Hwy 1, Bodega; scvilla.com) to experience their newest addition: horseback riding. Property owner Johannes Zachbauer is always looking to supply his guests with new adventures, so he has partnered with Scott Johnson – an equestrian lover with a wealth of knowledge and stories from his years of working with horses – to offer guided rides around his 60 acres of property. On the trails, you'll likely encounter a zony, the offspring of a zebra and pony.

Siesta time? Check-in to the centrally located **Hilton Sonoma Wine Country** (3555 Round Barn Blvd., Santa Rosa; winecountryhilton.com). Soothe your muscles in their outdoor Jacuzzi, excellent for stargazing, and sample the locally grown delights at their Nectar restaurant and lounge.

It's time to taste from the vine. First stop is **Kendall-Jackson's Wine Center** (5007 Fulton Rd., Fulton; kj.com) for its unique offering of an ambrosial wine and food pairing. Executive Chef Justin Wangler and his talented team serve two types of tastings: food and dessert. Five two-bite-sized entrées are presented; each chosen to accentuate certain flavors in the wine. For example, a chilled slice of duck wrapped in the aromatic hoja santa leaf is paired with a 2006 Seco Highlands Pinot Noir to highlight the wine's earthy and fruity aroma. It's all very scientific. For the sweet tasting, one option is a chocolate truffle paired with Grand Reserve Port. The menu changes seasonally and so do the wines, which grow on Kendall-Jackson's 14,000 acres.

Another extraordinary viticultural experience is a stop at **D'Argenzio Winery** (1301 Cleveland Ave., Ste. A, Santa Rosa; dargenziowine.com). Off the beaten path from the larger scale wineries, tucked away off a city street in Santa Rosa, you'll find the tasting room of the friendliest vintner in the valley, Ray D'Argenzio. Ray is happy to pour from any of his barrels of award-awarding varietals, but it's always advisable to ask the expert for recommendations. D'Argenzio also has

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Armstrong Redwoods offer an otherworldly adventure.

a tasting room in Burbank (1204 W. Burbank Blvd.), and the Santa Rosa site is preparing for Festival Valentino Di Newport on Feb. 19, featuring Southern Italian folk music.

After sipping to your heart's desire, you're ripe for a hike in **Armstrong Redwoods State Reserve** (17000 Armstrong Woods Rd., Guerneville; parks.ca.gov). Walk along paths surrounded by thousand-year-old trees. The tallest tree is 310 feet (longer than a football field) and the oldest is over 1,400 years old.

For dinner, reserve a seat at the tastiest new eatery in town, chef Josh Silvers' **Jackson's Bar and Oven** (135 Fourth St., Santa Rosa; jacksonsbarandoven.com). Boasting a casual chic atmosphere and bustling with locals, the menu ranges from small bites to big eats and wood fired pizza to noodles. Top it off with a treat that never goes out of style at any age: warm chocolate chip cookies and milk.

For more information, visit sonomacounty.com.

JETSETTER

BEADS, CRAWFISH AND KING CAKE

It's a Lake Charles Mardi Gras.

BY KEVIN WIERZBICKI

Gumbeaux Gator is probably the most popular critter in all of Southwest Louisiana. There's good reason, too, for the overstuffed mascot of the Lake Charles area to be cherished: He loves to party! It might be that big ol' snout of his that allows him to sniff out the action, but if there's fun involved, Gumbeaux will be there. And it's hard to find a place that's more fun than Lake Charles at **Mardi Gras**.

Of course, Gumbeaux Gator is just a person in a costume who represents the freewheeling part of Lake Charles at events all over the city all year round. But come every February, the rest of the city is preoccupied with costumes too, as Fat Tuesday, better known as Mardi Gras, nears.

The history of Mardi Gras goes all the way back to the days of ancient Rome to a time when the city first embraced Christianity and held a carnival-like party influenced by both Christian ideals and Pagan beliefs. Mardi Gras made its

way to Louisiana about 300 years ago and even though the celebration has evolved, one thing hasn't changed – Mardi Gras is still the time to let your hair down and indulge in frivolous fun.

Lake Charles has one of the country's biggest Mardi Gras celebrations that culminates with hundreds of garishly-decorated floats making their way down Ryan Street as the **Krewe of Krewe's Parade** rolls. Some of the massive floats are as long as a semi-truck and just as noisy as each float blares music that goes along with its theme, while the costumed revelers aboard toss beads and other trinkets to the crowd lining both sides of the street. Bead catching is a big part of the fun; the plastic necklaces are not of any monetary value, but the idea is to catch and collect as many of the strands as possible.

To better show off the glittering floats, the parade is held at sundown, but Lake Charles also has a smaller affair, the **Red Hat Parade** that rolls on Mardi Gras morning. Street parties spring up all over the city throughout the day and at these you'll always find a Cajun band playing and plenty of Cajun food and other Southern delights waiting to be consumed.

If you visit Lake Charles during Mardi Gras, the best way to see Krewe members in their ornate costumes is to attend the Royal Gala at the **Lake Charles Civic Center** (900 Lakeshore Drive; cityoflakecharles.com) the night before Mardi Gras. This event is where the Krewes really show off their creativity as Krewe kings, queens, royal dukes and duchesses promenade through the hall in their outrageous feather-adorned finery.

You can still enjoy lots of costumes if you come to Lake Charles at any other time of year though; the **Mardi Gras Museum of Imperial Calcasieu** (809 Kirby St.) has an extensive collection of outfits worn in local

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Peek into the Mardi Gras Museum of Imperial Calcasieu.

celebrations as well as from the festivities in New Orleans and beyond. The museum has a great display of country-style Mardi Gras costumes too; these outfits go without the feathering, but they're just as outlandish and usually feature a conical hat of some sort.

And remember if you run into Gumbeaux Gator, you're in the right place! Hint: He really likes to chow down on the crawfish platter at **Steamboat Bill's** (1004 N. Lakeshore Drive; steamboatbills.com) and then head to **Delicious Donuts and Bakery** (2283 Country Club Rd.; deliciouskingcakes.com) for a big slice of king cake, the traditional Mardi Gras pastry. A gator's got to eat, you know!

Mardi Gras 2010 is Feb. 16.

For more information, visit lakecharles.org.

BEAUTYBEAT

EL LEÓN

8217 Beverly Blvd.,
Los Angeles

BY ANGELA MATANO



El León: manna from spa heaven.

