

# STOREPRESENT



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concert calendar*



## 979represent is a local magazine for the discerning dirtbag.

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## IOWANS PICK CORN BUT...

The saying goes that Iowans pick corn but in *New Hampshire presidents are selected*. It is a rather nice and polite way for New Englanders to tell Podunk bread basket farmers to take their caucus and shove it up their combines. Early this month Iowans braved an oncoming blizzard to get together in rooms and discuss who they think should be their particular political party's nominee, and then pick one. If you have never caucused it is a very interesting process. It is part church potluck, part serious political wonkfest. I caucused in Washinton state in 2004 and it was an unforgettable experience. The caucus is a throwback to the days of yore and yesteryear, the fabled smoke-filled rooms where the powerful get together to make things happen. In Iowa this year, the general populace queued up to select Texas senator Ted Cruz on one side and, well, who knows exactly on the other side. The caucus selection was so close in several key precincts that a mere flip of the coin decided who won that particular precinct.

So what did we learn exactly? Well, Ted Cruz may not be the all-star bully that famed loudmouth Donald Trump is, but he's enough of an asshole that he can draw the same sort of voters that Trump does but also appeal to the Christian sect of the far right that Trump just can't fool into believing he be a man of the LORD. Florida senator Marco Rubio spun his third placing as a victory and even gave a victory speech after the results were filed. Considering that Rubio has poled third consistently for most of the last year shows that of Marco got some elephant-sized hubris. Trump didn't fail outright and was only beaten by a couple of percentage points. There's a fair chance that he's gonna clean up this month in New Hampshire and South Carolina. It does mean that we ought to see more of the "kids table" GOP candidates give up the ghost. Former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee and Kentucky congressman Rand Paul have already dropped out. Expect to see several others walk away by month's end. Poor Jeb Bush. The former Florida governor, who was slated early on as a shoo-in for the nomination, barely moved the meter.

On the Democratic side, we have a bit of false hope for the Bernie peoples. That Vermont senator Bernie Sanders basically tied with former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is an amazing feat, considering that most Democrats weren't interested in running against Hillary. The party apparatchiks threw their lot in with the Clintons decades ago and President Barack Obama's nomination came as a surprise to nearly everyone in the party's elite. So it has been expected for eight years that 2016 would be Hillary's year. Sanders has upset that apple cart by appealing to the youth vote. Clinton has a real hard time appealing to young voters. Sanders is expected to clean up in New Hampshire this month, but elsewhere in the country he will have to endure some big losses, especially down South and in the rust belt. Sanders has said that he will remain in the race until the convention, no matter how he fares in the primaries.

Texas have to wait until March 1st when we, along with six other states, line up on what's known as *Super Tuesday* to pull the levers. How will you vote? Well, you've got exactly 29 days to figure it out. Primaries tend to be low turnout, but as you can see, the contest is still up for grabs. Your vote counts.—KELLY MINNIS



## STILL DRINKING

Karbach Brewing Co. is a polarizing operation, to say the least. Their brews have won staple space in many beer geeks' fridge crispers. At the same time, I've collected ample ire from many who've utterly dismissed Karbach, unwilling even to sample new releases. Personally, I sympathize with the pro-Karbach camp, as I keep several Karbach brews on affectionate rotation. Karbach's new **Zee German Pils Seasonal** joins such ranks. In true Karbach fashion, Zee (40 IBUs / 4.9% ABV) is subtle, quiet, pleasant: more Nora Jones than Amy Winehouse. Zee pours like a dadgum Budweiser: golden, bubbly, energetic, and topped with a solid head of cappuccino foam. The nose wafts yellow-earth tones, and the flavor politely—with some reverence, I should say—blends the malts and hops into a fine Old-Recipe balance. Zee is a backporch/good read/backgammon/fine record/long-ass chat/crossword puzzle/poetry-penning/sunset watching kinda beer. Don't open one unless you've time for three more. I'm already stoked for my first twelve-pack.

