FPH 132

No Good Sources

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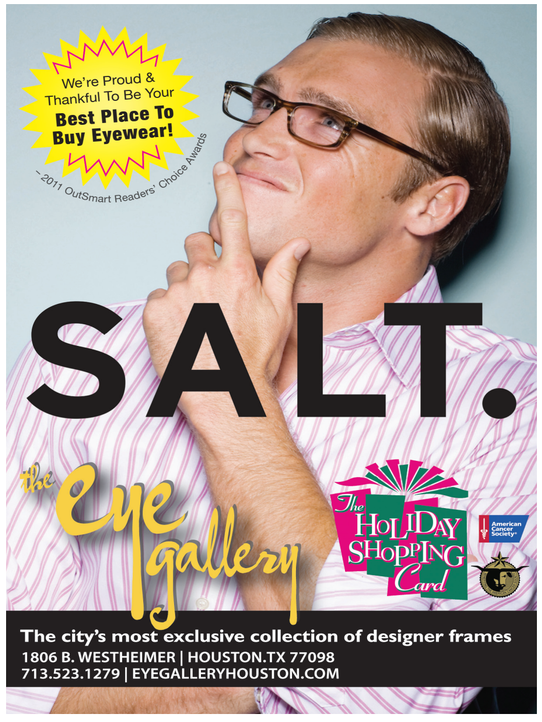
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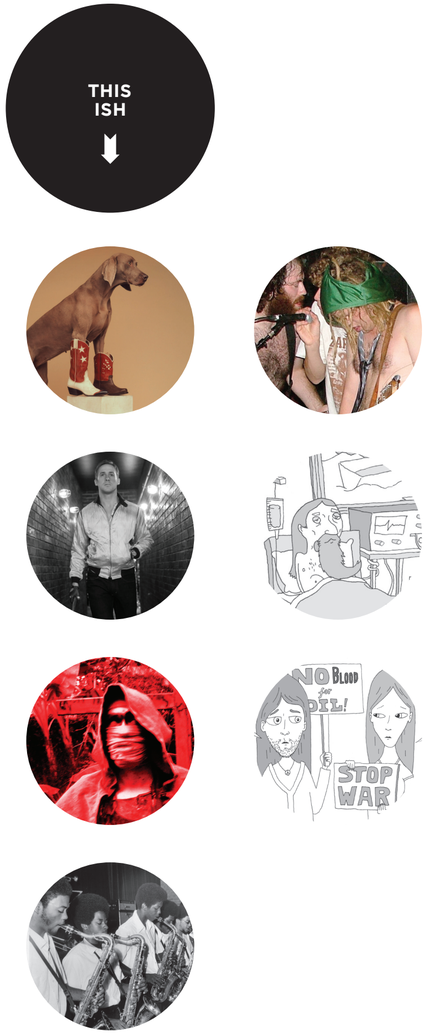




FPH 10|11

Cover Art by Michael C. Rodriguez

EMAIL US
editors@freepresshouston.com
713.527.0014



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Publisher
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Associate Editors
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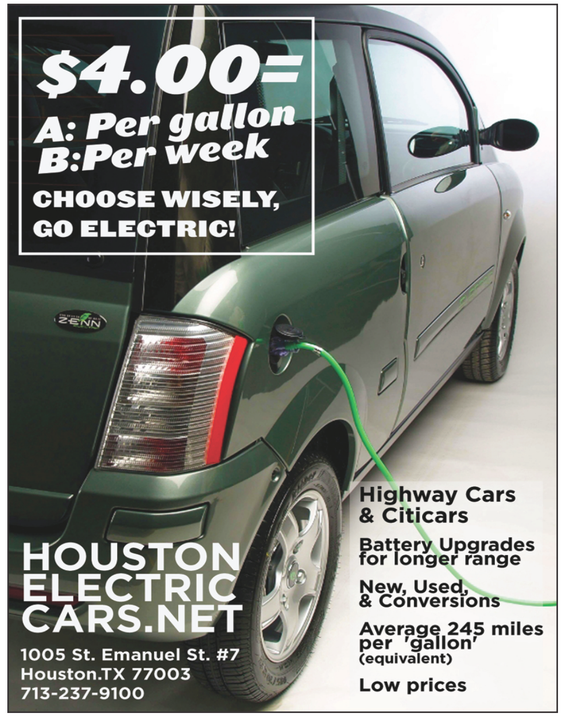
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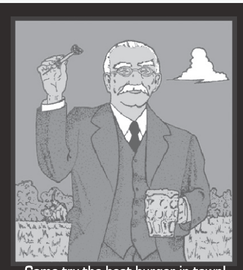
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Thu. 13	Late Night Liquid Comedy
Sat. 15	Orange Is In
Tue. 18	Grown Up Storytime
Thu. 20	Possessed By Paul James
Sat. 22	The Holdouts, Tom Callins
Mon. 24	Alexis Marceaux & the Samurai, Elaine Greer, Day Sailor.
Thu. 27	Beer Tasting
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This just might be the 5th time I have written an editor' letter about being magnificently out of shape. After in the last 10 years I have slowly gained 65 pounds of squishy, visceral fat. For someone like me, this is deadly. I have a family history of heart disease, diabetes, and kidney disease. This may be related to my family history of feasting, overeating, and showing affection with rice, lamb, and yogurt. So after many years of being sick and tired of being sick and tired, I have started on a diet and workout for the last several weeks. I figured if I put it in print the struggles with weight I am having then I would hold myself to my regimen to avoid utter embarrassment. If you see me with a pastry in mind, smack it out. Hopefully I can come back in 2 months with a super sexy, healthier version of the fat motherfucker below.



SO, I KNOW YOU DIDN'T GO TO THE ART FAIR. It's not surprising. In a metro area of 6 million, 10,000 people went to the Houston Fine Art Fair one weekend midway through September. One hundredth of one percent. It's OK that you didn't go, because it was pretty similar to what you can see every day in Houston's museums and galleries. The proliferation of Robert Rauschenberg at the Fine Art Fair is mirrored in the Menil Collection and McClain Gallery. Great mid-century and contemporary Latin American modernism in the fair at Sammer Gallery and others can be found at Sicardi Gallery and the MFAH every day of the week. Local painter Wendy Wagner's work held its own near Takashi Murakami prints nearby. Two local galleries represented at the fair, Koelsch and Darke, packed a punch with installation work worthy of Rice Gallery's celebrated run of incredible immersive environments. Joana Vasconcelos, represented at the fair by London's Haunch of Venison gallery, seemed eerily familiar in this town, as local Elaine Bradford's similar taxidermied-animal-covered-in-thread work cast a long shadow over what across the pond probably comes off as original and innovative work.

Some things were different. It was nice to see an amazing Morris Lewis at the fair, his status as an underrepresented character in Houston long overdue for change. Robert Indiana and Jim Dine were welcome classics to come across. Random Warhols speckled the landscape, invigorating the space. Seeing Fotofest, BOX 13, Anthony Thomas Shumate, Donald Sultan, Donald Lipski and Joseph Helfenstein elevated in the context of an art fair was inimitable and seamless. Many conversations were carried out in Spanish; it was great to see gallerists and collectors comfortable to be bilingual. Nobody saw it, but if .001% of the population has any sway over the institutions that represent art to Houston, perhaps these art fairs will pay dividends.

Coming up this October 20-23 is the Texas Contemporary Art Fair, which I have on good authority will be crashed by at least one noise musician/artist duo. I encourage all other guerrilla artists to join in. Even if the crafty vibe in world art markets is not well represented inside the pavilion, it sure should be out in the street. Just outside the George R. Brown Convention Center (site of both art fairs) is a hysterical take on contemporary art's place in the world that echoes the artworld's inability to make inroads in Houston's upper classes. In Discovery Green Park (worth a stroll if you're headed to the fair) sits a mini-golf course built of installation art by some of Houston's usual suspects. As I walked around the white picket fence cordoning the course on a sunny Friday morning, couples in Nike running gear sipped coffees and watched their kids smack the ball around with no regard for the game or its rules. It was hilarious. Turns out that the "Insparity Golf Experience" is not just two words and one made up word, it is a fully funded exhibit curated by Galveston Art Center doyen Clint Willour featuring The Art Guys, Elaine Bradford, Bill Davenport, Noah Edmundson, Gonzo247 of Aerosol Warfare, Jonathan Leach, Seth Mittag, Jason Makepeace, Anthony Thompson Shumate and Emily Sloan. They just threw it in a mini-golf course so they could charge five bucks to play 9 holes. Insperity manages payroll and employee training for companies, and they're right to cross art with golf outside of an art fair. Businessmen buy art. They also golf. There were two 1.7 million dollar sales at the Houston Fine Art Fair and the Texas Contemporary will strive to match that. If you have 1.7 mil to buy art, then you have enough money to need payroll management services. This plucky IT and HR service have their b.s. down to a science, with language that could rival any good curator in this country. From their website; "At Insperity, we understand you need the right combination of relief and resources to help you achieve your goals. Whether you're ready for our complete solution or one of our many service solutions, we can help turn your vision into reality." Hear that? They want to understand the viewer, promote self-realization, be non-judgmental and encourage aspirations. Too bad they put fake grass and tiny flags all over the art.

I'm all for art reaching out to the public, being more inclusive and populist. The decentralization of the artworld throughout the 21st century has made collectors of us all on Etsy, curators on Facebook, designers in Illustrator, marketers on Twitter, painters on an iPad and critics on Wordpress. Adverse reactions to such a change may result in bad fads, questionable provenance, dumbing-down and differing opinions, but not a golf course of installation art. Discovery Green and Insperity have stumbled upon a delectable metaphor for how Houston sees contemporary art. By mashing two concepts together and charging a fee to enter, the idea of art as egalitarian enlightenment is squashed beneath the rigors of reality-that art is made for elites. This stunning illustration of that principle shouldn't be surprising, it's just par for the course. **FPH**

art



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Oct 7 { Ghosts Along the Brazos
Oct 8 { Disfrutalo
Oct 14 { Funkotron, Plump
Oct 15{ Rattletree Marimba
Oct 20 { 6pm: Last Organic Outpost Community Farm Discussion
Oct 21 { Pimps of Joytime, Yo Mama's Big Fat Booty Band
Oct 22 { Block Party featuring Trae Tha Truth, Antiserum, Michael 5000 Watts, many more
Oct 28 { Reggae Rhythm Revival featuring Spoonfed Tribe, D.R.U.M.
Oct 29 { Halloween Murder Masquerade featuring Come See My Dead Person
See website for more shows

ARToberfest

Your cup runneth over with arts events in October

BY MICHAEL PENNYWARK

OCTOBER IS A BUSY MONTH for the art world in Houston, so strap yourself in while I bring you some of the highlights. First up is Under Repair: New Works on Paper, a solo exhibition by Houston artist Mark Masterson at Spacetaker ARC (October 1st-28th). Inspired by 16th century Northern Renaissance painter and printmaker Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Masterson exhibits twelve paintings and three lithographs that reflect an absurd, vulgar, and chaotic world infused with contemporary social and political issues and Masterson's own personal experiences.