LIVING IN LOS ANGELES, IT'S EASY

to get overwhelmed by the hip factor of it all. From gyms to salons to restaurants, it gets exhausting just trying to measure up to the local standards of cool, beauty and attitude. When you go for a massage, the last thing you want is to be anxious about your cred. Instead, you want to relax and let go of all the judgment. El León may just be manna from heaven in this department. This unique Thai spa, with a focus on healing, spirituality and holistic medicine, made me breath a sigh of relief from the moment I walked in.

Owner Barry Walker (also the proprietor of the Raven Spa in Silver Lake; theravenspa.com) showcases his unusual vision for El León by providing an authentic, Asian spa experience, from the indigenous products brought into the country by his Thai masseurs to the Ayurvedic facial, "the only spa in L.A. to do this true, Indian facial."

For once, my multi-tasking brain could hang out a gone fishin' sign and let loose. As I entered the healing center, the traditional music, warm décor and earthy smells all conspired to relax my weary muscles.

I dropped my city garb for a T-shirt and comfy Thai pants – the better to be massaged and manipulated. My masseuse, Panuch Wonthongdee, explained the basics of the treatment to me and told me to rest and let her guide my limbs. Nurturing and soft, Wonthongdee still managed to knead my neck into oblivion.

Afterward, Wonthongdee brought hot tea, fruit and a delicious date that brought me that much closer to Shangri-La.

It wasn't until I got home that I realized I was so laid-back, my shirt was inside out. Talk about leaving your worries behind.

For more information, call (323) 782-9582 or visit elleonspa.com.

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MUSICREPORT

BY KEVIN WIERZBICKI

Coachella Headliners: Jay-Z, Muse and Gorillaz

The roster for the 11th Coachella Valley Music & Arts Festival has been announced. The festival opens April 16 with headliner Jay-Z and a list of supporting acts that includes LCD Soundsystem, Them Crooked Vultures, Vampire Weekend, Deadmau5, Public Image Limited, the Specials, Grace Jones and She & Him.

Muse will have the headlining spot April 17 when Faith No More, Tiesto, MGMT, the Dead Weather, Devo, Coheed and Cambria, Shooter Jennings and Tokyo Police Club will also appear. Gorillaz close out the festival on April 18 along with Pavement, Thom Yorke, Spoon, Sly and the Family Stone, Gil Scott-Heron, Deerhunter, Gary Numan and Julian Casablancas.

All in all, over 130 acts will perform this year at the Empire Polo Club in Indio. Details on tickets, travel and camping packages and the ever-expanding lineup can be found at coachella.com.

The Smashing Pumpkins x 44

Billy Corgan, leader of the Smashing Pumpkins, has decided to give away the music comprising the band's latest effort, *Teargarden by Kaleidyscope*. Fans will be able to download all 44 of the album's tracks absolutely for free, but there is one catch; they'll have to do it one song at a time.

That's mostly due to the fact that Corgan and company are still recording and have no set time to finish the project. So far two songs have been released; "A Song for a Son" and "Widow Wake My Mind" are now available at smashingpumpkins.com.

Corgan explains that *Teargarden by Kaleidyscope* is based on 'The Fool's Journey' as signified by the progress of the Tarot: "The intention is to approach the work by breaking down the journey of life into four phases as made by different characters depicted in major arcane cards: the Child, the Fool, the Skeptic and the Mystic."

The band also plans to release the music as a series of four-song EPs.

Weedeater Singer Shoots Off Toe

Dixie Dave, the vocalist and bass player for sludge metal act Weedeater, has lost a toe in a firearms accident.

The singer has managed to keep a sense of humor even though he's now short a digit, issuing a statement that says, "It wasn't my intention to shoot off my big toe! Here in the Weedeater camp we pride ourselves on a long tradition of shooting our band in the proverbial foot right before we're supposed to do something important. This time we *really did* shoot ourselves in the foot; I shot my big toe off while cleaning my favorite shotgun."

The band has had to postpone the recording of their next effort for Southern Lord Records, but as soon as Dixie Dave recovers, they plan to hit the road for their Nine Toe Tour.

R.I.P. Kate McGarrigle

Folk singer Kate McGarrigle has died. McGarrigle suffered for several years with a form of cancer called sarcoma, but remained energetic enough to perform recently at the Royal Albert Hall in London.

McGarrigle had a long career that included 10 albums cut with her sister Anna; she was also the mother of singers Rufus Wainwright and Martha Wainwright. McGarrigle died at 63 in her Montreal home on Jan. 18.

STS9 Helps Haiti

It's no secret that the members of STS9 are activists; they've rallied fans to donate a quarter of a million dollars to causes like Rock Against Cancer and the Yellow Ribbon Fund, and they've helped build houses in the Lower Ninth Ward in hurricane-ravaged New Orleans.

Now they've turned their attention to helping with the tragedy in Haiti, asking their fans to give whatever they can to the Red Cross or other relief organizations working in the earthquake's aftermath. The band has put up a list of reputable charities at STS9.com; information will also be available at the band's show at the Wiltern on Feb. 12.

Elizabeth Fraser: Moses

Former Cocteau Twin member Elizabeth Fraser has released a new EP called *Moses* that's available as a download or on vinyl. Fraser is donating all proceeds from the release to the family of Jake Drake-Brockman, her friend and former member of Echo and the Bunnymen who died in a motorcycle accident last year.



Muse headline the second day (April 17) of Coachella.

FREQUENCY

BY BRIEN OVERLY



St. Vincent displays a coolness that only a native New Yorker can bring to the stage.

Senses Fail**Feb. 4 @ Chain Reaction**

I'm going to hope that Senses Fail playing a tiny venue like Chain Reaction was a conscious decision on their part to return to their roots and play a more intimate setting for one go-around, you know, to reconnect with audiences in some kind of meaningful way and whatnot. Because if these dudes are playing that venue *by circumstance*, it would truly be one of the great injustices of our society. For which I will also place blame squarely on the Bush administration.

These guys have been in this game for a long time now, and they've been continuously improving their craft since their inception, writing some of the catchiest rock this side of Warped Tour. More importantly, they do it *without* the gimmickry, like having to wear more neon than a '90s raver kid or having to use packaged synth beats last heard pre-programmed into a Casio keyboard.

So while the rest of their less seasoned contemporaries fade out into obscurity as quickly as they rose to the top of 14-year-old girls' iPod playlists, these dudes will still be around making solid rock music. While they may sound like a lot of other bands doing similar things on first listen, each additional listen gives something new to hear in those same songs.

And though frontman Buddy Nielsen's vocal wailing may seem simplistic in how infectious it is, some of those lyrics are just emotionally brutal when you really listen to them. That's the mark of real artistry, when the songs can be aurally memorable and still resonate after the song is over.