Recently I had the privilege of attending the **Chupacabra Craft Beer** bar in Salado, TX. If you're unfamiliar with Salado, drop your finger on a Rand McNally halfway between Georgetown (north of Austin) and Temple (south of Waco), and right about there you've got Salado. Chupacabra boasts 41 Texas brewed craft beers on tap, featuring rare jewels from **Deep Ellum** and Karbach, as well as fine standards from **512, Eastciders, and Adelbert's**. A flight of four 5 oz samples costs \$10 with a Chupacabra pint glass tossed in *pro bono*. Okay. Stop here. Did you just see that? A flight of Texas craft samples and cool ass glassware costs \$10. Brother, gas the jalopy! The food situation at Chupacabra is interesting. Popcorn is free, and the bar offers a few appetizer trays and baskets for purchase. But with 41 beers on tap, you'll want some carbs. I recommend **McCain's Bakery and Cafe** across the street for sandwiches and homemade pie. Good stuff. McCain's makes our own Must Be Heaven look downright unholy.

During my all too brief visit to Chupacabra Craft Beer, I tried two new Texas based breweries, though only one is worth mentioning. From **Rentsch Brewing (Georgetown)**, I tried a Hefeweizen and a Prussian Imperial Stout. According to their website, Rentsch Brewing, born from the founder's beer themed trip to Germany, "adheres to the Reinheitsgebot, or German purity law". This suggests that Rentsch is a malt-forward brewery, as can be attested from the two ridiculously good samples I tried at Chupacabra. Although I am not usually a fan of American made Hefes, Rentsch has crafted something special. **Rentsch Hefeweizen (5.5% ABV)**, a true breakfast/brunch brew, features huge banana and honey notes. In keeping with the Reinheitsgebot rule, these flavors can be accessed from particular malts in the roasting process. The density of these flavors, which are generally muted or drowned out by heavy doses of wheat or coriander spice (additions that would violate the German purity law) in most American made Hefes, attests to the dedication to artistry at this brewery. My flight also offered **Rentsch Prussian Imperial Stout (9.9% ABV)**. Admitting ignorance: I've no damn clue what a Prussian Imperial Stout is supposed to be. Forget it. This is one of the better Imperial Stouts I've had. The menu descriptor claims "thick texture like a coffee stout", which, if your access to coffee stouts is **Real Ale Coffee Porter** or even **Santa Fe Java Stout**, is a massive understatement akin to labeling Slayer "rock-n-roll". With this Rentsch Prussian, we're talking dark dark dark chocolate. 98% cocoa. 2% Indonesian based espresso beans. Super rich, demanding vanilla bean ice cream or sea salt coated bacon strips as a pairing. Beautiful beautiful beautiful beer. Would it be dramatic to say my toes curled while sipping this flight? They did. I'll not soon forget that.—KEVIN STILL

## THE SHITTY NEIGHBOR



We moved into a house last month. I'm still getting used to it. I'm pushing 40, but the first part of my adulthood was spent being pretty nomadic. Peter Pan syndrome ran rampant when I moved out at 17 and kept going. I think at some point in my 30's I woke up in an ancient drafty rent house I shared with my band sometime in February, the cold seeping in from outside, I had several gallons of water near my bed in case someone needed to use the toilet, and I put a few layers of clothes on as I braved the house outside my room, I felt like I was living in a run down garrison in Europe, only I was in my hometown minutes from where I graduated. I walked outside the massive porch in our little house in the hood, waved at the neighbors who were nice enough not to rob us (I guess they didn't shit where they eat even though we didn't have a back door to the house) and I decided I was just getting too old for this shit.

Brea (my wife and singer for TSS) and I decided to get our own apartment, one with a door and heat, and we started living in some comfort for awhile. I was used to apartment life. I hated lawns. I hated upkeep, I just wanted to rock out and pass out in my bed. That lasted a few more years then my hatred of other people came stronger than my hatred of lawn work.

