
153
FREE PRESS SUMMER FEST ISSUE








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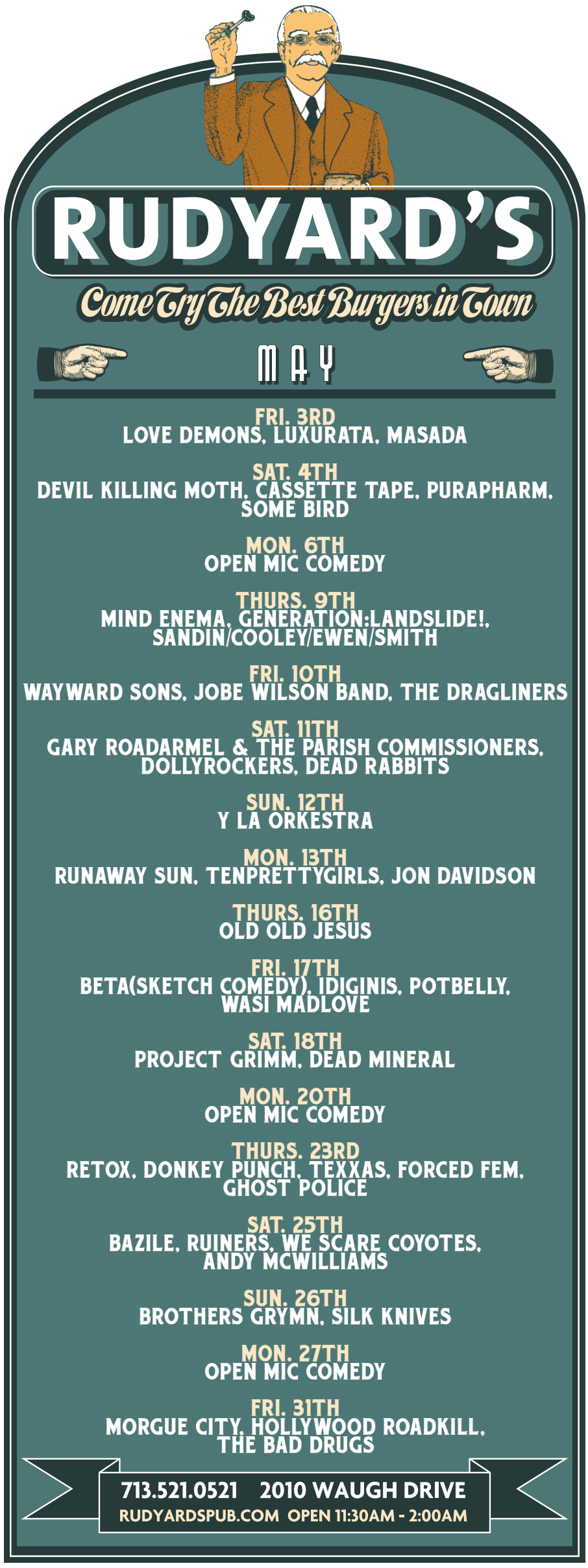
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I AM TOO BUSY TO RANT. BUT HERE IT GOES.

Houston. Let's move beyond this 'Screwston/H-Town/Syrup' identity which we cling to so dearly. Though we should honor the greats who blazed the path and put us on the map, it is time that the younger generation start innovating much like DJ Screw, UGK, and their contemporaries did. Besides, if you are 25, you were only seven when "3 'n the Mornin" came out. You could not possibly claim that as the soundtrack to your life. But we have become a cartoon of ourselves and are resembling Austin post-SRV where everything became a regurgitation of past glory for some time. Time to move forward, kids. Let's let Pimp C and DJ Screw rest in peace.

LETTER

ART AT FPSF

By Space City Sarah
Photos courtesy of Peter Lee & Brey Tucker





FESTIVAL ART is anything that is built purely for the enjoyment of experiencing it. Ideally, it serves the purpose of enhancing some aspect or area of the festival, but it can also enthrall the viewer to the point where it becomes an attraction in and of itself. Successful festival art matches the vibe and scale of its surroundings because this is the furthest from a quiet gallery space. This art needs to find attention and purpose in a giant outdoor party.

Festival art can take shape in a number of different ways, and the type of festival often shapes the direction the artwork takes. Coachella builds enormous structures, like converting a cherry picker into a 40-foot-tall moving flower, to maximize the eternal feeling of an overpoweringly hot, endless desert. Psych Fest in Austin, which took place last month, invested in all the kitsch with fun, interactive, overly-sized kid toys, such as swings and a hall of mirrors, that could be appreciated and enjoyed by adults (who were possibly on drugs). Outside Lands hung candy-shaped lanterns in a grove of trees and strategically placed food trucks throughout the area to create an enchanting food truck forest. If the festival art is done well, it reflects and enhances the character of the festival.

The art for FPSF 2013 could not more appropriately reflect the spirit of the festival. FPSF is a festival for Houston, by Houston, so naturally the artists are all local talent. The artists are truly maximizing the festival space to provide shade, water, and above all, entertainment. This year, the festival is concentrating on functionality (read cooling), building BIGGER, and showcasing Houston love. FPH interviewed two groups of Houston artists showcasing their projects at FPSF--the design and build team of Nick Moser and Brey Tucker, and local artist, Peter Lee.

This first build team of Houston artists would argue that you, the festival participant, are the one to create the experience of their art. This statement, at first, seems incredibly ironic coming from Brey Tucker and Nick Moser, since all of their structures are built on a scale so massive the experience is practically imposed upon the viewer. Yet Moser believes, "The purpose of building these things is to fabricate an experience and open the possibilities of how to interact with the things around us." Tucker, a graduate from the UH College of Architecture, describes festival design as, "Physical constructs that people never get to make otherwise. I enjoy festival design because it's all about human interaction. You get to be more free-spirited in what the structure means and what the aesthetics are for." Moser and Tucker will be submitting three major installation pieces and assisting in the installation of other festival décor. Their view of festival art as free-form collaborative expressionism will help transform the festival grounds into another world that we can all look forward to experiencing, however we see fit.

Another local artist is using this massive Houston gathering to reinforce our often undefined Houston identity. The following is Peter Lee's description of why the old Montrose Mary's mural is important to him, the ways in which it represents our uniquely Houstonian experience, and why he wants to repaint the mural for the festival.

Lee, who grew up in Houston, believes the city lacks pop culture identity. "I realized a lot of things that made Houston what it is are things that never caught on in the rest of the country. If someone outside of Houston heard a Screw tape they would be curious as to why we listen to this stuff at all." For Lee, the mural that had been painted on one of the outside walls of the now-defunct Westheimer gay bar, Mary's, came to signify how the Houston community uniquely relates to each other. Montrose can be viewed as different or strange but it seems to Lee that, "people dress and act that way not to push boundaries or be flamboyant. They just did it because they wanted to. A part of what made me feel this way was Mary's mural. It put that lifestyle out in the open. Mary's was not secret about what was going on inside the bar and when this scene was made public, the community didn't even flinch. It became such a normal scene to me--a mural of strange bear dudes hitting on each other in a bar--while an outsider would be fascinated by that."

It was when the mural was gone that Lee grasped the magnitude of the mural's significance. "I didn't realize how important it was until it disappeared overnight. That was also a very Houston thing to me. In Austin, the "Hi, How Are You?" mural is still there, but the Mary's mural was painted over even though it was infinitely better. When it was repainted, I realized the whole city was fascinated by it." Peter's plan for repainting the mural and having the faces cut out so that festival goers can take pictures with this iconic Montrose image is Lee's way of letting Houstonians literally be a part of what he views as a representation of our Houston character.

Whether it's fostering the communal Houston experience or building structures larger than the festival has ever seen, this year's local artists are doing a great job at reinforcing the spirit of FPSF, a festival made by Houstonians, for Houstonians. **FPH**

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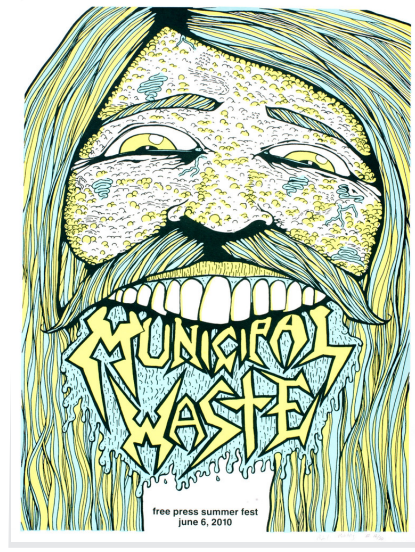
A History

By Shelby Hohl



THE WORDS "CONCERT POSTER" are fucking magical, often evoking images from artists such as Coop, Jermaine Rogers, Frank Kozik, and Art Chantry. Creating art for a band, show or music festival is a really different experience compared to other types of commissioned work. Artists have to transform their creative vision into a piece of artwork that conveys both their personal style and the aesthetic and sound of the band or event. The ability to meld two such distinct styles into one image is no easy feat and it's for that exact reason that concert posters resonate so powerfully with fans.

When Free Press Houston first started, there was one thing that all of the contributing members at the time agreed on, and that was that every show or event that came to Houston needed a badass illustration to go with it. It didn't matter if the show sucked, ruled, was local or regional--none of it mattered. We wanted to strengthen the bond between broke-ass illustrators who were almost inevitably going to spend most of their lives on couches and the musicians that helped them get through all that shit. Now, a little over 10 years into the game, we've seen everything from the Westheimer Block Party, to Fitzgerald's new ownership, to the might and crushing force of the Free Press Summer Festival. These institutions solidified our ability to provide opportunities to established and up-and-coming artists in the form of concert posters, handbills, and print/web-based promotional materials for what are, in my opinion, really awesome moments in Houston's history.







When I started as an illustrator for FPH, I was the aforementioned lost cause, sleeping on couches, drawing wild images that I thought would only have a place in a tattoo studio. I remember sitting with Omar Afra, going through all the shows posted on Hands Up Houston's message board and just listing off shows that either didn't already have art or were, in our eyes, lacking in overall promotion. We just took it upon ourselves to start creating flyers for fucking everything. Eventually, some cats around the scene at the time took notice and actually started paying us to do their posters and ads. Seeing that this was a legitimate source of income for a broke-ass artist, I started studying the work of Jermaine Rogers, Frank Kozik, Burlesque of North America, and count-

less other artists who I admired or considered to be "masters" of the craft.