After Midnight Project**Feb. 6 @ The Roxy**

All too often lately I feel like I've been saying the bands I pick for Frequency are either entirely underrated or totally didn't get a fair shake by the music industry. Audiences are fickle, label execs can be clueless, blah blah blah, sour grapes or whatever. After so much butt-hurting because the masses don't seem to absolutely love every single band I love, even I get a little tired of it. So needless to say, I get very stoked when I can say that a band who has legitimately worked for success starts to see the fruits of its labor.

Frontman Jason Evigan has been writing and performing music since he was but a wee young'un, which I state facetiously because he's seriously about eight feet taller than me and is a jack of all trades when it comes to performing. Granted, After Midnight Project is a *very* mainstream-friendly endeavor, but Evigan and all his band mates will own whatever stage they take when they play those songs live. And really, where better to see these guys tear up a stage than one of the best small venues in their hometown?

St. Vincent**Feb. 9 @ El Rey**

Admittedly, what first intrigued me about St. Vincent was her video for "Actor Out of Work" and how I was convinced it was meant to be a take on Helena Bonham Carter's portrayal of Marla Singer in *Fight Club* participating in some kind of self-help group the character is so fond of. Of course, I came to this conclusion having only seen the video on mute and never having heard or seen St. Vincent prior to that. Then I actually turned the volume on, and I was pleasantly charmed.

Though that single is a bit of an emotional downer and could in actuality be the soundtrack to the life of any of Chuck Palahniuk's desolate and morally ambiguous characters, the rest of the Brooklyn songstress' work creates a very different mood. A master at using vocal layers to create an aural atmosphere, St. Vincent's delicate crooning pulls in old-timey classical instrumentation and mixes it with modern beats and orchestration for a coolness that only a native New Yorker can bring to the stage. Kind of like if Regina Spektor wasn't brutal and unbearable to listen to these days.



UPCOMING IN-STORES at AMOEBAMUSIC!

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Thursday • February 4 • 6 pm

DAVE RAWLINGS MACHINE

Join us for a special in-store performance with guitarist, producer, singer-songwriter Dave Rawlings Machine (best known for his work with Gillian Welch and Old Crow Medicine Show) in celebration of his first record *A Friend of a Friend* (out now on Acony Records). Also appearing at the *Troubadour* on February 4, 8pm.

Saturday • February 6 • 4 pm

AMOEBAMUSIC CHARITY AUCTION WITH GUEST HOST, LANCE ROBERTSON!

Join us as our special guest auctioneer, LANCE ROBERTSON (DJ Lance Rock from the hit series *YO GABBA GABBA!* airing 7 days a week on Nick Jr.) auctions a cornucopia of items you never knew you HAD to have. This month's auction items include Opening Night tickets to *CATS* and 101 *DALMATIONS* at The Pantages, 2 pairs of tix to see *The Big Pink* and *A Place To Bury Strangers* on 3/9 and much, much more! All proceeds will benefit the ANIMAL ADVOCATES ALLIANCE. As always, Amoeba will match your individual donation up to \$1000.

Sunday • February 7 • 2 pm

HUUN HUUR TU

Huun Huur Tu are masters of the throat singing style of *xoomei* from the Siberian region of Tuva, in which a vocalist produces two or three notes simultaneously. They collaborate with the electronic artist Carmen Rizzo on their latest release, *Eternal* (out now).

Performing with Carmen Rizzo at *Zanzibar* in Santa Monica on February 10th.

Wednesday • February 10 • 7 pm

JUSTIN TOWNES EARLE

Justin Townes Earle comes to Amoeba for a live in-store performance! *Midnight At The Movies* (out now on Bloodshot Records) displays an adeptness and musical sophistication of remarkable, organic breadth and is as lyrically sharp as a lover's tongue as she is walking out the door. "An utterly distinctive voice that takes what's come before and artfully moves it forward."

- L.A. Times

Catch him live at *The Echo* on February 11!

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MUSICINTERVIEWS

Campus Circle > Music > Interviews



All the King's Men: Wild Beasts land in Los Angeles Feb. 10.

WILD BEASTS

Whimsical, Frivolous, Eccentric

BY NATASHA DESIANTO

PURVEYORS OF THE PECULIAR, Wild Beasts have already shaken up the UK indie scene with their sophomore effort, *Two Dancers*. They now stand poised to take on U.S. audiences for the first time.

Recorded in the countryside of Norwich, Norfolk, the release blends surreal, somniloquy-style lyrics with atmospheric sonic landscapes.

This release sees a departure from their vaudeville-flavored debut, *Limbo, Panto*, displaying a marked evolution of their craft. While *Limbo, Panto* was a frantic wake-up call, a hammer to the placid waters, *Two Dancers* is a lullaby beckoning to a Daliesque dream world, distant ripples spread out over the waves.

"We sort of made a loose agreement that this album would be more 'adult,' whatever that meant. And as it turns out, I'm not sure if we knew what we meant by that, as I rather think this album is more concise, brief even, which is what we'd always aimed at since day one.

"I think any change is a result of us becoming more comfortable in our own skin, and in recognizing what we'd done on the first album, and what aspects we wanted to repeat and what aspects we wanted to leave behind," explains multi-instrumentalist and vocalist Tom Fleming.

Two Dancers is a more cohesive whole than its predecessor, thematically more streamlined and fluid.

"[The songwriting process] was quicker and each song tended to have elements of the next song about it. So structurally, sonically, lyrically, the songs are all tied to each other. They are brothers and sisters.

"The first album had more pains taken over it. We tried to make a definitive statement, whereas this is calmer, there are

fewer ideas on it and the ideas are made to do more heavy lifting as a result I think," Fleming explains.

"There was a definite lyrical to-and-fro between Hayden and I as well, though we wrote separately, we were aware of what the other was doing (I lived downstairs from him at the time)," he continues.

"We recorded almost everything and ripped things apart and stitched them back together again. Most songs had a few alternate versions, and I have a couple of demos that contain the bulk of the album's themes in about 10 minutes of music. I think we learned how small ideas are, and that writing is nothing but a series of choices."

The centerpiece of the Wild Beasts' sound is certainly its unique vocal mix. Counter-tenor Hayden Thorpe spars delightfully against Fleming's baritone, providing contrast to a band already rife with contradiction, as their first single, "Hooting and Howling," expertly puts it, "equally elegant and ugly."

Where Thorpe's strong falsetto can often prove as startling as a caterwaul, Fleming's is full-tone honey-thick and comforting.

"On this album at least, we were playing with the idea of it being two voices, or at least two sorts of voices that were talking; always a point of view, never a statement of fact," says Fleming.