If you want to know the real reason I bought a house, I'll tell you... People are shitty. I can't think of a neighbor who didn't have something wrong with them. Either they had shitty kids who liked to climb my stairs and play outside my window while I tried to sleep, or they decided to herd elephants in their spare time upstairs, or they would illegally house other people any given day of the week, people became the catalyst to my desire to buy a house.

This meant conquering my fear of settling in a place. It was new to my former vagabond lifestyle and scared the shit out of me. So my wife and I talked for close to a year. Where would we settle? B/CS? Houston? San Antonio? Austin? (just kidding Austin is a hell hole don't believe the hype and avoid it like a virus NOTE: the opinions of Timothy Danger do not reflect 979represent but yeah he thinks Austin can choke a dick) [ed. note: the entire staff of 979represent concurs with Mr. Danger's opinion of Austin] We weren't sure where to go. We'd let fate decide.

Then fate stepped in as the form of a three bedroom house in Stout City. It had three bedrooms (one for sleeping, one for an office for Brea and a study for me). A living room, a dining room (we turned it into a bar) as well as a room for the band to practice and a small house in the back for art projects. It was a dream come true. So we bought it. Turns out living as a vagabond with a cash existence and no credit cards keeps your credit pretty damn clean.

It's weird living in a house. It's quiet except for the noise that I make. I like the big kitchen. But I really love my study, where I am writing this now. It allows me to write, it allows me to smoke cigars and listen to music before 1980, I have a creative refuge I never had. Heaven help me, I even like the damn yard.

I don't think I'll miss moving around so much. The band keeps us visiting cities and Brea caught the travel bug with me when we took a road trip across America last year, so it looks like everyone is stuck.

Funny thing is, when we took down the patriotic flag and hoisted a Jolly Roger onto the flag pole on our front yard I realized... Holy shit. Now I'm the shitty neighbor.

Game on.—TIMOTHY DANGER

# RICKSHAW HEART—THE DUTIES OF MAN

*This is the seventh chapter of a serialized novel that began in the June 2015 issue — ed.*

The season was autumn and the year was far long enough ago to be questionable. Dan was 13 and an aspiring youth with big dreams determined not to be a product of his surroundings when he first met a man named Jonny. Dan worked two jobs after school. One as a shoeshine boy next to the Greyhound station and another cleaning a washeteria. School was simple enough it seemed, but the distractions of so many aimless youths lashing out at world they weren't allowed to participate in began to take its toll. Yet he stuck to it and plowed through the grade levels undeterred. Jonny would frequent the shoeshine box ever so more frequently the more he spoke to little Dan and heard his take on things. By 17 he was in his senior year and he found it increasingly more appealing to just drop out. One day after the murder of Jonny Four Fingers, Dan decided enough was enough.

Jonny was a local high ranking wop spic, who illegally boarder-hopped as a teen destined to make something of himself up north in the states. As luck would have it, he ended up going north all the way to Detroit where he would rub elbows with the Degalargio brothers and sleuth his way into the organization over time. He ran numbers for rackets at bus stops, and took odds on most anything anyone was willing to bet on. The kid was a natural. He had a strong yearning to thrive and survive and being an illegal immigrant, that window was about as wide as degrading low pay manual labor or crime of some sort. He tried the fields but only made pocket lint for his time. His work only bought him the next meal to go back to work essentially. What type of a life is that for someone so young and ambitious? Over the years, and with the help of pouring a few pairs of temporary liquid shoes for a few favors, Jonny was set. A made man so to speak.

The world was tough, but Jonny was tougher. He broke and ripped off his thumb on his right hand to escape a pair of cuffs from a bad rap he wasn't responsible for. It didn't matter whether he did it or not, his skin said otherwise. This moment, needless to say, didn't do much to make him anymore found of the "JUSTICE" in the system. To him it was "JUST US IN THE SYSTEM". He got away, albeit one digit short, and undeterred his convictions were set and he knew he would rise and shine through a life of "CRIME".