Once you have had your fill of Masterson's satire, be sure to check out the dedication of Fifth Ward Jam, a work of temporary public art by Dan Havel and Dean Ruck at 3705 Lyons Avenue (October 1st). Created from recycled materials this architectural artwork inverts a condemned bungalow into a unique space reflecting the rich oral and musical traditions of the Fifth Ward. Free and open to the community, Fifth Ward Jam will be celebrated with music and storytelling that reflect the vibrant cultural roots of the area. Featured performers include Zydeco artist Prince Jabo, legendary Duke-Peacock studio guitarist Texas Johnny Brown, gospel quartet Endurance and rapper Moon Rue.

Sunday, October 2nd will see the first of a three-month series of artist talks, exhibitions and events organized by Project Row Houses and the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts as part of Communograph: Mapping Community Through Creative Action. The first talk will feature Mel Chin and will be held at Eldorado Ballroom, 2310 Elgin from 3-6pm. The series aims to further PRH's goal of combining public art and social practice, by providing a context in which art can create social change. This will be followed by an artist talk by Rick Lowe and Ashley Hunt on October 12 at 7pm at UH, Dudley Recital Hall and the opening of Project Row Houses Round 35 including Communograph House on October 15 (2505-2521 Holman).

If September's fine art fair left you wanting for more art extravaganzas, then look no more. First, on October 8th-9th will be the 40th Annual Bayou City Art Festival Downtown featuring printmaker Kreg Yingst, and daily musical performances by String Theory. The one-of-a-kind outdoor gallery will host 300 artists representing 19 artistic media, and will also boast an interactive creative zone for children, restaurants, wine cafes, and a performing arts stage with multicultural musical and dance entertainment.

The second extravaganza coming your way is of course the Texas Contemporary Art Fair (October 20-23 at George R. Brown Convention Center), which promises to focus on vanguard work, innovative dialogue and progressive programming addressing the issues of energy and sustainability. Keeping with this theme, Texas Contemporary has partnered with Belgrave Trust to ensure that each guest leaves a carbon neutral footprint.

Ongoing at The Menil Collection is Walter De Maria: Trilogies, the groundbreaking artist's first major museum exhibition in the United States which includes three series of related works: one painting series and two sculpture series, each comprised of three parts. While people can be excited about the new café (designed by Rice University's Rice Building Workshop) scheduled for construction next spring, October 21 will see the opening of Imprinting the Divine: Byzantine and Russian Icons from the Menil Collection.

Finally, as part of their 24th Dia de los Muertos celebration, Lawndale Art Center will present its annual Retablo Exhibition (October 17-November 5): small art works inspired by the traditional Latin American devotional art form of the same name. These contemporary interpretations will be auctioned off at Lawndale's Gala/Silent Auction, October 21. **FPH**



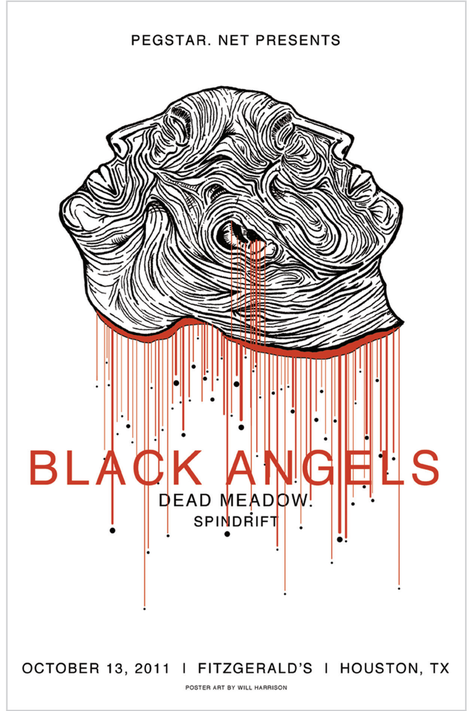
Stand Up, 1989
William Wegman, Texas Gallery, Texas Contemporary Art Fair



Anthem, 2011
Helen Altman, Moody Gallery, Texas Contemporary Art Fair

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Soul

film

BY MICHAEL BERGERON



I'M READY FOR A WHOLE REVISION OF the Sam Peckinpah canon or gatling gun as the case may be. There are already remakes, like Straw Dogs in theaters right now (d. Rob Lurie); or proposed remakes like the Tony Scott helmed The Wild Bunch; and The Getaway was re-imaged (and actually added the intro from Jim Thompson's book) back in 1994.

But stop for a moment think and about that, what kind of cast would emulate William Holden, et al., but perhaps Costner, Crowe, Affleck, Pitt, Bernal, you get the idea. Nobody currently living has really seen the original Straw Dogs but me, although a lot of people are familiar with The Wild Bunch.

Certainly there are purists but then again there are those who, in a renaissance kind of way, are ready to adapt the most recent classics of their elders as a stepping stone into their current cosmology, and outside of Woody Allen (still alive) and Luis Bunuel (long gone but hopefully remembered) who's more deserving of such an commercial accolade.

Here're the remakes I propose, and "If they move, kill 'em."

Peckinpah appeared as an extra in the apocryphal Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956) and in particular he's at the front of a pyramid of people who're chasing Kevin McCarthy from a gas station near the end of the movie. His television directorial credits include eps of The Rifleman and Gunsmoke among others. Peckinpah actually directed a few eps of Have Gun – Will Travel. That title lends itself to credence as badass and is certainly more deserving of a reboot than say Get Smart, a not unlikable proposition.

Perhaps we're dining at a small table where the bread and wine rest before consecration, and we divide the television d'oeuvre from Peckinpah's feature film output.

Remake directors include The Deadly Companions and Ride the High County, Major Dundee, The Ballad of Cable Hogue (Paul Thomas Anderson would be a good fit), Junior Bonner (James Mangold); Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid (Kevin Costner, also starring as Garrett); The Getaway (for the third time, with Robert Zemeckis helming a weird yet satisfactory motion capture hybrid that combines 20th century noir and 21st century tech).

Need we say more?

If you want a semblance of originality try Drive on for size.

Drive is a muscle car of a movie drenched in sweat and adrenalin. With Ryan Gosling behind the wheel the film makes sharp turns that would leave other actors spinning out of control. What starts as a simple story of a mechanic who moonlights as a Hollywood stunt driver, and also as a wheelman on robberies, slowly escalates into a blood stained fable. Gosling plays the ultimate cool dude who rarely if at all shows emotion, even while his world comes to a grinding halt.

Drive director Nicolas Winding Refn soaks the scenes with atmosphere and foreboding. Yes, Drive is an action thriller of sorts but the pacing is masterful, slow and delicate. Then the screen explodes with deadly violence or a breathless car chase. The music by Cliff Martinez slowly percolates and imbues scenes with moodiness reminiscent of David Lynch films. In fact there are sequences where Refn's methodical movement of the story into moments of surrealism made me think it was a Lynch sequel to Mulholland Dr. Other soundtrack items include a Riz Ortaloni song from an early 70s exploitation film called Goodbye Uncle Tom.

Gosling makes friends with his next-door neighbor and her young son (Carey Mulligan). Mulligan's husband has just been released from prison and Gosling agrees to be his driver for an ill-timed heist. Albert Brooks plays a mobster who speaks softly and carries a big grudge. Although the supporting turns are all well cast its Gosling at the center of the frame that demands your attention. His brooding yet silent character walks calmly through the valley of death that is the underbelly of Los Angeles.

Refn should look forward to accolades aplenty as the season ends. Drive is not Thief, although there's a crime element similarity. Drive isn't a David Lynch film, but the mood created by slow paced drama mixed with a wavelength soundtrack conjures up the colors and tonalities of the aforementioned Mulholland Dr. and Blue Velvet.

Drive may well be the autistic child of the Fast and Furious set. Gosling says practically nothing, but then when he does speak it's along the lines of: "If you don't shut your fucking mouth I'm going to kick your teeth down your throat and shut your mouth for you." Gosling treads territory in Drive formerly regulated to Eastwood or McQueen.

AFF

In Austin from October 20-27 the Austin Film Festival will unreel an advance of lauded films and later-in-the-year releases such as The Descendants, The Artist, Jeff Who Lives at Home, Shame, We Need To Talk About Kevin, and even that fussy feline Puss In Boots. Seminars taking include speakers like Fight Club author Chuck Palahniuk, Shane Black and Lawrence Kasden.

MFAH

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston has many singular retro screenings and premieres in October. Here are but three: Jean-Luc Godard's Film Socialisme (Oct. 14-16); Ranier Werner Fassbinder's World On A Wire (1972) (Oct. 7-9); and the very subjective Italian mystery thriller The Double Hour (Oct. 21, 23).

Puncture

A drug-addicted lawyer takes on a medical supply organization to great effect in the powerful yet minimalist film Puncture. Chris Evans stars as a Houston attorney based on the real life persona of Mike Weiss. Weiss and his partner Paul Danziger eventually won the case after nearly a decade, but the cost was tragic on several levels including the death of a medical technician (played in the film by Vinessa Shaw) who contracts AIDS after being pricked by a needle that a convulsing emergency room patient has repelled.