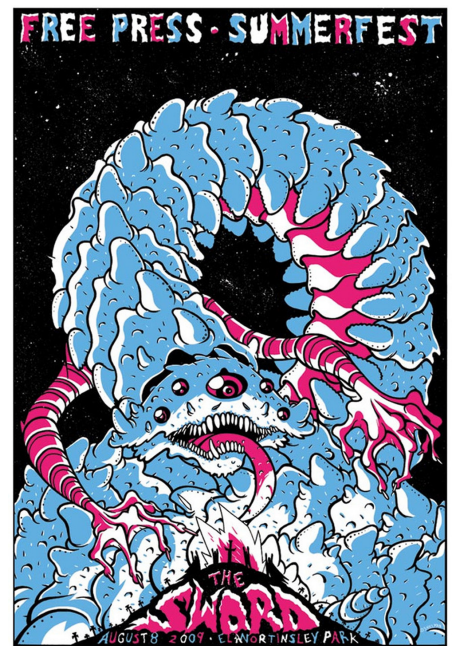
Shoot forward in time to 2009.

FPH and Pegstar meld their creative seeds and give birth to Houston's "Free Press Summer Festival," a light saber of energy with the potential to reshape a community rife with scene naysayers and contrarians. Since I already had a few years of experience doing concert posters, I was given the task of hiring other local artists to create poster designs for each individual headlining act playing FPSF. We contacted a local silk screen printing company to produce the prints and, after giving the designers a few copies for themselves, we sold what we had left. With the number of headlining FPSF acts growing larger over the next few years, we were given the opportunity to hire out the design work to even more local artists and, in some cases, national designers. Eventually we were able to organize events showcasing the design work itself, with the music represented in the art being almost secondary to the weight the promotional pieces carried.

There have been plenty of talented folks that have done and continue to do amazing work (Google search these people and hire them!): Michael C. Rodriguez, DUAL, Chris Henry, Blake Jones, Tim Dorsey, Davie Graves, Eli Sebastian Brumbaugh, Shane Hillman, Will Harrison, Natalie Irish, Eyesore, Carlos Hernandez, Uncle Charlie, Jermaine Rogers, Molly Joon, Dann Miller, Tyler Barber, Jody Worthington, Tom So, Ryan Ottea, Mark Williamson, Rene Cruz, Justin Anville, Jason McElweenie, Evan O'Neil and MANY MORE. (Note: FPH has worked with a large number of gifted artists over the years. So many, in fact, that we probably missed a few. It happens. But, thanks to the wonders of the Internet, we can add names to the digital version of this article, so email us.)

We really hope to see more inspired young kids coming out of the woodwork to slay us old-schoolers into the ground in such a way that we have to reevaluate the methods we've held sacred for illustration and event promotion. FPH and its related endeavors have always encouraged creatives to submit their artwork to us for consideration. So, if you can draw, design, fingerpaint, type really well, or have the ability and means to wear butterfly frame glasses and smoke cigarettes in front of Black Hole, send us your work. We must be humbled. **FPH**













EAST IS EAST AND ROCK IS ROCK

By Michael Bergeron

WHEN FREE PRESS SUMMER FESTIVAL COMES TO LIFE this month, people will be rocking out at what has become the city's premiere outdoor music festival. But how many fans are aware of some of the movie roles performed by artists on this year's lineup? And I'm not referring to the songs heard on movie soundtracks or concert DVDs or SNL appearances to which many of the bands can lay claim.

Chan Marshall a.k.a. Cat Power not only appears as a character in Wong Kar-wai's My Blueberry Nights (2007), she also supplies the song "The Greatest" heard throughout the film. Iggy Pop (a.k.a. James Osterberg) actually has a filmography that professional thesps admire. Some of the films the Igster has appeared in include: Sid & Nancy (1986), The Color of Money (1986), Cry-Baby (1990), Tank Girl (1995), Dead Man (1995), and most recently a French film, L'étoile du jour (2012). Iggy Pop is also listed as composer on the unreleased The Brave (1997, directed by Johnny Depp, starring Depp and Marlon Brando). Perhaps his most iconic composition though is the "Repo Man Theme Song," which he also performs for Repo Man (1984). A recent Blu-ray release of Repo Man by Criterion Collection features a new interview with Iggy Pop.

Brit Marling on The East

Corporate malfeasance gets a clamorous treatment in The East, a limited release from Fox Searchlight rolling out this month. The East stars Alexander Skarsgård, Ellen Page, Jason Ritter, and Toby Kebbell. Star and writer Brit Marling discussed her work and process with Free Press Houston during a recent phone interview.

"Writing is really lonely. Zal and I wrote the film together, bouncing ideas off of each other," admits Marling. "But eventually you are looking at a blank page and you're really in your own world."

Previous films written by and starring Marling include Another Earth, directed and co-written by Mike Cahill and Sound of My Voice, directed and co-written by Zal Batmanglij. Marling, Cahill, and Batmanglij all know each other from their days as students at Georgetown University. Marling has also appeared in prominent roles in films such as Arbitrage and The Company You Keep, the latter being a film that Marling states she jumped at when the opportunity arose.

In The East, Marling plays an FBI-trained operative who now works for a private intelligence company. Marling is tasked with infiltrating an anarchist collective that practices corporate sabotage. While Sound of My Voice was about a cult group led by a mysterious woman from the future, Marling doesn't see The East as being about cults. "This group is a tribe, a community. My character is a spy who goes deep undercover and creates a new identity. But, what is that subterfuge all about if you fall in love with a new philosophy?"

"There's a prescience to the material," notes Marling. "We had written a scene where the group breaks into the Hampton summer estate of an oil CEO and creates an oil spill in the house. And a week later, the BP oil spill in the Gulf was in the news." At one point Marling's character, Sarah, reveals a cell phone in the sole of one of her shoes. "That's the only real spy kind of tool we used. The rest of the time Sarah uses her ingenuity, like the scene where she tears a Coke can in half to use as a sharp object or even [her] secondary use [for] dental floss."

At one point, members of The East crash an exclusive party on Cape Cod being given by the CEO of a pharmaceutical company and spike the guest's champagne with antibiotics that the company has a contract to market in Africa. Yet, when Marling's character contacts her boss (Patricia Clarkson) and attempts to subvert their raid, she's told to stand down. "They're not our clients," Clarkson's character says. Eventually, this experience makes Marling's character doubt her own worth as a spy and an infiltrator.

In some ways, the Occupy Movement influenced The East. "There's a sense that these people are agents of change. To some degree, our characters were based on the feelings of young people we were meeting and interviewing. It's a story about people who seek revenge against corporate malfeasance like vigilantes seeking justice," Marling states. "Yet how far is too far?"

Marling literally burst onto the scene at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival when both Another Earth and Sound of My Voice premiered and were bought by Fox Searchlight. The East was actually funded and distributed by Searchlight. "Speaking of tribes, that's a good one to belong to," adds Marling. **FPH**





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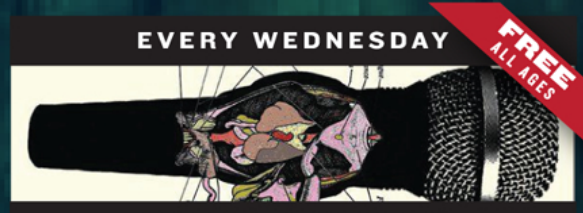
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MAY **05** THE DEVIL MAKES THREE
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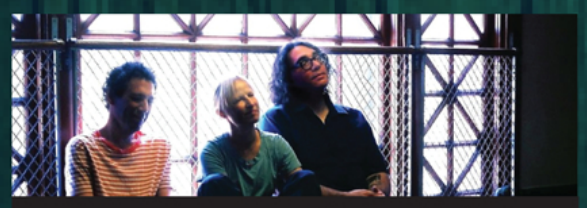
MAY **24** THE BLACK ANGELS
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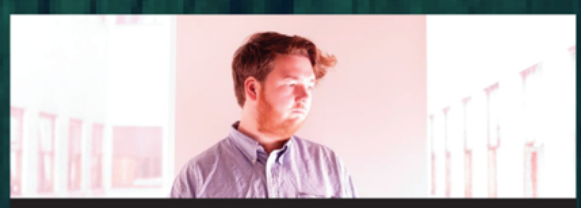
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MAY **08** FATHER JOHN MISTY
WITH JESSICA PRATT



MAY **08** CHAD VALLEY
WITH SKI LODGE • NIGHT DRIVE



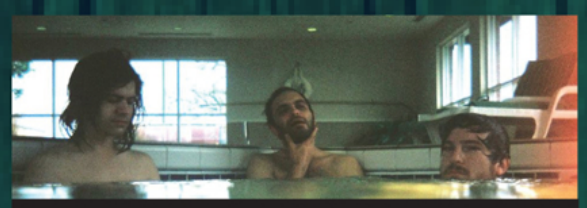
MAY **10** BROWN BIRD
WITH LAST GOOD TOOTH



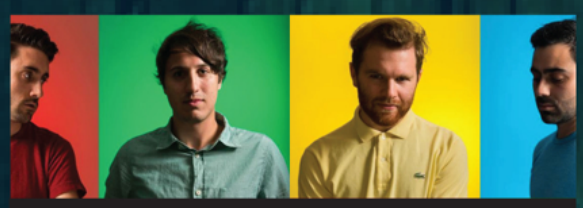
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MAY **16** TERA MELOS
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FACE TO FACE MAY 18 | **THE HUSH SOUND** MAY 26 | **FLOBOTS** MAY 29 | **ARUM RAE** MAY 31

THE HEAT IS ON

By Will Guess

AFTER MONTHS OF (not so) patiently waiting, it's time. The biggest music event of the summer arrives right at the beginning of June and it's sure to be memorable. But as tired, hungover, and completely fucking disgusting you may be after the festival, don't forget that the music keeps rolling through the city long after FPSF is gone. June's got plenty to offer with a "so-far, so-good" reunion, a young punk band turning heads, and a band that will always hold a place in my heart.



ICEAGE / JUNE 3 / MANGO'S
Denmark punk band Iceage has come onto the scene rather quickly. They have two phenomenal, solid albums in New Brigade and You're Nothing and have toured relentlessly for years. And, hey, even Iggy Pop is a fan. The band is astonishingly young - the members got together in their late teens and are just now coming into their early 20s - but the complex composition of their songwriting is rather impressive. What sets them apart from the average punk band is their ability to bend and meld the genre into something all their own. You can hear the vocalist channeling his inner Ian Curtis. The band performing at Mango's just puts the icing on the cake. Known for their over-the-top, and sometimes bloody and violent, live shows, Iceage's Houston stop will be one to remember. Catch them before they REALLY blow up in the States.