This "heartless thug" was more than a heavy hand in the street, he had wits, and fashion. As an elder middle aged good fellow he always kept his eye peeled for someone in his old boat, looking for a place to dock, he intended to be able to offer them the same chance to move up that he was so fortunate to receive courtesy of the Degalargio Brothers. That person just happened to turn out to be Dan who he had spotted being degraded after school shining shoes for pennies when everything then was a quarter or more. So he spoke to the boy and charmed him with promises of a way out, along with a chance to make a name for himself so no one would ever bother him again. It sounded tempting, especially to a 13 year old god fearing Negro in the ghettos of Detroit. He knew god would forgive him for his transgressions, but he had to his reservations so he

asked for a trial run.

Jonny gave him the number run. He was a complete stool pigeon running "errands" delivering money from patsies to the goons under the assumption that it was legit legal work. Or he'd take peoples bets while he shined. That was when business got better before the maelstrom. They had a business name, and a building, on the books it looked legit, but inside was a hollow core absent of anything except cardboard, and a table card. Dan never felt easy going there, but the pay was dollars, not pennies and he was at least honest enough. By 14 Dan was working construction learning new and real trades. By 17 he was ready to work full time with overtime. No one cared in his classes. Not the students or many of the teachers. One did however take a shine to him though and he would listen to Dan's troubles, hopes, and dreams. When informed about his decision to leave school, he didn't try to stop him but instead got him the paper work needed to get started on getting his GED. The teacher knew the odds, he knew the area of town, and he knew something was better than nothing.

Seeing the morning's headline "9/10's Found on ice in the bay" sent chills down his spine. He knew that it could be him if he stuck around much longer. He knew he should have just tried harder to make anything else work instead of sleuthing around for the wops. From that moment on Dan went to Church every Sunday, dotted his I's & crossed his T's, and did his damndest to be an upstanding moral human whether the world recognized him for it or not. That was a matter between him and the great what is. The future was again a little bit brighter just enough to sustain his usual, casual calm demeanor. For all he knew there just may have been a future that lay ahead worth fighting for. That's all it took.

Through the years he worked and did his best to save, but his bleeding heart saw to it that those savings never lasted long. He was just fine with that. He didn't need to be lavish or posh, he had worked for so many over the years for various jobs, and he had seen a good number of people change with just a little fresh scratch, they turned their backs and thumbed their noses on their roots and just further continued to perpetrate the class mentality and went on along trying to forever "keep up with the Joneses" acting as if they were born someone else. Their lives became hollow and void as they betrayed themselves to gain more pieces of grimy green leafy paper. They talked down on good people because they felt entitled. As far as Dan could tell though, all anyone was really entitled to was death, and that if we didn't fight against the greed in the hearts of man, no good could come from any of it. He wanted nothing more in return for his humanitarian efforts (ex: giving away his last bits of money when he needed them most, to people who were hungry too, but who were farther gone then him, with the faith and convictions that all he needed was another day to help someone, anyone in need who he saw being forgotten, and that life would see to it that something somehow worked out in his favor, even if that just meant living one more day. Life was simple and he knew that all he really needed in this life in his heart of hearts was some tight pussy, some loose shoes, and a warm place to shit.

— WILLIAM DANIEL THOMPSON

# JUST POOR DEAD ANNA

Sipping my overpriced cup of coffee-flavored milk, I walk through the double doors, and I am hit by carnations, vanilla, and the odorless dead. Poor, old Teddy waves his liver spotted hand as he greets me with a half tooth smile and warmth in his deteriorating heart. It won't be long now, Teddy, I'll see you on the other side of that casket, I think to myself. I take a seat at the lobby desk where I catch up with the world and all of the moronic things that have happened in the last 24 hours on my smart phone. Teddy talks to me about presidential candidates, and I ignore him as I read the same information that's spewing from his chapped lips. 20 minutes into learning that the government is still a bunch of assholes, Harvey, the manager, comes waltzing through the lobby with his Skeletor smirk on his face. He's a creepy old man. Harvey gives me my first task of the day. No one cleaned up after the late night viewing because the rest of the employees are so gosh damn old, they'd forgot—supposedly—so it's my job now to go and collect the belongings of the deceased. Fun shit. I plaster my face with a devious grin, and graciously accept Harvey's demand. I know it bothers him when I smile in such a way, so I make sure to do this as much as possible. It's the little things in life that give me the truest pleasure.