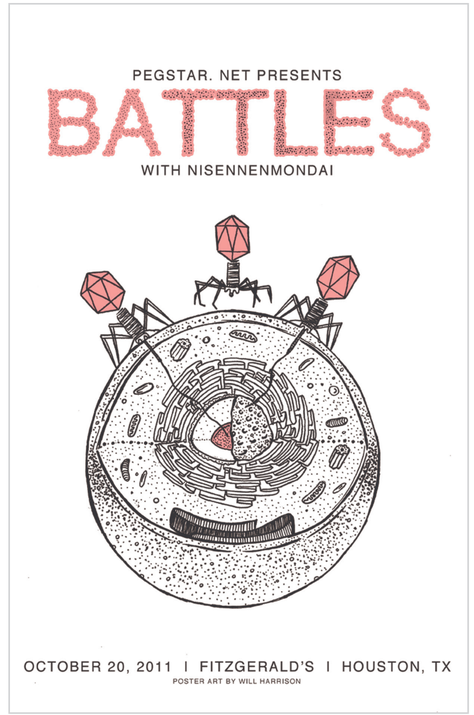
Free Press Houston spoke to directors Adam and Mark Kassen who lensed the film in Houston using many of the actual locations from downtown lawyer's offices overlooking the Cullen Building (Brett Cullen plays the nefarious antagonist lawyer Nathaniel Price), to party houses in the Heights to cramped spaces in medical offices. Speaking to Adam and Mark by phone it's difficult at first to tell them apart. "Don't worry," laughs Mark (who also plays Danzinger), "Even our Mom has trouble telling our voices apart."

Puncture revolves around a lawsuit trying to prove that the GPO (Group Purchasing Organization) held an unfair monopoly over what kind of syringes hospitals purchased. Weiss's client has invented a one-use safety syringe where the needle pops off and prevents any kind of second sting that affects 800,000 medical technicians a year. Even if only five people actually die, that's not the point. Evans plays Weiss to the hilt, indulging in sex, lots of cocaine, and a fair share of pain pills. Weiss is a functioning drug addict and that's what makes the story turn, the fact that this dreg of society, albeit educated and buff to boot, has a cause that's righteous.

The Kassen Brothers make their low budget work for the look of the film. When there's a discovery phase of a trial there's hardly anyone in the courtroom. That increases the feeling that Weiss is on a mission that nobody cares about. "We were going for an organic feeling," Adam says. "We spent time developing the story and situations. We took things to where there's a jumping place."

Puncture opens this weekend in limited engagements that suits its indie look and feel.

The wardrobe of Evans as Weiss represents one of the best things about Puncture, Evans is always wearing dark suits, dark dress shirts and ties with bright hues, well past primary colors that just punch the picture. "We had consultants that told us how Weiss dressed. His combination of suspenders, ties and shirts was truly both distracting and hypnotic," Mark adds. **FPH**







I FELL IN LOVE WITH THE BURDEN HOLDING ME DOWN

BY KWAME M. ANDERSON

NAPS. EVERYDAY I take a series of unplanned naps at various places throughout my travels. Why? Because sleep is a luxury that I am not afforded, or that I refuse to afford myself. What am I doing as I dodge planned stints of unconciousness? Nothing really, reading, listening to music, watching the internet. However, sleeping is a healthy option, but I would rather seem occupied while really accomplishing nothing more than appearing occupied, cycles cycles, life moves in cycles. Reading about revolution, it's sort of a thing, a goal rarely realized but cherished and deified. Do we have the stuff to fight the stuff, or is the stuff that powerful, or are we too occupied with other stuff. Could be. Shows, let's talk about them. Happenings in Houston, more frequent than infrequent, let us venture out into the city, see the lights, smell the sights, you have rights and lefts. Nonsense, I'm reading too much, or too much into this, elipses.



Wild Flag

music

SHOWS

10/9/11 - Toro y Moi - Fitzgerald's

Chazwich Bundick is also known as Toro y Moi who plays something called Chillwave (according to Wikipedia and my iTunes genre tag). Not sure what Chillwave is, but I would go with the connotations of chillin as and wave, as sort of this free moving structure capable of highs and lows depending upon wind speed and wind strengths. Similar, the music of Bundick is, because it ebbs and flows in a series of grooves, some better than others, but none outside of a wave that would induce a slight recline of the head and a smile that would indicate relaxation and/or chilling. The show would be a good place to close your eyes and sway.

10/25/11 - ST. VINCENT - Fitzgerald's

St. Vincent 's Annie Clark has managed to get weirder and more popular with each album. The juxtaposition of sultry vocals, Fripp guitar, and dark themes has forged a style unique to Clark. Her latest album, Strange Mercy, throws a heavy bit of groove into the mix. "Cruel" channels 1999/Around The World In A Day era Prince. "Strange Mercy" stutters and saunters to an elegant finish evoking the closing scene of a sci-fi film; it is at once Sade and Eno. Anyone in the know (as you can assume I am) would also know that Clark is a boss guitarist and that is displayed nowhere more than her live show, which will land here 6 days prior to satanic celebration. I pride myself in only recommending shows I would go to because of the high standard of entertainment value. This would be another one of those instances.

10/27/11 - WILD FLAG - Fitzgerald's

Wild Flag's self-titled album is a spoonful of rock goodness. I've reviewed it already, but if you missed it, it is basically one of the finest moments in rock n' roll history. That said, any oppourtunity to see Janet Weiss play these songs live far outweighs any thing else I could possibly. If I could find a way to take my daughter, I would. Mary Timony's mysticism, Carrie Brownstein's Pete Townsend, and Rebecca Cole's Billy Preston, this is one of those shows where the encore's will never be enough. If you have begun to doubt the state of music, if you long for feeling, if you want to remember what made you want to remember, haul ass to this show, HAUL ASS!!!!

ALBUMS

TERRIUS NASH - 1977 (free download)

The Dream pissed at his ex, misses his ex, haters, etc. A great kiss off record, a wonderful bump and ride record, one of the choruses is "Stop fucking with me, woman!" Shakespeare?

WILCO - THE WHOLE LOVE (dBpm)

Wilco is always a band that has been capable of classics, and though I wouldn't call their last few records that, it seems that their mojo is again working for The Whole Love. From the 7 minute opener "Art Of Almost" to literally every other song, this album has no weak spots. "Dawned On Me" is one of the songs that mans familiar territory while being one of the best songs the band has ever written. Summerteeth-ish, "Standing O" begins familiar and veers into classic rock genius. "The Whole Love" could never end and it would be OK, and "One Sunday Morning" may be one of the greatest closers of any rock album. Is this the best album I've heard this year? Well, I will say it's one of the best Wilco records in the band's discogaraphy. **FPH**

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HALLOWEEN PARTY!
featuring MTA (Metallica Tribute) and Ozz (Ozzy Tribute)

FRIDAYS
Sept. 30 - The Chromatics
Oct. 7 - Original Music Showcase
"Great Local Original Acts"
Oct. 14 - The McClanahan's
Oct. 21 - Eightyplus
"Pure 80s Rock!"
Oct. 28 - Halloween Party with The Spicoli's
Nov. 4 - Band TBA

Sundays
Crawfish Boil and Party On The Patio!

SATURDAYS
Oct. 1 - Highway To Hell (AC/DC Tribute)
Oct. 8 - SwampDaWamp with Kara Clark
Oct. 15 - Metal Maiden (Iron Maiden Tribute) with Slip Of The Snake (Whitesnake Tribute)
Oct. 22 - Cardi's Reunion 2 Lights Out, Oz Knozz, ZRocks, Filthy Rich
Oct. 29 - Halloween Party MTA(Metallica Tribute) with Ozz (Ozzy Tribute)
Nov. 5 - GoGirls.com Musicfest

October 8
SwampDaWamp



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FRIDAYS
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SATURDAYS
Live Bands Inside!
Live DJ Outside On The Patio

Oct. 8 - Tribute Night
Double Vision (Foreigner Tribute)
The Sound Of Madness (Shinedown Tribute)
99 Lbs (Black Crowes Tribute)

OCTOBER EVENTS

FRIDAYS
September 30 - Victim
The Dogz, Winter's End
October 7 - SwampDaWamp with Kara Clark
October 14 - Eightyplus
October 21 - Troublemaker featuring Kat James
October 28 - Original Music Showcase
"Great Local Original Bands"
Nov. 4 - Spare Heart (Rush Tribute) with Geddy Perry (Rush Triubute)

SATURDAYS
October 1 - Spare Heart (Heart Tribute)
October 8 - Double Vision (Foreigner Tribute)
The Sound Of Madness (Shinedown Tribute)
99 Lbs (Black Crowes Tribute)
October 15 - Ramey Presents Rock Band Showcase with Lights Out, Soul Junkies The Company of Wolves, & More!
October 22 - Black Dog (Led Zeppelin Tribute)
Subdivided - (Rush Tribute)
October 29 - Halloween Party with Victim

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Bike Night!
Entertainment by Crosstown Renegades

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Steady Funk Fusion

BY MICHAEL BERGERON

LATE IN 2006 director Mark Landsman was listening to NPR and they were doing a piece on the Kashmere Stage Band. "This incredible music came through my radio and I thought it was a bold, huge big band playing a 70s funk sound," Landsman told Free Press Houston in an exclusive interview. "I thought it was the obvious, like The Bar-Kays, and the radio reporter says 'Can you believe these are 15 and 16-year-old students from Kashmere Senior High School in Houston Texas?'"

Landsman saw in the story a fictional narrative, a group of kids overcoming adversity on the path to worldwide recognition, on the road to winning the national high school band championship in Mobile, Alabama in 1972 (then lorded over by Governor George Wallace). At the front of the tale was the band's conductor Conrad O. "Prof" Johnson.

"I Googled every Conrad Johnson in Houston and came up with four names. I called the first one and asked him if he was the leader of the band I was listening to on the radio. No, he told me that was his Dad; I was talking to Conrad Jr. He gave me his Dad's phone number. I was so nervous it took me a week to build up the courage to call him. Finally I called him, and he picked up the phone. He answered, I introduced myself and Conrad said 'What's wrong with you? I've been waiting a week for you to call.'"

Landsman flew to Houston and spent about five days interviewing Johnson, and met a few of his former students. A couple of the students took Landsman to lunch and told him "Prof doesn't realize this but some of the guys are getting back together to do a reunion in his honor." In fact members of the Kashmere Stage Band reunited for this first time in nearly 30 years in 2008 for said reunion concert, honoring the 92-year-old Johnson.