England, formerly lauded for its output of eccentric artists, seems to have dropped the ball in recent years to us rivals across the pond.

With a sound harkening back to art-rock staples the likes of Kate Bush, Peter Hammill and even Roxy Music, it seems that perhaps Wild Beasts have picked up the

freak flag where their contemporaries have dropped it.

"I do kind of feel like the word eccentric is used to make something strange seem harmless and remove its threat. We want to be as much ourselves as we can be, and sometimes in order to shrug off the fetters it means trying to look at things with new eyes, and this can be sometimes clumsy or inelegant," explains Fleming.

"I suppose we do get whimsical, and sometimes we're even a bit frivolous, but any eccentricity really isn't a mannerism, it's a temperament. And I guess we're part of a tradition to an extent, but not one that is necessarily exclusively British, and we don't try to play it up, we just seem to end up there naturally."

The band, whose members have known each other since childhood, hails from Kendal, a small town of about 30,000 that is rainy and "conservative, but surprisingly art-friendly," as Fleming puts it.

A typically snarky UK music press has showered them with accolades and the response in the U.S. has proved equally favorable.

"[The response has been] astonishing, really quite touching. Growing up, London seemed very far away, let alone the U.S.A., so to go there and to be welcomed, listened to and understood is something quite amazing. It seemed like there was a cushion for us to land on and that we didn't have to explain what we were doing or justify ourselves. It felt like we'd made a cool friend," Fleming says.

Wild Beasts will perform Feb. 10 at the *Troubadour*. For more information, visit wild-beasts.co.uk.

CDREVIEWS

Priestess

Prior to the Fire

(Tee Pee)

Thurston Moore said it well years ago, and I paraphrase, that guitar-based rock is far from over. Synthesizers or techno or anything else non-rock has not killed it; it still has its own evolution to experience.

Priestess have stepped up to not only prove that right, but to also up the ante and make the case that heavy metal has saved rock 'n' roll's sorry hide.

The funny thing is that Priestess' frontman and extraordinary voice Mike Heppner eschews the "metal" label. Priestess is hard rock – nothing more, nothing less. This is true, but as the band shows on *Prior to the Fire*, they have songwriting skills and musical talents that could only be honed by years of woodshedding and gig-after-gig-after-gig.

If the opener "Lady Killer" doesn't knock you out with its pummeling riffs, perpetual-motion rhythm and sense of melodic phrasing beyond what any metal band in recent memory could achieve, then the utterly catchy *tour-de-force* "Murphy's Law" sneaks up on you and demands that you listen to it at least four or five times a day. Priestess gives you rock with raw physicality, emotion and artistry all rolled into one headbanging package. Highly, highly recommended.

Grade: A

—Damon Huss

Prior to the Fire is currently available.

Dave Rawlings Machine

A Friend of a Friend

(Acony)

Dave Rawlings should be familiar to anyone who has listened to roots and/or Americana music during the last decade or more. Although *A Friend of a Friend* is Rawlings' solo debut, he's been kicking around the country-based scene as Gillian Welch's longtime musical partner and has worked with Ryan Adams, Bright Eyes, Mark Knopfler and Old Crow Medicine Show.

This 41-minute outing captures Rawlings' blend of old timey music, country, folk and bluegrass with a cordial back porch ambience. Rather than a polished Nashville tone, the album has an unobtrusive, intimate and live feel.

This approach works well on Gram Parsons-esque opener "Ruby," which evokes a Laurel Canyon late '60s vibe, as well as a fiddle-infested, Appalachian rendition of the Rawlings/Ryan Adams ode to lost youth "To Be Young." The most evocative moment, though, comes when Rawlings melds Conor Oberst's "Method Acting" with Neil Young's "Cortez the Killer," emphasizing acoustic guitar and each writer's dark lyricism.

Catch Dave Rawlings Machine perform at both the Troubadour and at Amoeba Music (free in-store) on Feb. 4.

Grade: A

—Doug Simpson

A Friend of a Friend is currently available.

Spoon

Transference

(Merge)

Spoon has always existed in that space between mainstream notoriety and truly indie street cred. The band is known for putting out songs with driving guitars, staccato tempos and a unique voice, but somehow managing to make it all irrefutably catchy, while leaving relatability just out of reach.

But with *Transference* Spoon tries to push the envelope safely into the indie category, with a mostly lackluster album that borders on unfinished.

Transference is a departure from the poppy sound that came out of *Ga Ga Ga Ga Ga*, with songs that range from the tinny "Before Destruction" and jangly "Who Makes Your Money" to the twangily ambient "Is Love Forever" and the out of character piano ballad "Goodnight Laura."

On the whole, Spoon is still in there, but the album might leave the listener a little confused. Be sure to check out "Written in Reverse" for all the best things about this album and the band's sound combined in one great song.

Grade: B

—Melissa Russell

Transference is currently available.




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BY ERICA CARTER



Courtesy of Restaurant Girl

A treat from BabyCakes NYC

MMM, CUPCAKES. I DON'T KNOW TOO MANY PEOPLE WHO HAVE AN aversion to this tasty treat. Even I, the non-dessert eating culinarian, give in at least once a year for the taste of cream cheese frosting atop a moist, red velvet delight. The only problem is when I do choose to indulge, my digestive tract gets really upset. I, like about 40 million others, am lactose intolerant. It does get in the way when trying to enjoy some of life's creamier options, but as time progresses, so too do food inventions. Vegan and vegetarianism are now so popular they're almost "hip."

Enter BabyCakes NYC, an organic, wheat, gluten and dairy-free cupcake shop. Using naturally sweet agave nectar almost exclusively for their sugar alternative, BabyCakes has quickly gained buzz among the refined sugar-free crowd.

Certified Kosher, Parve and vegan, BabyCakes uses rice flour or finely pulsed bean mix for their gluten-free cupcakes and spelt for their non-gluten options. You'd think these ingredients wouldn't lend themselves to taste great in Chocolate, Vanilla or Red Velvet cupcakes, but you'd be hard pressed to find a "just as close to the real thing" version in this city.

The only drawback with BabyCakes is the price. It's always odd to me that healthy means spending more money. BabyCakes runs between \$3.25-4.25 for one precious cupcake. It's a bit steep, especially since you have to pay for street parking, lest you wind up with a \$25 parking ticket. If you live in the neighborhood, it's worth the two to six block walk, but if not, purchase the cookbook and bake to your heart's delight.

For more information, call (213) 623-5555 or visit babycakesnyc.com.