I leave my coffee milk on the desk where it will become cold by the time I get back, which is a great way to spend five bucks. I kick off my already a pain in the ass shoes, and head towards the viewing room. It's awkwardly dark in those rooms, so I turn on all the lamps before I gather the rest of the dead lady's things. The welcoming signs says "Anna". No last name, no prefix, no nothing. Usually I play some sort of music while I do various things around the chapel to kill the deafening silence. This morning I was going to listen to Queen's "Another One Bites the Dust", which is morbidly appropriate, but my conscience was sending that annoying pang of guilt to my stomach; souring my very expensive hot beverage I left to become cold and wasted. Father John Misty's "I Love You, Honey Bear" will have to do.

Sliding around in my socks and an empty box in my arms and Father John murmuring softly in the back of my pants, I gather old pictures of Anna. There were many, over a dozen. There was one in particular. She lay swinging on a porch swing, reading a book surrounded by trees. Her sun dress draped over her voluptuous body, while her feet hung off the edge of the swing in an elegant sort of manner. There was a little gleam of sunshine peeking through the trees, casting the shadows of the leaves on her face. Anna was beautiful and young. The difference between Anna in the picture, and Anna in the casket was drastic. Her cold hands were purple at the finger tips, and her face sagged near her jaw lie from gravity and all of the chemicals hardening her body and preserving it from rot. Poor Anna.

There were so many pictures of her doing the most alluring things. Anna sailing boats, Anna flying planes; I wanted to know more about this Anna woman, so I quickly collected the rest of the pictures, but the others were of Anna posing alone in various sceneries. I sat the box of pictures on the floor, and plopped down to go through what I had already seen. Reaching into the box, I glanced up for a split second, and noticed a green book near the casket. Fuck me. I hate going near the casket. It's fucking weird, and it smells like chemicals and Hollywood. But I had to gather everything. I inched as close as I could to poor dead Anna, grabbed the book off the end table, and briskly walked back to the couch to toss it in with the other pictures. The book felt too thick to be just a book, so, of course I was nosey, and of course I looked inside. SCORE! The stiff old photo album gave me all the Anna I could ever want! I started from the beginning. First, there were pictures of Anna smiling, like portrait types of photos.

She was so pretty with her doll-like eyes, and wide full smile. Her cheeks were prominent with dimples. I flip through all of the portraits, until I came across a post card from Africa. It was old, and water-damaged. I flip to the next page and there was Anna; lying with lions in the tall grass under some trees and out in the sun, her smile was vivid, and her dimples deep. It was the most amazing photo I had ever seen. Poor dead Anna, lying with lions, being very much alive. I turn to the next page, and there was Anna climbing the tallest of trees, swimming in the darkest of water, and shaking hands with tribesmen. The next page was full of all walks of wildlife. The last page of Africa had one small picture that took up an entire page. It was of Anna in the sun. She was crying and hugging men that were too thin, and too tall. It made me sad to see her cry. It made me sad to see her good byes.