This info made Landsman change his strategy and upon returning to Los Angeles he contacted producers and financiers to back him on a documentary. Landsman still has a deal in place to turn the story into a non-fictional narrative in place at a major studio. "I was inspired by how Johnson changed these people's lives. This is a perfect storm of a phenomenal music story, and a phenomenal story about human beings." Johnson, who had played in Count Basie's band, took a high school band and turned them into a funk fusion band. "Prof broke the color barrier, I was interested in that time period, 1971, 1972." Indeed flared bell-bottoms and Afro hairstyles have never looked as right as they do in Landsman's film, a documentary the construction of which he describes as "building the bridge as we walked over it."

Thunder Soul combines found footage with contemporary footage Landsman shot of the band's 2008 concert. Old clips include a segment where then Texas governor Dolph Briscoe awards the Kashmere Stage Band a check for ten-grand, money needed to complete expenses for a summer trip to Europe. "I did a full court archival press to try to figure out how to get obscure film footage of this high school band. I tried every source in Texas and many outside the state and nobody had footage of the band," lamented Landsman who at that point was going to recreate the era through a series of excellent still photos. A couple of those photos accompany this story.

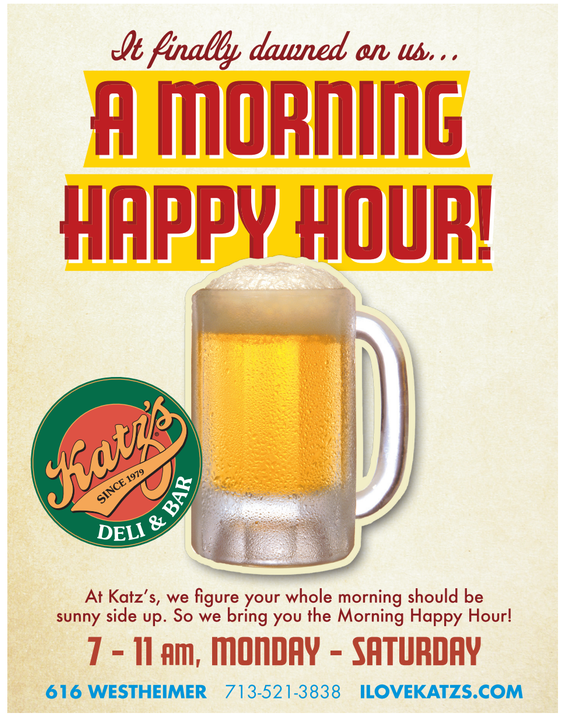
"Then about two weeks into editing I got a call from a production assistant we had used in Houston. He told me he was standing on a set with a director of photography named Greg Cook and about 30-years ago Cook was working with a reporter named Charles Porter [Porter was the first male black reporter in Houston, at KTRK.] and they'd shot a 30-minute 16mm documentary on Conrad Johnson and the Kashmere Stage Band and would I be interested in using it." Landsman also licensed footage from a 1972 documentary named Wattstax. Additionally Landsman wanted to create some impressionistic footage "just to capture the vibe of the magnificence of the band." This he did using 35mm to shoot silhouettes as well as an early 80s tube television camera that produced those classic electronic light streaks. Thunder Soul also combines the Kashmere Stage Band recordings with live music shot during the production.

As for Johnson's career after Kashmere, Landsman smiled, "Prof never retired. He built a studio in back of his home and he tutored hundreds of kids from that studio. There was a saying – if you studied saxophone in Houston at that time somewhere along the line your path crossed with Conrad Johnson. He taught Joe Sample, Kurt Whalem, Bubba Thomas." Thunder Soul isn't the kind of documentary that exposes injustice or sets out to right wrongs. Thunder Soul is the kind of movie that provides inspiration by showing how one man provided that same kind of inspiration to generations of music students. Many of the Kashmere Stage Bands record albums are now available on CD. **FPH**











Church Ov Melkarth perform Monday, October 23,2011 at Mango's Café with Cronophage and Barghest. Look for the new Church Ov Melkarth/Cronophage split LP soon.

Church Ov Melkarth

BY RAMONLP4 | PHOTO BY MICHAEL O'DWYER

CHURCH OV MELKARTH IS A BRUTAL, uncompromising mix of Metal, Industrial, Dark Ambient, and Noise. That may not be a combination that screams commercial success but that's not the point – being true to yourself and dedicated to your art is. The occult, Jung, Lovecraft, mythology, and many dark themes are riddled throughout CovM work. Consider the mythic four album cycle the band is currently in the middle of producing. The first, the Sermon of Hate, is a double album that introduces the characters and their motivations for destroying the Gods. In the second album, Sermon of Steel, they develop a weapon that destroys memories thus depriving the Gods and their religions their power. The third album, The Sermon of Defeat, involves the weapon invoking the 7th unholy Sephira that guarantees that nobody wins the epic battle. In the final album, The Severing the Neck of the Orobouros, the characters seek to kill the World Serpent only to discover everything they have done is for nothing – a recurring constant. Intrigued, I went to the deep dark woods of north of Houston to invoke the mastermind behind the Church, Jvstin Whitney.

YOU DEAL WITH A LOT OF DARK THEMES. WHY?
We're dark people who see the world for what it really is and it's not a pretty place. In the real world, you friends and family die. Over the years, CovM skewed more to the dark side but as we grew up we found there's a balance between light and dark – that is what we try to find within ourselves. Some people can't accept their inner darkness but we chose to tap into it as opposed to saying "Hey, I'm a good person." Sometimes I'm a shitty person and sometimes I'm nice guy - it's all a neutral balance. What centers us is aligning ourselves with the darkness in our souls because that's who we are inside. Why should people punish us for that? We're trying to attain balance just like the people who go to church who try to find their spiritual path of life.

YOUR SHOWS OPEN WITH A CEREMONY. EXPLAIN THAT FOR US.
It's a ritual using Thelemic ceremonial magic to align ourselves to the darkness. We're trying to show people what's inside our heads and we're doing that so they can attain a point of focus as well. We'll have people who are into Satan there but that's not necessarily my thing; I find Satan to be an overly contrived character. I consider him more of a tool than a way of life because Satanism is just a backwards mirror of Christianity. If you're yelling stupid shit that pisses people off (the same exact same shit that pisses you off about Christians), that doesn't help anyone. You're just replacing one name with another. That's not finding balance. You're too skewed to the other side.

YOU COMBINE DARK AMBIENT, NOISE, AND METAL. WHAT DO THOSE HAVE IN COMMON?
Despite the fact that they are vastly different types of music, they all have the same general ideology and life view – they tap into an inner darkness. Early Throbbing Gristle and Skinny Puppy isn't fucking pop; it's dark stuff addressing serious personal issues within those artists. Dark Ambiance is the introspective side while Noise is a violent outburst of the same feelings. Noise wants to destroy someone's ears and to be as harsh as possible but the same emotions and mindset are there in Dark Ambiance. Metal is in-between.

That is why you have a lot of cross-genre artists like Mortiis who played in a Metal a band, then played Ambient and, now he plays Industrial. Part of that is growing up and tastes changing. People don't want to admit it but, at some point, you hit a wall with Metal - the same with any genre. Few bands keep doing stuff worth listening to after four or five albums. It's about admitting to yourself that you change. If you are playing the same stuff over and over, you compromise yourself - you've decided to sell records rather than be an artist.

HOW DO YOU GET PAST THAT WALL?
Listening to different music. I got bored with Metal so I started listening to Dark Ambient and Industrial for a few years and then went back to Metal. I'm not saying abandon the genre entirely but to reach out. You need to be fluid and continually shifting because once you start stagnating you've made a decision to give up whether or not you're conscious of it. I don't want to give up. I want to keep changing, learning, and striving.

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL BANDS WHO DO THE SAME?
Absu and Averse Sefira have continually improved. Cronophage, are in the same mindset as me. A lot of bands that are critical to the scene like Adumus, Morbus 666, Imprecation, and Blaspherian are playing good music and making it for themselves. Those bands don't care if they get big; they are going to do it no matter what. That's a dedication you have to respect. They're not fake.

The fake people are the ones who don't come to a local show. A big band like Dimmu Borgir plays and I'll see 2,000 people! I never see them [at a local show] EVER!! If you say you love Metal so much that you'll live and die for it...then where the FUCK are you?! They don't care and they're not as committed as they claim.

THE BAND'S MYTHOLOGY IS A LITTLE VAGUE. WHY IS THAT?
We like confusion. When people hear noise in The Sermon of Deception, they don't understand there are six or seven palindromic layers of keyboards throughout the whole 40 minute track.

THAT'S A CLEVER TRICK BUT WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY BY DOING THAT?
Why believe anyone's dogma? We could just as easily be lying to you.
FPH





Balaclavas release their new record Snake People on October 7th at Mango's.

Interview: Balaclavas

BY OMAR AFRA

For a local band, Balaclavas have always been just a little bit enigmatic. They are not a band that is constantly hamming it up with other local musicians, they are utterly selective about the shows they play, and they only do interviews with, ahem, the clutchest of clutch local papers. But ultimately, this ethos translates into their own quasi-macabre brand of psychedelia. They are a band I have personally been a thorn in the side to as I am constantly bugging them about shows, interviews and such. So after annoying them for some time, they agreed to an interview under one condition: I meet Tyler and Brian at Menil Park to drink beer and discuss questions as opposed to another lame email interview. Deal. Well what I found was a couple of very laid back yet tight knit friends (not the mysterions I imagined) who just so happen to make visionary music together. The conversation drifted between the resurgence of vinyl and the 'battle' between musicianship/song craft/passion, and municipal/state/national politics. And oh yeah, the Golden Dawn, which we won't mention here for fear of retribution. Here is just a little bit.

YOU GUYS ARE CRAZY LOUD. DO YOU WEAR EAR PROTECTION? CAN YOU HEAR WHAT I AM SAYING RIGHT NOW?
We have always been loud. I tried to use earplugs before but they cut out the entire high end. Also, us being really loud allows the audience to feel in their chest like we feel it.

DOES BALACLAVAS HAVE THE BOILERPLATE PROBLEM OF 'DEMOCRATIZING' A MUSICAL DIRECTION? HOW DO Y'ALL FIND A SHARED VISION?
Maybe if we did not drink so much we would have that problem? Other bands that have not been friends for as long as us will surely have that problem. But we have been playing music together for 12 years. Also, our studio space has been typically 106 degrees and that will really force you to reconcile with each other.