FALL OUT BOY / JUNE 7 / BAYOU MUSIC CENTER
As far as reunions go, I'd say pretty much everyone saw this one coming. If not for the fact that each member's solo project fell incredibly short of its mark, then because of that infamous blog post written by frontman Patrick Stump claiming he was almost broke. But look, even though their last album didn't really do much for anyone, everything before that was pretty solid. Bear with me. Their debut album was absolutely killer and no one can deny Stump's extraordinary ability to write a catchy song. Usually, bands make a great album and then everyone says "I like the old stuff better," but they're one of the few bands that stayed consistent for a considerable period of time. Now, they're back with a new album and a newfound appreciation for what they once were. With that, they have chosen to make this not just a reunion tour, but also an actual rebirth of the band. Welcome back.



SAY ANYTHING / JUNE 8 / FITZGERALD'S
If you thought I was getting nostalgic about Fall Out Boy, you ain't seen nothing yet. The first road trip I ever took to California, Say Anything's ...Is A Real Boy was the soundtrack. Those songs, that album, will always mean something to me because it created a connection between my two friends and me during that journey. I've listened to ...Is A Real Boy more times than I can count. Some albums that you were into when you were younger don't hold up as you grow older, but this one has never let me down. I still listen to it and it's still great. With that said, the band could never really top that album with any of their subsequent releases. Frontman Max Bemis wrote and recorded ...Is A Real Boy almost entirely by himself and then enlisted a full band for each album after that. I'll just blame that. Say Anything has now grown up and so have I, but they still have the ability to take me back to a younger age. I'll be at this show harnessing my youth and singing along to every song. I just haven't decided which color V-neck I'm going to wear yet.



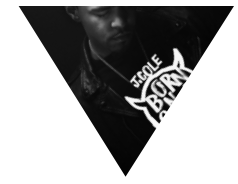


The Thermals / June 6 / Fitzgerald's
Kendrick Lamar / June 11 / Reliant Arena
Rob Delaney / June 26 / Walter's
New Kids On The Block/98 Degrees/Boyz II Men / June 27 / Toyota Center
Cyndi Lauper / June 28 / House of Blues
Valient Thorr / June 28 / Fitzgerald's

MUSIC OPINIONS

(BIG VOICE, ECHO, LIGHTS DIM, CURTAIN OPENS, DESK ILLUMINATES, MAN EATING NACHO CHEESE TORTILLA CHIPS)

By K.M. Anderson



J. COLE / BORN SINNER / ROC NATION & UNIVERSAL
Jay-Z once lamented on the song "The Bounce" that people misunderstand him as a rapper by judging the pop hits and not listening to the album. The hits are for the money; it's a business decision. J. Cole (a Jay-Z protégée), along with Drake and Kendrick Lamar, is the representation of this philosophy—the new formula—cold-ass rapper with pop sensibility. Cole is the trifecta: storyteller, hitmaker, and lyricist. The lead single from this album, "Power Trip," is a love song, a great story (confessional to a point), and has a Miguel chorus to ensure the ladies swoon (accessibility). Expect the same from the album. J. Cole has an underdog quality; you want to see him win. He can spit with the best of them—the tribulations of his story (love, fame, transition, no money to money) and the cleverness in the wordplay. J. Cole went under the radar on his last album. Do not expect the same with this one.



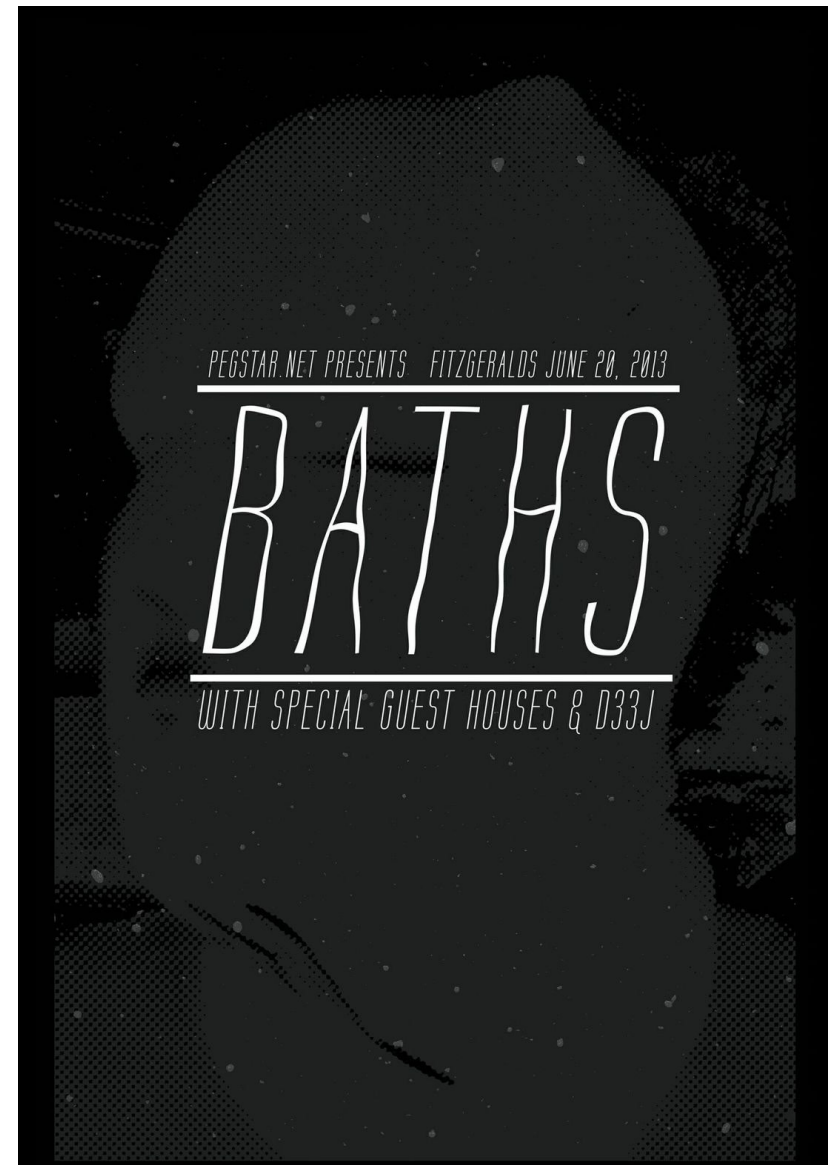


QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE / ...LIKE CLOCKWORK / MATADOR
QOTSA albums are always events. Josh Homme believes in the spirit of collaboration, which means a colorful cast of characters. This time, in addition to people such as former members Nick Oliveri and Mark Lanegan, there is the power drum duo of Dave Grohl and Jon Theodore (rumored to be their new drummer). The other great thing about QOTSA is that regardless of who is playing on the album, the songs maintain that signature QOTSA sound. "My God Is The Sun" is classic QOTSA with the rush of the guitar, the chop chop drum, and that falsetto. Consistency is a welcome quality in music these days. Sometimes, it's better to be satisfied than surprised—although with this band, I expect both.

MAVIS STAPLES / ONE TRUE VINE / ANTI
Mavis Staples and Jeff Tweedy recorded the album You Are Not Alone together—it was a fine album. Tweedy's warm, sparse production was the perfect accompaniment to Staples' voice. They have teamed up once again for One True Vine. All of the instruments were played by Jeff and Spencer Tweedy (Jeff's son). It features a cover of the song "Holy Ghost," originally recorded by Low (from their wonderful album The Invisible Way). The weird thing is that even without knowing that information, this cover could totally pass as a Staples original. There is also a cover of Funkadelic's "Can You Get To That," which is a folky kind of funky. One might say there is an unlikely pairing in Staples and Tweedy (one who did not hear their last release), but anyone who's listened to the more soulful leanings of recent Wilco material wouldn't be surprised. Still, whatever the case may be, this album would be a great addition to your collection.

...and so concludes MY MUSIC OPINIONS (big voice, echo, curtain closes, usher signals exit.)


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IAN HULTQUIST

INTERVIEW WITH PASSION PIT'S

By Rob McCarthy

Photo by Jason Nocito

WHAT STARTED AS A ONE-MAN PROJECT, and further, was simply a late Valentine's present to one very lucky girl, quickly became an international sensation. Passion Pit is one of the more encouraging success stories in modern popular music. A boy makes music for a girl and ends up making music for the world. With hits like "Sleepyhead" and "Take a Walk," Passion Pit's music has risen to great heights on notable charts, has appeared in commercials and on movie soundtracks, and has stuck in the heads of millions of fans across the globe. The brainchild of Michael Angelakos, Passion Pit evolved into a full-fledged band when members Nathan Donmoyer, Jeff Apruzzese, Ayad Al Adhamy, and Ian Hultquist joined up. With one EP and two full-length albums under their belts, the band is poised and ready to bring their live show to fans everywhere. Passion Pit will be performing at this year's Free Press Summer Festival. FPH recently connected with keyboardist/guitarist Ian Hultquist to talk to him about creativity, success, gear, and music.



Gossamer did a lot of really great things for you guys. For one, it helped solidify the group as having range beyond your debut releases—which was something that had been looming over the band since its inception. Secondly, it introduced the band to an entirely new audience. How do you feel about the reactions to Gossamer in terms of critical acceptance and the obvious popular appeal of songs like "Take a Walk"?
It's been really great. When I first heard the songs that Michael put together, I was really impressed and happy. Obviously, I'm partial because I am in the band, but it's one of my favorite records of the past year. It has been great for us; different people come to our shows and check us out. The crowd ranges from a 15-year-old kid to a 60-year-old dad and everyone enjoys the music.

Your singles are unique, comparatively, to a lot of what is happening in popular music, and your sound is more the leader than the follower. How do you all approach the pop format and how has the band's collective musical upbringing shaped the way you all write as far as staying original and not conforming to trends?
Michael is the songwriter but as far as playing the music that we want to play, we do what we like, to be honest. We don't change the way that we play to suit others. We want to enjoy the music that we are playing, so as long as we stay true to that, then we are happy.

We constantly hear from the public that "everything has already been done." How do y'all feel about that statement? Where do you stand on that argument?
I come across that from time to time but I've also been surprised from time to time. I think there is still so much ground to cover musically. There are only 12 notes in the music scale but unless you are trying to do something that's been done before, I think there is still a lot left to discover.

Most of the band went to Berklee College of Music. What was that experience like?
Berklee was great; it was an interesting experience. It wasn't a normal college experience but I am really happy that that's where I ended up.