GAMES & GADGETS

**STILL
FLYING**

Keeping Flight Sims Relevant

BY JONATHAN KNELL

IN ALL FORMS OF ENTERTAINMENT

media, the experience that the creators can deliver changes due to the technology available.

The *Mona Lisa* would be an impossible task to a cave painter whose scope was limited to whatever he could do with crushed berries and sticks, but one could only imagine what Leonardo could do with a copy of Photoshop and a graphics tablet.

Movies like *Avatar* seem like technological marvels, but history has shown that the lessons learned making that film will become standard operating procedure for imitators within just a few years.

Video games are no different. The evolution from the blocky artwork and mindless AI of games from only a few decades ago to the cinematic experiences we play today couldn't be any more striking. While only hardcore enthusiasts can truly say that video games have officially gained the artistic respect of genres like film, it would be ridiculous to ignore how games are truly coming into their own.

Unfortunately, evolution does mean in any capacity that the weaker elements have to die for the stronger ones to thrive. The ease and elegance of 3-D gaming has made two-dimensional gaming into a costly and time-consuming venture that many companies wouldn't even consider anymore. Full-Motion Video games like "Mad Dog McCree" and "Myst" had a brief moment of glory, but the limitations of these games drove gamers back to less realistic but more interactive games.

Flight Simulators and combat titles have been around from the early days of gaming, but evolving technology has been as much of a curse to the genre as it has been a blessing. When games switched over to 3-D graphics, military games were the big winners since it was far easier to realistically model items with simple, flat designs like planes and tanks than it was to create human forms.

This meant that aerial combat games could feature planes that were nearly identical to real aircraft while other genres had to struggle with blocky, robot-like humans. Unfortunately, as technology caught up and human forms became easier to render, players turned away from the often complicated or dull flight games in favor of more down-to-earth action.

Since then, flight combat games have been teetering at the edge of obsolescence. Granted, there are definitely hardcore gamers who wait for the newest PC flight sims to come out so that they can take to the sky with ridiculously expensive hardware that perfectly recreate a fighter jet's cockpit, but this is not a big enough group for most developers to spend time and money on new flight titles. To justify this expense, they need a big win on a massive scale.

"The Sky Crawlers: Innocent Aces" – an alternate reality combat sim based on the anime of the same name – seems to be a good candidate for getting gamers back into flight combat games.

With the distinction of being the uniquely Wii-only aerial warfare title and the pedigree of Project Aces (the team behind the wildly popular "Ace Combat" series,) it definitely distinguishes itself from the other, often PC-only titles that are aimed mostly at hardcore fans.

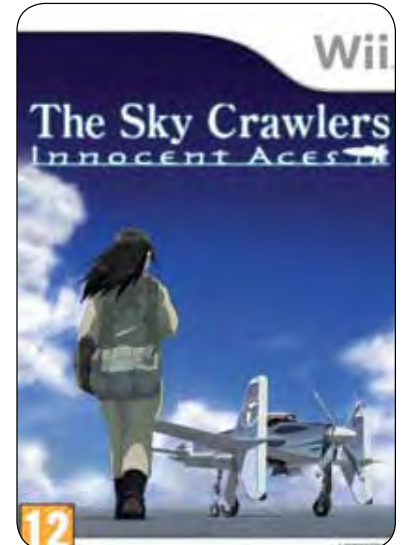
The story of the game is relatively confusing – the result of having the story delivered through in-mission dialogue and animated cutscenes taken from an already confusing Japanese animation – but it serves as a nice backdrop for some intense dog fighting.

The best-selling point of this title is the amazingly simple controls. By pitching the Nunchuk back and forth to adjust the speed and twisting the Remote Controller for movement, even the least aerial of gamers can quickly feel comfortable flying the period planes around to take out rival corporations' pilots.

To make combat even simpler and more cinematic, the game introduces the "Tactical Maneuver Command" ability where players who successfully tail a foe long enough can execute a mid-air maneuver to end with their prey squarely in their crosshairs.

Admittedly, the simplified controls may not be for everybody – especially for those with PC flight rigs that cost more than a Wii – but it is a truly enjoyable game. If this game and others can reignite the afterburners on gamers' interests, there is a real chance that flight combat games might have a new future in the console market.

If not, at least there will always be a home for these games with the die-hard fans.



12

"The Sky Crawlers: Innocent Aces" should get gamers back into flight combat games.

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Q&A

BY LUCIA



Lucia

You always hear the phrase "Don't give your power away," but what exactly does that mean? —Adele

The most precious thing you have to give to others is your time and energy. When you give that to another person, you are taking it away from your own life, since you have a finite amount of time and energy per day. Giving your power away means that you are focusing on someone else more yourself. You are thinking about them and the relationship more than you are thinking about yourself and what you need in your life.

While this is OK to do with someone whom you have a solid commitment with (married, living together), it doesn't work if you are simply dating someone. Taking your power back means putting the focus back on your own life and what you need. You become the conductor of your own train, rather than a passenger on someone else's.

I am 40 dating a guy who is 31, and we are intending to get married. I don't feel confident most of the time, because younger women are attracted to him. How can I gain confidence? —Mary

The No. 1 reason guys say they are attracted to older women is confidence, so until you feel confident, do not even think about marrying, or it will not go well. Although nine years may seem like a big age difference to you, these days it's not that big!

He is interested in you because you have qualities which younger women don't: maturity, life experience, no drama, sexual confidence. The fact that the two of you are intending to marry means he wants to be with you, not someone younger. No matter who you're with, at some point, another woman will find him attractive. That's just life. Your job is to find someone who loves you so much that no matter who is attracted to him, he's always happy to come home to you.

Write to Lucia at theartoflove.net. Read an excerpt from Lucia's Lessons of Love at lessonsoflove.net. Listen to Lucia live every Sunday at 3 p.m. PST on latalradio.com. Remember: Love inspires, empowers, uplifts and enlightens.



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DODGERS REED THE SIGN

BY PARIMAL M. ROHIT

ANOTHER WINTER IS PASSING BY. Yet again, the Dodgers' front office staff opted to spend it in hibernation.

As they awaken from their slumber in these final few weeks before spring training, the Dodgers suddenly have a pen and paper in hand, willing to hand both items to a free agent willing to spend the next summer playing in front of the sun-splashed rolling hills of Chavez Ravine.

Fresh off signing a few key players to contract extensions, the Dodgers finally decided to test the free agent market – even after some marquee names are no longer available. Sure, the Dodgers missed out on filling out their rotation with Joel Pineiro or adding a solid bat in the recent World Series MVP Hideki Matsui. And the Blue Crew expressed no love lost in letting players like Randy Wolf, Orlando Hudson, Juan Pierre, Jon Garland and Jim Thome (among others) depart from Chavez Ravine without much fanfare.