I OFTEN CATCH YOU GUYS OUTSIDE ON THE PORCH BBQ'ING AND DRINKING. HOW MUCH OF BALACLAVAS IS FUN ON THE PORCH VS. AN ACTUAL BAND?
We don't really see a distinction between the two! But seriously there is a distinction between fun and friends and music but the music itself takes a lot of thinking and interpretation of sound whereas when we BBQ there is no thinking. We are total boneheads vs. the scholarly work of songwriting.

PUT THIS RECORD IN CONTEXT WITH THE OTHER ALBUMS FOR US. IS THIS A DEPARTURE?
This is the first time our album has not been to some degree a collection of demos. Our last album was recorded in 2 different sessions. This one was one cohesive session. We wrote all the music, practiced to perfection, and went and recorded it in a single go. The only break we took was to play the FPSF after party.

WHAT IS YOUR EARLIEST MUSICAL MEMORY?
[Tyler] My father was in a70s prog band The Liberty Brothers. When I met Brian in grade school we shared Siouxie and Banshees and Wire Pill Sessions cassettes. He let me borrow a Sex Pistols bootleg. But ultimately, Chaz and I have more commonality into what we like now. Charlie is always turning to weird German progressive electronic and I am always tuning the rest of band on to avante garde classical records and dub.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR CITY/COMMUNITY? DOES HOUSTON HELP OR HURT?
Well, either way we answer that is wrong: That makes us either cheerleaders or naysayers. But it does help that it allows you to focus in on your own music. Because there is not a ton of attention on Houston, it does not seep into your music. There is however a lack of labels based in Houston, which are pushing Houston music abroad. But it can be a curse with the lack of touring acts that come through. We love this city, itself. FPH



Interview: Escatones

BY JACK DANIEL BETZ

The Escatones back in tamer days.



WHERE ARE YOU NOW?
We are in Stillwater Oklahoma.

NOW, Y'ALL AREN'T MOVING THERE ARE YOU? A LITTLE BIRD TOLD ME THAT Y'ALL ARE MOVING YOUR OPERATION, IS THAT TRUE?
A little bird, huh? Was it a dumb little bird? It was true little bird.

WHAT ARE THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND WHAT'S THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY ABOUT YOUR TOUR WITH THE ESCATONES?
Other side of the story, eh? Well the reason why we're in Oklahoma, let's go back how many months now? Three, two months. Anyway my car broke down on the tour on our stop in Tulsa.

They told me my headgasket was blown, therefore my car couldn't make it so I was like, fuck it. We've got nothing better to do now anyway so we decided to stay in Oklahoma and we've pretty much been here ever since -except for a couple trips back to Houston but an interesting post-script to that story, I took my car to another mechanic a month later and he told me it was the engine fan and that was 200 dollars, no big deal. If I would have known that ahead of time we would probably still be in Houston.

We probably would have finished the tour and still be in Houston right now.

ONE QUESTION I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO ASK Y'ALL IS, CAN YOU TELL ME A LITTLE ABOUT THE NAME OF THE BAND? I TOOK SOME ANCIENT GREEK IN COLLEGE AND THE WORD ESCHATON CAME UP IN THAT CLASS. IS IT RELATED IN ANY WAY?
It's basically from the word eschatology, which is kind of like the study -it's a Greek word, actually-

IT'S A STUDY OF THE END TIMES, RIGHT?
That's where I got it from and I tagged tones on the end because I thought it would make a good suffix for a band.

I LIKE IT. IT'S VERY BRITISH-INVASION ERA SOUNDING.
Yeah, everyone thinks we're like the Escatones like we're a ska band. [laughter]
JT: Like music for the end of the world.

I HEARD YOU GUYS HAVE AN OFFICIAL ALBUM OUT NOW?
We've got two of 'em now!

EVEN BETTER.
There's "The Ghost of High Island", that's the new one, and "Live at High Island" which is this crappy little island north of Galveston. But we don't have like a polished studio album yet.

THAT'S COOL. I LIKE THAT YOU GUYS ALREADY HAVE TWO LIVE ALBUMS BECAUSE SOME BANDS NEVER EVER RELEASE ANY LIVE ALBUMS.
Yeah, I think we're gonna do that in reverse and never have any studio albums and we're just gonna have a shit ton of live albums.

That's like Dark Star Orchestra or Phish that have a shitload of that kind of stuff [live bootlegs] and y'all aren't a jam band but they both do that kind of thing. I don't think Dark Star Orchestra has a single album out but they have a bunch of live ones and they're awesome.

Yeah, I never thought we were a jam band but then I'm looking at all these tracks on these live albums and a bunch of ten-minute songs.

WELL, NO OFFENSE TO PHISH, ACTUALLY, TONS OF OFFENSE TO PHISH BUT THEY SUCK.
I'm just tip-toeing around it because you never know when there's gonna be some hippie-ass Phish fan.

ANOTHER QUESTION I HAD, AND IF THIS IS A SORE SPOT LET ME KNOW AND I'LL BACK OFF BUT I HEARD YOU'VE GONE THROUGH A COUPLE OF DRUMMERS, DO YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT THAT A LITTLE BIT?
No problem. We've gone through about ten drummers.

Yeah man, we've gone through a lot of drummers. The reason -our last drummer, Chris um- when the car broke down in Tulsa we just told him, we're staying and he was definitely not down for that and there were other problems too, he was a great drummer and everything -it just wasn't going to work out. [. . .] Now we've got Anthony over here and he moved up here last week and we jammed with him last Friday one time and he's down to join this crazy Escatone party thing we've got goin' on. So hopefully we're done looking for drummers. FPH

SUPER HAPPY FUN LAND

UPCOMING SHOWS

OCT. 2ND:
Acorn Bcorn
Bloombox

OCT. 6TH:
Act Naturally Film Screening

OCT. 7TH:
Punk Rock Comedy
Renderers (New Zealand)
Sore Eros (New Zealand)
Neptunes Explode

OCT 8TH:
EYES BEHIND THE WALL FESTIVAL 2
THEWHITEHORSE
GENDER SABOTAGE
GITMO (from Mississippi)
OBLIVE (from Missouri)
VOMIR (from France)
I LIKE YOU GO HOME (from Iowa)
WHITE GIMP MASK
SEE SIX (from Austin)
BOAR (from Iowa)
SNUFF-FILM (from North Texas)
CHURNER (from Mississippi)
PAINFUL VIGIL
DEATH.SICK.C_NT (from Dallas)
TRENT BINGHAM (ex-Forced Orgasm)
THE GODLESS GIRL (from Dallas)
TINIEBLAS (from California)
PEIISTE (from Louisiana)
BIOLOGICAL GIRL (from Miss.)
GLASGOW SMILE
UNPROTECTED SEX (from Dallas)
NONHOSONNO (from Austin)

OCT 9TH:
Off The Wall Festival too
Cracked Ray Tube (Chicago)
Yaktronix
Black Magic Marker
The Annoysters
Andy Rivera
Dirty Churches (Brooklyn)
Muzak

OCT 12TH–17TH
Harvest Moon Campout

OCT. 20TH:
Sleeping in the Aviary
Grace In Folly
This Time I Brought Bombs

OCT. 22ND
Escatones
Idyl
The Grimm Dolls
The Rich Hands

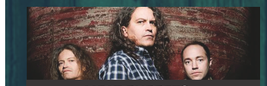
OCT 23RD:
Sick/Sea
The Illegal Wiretaps

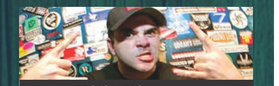
NOV. 2ND:
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WEEDEATER
OCT. 07 WITH SAVIOURS


WILD MOCCASINS
OCT. 08 WITH THE MATHLETES & LITTLE LO


TORO Y MOI
OCT. 09 WITH UNKNOWN MORTAL ORCHESTRA


TAPES N TAPES
OCT. 10 WITH HOWLER & LESLIE SISSON


NEW FOUND GLORY
OCT. 12 POP PUNKS NOT DEAD TOUR W/ GUESTS


THE BLACK ANGELS
OCT. 13 WITH DEAD MEADOW & SPINDRIFT


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ST. VINCENT
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CONCRETE BLONDE
OCT. 30 WITH GIRL IN A COMA

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PHANTOGRAM NOV. 10 | MELT BANANA NOV. 17 | SCRATCH ACID DEC. 09

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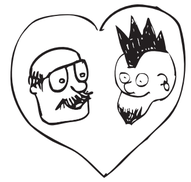


Oddly enough, Mayor Annise Parker has been strangely available to not only the media in general but to FPH specifically despite our 'antics and shenanigans'. As candidate for mayor prior to election, Parker sat down with us for a video interview where we subjected her to speed metal demons Golden Axe, prying questions about her candidacy, and even confused Lesbians with Lebanese. We thought she may never give us the time of day again after that but she has been gracious enough to let our entire staff interrogate her this time around.

Interview: Annise Parker

Nearly the entire FPH staff give Mayor Annise Parker the Grand Inquisition

FOREWORD BY OMAR AFRA
ILLUSTRATIONS BY MARK WILLIAMSON



ALEX WUKMAN:
Another issue that concerns many of our readers is the fact that the City of Houston still does not offer benefits to same sex partners. Are there any plans to change this, if so how soon and if not why not?

I was a City Council member in November 2001 when this issue was put to a vote by petition in a city-wide referendum. By a vote of 52%, benefits for unmarried domestic partners of the opposite or same sex were struck down by Houston voters. Being with my partner for over 20 years, I would like to have the same benefits as a heterosexual couple, but I've focused my energy on getting the City's finances in order first.



MICHAEL PENNYWARK:
What does Annise Parker do to relax after a day running the fourth largest city in the US?

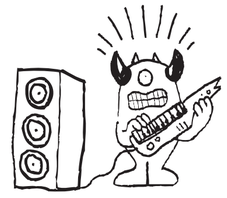
I enjoy gardening and reading science fiction. I also enjoy classical music because it's soothing.

OMAR AFRA:
Since you have vocally expressed your desire to get the City of Houston out of the crime lab business, and Harris County's Institute for Forensic Sciences does not have the capacity to process the city's back log of DNA evidence, is the city planning on signing contracts with other Texas crime labs (such as the DPS lab) to try and get the 15,000 rape kits processed more quickly and efficiently?



We are considering a variety of options, but yes part of the solution for the backlog is outside contracts. We recently had a contract passed by City Council, which will help.