The next few dozen pages were of Anna and her adventures around the world. She travelled to India and had tea with yogis, she flew to Brazil and danced with costumed women, and she sailed to Italy and ate gelato near the Vatican. Anna lived enough lives for a dozen men, and yet, she died. Her whole life sat in a cardboard box that lay at my feet. No more Anna, no breath, no heartbeat, no nothing. The silence has become too groaningly loud that my ears began to ring, and I realized my phone had died. The awareness of Anna's lifeless body was so staggering and overwhelming, so I cry. Just a bit. A tear or two for Anna's sake. It's the dumbest thing to cry over someone you didn't know. I knew nothing of Anna until a few pictures ago, and I'm seeing her as if she was my hero. Can you discover a hero once they are already dead? Does she count as a hero just because she saw the world, and has done the things I only dream of? Maybe that's why I'm crying. Because, someone who lived a bigger life than I can imagine died before I could see them alive and moving; before I could see the spark of adventure in their eye that drove them to brave the big bad world. I don't want Anna to be dead. I want her to be alive and young like she once was. I want Anna to keep living. Anna's life, and her death has made me aware of my own mortality than I've ever been aware of it before. Body after body, and casket after casket, I've disconnected myself from the dead, because their lives were nothing like mine, or even remotely similar. But now that I see Anna, and all of my dreams printed on little photographs, I can't help but realize that I am not immortal, and one day, I am going to be Anna. I shut the book and set it inside the box. The silence is pounding against my ear drum now. I walk over to the casket, and peer inside to find a wrinkled old woman who looks as if she is sleeping the most peaceful sleep. She is so tiny. It doesn't look like this woman could lay with lions. "I don't want this to be us Anna," I whisper. I want to hold her hand, but that's gross and she's dead. So, instead, I walk back to the book and pick out a picture of young Anna lying in the sun surrounded by the lions. The sun is shining in her honey blond hair, her eyes are closed, and she's looking up basking in that light smiling a big wide smile. This is the one. I take it out of the book, and walk the old picture to the casket, and slide it under a veil so no one will be able to notice. Now, Anna can always be with the lions.

I turn off all of the lights, pick up the box of Anna's life, and I leave the room, shutting the door behind me. I place her box in the main office for her family to retrieve, and walk back to my desk. Teddy comes out of the kitchen and asks if I want coffee. I sigh loud enough for his old ass to hear. I told him not to touch the coffee machine, that I would do it because he over fills the pot and I don't want to clean up after him. Teddy smiles, and nods his head. He didn't hear a word I said. I walk by him, smile and ask him why he wasn't Anna. Teddy smiled, nodded, and walked away as I presumed to make coffee.—JESSICA LITTLE

What did Bowie do, really?

# POINT/COUNTERPO

OK, short of "Space Oddity" I mean. Oh, and "dick in tights" bad guy. Everyone is all, "Oh, David Bowie died! So tragic!" But you know what? His music mostly sucked. I mean, yeah, there's a handful of songs that are cool, and in the history of music he did things that were kinda oddball and artsy, but so did Zappa (who's music is super lame) and so did Lady Gaga.

I listened through his newest album and I got the same feeling I always get when I listen to Bowie...it's OK...kinda strange...interesting at best...maybe one or two songs I'd listen to again.

It feels like his music is "pretend" drug music. Like it's "almost" weird enough to be cool, but it will never be as cool as Pink Floyd or The Cure or Ween. Just weird to be weird, but not as "cool" weird as something like Gwar.

Seriously. I'll count how many songs that I think are actually cool that he wrote: "Changes?" Maybe. "Ziggy Stardust?" sure. "Space Oddity?" Yes, of course. "Heroes?" OK. "Moonage Daydream", but only after it came out on the *Guardians of the Galaxy* soundtrack. "Let's Dance?" Sure. "Fame?" Great. What is that, 6 or 7? Add "Under Pressure" with Queen, but that is most definitely a Queen song featuring Bowie. "I'm Afraid of Americans" with Trent Reznor? Possibly, but have you even heard of it? And honestly, it sounds like Trent had a lot more to do with the song than Bowie did.

I guess I'm just not convinced that a handful of songs constitutes "legendary". Did he influence the world? Yes. Did he inspire? Probably. Did he have amazing hairstyles? Definitely.

Again, yes, he did some strange and interesting things, but so did Kiss. So did Alice Cooper or Ozzy, but I can name more than five songs from each of those guys.

Some of you are fuming right now saying that I am not a "true fan" in that I didn't mention any "B" sides. OK, granted, I am not a true fan, but to be honest, it just always took too much effort to even try to get into any other songs than the ones that played on the radio or MTV or were covered and redone on *Moulin Rouge*...and I ALWAYS turned over the record. I love "B" sides. In an effort to do ol' Ziggy justice, I'm gonna go on a search for "Hardcore Fan" David Bowie songs. We'll see.