Yet, General Manager Ned Colletti revealed his ace-in-the-hole by bringing Reed Johnson into the fold.

Oh, alright, with the *Los Angeles Times* reporting on Monday a deal was imminent but not final, Johnson is not officially a Dodger yet. Still, who could go wrong with Reed?

Despite missing close to two months last season – thanks to a broken foot – Reed hit .255 while smashing a whopping four home runs and collecting 22 RBIs. Even more, the 33-year-old outfielder is a career .282 hitter. Hold on to your hats and buckle up as Reed prepares to take Los Doyers for a ride in 2010.



Reed Johnson could soon be sporting Dodger Blue.

OK, all joking aside, the potential deal actually makes some financial and practical sense. After all, the Dodgers lost an everyday dependable bench player when they traded Pierre to the White Sox. With no one around to fill Pierre's void, Johnson seems good enough to be that proverbial fourth outfielder. If Johnson accepts the reported one-year, \$800,000 deal, Colletti would have actually made a great deal.

In 2006, Pierre signed a five-year, \$44 million contract with the Dodgers. With this season being the last of that deal, the Dodgers would owe Pierre \$12.75 million for the 2010 season, a figure far too high for someone who is effectively a part-time player.

While Pierre was solid in filling in during long stretches of the 2009 season – mostly due to Manny Ramirez's 50-game suspension – his \$10 million did not seem justified despite a .308 average and 30 stolen bases in 145 games. Even more difficult to justify is Pierre's \$2.75 million raise for 2010, especially when Andre Ethier, Matt Kemp and Manny Ramirez are full-time mainstays in the outfield.

Meanwhile, the Dodgers' reported one-year, \$800,000 offer to Johnson makes perfect sense. Should the deal go through, Colletti effectively saved the Dodgers close to \$12 million in asking Johnson to do in 2010 what Pierre did in 2009: fill-in for the outfielders whenever they need a dry spell.

CENTERICE TRADING FOR A STREAK

BY PARIMAL M. ROHIT

OH, WHAT THE ANAHEIM DUCKS would do to trade places with the Los Angeles Kings. Instead, the Ducks traded away a former Stanley Cup most valuable player.

To no one's surprise, the Ducks reportedly sent Jean-Sébastien Giguère, 32, to the Toronto Maple Leafs on Sunday in exchange for goalie Vesa Toskala and forward Jason Blake – one day after his competition, Jonas Hiller, watched the ink dry on a four-year, \$18 million extension.

With a weak performance as backup

goalie (4-8-5 record, 3.14 GAA, 90 percent saves) and a stated desire to be a regular starter, the only choice the Ducks had was to trade Giguère away, despite his two Stanley Cups with Anaheim and his 2003 most valuable player trophy.

Along the way, Giguère amassed 208 of his 214 wins as a Duck. Yet, with only four of those wins coming this season and the Ducks currently out of the playoff race, change was imminent. It also did not help to have Hiller sport a 21-15-2 record with a 2.75 GAA and 91.6 save percentage. Simply put, the numbers did not add up for Giguère to continue playing in Anaheim.

Whether Anaheim (25-23-7, 57 points) makes a playoff run in light of this trade remains to be seen, but the Ducks are certainly envious of the Kings' current success.

Speaking of success in Los Angeles, the Kings have won their last six contests and eight of their last nine overall. The Kings are winning close ones, too, claiming victories



Jonas Hiller of the Ducks

in their last five shootouts. In fact, the Kings have won 10 of 13 games not decided in regulation this season.

Too bad the NHL will be on hiatus for 20 days due to the impending Winter Olympics. With just six games on the team's February schedule, the Kings hope they are not trading a late-season push for a well-deserved mid-season break.

All stats as of Feb. 1.



Quarterback Drew Brees leads the New Orleans Saints to their first-ever Super Bowl.

SUPER BOWL XLIV

New Orleans Saints vs. Indianapolis Colts

BY DAVID TOBIN

THE STAGE IS SET FOR THE ULTIMATE SHOW-down. The Colts have been to the big show before and walked away with victories. The Saints are making their debut in the largest sporting event in America. Both teams are loaded with talent, but from the looks of the 2009 season, it's going to be a shootout with two top-scoring quarterbacks leading these teams.

It's been 17 years since the top two seeded teams faced off in the Super Bowl, and with that matchup, the viewers got what they paid for. Once again it's time to see the best of the best bang heads and try to survive 60 minutes of pure adrenaline.

Looking at the two squads, some might think it's a no-brainer with the Peyton Manning-led Indianapolis Colts in the mix, but the New Orleans Saints have a general of their own in Drew Brees.

Each team depends on its offense to win games, a big change in the NFL. Up until Manning's debut, teams were

winning games by defense and using offense to move things along. Now with a strong passing game, the Colts are showing the rest of the league that they can score fast and often when it comes to crunch time.

Manning has dominated the league in two-minute drills, most recently illustrated in the Colts' win over the Jets. Just before the end of the first half, the Jets took an early lead, but with 90 seconds remaining, it only took Manning two plays to get down the field and score another seven points before ending the half.

The Saints will most likely be on the lookout for the three-receiver offense that the Colts have been using to increase options down the field. The difficulty in covering that many potential targets is that you lose men on the line and open up options for the run game. Joseph Addai has been averaging only a few yards per carry, but the Saints defense knows that he has the potential to break through for much more given the right opportunity.

When it comes to the running game on the Saints' side of the ball, they have more strength, especially in a newly rejuvenated Reggie Bush. Throughout the season, Bush took passes and carries for solid yardage, but went down with the tackle. That all changed when the playoffs began. Instead of hitting the ground, he took a note from Vikings superstar running back Adrian Peterson and started hitting back at the defense.

The coverage has definitely changed up when Bush gets the ball now. The defenders know that they can't go for the low tackle, they need to stop him dead in his tracks or else they will be run over and lose even more yards.

Not to go unmentioned is Drew Brees. His attack in the air has led the Saints to the Super Bowl for the first time in history. Taking time in the pocket and being smart about

his receivers is what is making his offense so lethal. Very few teams have been able to defend against Brees partly because he can sell his fakes as good as Manning, but also because he knows how to scramble when the offensive line collapses.

In the final playoff game of 2009, Brees played smart instead of making the same mistake that Brett Favre did when only yards away from winning the game. It's going to be those kinds of smarts that will keep the Saints in contention for a win against a very rough Indianapolis pass defense.