ROLAND T. FLAFEIZER:
It is a common complaint amongst those in the live music community that the level of ambiguity within the city's current noise ordinance is harmful to business. Business owners understand that they have to live in a community and respect the rights of residents and property owners around them; however the perception amongst those in the arts and music community is that the balance has shifted too far in favor of home owners. Are there any plans to reexamine the ordinance with input from all the stakeholders (musicians, business owners, home owners, etc.)?



Yes, we are in the process of re-examining the noise ordinance, but the arts and music community should know that this ordinance exists to respect others. It's important to know that I am a fan of music as well.

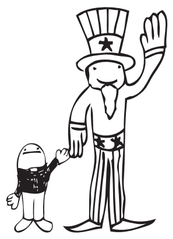
AMANDA HART:
Why do we have over 200 officers committed to drug enforcement/ investigation and only 4 committed to human trafficking ?

I trust the judgment of my Police Chief and I know he places his personnel where necessary. Human trafficking is an especially important issue that requires more federal officials, so when you add in the federal officers who work with our officers it's a much larger number.



TYLER BARBER :
How do you interpret the 'constitutional mandate' of separation of church and state?

It is the lack of influence of government in religion and vice versa. Both operate as separate organizations without either one having authority over the other in their decisions.





MILLS MCCOIN:
One of the huge obstacles Houston and its surrounding areas must overcome in developing and implementing green initiatives is the citizens' ongoing resistance to change. It is not in the nature of an average Houstonian to abandon what they know and understand (fossil fuels, SUV's, trucks, diesel, etc.) in favor of something new... and, in this particular case (hybrid & electric cars, recycling, solar energy, etc.), intelligent. As mayor, how do you work to overcome this "personality flaw"? How does City Council work to overcome the personality flaw? How will you convince the stubborn average Houston consumer to swtich to green technology?

I disagree with the premise of the question. Although Houston is known worldwide as an oil and gas capital, it is also paving the way for green energy. We recently became the city with the largest fleet of electric cars and have partnered with businesses to have the most electric power stations of any city in the nation. We are leaders in LEED certifications and we are continuing to set the pace for municipalities to follow our example. Houstonians are proud to be trendsetters and developing widespread use of green technology is no exception.



CHRIS HUTTO:
When is the city going to realize that aerial gondolas are our future?

My goal is getting METRO Light Rail expanded. We need many more people to be transported across a large distance, which I think can be solved through a light rail transit system, but maybe one day in the future Houston will have an aerial gondola.



JACK DANIEL BETZ:
What is it like being an openly gay woman serving as mayor in a red state? Have you encountered much prejudice so far as mayor?

It is always different when a woman is in a leadership position. Thankfully our city charter didn't distinguish between a man and a woman in the description of mayoral responsibilities.

ANDREA AFRA:
What services does our city offer to those who are struggling with addiction? Jail time doesn't count...



Unfortunately a significant portion of the population in our jails has addiction problems. I agree that jail isn't the best place to rehabilitate them, so if needed they are transported to a hospital. We are currently examining the possibility of offering an alternative to incarceration for addicts.

SHELBY HOHL:
Do you feel crime is decreased by enforcement or do you feel it is decreased by education?

It's decreased by both. HPD does an excellent job of enforcing our laws and they are careful to couple that with community outreach. They go to schools, civic club meetings and community centers to ensure everyone knows their purpose is to help keep our city safe.

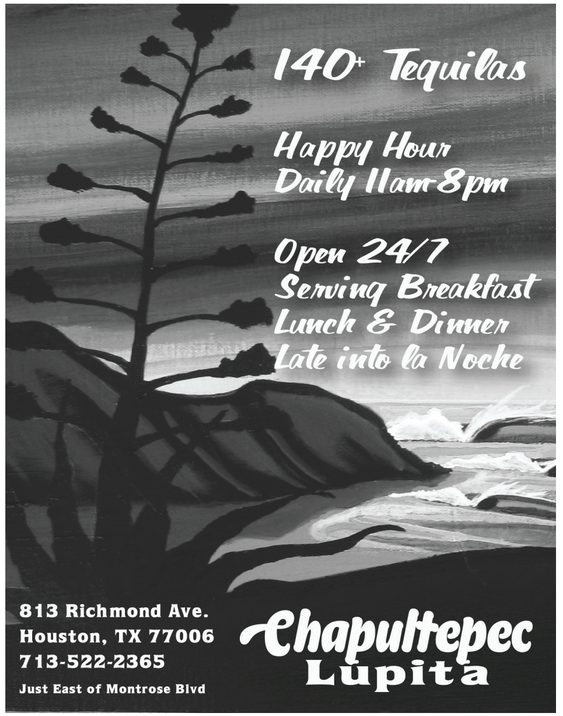


MILLS MCCOIN (AGAIN) :
Why is it so hard to find good tailoring in the Montrose? Who does your tailoring?

Houston is very diverse and has something for everyone. I recommend trying out different options and eventually you'll find what you're looking for. FPH









THE AMERICAN DISEASE

Mocking the Dying, Profiting off the Work of Uninsured Artists

BY DAVE LINDORFF | ILLUSTRATION BY TIM DORSEY



THE FIRST THING THAT NEEDS TO BE SAID to the heartless boneheads who, at the last Republican presidential debate, cheered at the idea of letting a hypothetical 30-year-old cancer victim who hadn't bought health insurance die, is that this is no mere hypothetical situation. The second thing that needs to be said is that most such people in real life don't "refuse to get" health insurance. They either cannot afford it (and their employer doesn't provide it), or they are rejected by insurers because of pre-existing conditions.

If you are a young person, earning a take-home salary of perhaps $20,000, are trying to raise two kids on your own, and you live in Texas, for example (Medicaid eligibility is set state by state), you would not be eligible for Medicaid coverage. Your two kids would supposedly be eligible, but not you. Meanwhile, if your employer, like most employers who are paying minimum wage, doesn't offer some kind of group policy, if you were lucky enough not to be rejected for some pre-existing medical condition like diabetes or a heart murmer or something, you'd have to come up with perhaps $3,000 to cover yourself with a plan that would not pay for doctor visits, just major hospital bills. But say you were paying $800 a month for rent, and another $3000 a year to keep some 12-year-old rust-bucket of a vehicle insured and on the road to get you to work and home. That would only leave you $7,000 to feed and clothe your kids and yourself. Would you take $3000 of that to pay for health insurance for yourself and reduce your money for living expenses to $4000 for the year?

Of course not! It would be coming right out of your childrens' mouths!

All over America, especially these days with one in five of us either out of work or working at some job like the one described above or worse, while looking for a decently paying job, millions of individuals and families are struggling with this desperate problem.

And what happens is this. First off, they don't go to the doctor when they get sick, or when they feel that something is wrong—say they see rectal bleeding, or feel a lump somewhere that a lump shouldn't be, or they feel dizzy, or whatever. They soldier on and hope it will go away.

That's what a dear friend of mine, a writer married to an actor, did. When her family fell on hard times between gigs, they found themselves without insurance coverage. Without any insurance, and with two kids to support, she did not go for regular physical checkups, which were expensive, so a cancer that might have been spotted early and taken care of, had she been covered and gone for regular doctor visits, was able to grow and metastacize. Worse, because she had a cancer, she could not get insured even when her husband got a job that offered coverage. The only reason she got into a hospital at all was that her doctor, at some personal risk for violating the rules, had her wheeled into a big New York hospital right past the financial intake office, and got her assigned to a bed, from which she could not be evicted once admitted. She ultimately died of her cancer. Ironically, she had for years been a fierce advocate for women's health and forinsurance coverage for all freelance writers like herself.

The morally challenged scum who heartily and heartlessly cheered for the death of a hypothetical 30-year-old were really cheering for the death of my friend, and millions like her.

But this obscenity goes much further.

I read inDaily Kosabout the fate of a 63-year-old guitar maker, Steve Patience, whose sister eloquently raged at the laughing "assholes" whom she said were actually mocking her own brother. She explained that he had devoted his life to making beautiful handmade guitars, working 14-hour days, but never earning enough to get by (her family had had to help him out on occasion just to keep things going). He could not afford health insurance, but at

63, though he had been forced to retire to get Social Security benefits, he was two years too young for Medicare when he learned he had metastatic cancer. A hospital emergency room wouldn't even examine him despite rectal bleeding and intense pain and just sent him home on pain relievers. When he was finally—too late—seen and diagnosed with cancer, thanks to $2000 that friends provided for him to be seen by a proctologist, it took six weeks to get the hospital to let him in. It wanted $20,000 up front just for use of a room for the examination procedure. Only when his heart started to fail did he get admitted as an emergency patient. Some emergency! It was like making an auto accident victim with a head injury wait six weeks to be admitted for an MRI to spot a blood clot in the brain.

This is health care in America today for those without the resources to buy insurance.

I thought about this some more, recently, when I sat down to play my guitar, a hand-made 1972 instrument built by J.W. Gower, an independent maker who worked out of a trailer at his home outside Nashville. It's an extraordinary instrument–apparently the second he built (the first is in the Nashville Guitar Hall of Fame). I don't know if Gower had health insurance, but it's a fair bet he never had any. The thought of such a master craftsman or his co-builder wife having to forego medical care for lack of insurance, or even having to worry about such a thing, makes me sick.

Most of the things of beauty that enrich our lives—guitars, harpsichords, hand-crafted pottery, paintings, beautiful music of all genres, etc.—are created by artists and artisans who barely earn enough to live on. They do the work they do because they love it, but they earn so little at it that the idea of health insurance is a luxury that many don't even bother thinking about.

Basically most of them just hope not to get sick, or to die fast when they do.

The rest of us, who buy their creations, or who listen to their music or watch their plays or drink from their mugs, don't even do that. We just forget about their problems.

And then there are those who enjoy the fruits of these artists' labor and turn around and laugh at them when they do get seriously ill.

There are others who are even more obscene still, though. They don't laugh at the suffering of the poor. Rather, they actively work to keep them that way. I'm thinking here of the real scum—the Wall Street bankers, huge pharmaceutical companies, insurance firms (including Blue Cross), and other giant industries that have lobbied hard to block real health care reform, such as expansion of Medicare to cover everyone—and who then will, with no sense of shame, put something like fine baroque music on their telephone "hold" system to add a touch of class to the "customer experience." Meanwhile, many of the musicians who perform that music can't even afford health insurance.