So far, what has been the hardest obstacle you all have had to overcome as a band?
Something that we've always worked on is making sure we are on the same page, and for the most part we have been. However, when you have so many people working together with different backgrounds and interests, it's hard to make things work all the time but we've come to a place where we all agree and have the same goals.

If you could give any words of wisdom to up-and-coming bands in this decade, what would it be?
Make sure you are doing it for the right reasons—because you love playing music. It's not an easy job at all. I've seen so many people try so hard at it and not get where they want to be, and vice versa. It's a big gamble in the end but as long as you are happy, that's the most important thing.

Because of the success the group has had, I imagine you don't have to worry as much about things like gear and recording costs. Does a level of financial stability hinder the creative process or aid it? For instance, the ability to afford the top-of-the-line gear versus having to improvise and make do.
We still worry about gear because we play live. We try not to use any tracks, [so] we end up touring with a lot of gear. We want to stay true to what we've always done, which is playing as much as possible. I think the success has allowed us to evolve and open up more with each record. We never want to repeat ourselves. Monetarily, it does help you explore and I don't think it has hindered anything.

Have you acquired any new pieces of musical equipment that you are particularly excited about?
I started touring with new digital Mellotron and it's really fun. I love how the keys go through the whole body; you feel like you are playing a real instrument.

Any bands that you are interested in or excited about that are relatively new or unheard of?
Holy Other, Chvrches.

Guilty musical pleasures?
I've been watching the show Nashville on ABC. It's made me realize how much I like country music.

What is next for Passion Pit?
Lots and lots of touring. We will be touring throughout the rest of the year, pretty much. Hopefully, next year we will be looking at LP number three.

Are you excited to be playing the Free Press Summer Festival?
The last time we were in Texas was some time last year. I'm excited about playing festivals in Texas; I just hope it's not 120 degrees out! **FPH**

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THE BILLY PILGRIM TRAVELING LIBRARY

By Amanda Hart

Photos courtesy of Chris Grawl & Kelly Allen



HOUSTON NOW HAS its very own traveling library. When we saw The Billy Pilgrim Traveling Library at the most recent Lone Star Bazaar we figured it was deserving of an interview. FPH caught up with creators Chris and Kelly to learn more about their book-peddling bus.

Who is Billy Pilgrim and where did he get the idea to create a traveling library?

Knowing who Billy Pilgrim is has sort of implicitly become part of the initiation process at the BPTL. Some come to our library with that knowledge intact. Others address one or both of us as Billy or flatly ask, as you have, "Who's Billy Pilgrim?" And we, Chris and Kelly, are happy to oblige.

Billy Pilgrim, we say, is the protagonist of Kurt Vonnegut's Slaughterhouse-Five.

Naming our bookmobile after a Vonnegut character speaks to both the character of our traveling collection as well as to our individual characters. We also like the sort of play on words with being a traveling library and Billy Pilgrim traveling through, or coming "unstuck in time," as well as the notion that literature, film, and music do unstick us in time.

Our idea for a traveling library resulted from your run-of-the-mill combination of library entrepreneurialism and food truck love. Chris initially visualized it inside a storefront, but when we moved to Montrose and began subsisting on food truck cuisine, it became clear to both of us that our project would best be realized as a mobile venture.



What exactly is a traveling library? Where does it go and who does it serve?

A traveling library, historically, has meant anything from boxes of books that were shipped from rural area to rural area to bookmobiles full of resources that travel to locations without libraries. Our traveling library draws from bookmobile history while offering something completely innovative. And we do this in a couple of ways.

The Billy Pilgrim Traveling Library is primarily an independent, Houston-based bookmobile stocked with a collection of literature, music, and film drawn from our own shelves and from generous community donations. We call ourselves "your bookmobile" because we serve everyone and because our collection is comprised of materials contributed by the library's members.

In principle, the BPTL is a fusion library/bookstore, with a business model somewhere along the lines of Netflix's. You join by paying an annual membership fee that ranges from $5 to $20 and, depending on your plan, allows you to have from one to five items out at a time. There are no due dates or late fees. Bring your items back when you want and exchange them for something else.



The natural (and consistent) question that follows is, "How do I know where to find you?" We try to be transparent about where and when we park on our Twitter (@theBPTL) and Facebook (fb.me/theBPTL) pages, and we have an up-to-date events calendar on our website (theBPTL.com/events).

We're only a few months into this project, and so we're still looking for some more places to park regularly. And due to other commitments, we are a largely weekend-based enterprise. Our most consistent stop so far has been Sunday afternoons at Style Cycle, next to Boomtown Coffee on 19th Street in the Heights. We are one of very few libraries serving the Greater Houston area that is open on Sundays, so we're thrilled to have established a partnership with Style Cycle that allows us to consistently offer the community Sunday service. We've also been making the rounds at several of the monthly arts markets - Houston Re-Market, Lone Star Bazaar, Folk Market, First Saturday Arts Market, Grey Area Art Market - and hope to continue to contribute to that circuit. Many of our stops so far have been in Montrose and the Heights, but we hope to work with local organizations and help serve communities all over Greater Houston and beyond.

The secondary purpose of the BPTL is to serve as a bookmobile-for-hire - that is, we empty out the truck's space and make it available to other interested parties (public libraries, museums, art galleries, schools, local businesses) for whatever (mutually agreeable) purposes (library card drive, pop-up gallery, exhibit). We debuted this component of our services during spring break in Odessa, where we helped the Ector County Library celebrate their 75th anniversary via library card drives at two county senior centers, Family Art Day at the Noel Art Museum, and H-E-B. We'd love to similarly serve Houston by teaming up with Harris County Public Library and/or Houston Public Library, letting them fill our shelves with their materials and going out into the community rather than waiting for the community to go to it.

What help or support do you currently need from the community?

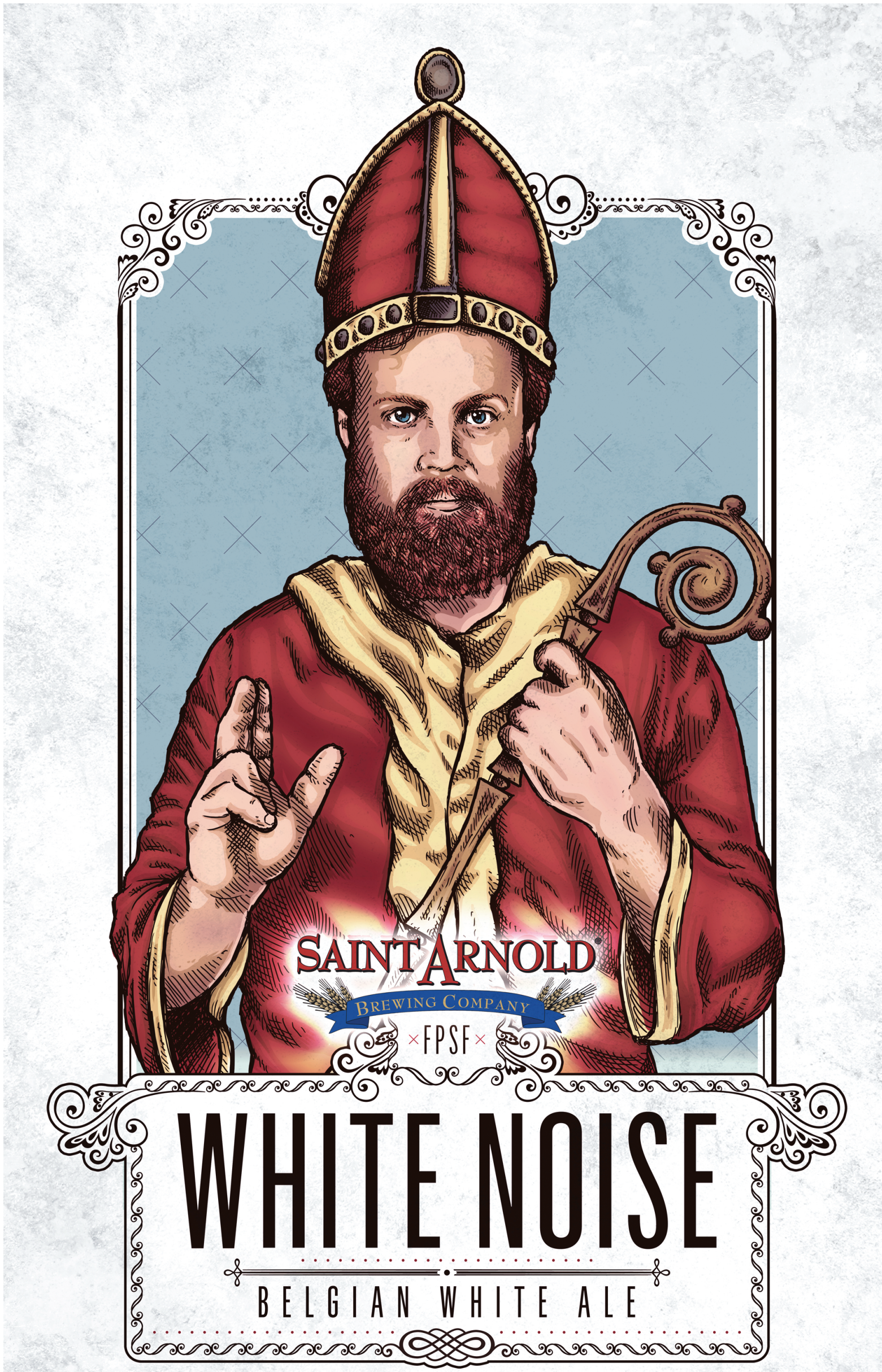
The support we have received from the community to this point has been tremendous and extremely encouraging. From the very start, we had friends, family, community members, and total strangers signing up to be library members, making donations (both monetary and in-kind), and suggesting other places to park and other events and organizations with whom to collaborate. Since we began in mid-February, our project has evolved in a very natural and community-driven manner, both in terms of the breadth of our collection, as well as the array of events we attend and groups we work with. We'd like to see this stay the course and continue to evolve naturally.

There are a couple of easy ways to support us without having to physically seek us out. Monetary contributions can be sent to theBPTL@gmail.com through PayPal, which we have a link to on our website, theBPTL.com. We've also set up a registry on Amazon where you can purchase an item on our wish list and have it sent directly to us. You can find a link to the registry on our webpage as well.

But most of all, if you like what we're doing, help spread the word about us!

If people wanted to contact you for an event or to volunteer, how would they go about doing so?