A few things to look at during the big game on Sunday will be how well Brees handles the ball. The football is actually different in the Super Bowl. There's more paint on it, and with the humidity in Florida, it will be harder to handle. Brees has smaller hands than Manning and isn't used to a ball like this. In the Colts win over the Chicago Bears during their last Super Bowl appearance, it was clear that Manning's size and familiarity with the event helped him overcome some of the more unique issues faced in a game like this.

Another interesting note about this game is that Manning's father, legendary Hall of Famer Archie Manning, rose to fame playing for New Orleans. It will be bittersweet for him not to root for his home team and his son at the same time.

For the 44th Super Bowl, expect a lot of offense and high scoring. The Saints' defense will use their strength to create turnovers, while the Colts will focus on stopping the run and creating confusion to keep Brees off his game.

If Manning's experience is any factor, they should be able to outwit the Saints, but it will be Brees and Bush that could upset this Indy team and bring home New Orleans its first Super Bowl victory.

Super Bowl XLIV airs Feb. 7 at 3 p.m. on CBS.

John Fitzhugh/Bloxi Sun Herald/MCT

CURTAINCALL

"Naked in the Tropics"

Now-Feb. 21 @ Macha Theatre

"Naked in the Tropics" revolves around Andy, a teenaged bi-curious nude dancer who falls for his drug-dealing gay dance partner, Joe, despite the fact that he has a pregnant girlfriend. When Andy goes down in a drug bust, his citizenship comes under question, and it is up to his mother's new lesbian lawyer girlfriend to do some fancy legal footwork to get him out. Oh, and it's a musical. It sounds exciting right? The show is more about shock value than anything else, with sexual encounters of every kind being mimed on stage. What should be an exhilarating ride comes to a grinding halt when the play moves to the courtroom in the second act and the action stops dead.

—Melissa Russell

Macha Theatre is located at 1107 N. Kings Rd., West Hollywood. For more information, visit plays411.com/nakedtropics.

"Blood and Thunder"

Now-Feb. 28 @ Moving Arts - Hyperion Station

"Blood and Thunder" is a powerful story of a con artist, Marcus (Keith Bolden), who plans to ride out the hurricane in his apartment in New Orleans when an unwanted visitor shows up. His brother Quentin (Tony Williams), a mild-mannered prisoner who escaped from jail in the wake of the hurricane, is not only seeking refuge from the storm but is searching for something else. Exhausted and bleeding from a gunshot wound, his arrival forces Marcus to face both the rising floodwaters and the ghosts of his past. Powered by a gradual process of tense revelation, "Blood and Thunder" is exquisitely acted and tremendously moving.

—Samantha Ofole

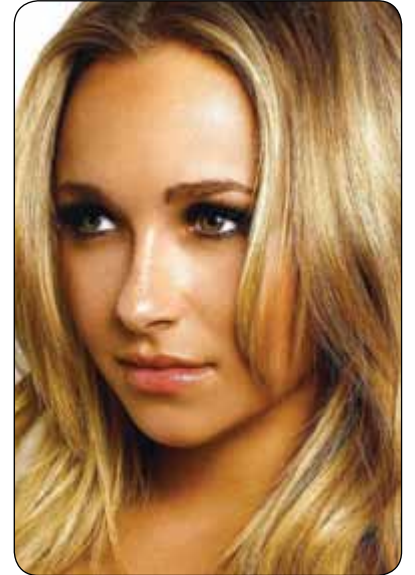
Moving Arts - Hyperion Station is located at 1822 Hyperion Ave., Los Angeles. For more information, visit movingarts.org.



Natalie Salins and Odalys Nanin in "Naked in the Tropics"

Michael Helms

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EVERYMAN

Be like Hayden Panettiere and volunteer.

BY EBONY MARCH

IN A PLACE LIKE LOS ANGELES, IMAGE IS EVERYTHING. SURE, YOU'VE heard it all before, but it's true. You could be dressed head to toe in designer rags by Dior or Dsquared, but if you roll up to the hottest spot in town rocking a '96 Toyota Corolla, you might as well be wearing burlap.

I've been living in this city for more years than I'm proud to admit, and I must confess: It never gets any easier. Sure, I could win the lottery tomorrow and all my troubles would instantly go bye-bye, but until hell freezes over, I've learned some nifty ways to enjoy the luxe and trendy life on mere pennies.

Let's say you've met a hot new honey or a devastatingly handsome hunk, and you've asked him or her out for drinks. You could easily take your date to the same old skanky dive bar and run the risk of another cutie turning their head. Or worse, running into your ex or your nosy friends who may wish to be introduced to your new pal before either of you is ready for such a leap.

If these are unappealing scenarios for you, then consider bringing your date someplace nice and upscale for a drink. Five star hotels such as the **Chateau Marmont** (8221 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles; chateaumarmont.com), **Four Seasons** (300 S. Doheny Drive, Los Angeles; fourseasons.com/losangeles) and **Sofitel** (8555 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles; sofitel.com) have killer bars and lounges that offer chic respite from the world.

Since you're only having cocktails, you can easily spend \$25 on a couple of drinks and some stellar conversation. Not only that, but you've just shown your date that you know how to enjoy the good life.

If you love labels but don't have a pot to piss in, don't get upset. Simply rethink your strategy. Many fashion houses offer smaller, less luxurious products such as perfumes, key chains or T-shirts for way less cash than an entire outfit.

Edgy designer Marc Jacobs has created a number of wildly popular fragrances such as **Lola**, a yummy scent perfect for any contemporary girl.

Recently, I went online to **Tiffany & Co.**'s Web site (tiffany.com) and saw a number of gorgeous items for \$100 and less.

My favorite? A pair of sterling silver earrings with the Tiffany logo engraved on each. SO hot!

Recently, actress Kristen Stewart was photographed behind the wheel of her black Mini Cooper. She's not the only fan of this sporty British import. Since 1998, the Mini has been a top seller and favorite of the rich and famous.

If gigantic luxury cars are a little too mom-friendly and out of your price range, snag yourself a Mini – for the day. That's right: Companies like **Beverly Hills Rent-A-Car** (bhrentacar.com) and **Enterprise Rent-A-Car** (enterprise.com) are a couple of the local car rental chains that carry the Mini among its fleet.

So, instead of facing off against this ride's estimated \$20,000 price tag, you can now rock out with one for under \$99 a day (check individual locations for price and availability).

Finally, if philanthropy has always been in your heart but fanaticism has been in your soul, **try volunteering**. Pretty much every celebrity in holiday has caught the do-gooder bug (think Jessica Simpson and Operation Smile or Hayden Panettiere and Isabel Lucas saving those poor whales from greedy poachers).