It's bad enough that we as a society close our eyes to the suffering of the tens of millions who are unable to get decent health care in this richest country in ther world. It's worse yet that some obnoxious jerks are so blinded by their fears, their ignorance or their rank ideology of smug selfishness and greed that they can mock that suffering, but it's purely evil that corporations and the wealthy can avail themselves of works of art and craftsmanship and pose as connoisseurs, and even use those creations to help generate profits for themselves, while actively working to block all efforts to make health care available to the creators of those things.

Enough! It's time for us to do what the rest of the civilized modern world has done, and establish a system of Medicare for all Americans, cradle to grave, as is advocated byPhysicians for a National Health Program. **FPH**





AS OCTOBER CREEPS IN on feather-touched-feet the meaningless chatter of the Bayou City's political horse traders slowly turns away from the circus in Washington, and the small-potato-stakes in Austin, to the race to represent Houston. Everyone knows who currently occupies the big office down at 901 Bagby, but not too many people know who's running against her. Houston Fire Department's Emergency Operations Deputy Chief Fernando Herrera is definitely not as well known or as well funded as some previous candidates for the Mayor of a city that has recently acquired the nickname Hustletown.

There are probably many reasons why the kids aren't rocking Herrera for Mayor t-shirts, one of those being that he doesn't over $800,000 on hand to throw around in the first six months of the year like his opponent Annise Parker did. Another problem Herrera has faced in his attempt to break into the city's collective consciousness is his low-key campaign; he didn't even open a headquarters until the first week of August.

Then there's the man's political record. In November 2010 Herrera ran, as a Republican, against incumbent Democrat Jessica Farrar in a bid for the State Representative seat in District 148. Houston's political geography breaks down so that District 148 takes up much of the Heights and the East End. As Rick Casey, who used to be at the Chron, pointed out "it was a Republican year, but a Democratic District." So, Farrar brought in 58 percent of the vote and Herrera only claimed 41 percent.

For those who pay attention to Houston politics Herrera is known for saying things like, "I believe essential services come first" and "balancing the city budget shouldn't require layoffs, furloughs, and cuts in city services." Even though Houston elections are superficially non-partisan—Herrera's statements about maintaining city services and ensuring public safety will definitely put him at odds with drown-the-government-in-the-bathtub Republicans, also known as the Tea Party. It's not just his belief in having any government that marks Herrera as a moderate in today's GOP; it's his views on the minor issues that have come to define much of life inside the loop.

When asked about overhauling the city ordinance regulating propane tanks in downtown and the Texas Medical Center, an ordinance that makes it hard for food trucks to operate in densely populated areas, Herrera said that he was more than willing to revisit the issue. As is currently written vehicles that use propane tanks have to be at least 60-feet from each other, which Herrera said doesn't make much sense. "I don't understand the 60-foot rule. I'm not sure how [the city] arrived at that number," said Herrera. He went on to say that he'd like to see "a food truck court" develop in Houston.

While Herrera's knowledge of some city ordinances is impressive, it is by no means all encompassing. A trait he exhibited when he was asked about the city's infamous noise ordinance. Everyone in the live music community, from musicians to club owners, knows that there's a problem with the way HPD interprets and enforces the noise ordinance. Herrera said that he's "no expert" on the noise ordinance but that, as someone who lives near Washington Avenue, his first instinct is "to side with homeowners."

He went on to say that while he supports homeowner rights he understands that the City needs entertainment venues, and as Mayor he would "review" the enforcement of the noise ordinance with a panel of stakeholders that would include both business interests and homeowners. Reviewing with stakeholders seems to be a main theme of Herrera's plan for governance.

When asked about what he would do to decrease Houston's ridiculously high STD rate—in 2004 (most recent numbers available) the city had 23.9 cases of HIV/AIDS per 100,000 compared to the national rate of 15.0—Herrera said that he would look at developing a "public-private-faith based partnership" and reexamine how the City spends the Department of Health and Human Services funds it receives and shift some of the money from "housing to prevention."

Herrera continued the idea of meeting with stakeholders when it came to discussing bike trails and bike lanes. He said that he was a fitness cyclist, as opposed to the lifestyle cyclists who can be found in and around Montrose, and as such he believed that it's in the City's best interest to complete the network of bike trails that runs through the city so "someone can ride from Memorial Park to Downtown or beyond without having to worry about getting hit by a car." When pressed about bike lanes on West Alabama he said that he would want to meet with the City's Public Works and Engineering Department, TxDOT and members of the cycling community to see if West Alabama is truly the best place for a bike lane.

As the conversation turned to the bane of bar going culture, the enforcement of DWIs, Herrera seemed to become more at ease. He explained that he believed that the problems with the Blood Alcohol Test, or BAT, vans don't approach the level of an unconscionable mistake that some DWI defense attorneys have painted them to be.

He indicated that he considered the difficulties the City has had with it's BAT vans to be part of a systemic problem within the City. "The BAT vans and the crime lab need to be overhauled. We have to make sure that proper procedures are in place for monitoring evidence and that the vans are in working order," said Herrera. He went on to say that he planned to have a meeting with all the stakeholders involved to see the best way to move forward. **FPH**



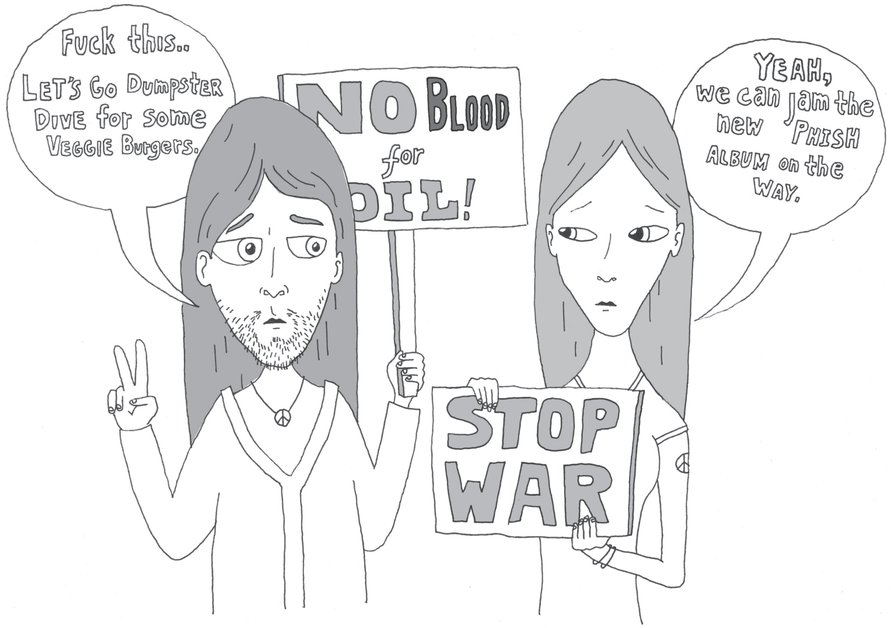
Rumors spread by the Parker campaign about Fernando Herrera eating his boogers are patently false.

Annise Parker's Only Opponent, Almost

BY ALEX WUKMAN







How the Left was Lost

Bob Buzzanco's take on the erosion of Houston's local anti-war community

BY ALEX WUKMAN
ILLUSTRATION
BY TIM DORSEY

IT'S THE 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF 9/11 and it's hot. Oppressively hot. The kind of heat that makes it hard to walk outside before the sun sets. So hot that drinking anything warmer than an ice cold beer seems ridiculous, but in spite of the heat Professor Bob Buzzanco is on a roll. He's sitting outside of Antidote, in a cross breeze between two industrial fans while drinking an iced coffee, trying to answer the question: what happened to Houston's protest scene?

For those who came of age after 2007 it's hard to understand just how prevalent activism was in the early 2000s. From 2002 until about 2004, and even into 2005, anti-war and anti-globalization protests seemed to happen about once a week. It wasn't uncommon to see someone on a Monday and Tuesday and be invited to a gathering at Mecom Fountain or a march in Downtown or the Galleria a few days later. However, by 2006 it was all over but the shouting.

The Houston wing of the anti-war/anti-globalization/anti-corporation movement had been reduced from the hundreds who showed up to take direct action at the 2004 and 2005 Halliburton share holders' meetings to a handful of people standing on a bridge overlooking US 59 holding signs. Since Buzzanco was one of the key organizers, and spokesperson, for many of the marches that were held throughout much of the last decade, he's uniquely qualified to talk about why 'the movement' fell apart. However, the problem is that since Buzzanco is a history professor he has a tendency to frame any discussion within a lager socio-political context.

"It's a bigger question about why there is no major activism in the US," says Buzzanco as he sips on his coffee, "unlike other industrial countries we haven't had any history of indigenous rights campaigns." After discussing whether or not Native American resistance to European colonization could be considered an "indigenous rights campaign" Buzzanco mentions the difficulty of trying to keep a movement going that depended on student activists.

"In about 1999 some UH students and I got together to work on anti-globalization, we had teach-ins and marches," says Buzzanco. He explains how that after 9/11 the group began to focus on anti-war issues, but over the years it became harder and harder to keep the energy going as many of the core members graduated or moved away. However, even at the height of the anti-war protest the organization was far from unified.

"Part of the problem was the turf battles. Everyone felt that their issue had to be represented at every action," says Buzzanco as he adjusts his mirrored sunglasses. "You'd try to have an anti-war rally and the next thing you know you're talking about same sex benefits for City of Houston employees."

He swirls the ice in his glass before continuing, "I remember at one anti-Iraq war rally we had about 1,000 people show up at Eleanor Tinsley park.The first speaker spent 20 minutes talking about Leonard Peltier and you could watch the crowd dwindle by the dozens, then the hundreds. Then the next speaker got up and spent 20 minutes talking about the Communist Revolution. After 40 minutes the crowd was down to around 300."

He goes on to articulate an opinion that, in the past, has gotten him labeled a Stalinist. "The left needs to have more self-critical discussions. There's this liberal guilt that you can't criticize an African American without being called a racist or a woman without being called a sexist," says Buzzanco. One of the greater ironies about the anti-war/anti-globalization/anti-corporation movement in Houston is that it was a victim of it's own, very limited, success.