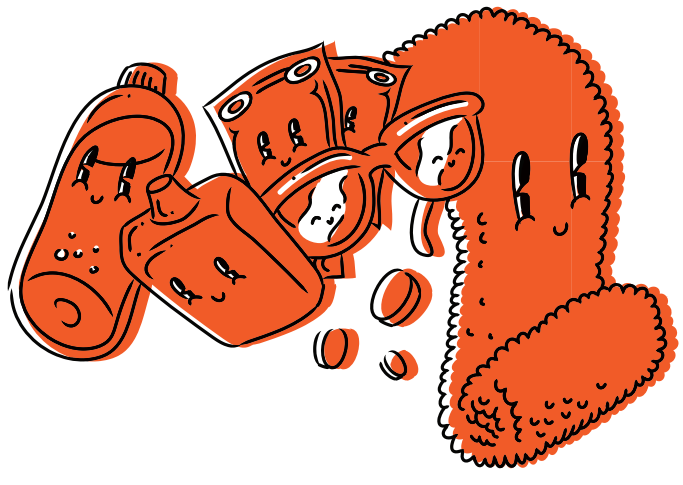
Anyone interested in collaborating with us in any way - using our space, having us attend an event, volunteering/interning, etc. - can feel free to shoot us an email at theBPTL@gmail.com. Any time we're open to the public should also be considered our office hours. Please feel free to stop by, even if you just want to chat or simply see the inside of a bookmobile. FPH


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BELGIAN WHITE ALE
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Super refreshing and flavorful.

YOUR GUIDE TO FPSF 2013







By Amanda Hart / Illustrations by Blake Jones & Shelby Hohl

ANTICIPATION FOR FPSF has been building for well over a year now. If you're anything like us, you left the gates of Eleanor Tinsley Park last year dreaming of what 2013 would have in store. Thankfully, the wait is finally over. Free Press Summer Festival has arrived! We've been hard at work making sure that this year's event is the best one yet. In an effort to ensure that your festival experience is as crunk as possible, we've put together a convenient guide to cover all the essentials you need to prepare for one hell of a good time.

1. GETTING THERE

The actual address for Eleanor Tinsley Park is 500 Allen Parkway. The gates are located near Downtown/Sabine and Taft on Allen Parkway. If you live within biking distance of the park, riding your bike to FPSF is your best bet. There will be plenty of racks and space available on-site where you can lock up your bike. This is the most convenient way to arrive and the environment will thank you for it. If you live outside the city or state, we highly suggest that you carpool. There are plenty of parking garages located in and around the downtown area that will put you within walking distance of the festival. Another great option for festival attendees who don't want to deal with finding parking downtown is the jitney shuttle service The Wave. Daily and weekend passes will be available for park/bike/walk & rides to and from FPSF. You can visit www.thehoustonwave.com to learn more. Lastly, the area where you can access taxi service or catch the METRO is located at Taft near Dallas.

2. BRING YOUR DAMN WRISTBAND

I know that seems like the most obvious pointer but it always happens to someone you know. Everyone is so excited to get to the festival that they leave their wristband at home. Pre-pack them the night before. Put them in your purse/messenger bag/satchel/fanny pack/backpack/man purse or whatever carrying case you are bringing your things in and be sure you remember where you put it. Or, you know, you could wear them to the park.

3. BASICS FOR SURVIVING A HOUSTON SUMMER: A CHECKLIST

WATER. Lots of water. We will have easily accessible water filling stations at the festival so bring your CamelBaks. Water bottles can be purchased (and refilled) on-site. As per requirements by the City of Houston, NO WATER OR ANY OTHER LIQUID OR FOOD IS ADMITTED. There will be plenty of water available for free and for sale. Empty CamelBaks or reusable non-glass water thermoses are allowed and can be filled once in the fest, but must be proved empty upon entrance. It is really important that you stay hydrated during the festival. And, no, your body cannot survive on beer alone. Oftentimes a beer seems to quench your thirst while, in fact, leaving you more dehydrated. It's a good rule of thumb to have at least one glass of water for every glass of beer you drink. So remember 1:1 in the water to beer ratio and you should be OK. This is also a great way to avoid a hangover.

SUNSCREEN. This is a necessity for everyone. If you see a friend, or even a stranger, who seems to be on the verge of turning into a lobster, be a dear and offer them some sunscreen. Hats or personal umbrellas are also welcome at the festival and can offer great use for protection from the Houston sun.

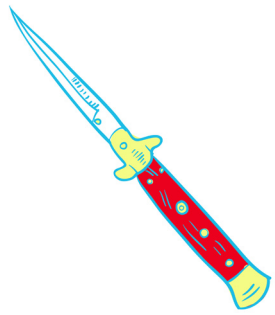
SUNGLASSES. So you can see us better.

CASH/CREDIT CARD. ATMs will be available on-site at the festival and many of the vendors will also accept cards. But it's always a good idea to bring a little cash with you for essentials and emergencies. It never hurts to have small bills on hand for ease.

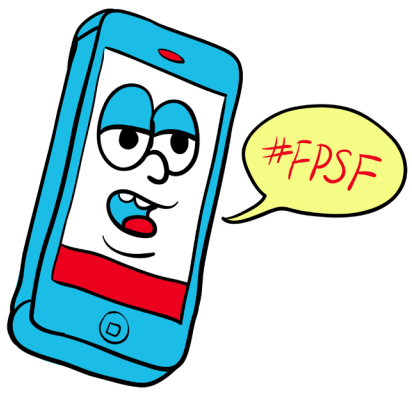
BLANKETS/TOWELS. Feel free to bring these with you to make sitting on the grassy hill a bit more comfortable.

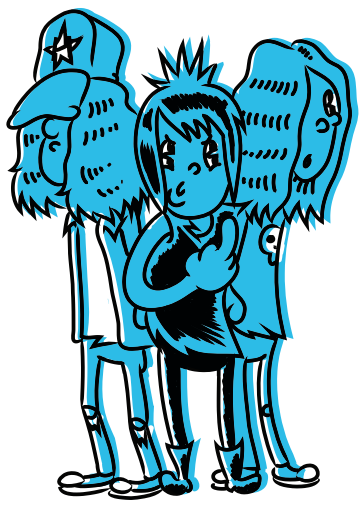
It is important that while dealing with Houston's subtropical climate we maintain a sense of hyper awareness--not just with ourselves but also with others around us. We need to watch each other's backs. If you see someone who appears to be injured or in need of medical attention, please flag down an FPSF staff member/volunteer or send someone else to do so while you stay with the injured party. All festival staff/volunteers have been trained to help you promptly find proper medical attention. Medical tents will be present through-











out the festival if you or someone else needs help. HFD, our first aid team, and medics are volunteers, employees and/or sponsors of the festival and ARE ON-SITE TO ASSIST YOU, NOT ARREST YOU. Refusal of medical attention, especially in the Houston heat and humidity, can be fatal. No matter what caused you to experience an illness, please come to us if you need help. Your safety is our only concern. Please look out for people who might be experiencing heat exhaustion/heat stroke or even something as simple as dehydration. You can prevent heat-related illnesses by wearing light-colored, loose-fitting clothing and drinking plenty of water. If you are not peeing every few hours you might be dehydrated and in need of a giant cup of water. Or three. We as a community have been very good about helping out our fellow festival goers over the years but we just want to make sure that it stays this way.

4. THE NOS

No Pets (of any kind). No coolers. No canopies, tents or other big pointy obstructions. No motorized vehicles. No weapons. No professional cameras (unless you applied for and obtained a media pass). Absolutely no video or audio recording equipment. This year we will be allowing detachable lenses for your cameras so bring them at your own risk. No unauthorized vending, sales, solicitations, or promotions. And again, no outside food or drinks, including no water or water bottles, sealed or unsealed. Security will be checking bags and confiscating prohibited items at the gate.

5. FPSF APP

Download it, install it, create your schedule, and share your favorite acts with friends. Check out FPSF.com for details.

6. CHECK OUT THE LOCAL ACTS

The headliners are an important part of FPSF, but be sure to give some love to our local artists. FPSF provides an ideal opportunity to venture out of your comfort zone and familiarize yourself with some of Houston's most talented musicians.

7. ENJOY THE ART

Unfortunately, this year, we will NOT have a paint slide. Please understand that this was not our decision. The City is doing construction on the park and because of the change in terrain, there just isn't a safe place to set up the paint slide. We are just as saddened by this as y'all are, but our hands are tied. OK, now that the bad news is out of the way, here is the good news: There will be plenty of interactive art installations for you to enjoy! So be sure to schedule in some time to check them all out!

8. LOST CHILDREN

FPSF is an all-ages festival and we want everyone to come and enjoy the fun. However, all children found unattended will be given a free puppy and returned to you. If you can't find a sitter and choose to bring your little ones, please be extra cautious with them. We haven't had too many issues with this in the past, but it is always a concern when so many people are in one location. Just to be safe, it is a good idea to attach a name and number to your kiddos in case they get separated from you. Also, if you are a parent and are sending your teenager to FPSF without an adult chaperone, please make sure they have a charged cell phone and a meeting place coordinated with you prior to dropping them off at the festival. Phone reception at the festival can be spotty at times and any extra precautions you can take will help bring peace of mind to everyone. Last year, we encountered a couple of concerned parents who couldn't locate their teens and, trust us, it's heartbreaking to see the face of a worried parent.

9. THE OFFICIAL FPSF HASHTAG

Sharing your FPSF experiences via social media is welcome and very much encouraged. We love seeing photos, Vines, tweets, and updates from all the folks enjoying their time in Houston during FPSF weekend. Just be sure to use the official hashtag #FPSF when posting about your super happy fun times at the fest.

10. EARLY BIRD 2014

I can't tell you how many people are in a tizzy right now because they didn't get their passes early for 2013. You can avoid this feeling of sadness by making sure to pick up your passes for 2014 as soon as all the fun is had in 2013. You can also save a hefty amount of money by getting them sooner than later. (See website after fest for details.) **FPH**







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EQUAL TO WHAT?

By Nick Cooper / Illustration by Blake Jones

AT A TIME WHEN MOST PROGRESSIVE CAUSES are losing ground, gay and lesbian struggles to marry and serve openly in the military are scoring huge victories. Full marriage and military service equality were unimaginable only a few years ago and now seem within reach.

Bones, a queer anarchist activist in Houston, thinks these two causes are succeeding because, “of all the calls for justice and normalization coming from the queer community, these issues are the least demanding of structural change.”