Sports stars are also in on opening their hearts and wallets to good causes. Many have their own foundations that not only offer them coveted tax breaks, but also allow Mr. or Ms. Fabulous the opportunity to give back to those less fortunate.

Where do you come in? Well, by volunteering, you allow yourself some instant good karma and the chance to help out a needy friend.

And on a superficial level, you will be putting yourself in the same air as your favorite singer, writer, director, model or musician. Each time he or she steps into the place for a photo op or to check the progress of a new initiative, wouldn't you LOVE to be the little joiner giving the breakdown?

Yeah, that's what I thought!

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BY FREDERICK MINTCHELL

FRIDAY FEB. 5



Tommy the Clown Class
Lula Washington Dance Theatre, 3773 Crenshaw Blvd., Los Angeles; tommythec clown.com

Tommy the Clown, known worldwide for his creation of the dance form and movement clowning and krumping, offers a rare three-day workshop, open to students of all levels, 12 years and above. \$55 for all three days.

WEDNESDAY FEB. 3
Lakers vs. Bobcats

Staples Center, 1111 S. Figueroa St., Downtown; nba.com/lakers

Though there are many games yet to be played, Charlotte is fighting for one of the last playoff spots in the Eastern Conference, so the Lakers better beware. 7:30 p.m. Tix start at \$10.

THURSDAY FEB. 4
Smart Gals 10th Anniversary Retrospective

Barnsdall Park Municipal Art Gallery, 4800 Hollywood Blvd., Los Angeles; smartgals.org

People can read quietly, alongside Los Angeles-based authors who, over the years, have presented their work at the Speakeasy. The fest culminates in a Winter Picnic on Sunday at 2 p.m. featuring bread from the Bicycle Bread Company, coffee Cafécito Organico, savory music and sweet bits of theater. Runs through Sunday. 12 p.m.–5 p.m. FREE.

THURSDAY FEB. 4
Home Depot Mystery Card Giveaway

Staples Center, 1111 S. Figueroa St., Downtown; kings.nhl.com
The first 5,000 fans get a Home Depot Mystery Card when the Kings host Anaheim. 7:30 p.m. Tix start at \$32.

FRIDAY FEB. 5
Yamaha Pianos All-Star Revue
REDCAT, 631 W. 2nd St., Downtown; redcat.org

With a program ranging from Romantic literature to new music to contemporary jazz, this spirited acclamation of virtuosic piano playing recognizes Yamaha, the world's largest musical instrument manufacturer. 8:30 p.m. \$20, \$16 w/ student ID.

SATURDAY FEB. 6
Amoeba Charity Auction
Amoeba Music, 6400 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood; amoeba.com

Amoeba welcomes Lance Robertson, of Nick Jr.'s Yo Gabba Gabba, as their guest Charity Auction host. February's auction proceeds will benefit the Animal Advocates Alliance. 4 p.m. FREE.

SATURDAY FEB. 6
Stree Tease: An Evening of Meryl Streep Monologues

Bang, 457 N. Fairfax Ave., Los Angeles; bangstudio.com/streep-tease

Some of the most beautiful, painful, thought-provoking, funny, emotionally resonant monologues in film history have been delivered by the incomparable, two-time Oscar winner (and record-breaking 15-time nominee) Meryl Streep. Now, they'll be delivered by ... men. Every Saturday in February. 8 p.m. \$15.

SUNDAY FEB. 7
Rose Bowl Half Marathon

Rose Bowl, 1001 Rose Bowl Drive, Pasadena; pacificsportsllc.com

The Half Marathon, 10K and 5K will start and finish at the Rose Bowl Stadium with a scenic course, periodically hilly and comprised of a combination of road and trail pathways, in between. Registration fee includes a T-shirt, medal and Rose Bowl entrance. Registration at 7 a.m.

MONDAY FEB. 8
Pee-wee's Big Adventure

New Beverly Cinema, 7165 W. Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles; newbevcinema.com

If you've caught his live act at Club Nokia, check out Pee-wee's big screen debut, uh, on the big screen. 7:30 p.m. \$7.

TUESDAY FEB. 9
Clippers vs. Jazz

Staples Center, 1111 S. Figueroa St., Downtown; nba.com/clippers

How will the Baron Davis-led Clippers fare against the Carlos Boozer-led Jazz? 7:30 p.m. Tickets start at \$10.

For more events, visit campuscircle.com/calendar. To submit an event for consideration, e-mail calendar@campuscircle.net.

PAGES

Batman: The Cult

(Titan)

Jim Starlin is in full dark and gritty Frank Miller mode in the reissue of this classic. The artwork by *Swamp Thing* co-creator Bernie Wrightson accompanies the tone perfectly.

The titular cult refers to the hordes of Gotham's homeless massing in the sewers under the city to do the bidding of the mysterious Deacon Blackfire. It seems all of Gotham is enthralled by the charismatic figure. But there's something sinister about him, and Batman may have met his match.

Grade: A

—Mike Sebastian

Batman: The Cult is currently available.

The South Park Episode Guide, Vol. 1: Seasons 1-5

(Running Press)

Having just concluded its 13th season, "South Park" has racked up countless classic moments. For the hardcore fan, the first volume of this in-depth guide breaks down every episode of the first five seasons. The book provides a synopsis for each episode, along with highlighting memorable lines, pop culture references, celebrities impugned, body count, original songs, character debuts and behind-the-scenes tidbits. As Cartman would say, "Sweet."

Grade: A-

—Mike Sebastian

The South Park Episode Guide, Vol. 1 is currently available.

The Unwritten, Vol. 1

(Vertigo)

Mike Carey and Peter Gross, the team behind *Lucifer*, create one of the most original comics in recent years in *The Unwritten*. This addicting series centers on Tom Taylor, a conflicted young man living off his legacy as the basis for the boy protagonist in his father's *Harry Potter*-esque novels. After a run-in with a mysterious stranger, Tom's pampered world begins to crumble around him. It's a tantalizing, complex and, most importantly, entertaining work that will leave you craving more.

Grade: A

—Mike Sebastian

The Unwritten, Vol. 1 is currently available.

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Upcoming Event

Open House Event

Saturday, February 13th 2010

Saturday, March 20th 2010

2:00pm — 4:00pm



- » An in-depth presentation discussing Gnomon's programs, classes, campus life and the opportunities that await you in the Computer Graphics industry.
- » Find out about the admissions process and financial aid.
- » Get portfolio feedback and your questions answered by our admissions counselor, school representatives and successful alumni.

**For more information
and to RSVP for this event visit:**

www.gnomonschool.com/open_house



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