It was Halliburton that changed everything. In 2004 internationally known activity Medea Benjamin brought her group Code Pink, and their money, to Downtown. They dropped a banner from the Four Seasons while black clad 'Anarchists' tried to stage a sit-in in the middle of the street and the Houston chapter of Billionaires for Bush attempted to add an element of absurdity to a situation that grew tenser by the moment.

However, it was the photo that ran the next day that changed everything. A pair of young men in suits covered in, what looked like, blood and hand-cuffed to the hotel's banister was on the front page of the Houston Chronicle metro section. That photo, and the publicity it generated, turned the next year's Halliburton share holder's meeting into a destination for protest tourists. Activists from New York to San Francisco descended on the streets, hotels and bars of the Bayou City. They brought angst and anger, chants and costumes to send a message to a regime they felt was corrupt.

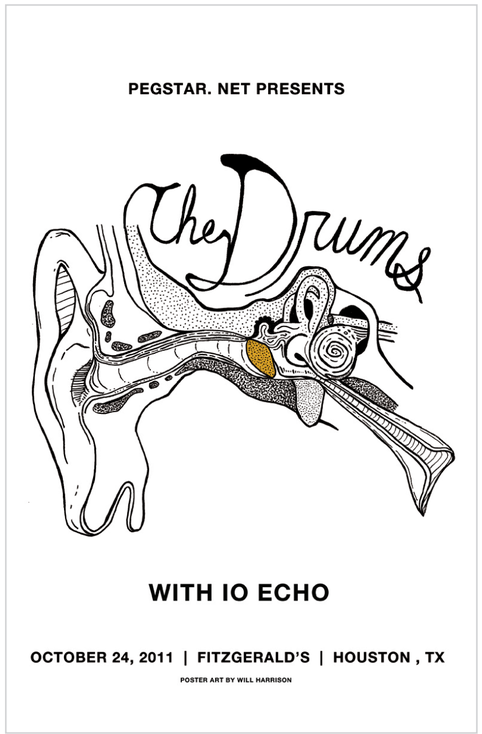
The message that got through to Halliburton's board had nothing to do with no bid contracts or destroying the environment, it was about protesters turning up at meetings. So, Halliburton decided to move it's operations to Dubai, a place with far fewer free speech laws. "I've got a researcher friend who did a lot of work on Halliburton, but when they moved to Dubai he called me and said, 'there's no way I can afford to fly out for their meeting'," says Buzzanco. He goes on to explain that Halliburton's move "made it impossible to protest them."

The one-two punch of the loss of a large target of opportunity and the relocation of many of the core group of people who had tried to create a radical element in Houston, left Houston's anti-war movement withering on the vine. By 2007 the only people trying to keep the flame of anti-war activisim going were the "harmless, lefty liberals" who had been derided and dismissed so often by the hardcore 'revolutionaries.' Houston's anti-war movement was left in the hands of people who showed up for rallies with lawn chairs and thought the Dixie Chicks were protest music. FPH



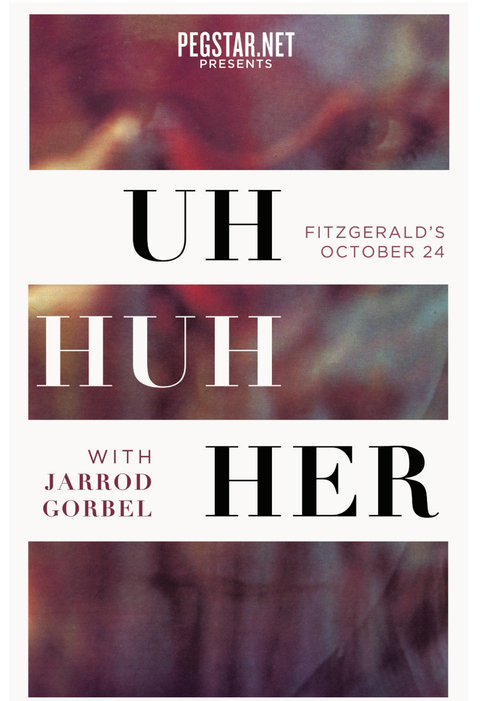



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Spaces Between

Houston's performance space growth/death, live music, & hydrofluoric acid

BY ALEX WUKMAN | PHOTOS BY BRANDON HOLLEY

IT'S ALWAYS BEEN FASHIONABLE amongst the hip to dump on Houston and it doesn't take a lot of imagination to do it. Some of the criticisms have been repeated so often that they have moved beyond tropes, clichés and stereotypes into outright prejudices. And like other prejudices, ideas like "Houston radio is horrible" and "this corrupt City doesn't care about the arts" are repeated and passed on in order to reinforce and establish a greater narrative.

There are many facts that run counter to the idea that 'Houston radio sucks because we don't have a real college radio station'—such as Alvin based radio 89.7 KACC is an actual college radio station and commercial station 103.7 both plays emerging artists and gives free air time to advertise local shows—but they are repeatedly ignored because they don't fit the narrative. The sad state of Houston's radio dial isn't the only thing held as a matter of faith amongst the city's indie-rats.

The fact that the old saw "this City doesn't care about the arts" has been repeatedly proven false, Discovery Green regularly books musicians so local and indie that they still tend bar and work at coffee shops, doesn't stop it from getting trotted out whenever someone wants to comment about the Houston music scene. But it doesn't matter, because it doesn't fit the narrative. And what is the narrative? The myth of the victimization of Houston's live music community.

Like all myths, the victimization of the Houston music community is dusted off and brought out whenever something 'dire' happens to the scene—from last year's sale of KTRU to the decision by the W. Alabama Icehouse to no longer book bands to the closure of Walters and most recently to the sale of the Mink—the idea that Houston live music is under attack is used to explain away or justify things without having to answer why these things are happening. The victimization narrative allows live music fans to both trades in whatever privileges they have for the status of an oppressed minority and absolve themselves of any responsibility for wrongdoing.

The absolution is one of the most important elements when it comes to the victimization narrative because there is a whole lot of wrongdoing in the music scene. In an August interview Leila Rogers the owner of Houston live music venue Rudyard's' said that booking bands "was inviting a tsunami of destruction" into a bar. "Bands don't care about a bar, they'll tear it up and be gone tomorrow," said Rogers. Jim Pirtle, owner of Notsuoh's, went a little farther in his description, saying it's not just the bands but also the crowds that follow them.

"They don't respect the venues or the neighborhood. I had someone tag the windows in my neighbor's building with hydrofluoric acid, it's going to cost him $3,000 to repair that," Pirtle went on to say that many of those in the live music community suffer from a prejudice towards those they perceive as not being in their tribe. "A successful bar requires a cross-pollination of different tribes. You can't have hipsters with dyed black hair and tight jeans making it uncomfortable for someone in a suit and tie. The hipsters are only going to drink $20 worth of PBR or Lone Star, but the guy in the business suit has no problem with $100 worth of top-shelf liquor." He also added that, from the band's point of view, the hipsters in tight jeans and dyed black hair don't want to pay cover and can't afford to buy merchandise, while the guy in the business suit has no problems paying cover and will probably buy at least one CD.

Brian Arthur, one of the founders of Super Happy Fun Land, put it bluntly when he indicated that part of the problem with Houston's live music community is the fact that no one wants to take a risk on a new band. "We'll book really good bands that no one has ever heard of and five people will come see the show and the next year they'll be in Spin or Rolling Stone," said Arthur. Both Pirtle and Arthur said that one of the problems is the fact that many live music fans are afraid to venture outside of Midtown, Montrose or the Heights. "Mango's and the Mink wouldn't have done as well they did if they'd been in Downtown or the East End," said Pirtle.

The location factor is something that some live music fans will acknowledge factors into their decision on where to see a show. "It's a sketchy bike ride to Super Happy Fun Land," said one live music fan that wished to remain anonymous. It's also hard to get live music fans to get over their idea of what a venue "should be." After the sale of the Mink was announced many commenter's on the Hands-Up Houston message board said that— despite the destroyed toilets and bad sound—the venue had the feel of a "musician's bar." Notsuoh's and Super Happy Fun Land, on the other hand, can at times feel like personal art projects.

Regardless of the difficulties that live music brings to a bar—unruly and disrespectful crowds and noise ordinance violations amongst other things—small venues are a necessary part of the arts and music scene. There has to be a place where artists, poets, musicians and stand-up comics can cut their teeth and learn how to be performers. Some in the community feel that the loss of Walters, and the change over at the Mink, has left only Mango's standing. Part of the intransience that some in the scene have expressed at returning to Mink can be attributed to rumors that began circulating almost as soon as the sale of the Mink was made public and part of it can be attributed to a lack of trust that comes from ignorance involving commercial real estate transactions.

Hands-Up Houston commenter Jaron wrote that Wegner's "first mistake was keeping the sale private." Jaron's sentiments were echoed by others who felt that not knowing ahead of time about the sale of the bar did nothing to engender an environment of trust. However, non-disclosure agreements are commonplace in business transactions. Former Poison Girl bartender Robin Whalan—who soon will be opening her own concept, Double Trouble Coffee, at 3622 Main—stated that when she and her partners were looking for locations no one involved could talk about the negotiations because "someone else might come in and drive the price up." In the past it was common practice for property owners to create a bidding war by playing possible buyers against one another in an attempt to drive up prices.

Wegner also said that another one of the reasons a non-disclosure agreement is common practice in the sale of a whole business is to prevent mass staff defections and inventory sell-offs. If word gets out that a bar might be on the sale block it can also harm the business by causing bands to move or cancel shows because of the uncertainty that the bar will still be open when they are scheduled to play. One bar owner, who shall remain nameless, let rumors that she was either closing her bar or selling it circulate for much of a summer and didn't understand why her regular bands decided to seek a more reliable booking situation. The end result was that despite the months' long rumor fest she neither closed nor sold the bar, but the rumors that circulated did give her some rather lean months.

And the rumors that are circulating now seem to be preventing the Mink from getting a fair shake from the live music community. Wegner categorically denies that she hasn't honored guarantees, fired people for stealing money or given away drinks, weighed bottles or taken inventory in the middle of someone's' shift or has any desire to turn the Mink into anything else. She went on to say that if the crowd that had been booking and coming to shows there wasn't interested "she'd see about booking shows that attracted a different crowd." FPH



Notsuoh has a oddly beautiful collection of vintage women's shoes





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