The Accepted and the Left Out

"The marriage equality movement appeared late to the GLBT struggle and has taken center stage," said longtime Houston activist Ray Hill. "Those who fought earlier battles were replaced with those who want to assimilate into the larger society. Many of us have no interest in marrying or killing so these 'advances' are not of our choosing or a major priority to us."

Shum Preston, a political activist and consultant and holder of one of California's 18,000 same-gender marriage licenses, says, "While we celebrate our baby-step victories, let's remember the driving impulse of the LGBT movement: as a people we are made poor by discrimination in housing and employment, we are killed and attacked routinely, and our young people are targeted with toxic messages of hate."

In most states, it is legal for employers and housing providers to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation. The murder rates of transgender people of color, up to 50 times that of straight whites, constitute a desperate crisis being largely ignored. So while there aren't many LGBT activists who say "gays and lesbians shouldn't be allowed to marry," many question how the top priorities became marriage and military service.

The queer liberation group Against Equality declares on its website: "Gay marriage apes hetero privilege and allows everyone to forget that marriage ought not to be the guarantor of rights like health care," and "gay marriage increases economic inequality by perpetuating a system which deems married beings more worthy of the basics like health care and economic rights."

Bones points out that gay marriage doesn't help polyamorous people, people in casual relationships, youths, and asexual and aromantic people. Furthermore, the most oppressed subgroups — trans people, undocumented queers, queer people of color, and youths, — still find themselves being fired from jobs, evicted, blackmailed, expelled, harassed, bullied, assaulted, and murdered.

Represented by the Human Rights Campaign, the more assimilationist tendency has historically had few trans and queer people of color in its leadership. When the most oppressed subgroups are the least represented and prioritized, it inevitably creates indignation and factionalism. So, it should come as no surprise that less enfranchised LGBT people are not applauding these latest victories.

Human Rights Campaign has found 1,138 federal benefits, rights, and protections that come with marriage. These rights relate to Social Security, taxes, immigration, medical leave, health coverage, and other employee benefits. Of course, LGBT people deserve these same benefits as much as straight folks, but why are they not also deserved by people who have no interest in marriage?

Yasmin Nair, a Chicago-based writer, academic, and co-founder of Against Equality explained in an email, "The only people who will definitely benefit from the economic benefits of gay marriage [are those] who don't need welfare benefits in the first place. The rest, gays and lesbians working minimum-wage jobs or struggling to pay bills or going under from health care costs, will continue to be screwed by capitalism - like everyone else." On her blog she adds, "I will see gay marriage in my lifetime, but I'll never see universal health care..."

Other Engagements: Military

The right to serve in the military is one many LGBT radicals were content not to have at all. Against Equality published a book, 'Don't Ask to Fight Their Wars,' with the stated intention of creating a "historical reminder proving that not all us queer and trans folk were banging on the doors of the war machine begging to be rainbow-colored cannon fodder."

Bones says, "The 'gays in the military' issue should be seen as nothing more than an expansion of the U.S. imperialist programme. If people are concerned by how soldiers are being treated, I would begin by looking at rape statistics or suicide rates."

You Call That Equality?

Framing the discussion in terms of 'equality' has gotten results but overlooks the systemic, rapidly-widening inequality in the U.S. It makes sense that people who are horrified by the inequalities of consumer culture will not be fans of campaigns that invoke the concept of equality to demand nothing more than access to the privileged class. In the quest for middle-class acceptance, the dominant voices in today's LGBT movement have sidelined those fighting for human rights and dignity for all.

White middle class American families shouldn't be treated as ideal or even as the norm. The lifestyles of outsiders, queers, and immigrants have presented alternative possibilities, provided contrast, and fostered constructive conflicts. However, if the demands made by these outsiders amount to nothing more than inclusion within the existing order, white privilege and patriarchy are only further affirmed and enshrined. Radical and anti-capitalist LGBT activists don't just want an equal seat at the table, they want to overturn some tables. **FPH**


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BRINGING IT ALL BACK HOME: A BRIEF SUMMARY OF HOUSTON'S MUSIC HISTORY

By Rob McCarthy
Illustration by Blake Jones

HOUSTON DOESN'T ALWAYS get the respect it deserves when it comes to music. Few people may fully realize the major role our city has played in influencing popular music—multiple times. Throughout the last century, Houston has been home to a wealth of talented artists, big and small, that were pivotal in defining American music for generations to come.

In 1946, Sam John Hopkins made his way back to Houston. Hopkins first moved to Houston several years before with the hopes of getting involved in the city's music scene. Unfortunately, his first effort was not met with much success. During a performance somewhere in Third Ward, he was discovered and sent to Los Angeles to make a record. It was there that Hopkins took on the name "Lightnin.'" It is said the Lightnin' Hopkins recorded somewhere between 800 to 1,000 songs during his lifetime. He is one of the best blues guitar players to emerge from the South and was ranked 71 on Rolling Stone magazine's top 100 guitarists of all time. He is renowned for his fingerstyle playing, which, for lack of a backing band, essentially created a percussive and low-end rhythmic foundation over which he would weave melodies and also sing. The man made a good name for Houston's bluesmen, paving the way for the next generation of blues musicians.

During the 1940s and '50s, Don Robey was somewhat of a legend in the Houston music scene. He was a high school dropout who left school to become a professional gambler. He gave that up when he started promoting dances and then eventually moved to Los Angeles. He came back to Houston in 1942 and opened up his own nightclub named The Peacock. Many Houston blues and R&B artists came through that club and rose to fame over time. Musicians such as Johnny Ace (one of the best pianists to come out of the South), Bobby "Blue" Bland (considered a sex symbol and admired by many southern women until his death), Big Mama Thornton, Junior Parker, and Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown were just a few of the people who performed at The Peacock and worked with Robey at his record label. Don Robey's unorthodox method of handling his artists was sometimes described as "gangster-style bullying," but regardless of his business acumen, the man got shit done and had hit song after hit song rolling out of his label.

In the 1960s, Texas played a pivotal role in how music would unfold throughout the decade with its influence stretching from coast to coast. A little band from Austin made a big splash and those ripples were carried all the way to San Francisco and, more importantly, to Houstonian and blues guitar master, Billy Gibbons. The 13th Floor Elevators, led by the eccentric conceptual genius Roky Erickson, essentially brought psychedelic music to national attention. Gibbons, a friend of Erickson, was inspired enough by their music to form his own psychedelic rock 'n' roll group.

That inspiration led to the inception of The Moving Sidewalks, a Houston-based quartet with an interesting approach to both the blues and rock 'n' roll. It was this band that introduced Gibbons to the world. His prolific virtuosity on the six-string caught the attention and admiration of the one and only Jimi Hendrix— so much so, that Hendrix admitted on live television to being quite fond of Gibbons' playing.

After The Moving Sidewalks' short-lived but highly-influential career, Gibbons connected with bassist Dusty Hill and drummer Frank Beard. Taking their name from a favorite brand of rolling papers, ZZ Top became one of the most endearing, ass-kicking, and all-around badass rock bands to ever come out of America—let alone little old Houston, Texas. ZZ Top's power-trio format combined Gibbons' commanding rhythmic guitar playing and distinctive bluesy vocals with Hill's rawer, more aggressive vocal style—all of which molded perfectly to Beard's "four-on-the-floor" drumming. The band hit it big in 1983 when they released the diamond-selling album, Eliminator. Indelible songs such as "Legs," "Gimme All Your Lovin'," and "Sharp Dressed Man" still sound as fresh and inspired today as they ever did, solidifying the band as classic artists. ZZ Top was also well-known for their unique sense of fashion. Towards the '80s, both Gibbons and Hill donned incredibly long and very righ-



teous beards (interestingly enough, Frank Beard was the only one in the band without a big beard).

Houston has also produced bands like The Hates and Rusted Shut, who, while not as nationally successful, are near and dear to the hearts of those who've been inspired and influenced by their music. Houston is also home to one of the most influential "crossover" bands, D.R.I., whose blend of metal and punk has defined skate videos across the world. The Pain Teens, Culturcide, Verbal Abuse, and Really Red are all bands that came from Houston and helped shape the local scene.

The next big thing to come out of Houston was a group called Girl's Tyme. The band started off with limited success but after years of hard work hit it big when they signed to Columbia Records and changed their name to Destiny's Child.

Destiny's Child's sophomore album, The Writing's On the Wall, made them international superstars with songs such as "Say My Name" and "Bills, Bills, Bills." After some lineup shuffling, the group became a trio comprised of Beyoncé Knowles, Kelly Rowland, and Michelle Williams. The group's third album made them so successful that they managed to get a word (bootylicious) added to the Oxford English Dictionary.

When Destiny's Child called it quits in 2006, all three women went on to do their own thing. We all know how that went. Beyoncé became one of the biggest and most influential pop divas of all time, selling millions and millions of records and basically leveling up to legendary status. She got hitched to Brooklyn's own Jay-Z and they continue to dominate the pop charts and sell out stadiums worldwide. It must be nice.

One of the strangest and most significant Houston phenomena happened perhaps by accident. Robert Earl Davis, Jr. got involved with music at a young age and, after seven years of studying piano, decided to start spinning records. Without the proper equipment for DJing, Davis had to improvise, and his ingenuity and unorthodox method of ridding himself of unwanted records led to him earning the nickname "DJ Screw."

DJ Screw developed a technique of slowing down or "screwing" recordings by local artists and then "chopping" up the song by repeating certain phrases several times in a row. This unusual approach to recording created a disorienting but appealing effect. His method of "chopping and screwing" was as inspired by the illicit materials that were present during production as it was by the flavor and tempo of Houston. Before his untimely death in 2000, DJ Screw had inspired several notable Houston rappers such as H.A.W.K., Fat Pat, Big Moe, Trae, Pimp C, Lil' Flip, Slim Thug. In essence, DJ Screw and crew, the "Screwed Up Click," helped make Houston an integral part of the evolution of hip-hop and rap music.

While most of these names are synonymous with Houston music, there are also many artists who came through Houston or got started in Houston before moving on to less-inspiring cities. In the late '60s and early '70s, artists such as Townes Van Zandt, who wrote standard American songs like "If I Needed You" or "To Live is to Fly," spent a lot of time in Houston. Houston was also the birthplace of the well-known alternative rock band Blue October. Willie Nelson recorded his first demos in Houston, and even though he doesn't remember it, he recorded some of his music, including his first two hits, "Family Bible" and "Night Life," at Houston's very own

SugarHill Recording Studios played a big part in launching the careers of artists such as Freddy Fender, George Jones, Lightnin' Hopkins, The Rolling Stones, Destiny's Child, The Big Bopper, and many more. Psychedelic bands such as 13th Floor Elevators, The Moving Sidewalks, Red Krayola, and The Bubble Puppy made some great records at SugarHill. Did you know that B.J. Thomas recorded some of Tomorrow Never Comes at SugarHill? Ted Nugent, Todd Rundgren, Jandek, Dizzy Gillespie, Little Feat, and tons more have worked on, recorded at, and produced records at SugarHill. The little Houston studio that could has churned out some of the most revered and beloved artists of all time, and the studio, which was founded in 1941, is still going strong today in its 71st year of existence. Artists that get the opportunity to record there marvel at the fully analog-capable set up, the highly-prized and vintage tape machines and sound boards, and the plethora of enticing musical equipment that has made SugarHill its home.

Although Houston has done its fair share of eradicating a vast majority of its historic music venues, two establishments massively important to the city's music scene are still going strong. The first is Fitzgerald's, which has managed to survive years of countless performances by some of the finest national artists of the 20th century, and is in better shape now than it probably has ever been. Fitzgerald's was built in 1918 and was originally a Polish dance hall. Elvis Presley performed there in the '50s. Bands such as James Brown, the Ramones, ZZ Top, Soundgarden, the Misfits, Sonic Youth, R.E.M., Butthole Surfers, David Allan Coe, and Etta James have also played there over the last few decades.

The other venue is the Eldorado Ballroom, which, while not as well-known, certainly has had a hand in bringing great music to Houstonians. Legends such as B.B. King and Count Basie performed there, along with Albert Collins, Johnny "Guitar" Watson, and Joe Hughes. This club was the place to be in Third Ward from 1939 to the 1970s. The Eldorado is still going strong after all these years and if you've never been, a visit is definitely in order.

It's clear that Houston has birthed a multitude of musical game changers and success stories over the years. While some folks may forever revel in the age-old discussion of Houston's slightly damaged, non-existent, broken beyond repair, etc. music scene, the fact remains that some damn good musicians were (and still are) born and bred in this town. The few examples cited above only cover a portion of the talent this community has seen. Yet as Houston continues to explore its identity, the music that this city sometimes inspires will more than likely help shape our future. **FPH**

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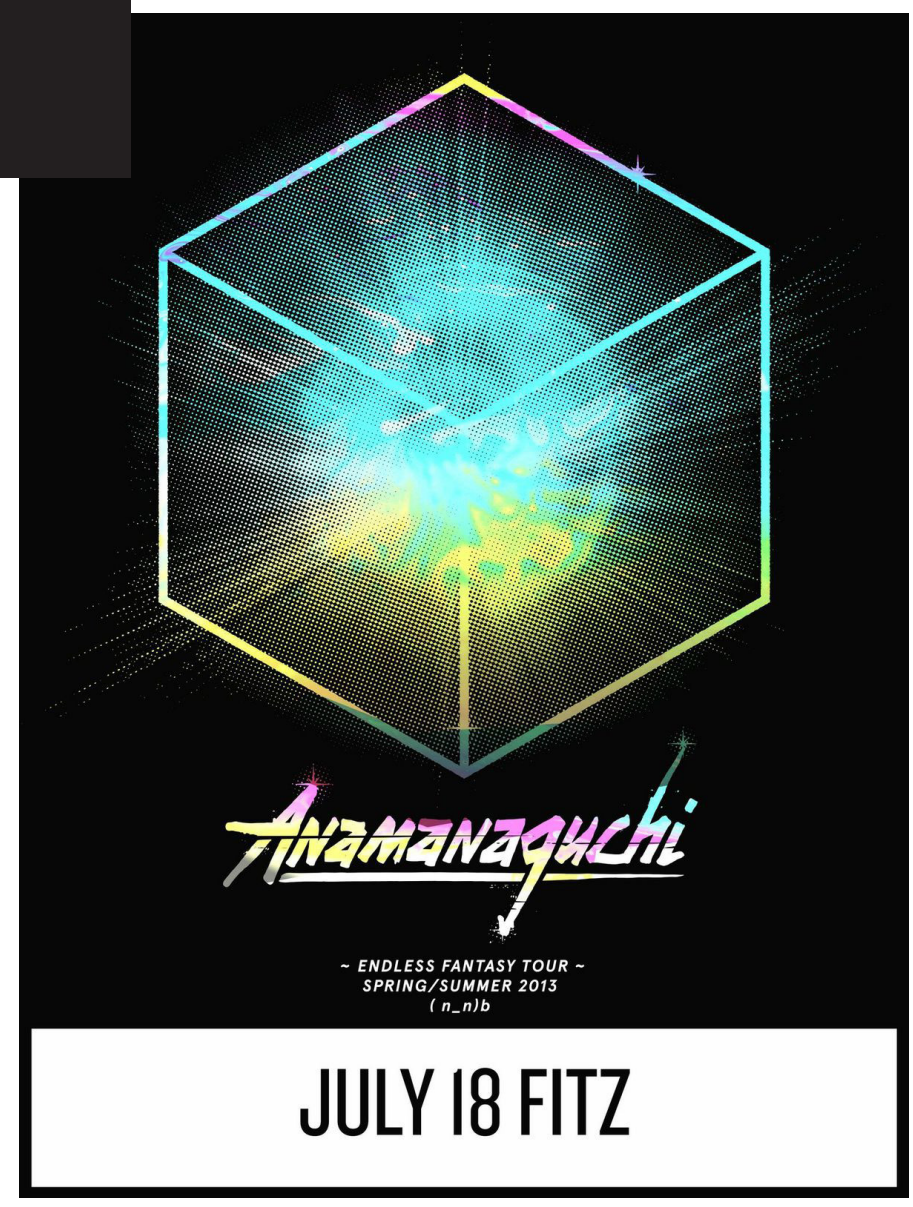
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LOCAL

REIMAGINING BUFFALO BAYOU

By Alex Wukman
Images Courtesy of Buffalo Bayou Partnership

HOW AND WHERE BUFFALO BAYOU'S MUDDY WATERS flow have become very expensive questions over the last 10 years. Millions of dollars have already been spent by public and private organizations to determine where the bayou needs to go and the best way to get it there, and the project is only halfway underway. By the time the project is completed, $50 million, almost all of it private donations, will have been spent transforming the Sabine to Shepherd stretch of the bayou into the crown jewel of the city's park network.

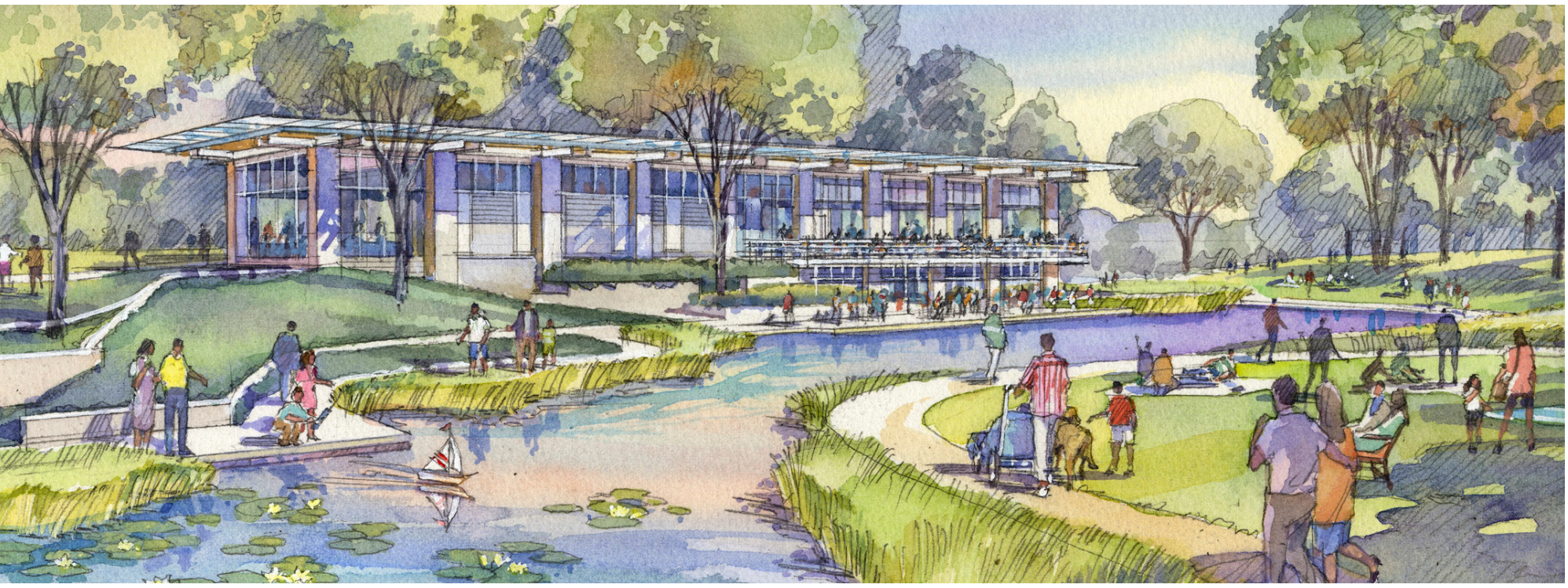
"It's going to be Houston's version of Central Park," said Anne Olson, president of the Buffalo Bayou Partnership. The inherent distrust that some members of the community have toward any form of government has led to, often unfounded, accusations that the Partnership is trying to rule by fiat and 'corporatize' one of the city's last green spaces.

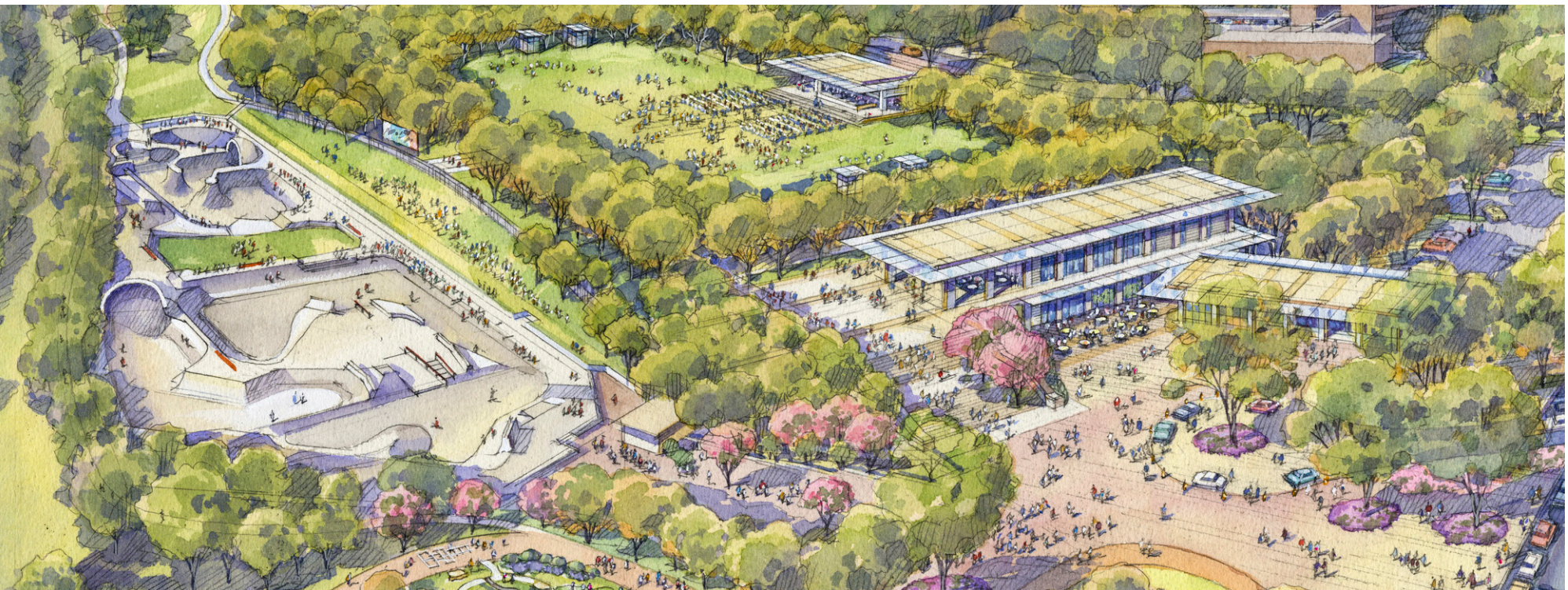
Olson said the perception of closed-door meetings and backroom deals between influential politicians and business members couldn't be further from the truth. She said that over the last few years, the Partnership, along with the city and the county, held a series of public meetings with community members and stakeholders in order to determine what the public wanted from the park.

"It's not like we hired a bunch of park designers and said this is how it's going to be," Olson said. She also scoffed at the idea that redeveloping Buffalo Bayou Park is, somehow, part of some nefarious plot by the white-business establishment to destroy Allen Parkway Village or to further gentrify what's left of Freedmen's Town, which was mostly absorbed into Midtown in the mid-2000s.

"I don't know where anyone would get the idea that this would have any impact on the Historic Oaks of Allen Parkway Village or the Freedmen's Town District," Olson said. She pointed out that most of the park's restoration is taking place on the north bank, across the bayou from Freedmen's Town and Allen Parkway Village. As for the concerns about the park being one of Houston's last remaining green spaces, Olson explained that things aren't always what they seem.

"People look at the park and see that it's filled with trees and grass, what most people don't realize is that most of those plants shouldn't be there," Olson said. A study of the park's vegetation, which the Partnership filed with the Texas Forest Service, found Buffalo Bayou to be overrun with invasive species—primarily White Cedar and Chinese Tallow. Chinese Tallow is such an aggressive invader that it already





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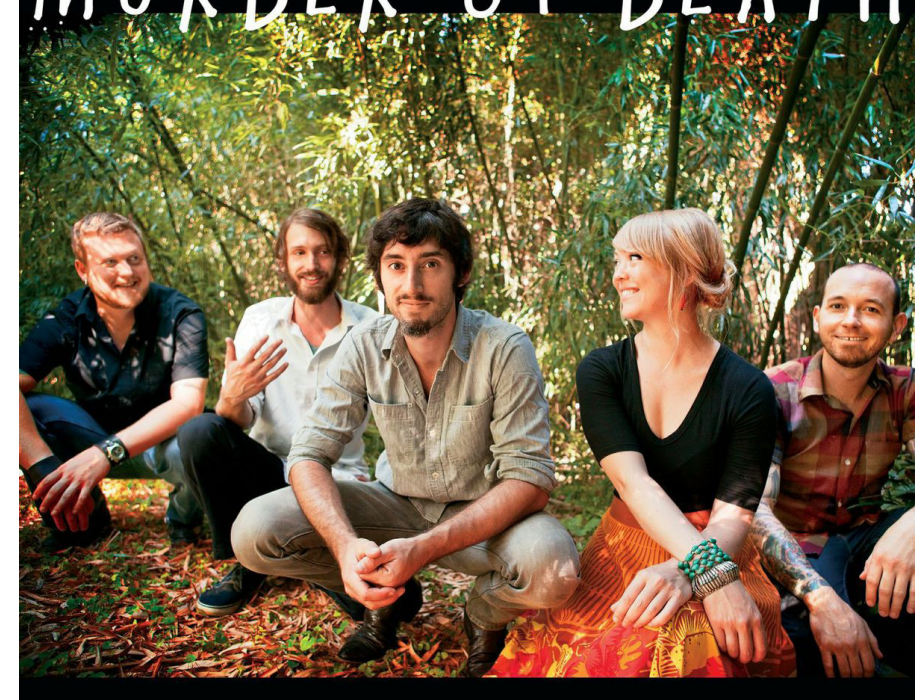
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accounts for 23 percent of the trees in the Houston area and the Texas Department of Agriculture has declared it illegal to sell, distribute or import the tree into Texas.

The study found that, in addition to hemming in native plants, invasive species have poor soil stabilization techniques that accelerate bank erosion. Olson explained that the Partnership plans to combat the invasive species problem by removing 50 percent of the park's lawn, which is mostly made up of easily-maintained but non-native Bermuda grass, and replacing it with native grasses.

"We're going to create an 11 acre urban prairie," Olson said. While replacing one type of grass with another may not sound like a big deal, it is a large contributing factor to Harris County's plans for the bayou. Mike Talbott, director of the Harris County Flood Control District, explained that the county sees the redevelopment of the park as a chance to undo some of the channelization that the Army Corps of Engineers did in the 1950s and 1960s.

"We want to restore the capacity of Buffalo Bayou on the Shepherd and Sabine reach and restore the bayou's ability to store water and minimize silt," Talbott said. He went on to explain that the flood control district plans to restore the bayou by creating bends, eddies, and other places for silt to drop out of the water. The flood control district has pledged $5 million to implement the new water retention techniques.

"We're using natural techniques and asking 'what does the bayou want to do and how can we help it,'" Talbott said. "We're trying to help this system act like a native system."

He went on to explain that by adding native plants and other forms of low-maintenance landscaping, the bayou will end up as "something that is self-sustaining, from a flood control standpoint." While the ecological changes and flood control improvements will be beneficial to the bayou as a whole, the most visible projects will be the ones geared to the park's human users. Olson explained that the Partnership has undertaken a vast infrastructure improvement plan designed to help unify the park.

"In Eleanor Tinsley Park, there will be wider sidewalks that will allow easier access for trucks during large events, and we will be adding some infrastructure for lights and sound equipment," said Olson. Over the course of the next year, Buffalo Bayou Partnership will be making major improvements, such as improved parking access, to make it easier for Eleanor Tinsley Park to hold large events. Trudi Smith, the Partnership's public relations and events director, said that the construction process for improvements to Eleanor Tinsley Park have not yet begun, and that any changes to the bayou or any part of the park network will not decrease the space available for events.

Susan Christian, director of the Mayor's Office of Special Events, explained that while the construction could prove disruptive for any events scheduled this year, the planned improvements "will have a positive effect on future events."

"We'll have to suffer through the construction this year, but the rewards that come to us after the construction is over will be far greater," said Christian. Among the planned improvements to the facilities along Buffalo Bayou is the restoration of Lost Lake, which was removed in the 1970s when its dam was damaged. Once restored, Lost Lake will feature a pavilion and visitor center with paddleboat/canoe and kayak rentals and 3,500 square feet of space for a proposed café. The informal dog park near the intersection of Studemont and Allen Parkway will become an official dog park with a fenced-in animal play area.

One of the most ambitious improvements the Partnership plans to undertake is the addition of a permanent stage, called Water Music Place, near the Lee and Joe Jamail Skatepark. Although the details for the new performance pavilion are still being worked out, the venue will feature concession areas and green space the size of a football field, all built atop a disused reservoir.

The reservoir, affectionately called the 1927 Cistern by City of Houston and Partnership staffers, is considered one of the most cathedral-like spaces in Houston. Houston Chronicle columnist Lisa Gray was allowed to take a trip into the cavern-like space in January 2012 and she described the odd acoustic properties of a giant underground metal sphere with six inches of water in it.

"With a sharp sound—like a hand clap—we could hear the sound waves interfering with each other as they bounced off the walls, pulsing erratically in the 17 long seconds before they finally died away," wrote Gray. Some members of Houston's avant-garde music community are already salivating at the thought of playing in a space that Gray describes as being illuminated by dramatic shafts of light straight out of a Caspar Friedrich painting and a sky framed by hatches that resemble a James Turrell installation.

The problem is that the space wasn't discovered until after all the money for Shepherd-to-Sabine projects had been budgeted. And the prospect of bringing the space up to code—it doesn't even have a door—is proving to be an expensive one. The existence of the cistern is also proving to be an engineering challenge for the construction of Water Music Place, which was originally intended to be built directly on top of the reservoir. The original plans called for the space to be used as parking or storage.

As Gray points out in her column, the sublime beauty of the space convinced the various stakeholders to do away with the functional ideas for the cistern and begin considering more artistic ones. Olson explained that creating a public art space has always been at the forefront of the Partnership's mind and that one of the centerpieces for the park will be the extension of Stephen Korns' Lunar Cycle Lighting installation from the I-45 overpass all the way to the Shepherd Street Bridge.

Once the extension is completed Korns' installation will be visible from as far away as the International Space Station, according to the Partnership's promotional materials. While Buffalo Bayou's visibility may not extend into orbit just yet, it has already increased.

"People are already asking 'how did the bayou grow so much?'" said Christian. "The bayou hasn't grown. The banks have been stabilized and they got rid of the underbrush so now people can see it. **FPH**



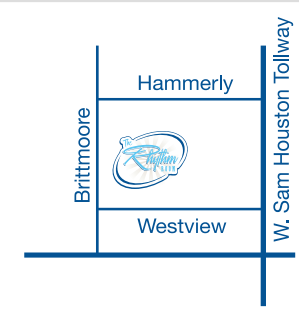


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