"London Bye Ta Ta?" Nope. "Holy Holy?" Stuck with me for a bit, then got tired of it. "Andy Warhol?" Nope. "Always Crashing?" Ugh. OK, "Heathen" is not so bad. In fact, it kinda reminds me of "Blackstar" on the newest album. By the way, I'm going through a list on Rolling Stone's website called, "20 Insanely Great David Bowie Songs Only Hardcore Fans Know". "Something in the Air" I can understand why it was chosen for *American Psycho* and *Memento*. I am surprised by this song. It's really good.

So, OK, Maybe I found a couple of new songs I would say are cool, but I'm still no fanboy. In fact, I have to say that I'm quite the opposite. I mean that I won't be suggesting that people listen to David Bowie.

That list of "20 Insanely Great" songs was a pathetic jumble of 50s meets Dylan meets Cohen with a little Beatles, *Revolver*. Also, I am picky and opinionated.

Maybe I would just have to be really high, fairly depressed and a gender-bender to appreciate his music.

It sucks that he's dead. I care that he's dead. I guess I just don't care much about what he did while he was here. I feel a little like a disrespectful asshole to be talking about someone who just died. Sorry.

David Bowie is/was over-rated.—JORGE GOYCO

=====

I have been told many a time in arguments both in person and over the internet by people older and cooler than me that context is extremely important in evaluating a piece of creative work, be it a film, photograph, play, poem, novel, song, album, etc. You will never fully understand or "get it" if you weren't there at the actual time the piece of art was created. You have to fully appreciate the times and the environment in which the piece was created to understand its place in that environment. And I would argue until I was blue in the face or my carpal tunnel syndrome acted up that the concept of context was complete and utter shite. A good piece of work can transcend context and speak to anyone in or out of the work's initial time and space. I don't think *A Tale of Two Cities* or *Metropolis* or, as Jorge mentioned in his piece, *Revolver* loses anything outside of its initial context. Now, can you appreciate something on maybe multiple levels if you understand that just two years before The Beatles released *Revolver* they were still aping American soul and rock & roll and somehow began to transcend their influences and become some completely other beast? Context lends that complexity.

I come to this piece perhaps with an apology to my usenet adversaries of yore, that perhaps there is more to this context argument than I gave them credit for. I think the point of view I held in my youth was perhaps formed because I had no context myself. I didn't entirely understand that 25 years after Nirvana's *Nevermind* that I would interact with people half my age who weren't even born and didn't understand what a counter-reaction it, and Husker Du, The Replacements, Jane's Addiction, etc. were to what was in the mainstream at the time (saccharine hair metal, polished Minneapolis pop, the birth of sampladelic NYC and gangsta LA hip-hop). Like *White Light/White Heat* and *Raw Power* before me, *Nevermind* would be the kids' classic rock.

I proffer this discussion to set up why I think Jorge doesn't "get" Bowie. Because, in all truth, I didn't get Bowie right away. My first interaction with the man's music



# POINT: DAVID BOWIE



was like most children of the '80s: on the radio and MTV during his pop phase. Singles like "Let's Dance", "China Girl", and "Modern Love" were super catchy soul-influenced pop radio fodder. Earworms and such, but nothing *deep* (see the original Iggy Pop version of "China Girl" to catch all the menace Bowie ironed out for his version). I missed on Bowie until late in the decade when I saw his band Tin Machine play on an awards show and I thought maybe I should check that record out. And to this day I defend the Tin Machine LP to a lot of Bowie diehards because I think it's a rather good hard rock record. But it wasn't until later into high school when I began collecting records in earnest that I began to understand why my older bandmates and music pals spoke in the same hushed tones about Bowie that they did about Zeppelin, Hendrix, Black Sabbath, and the like.

In 1990 you could take a \$20 bill into most used record stores and come out with an armload of vinyl. If you were the least bit curious about an artist you'd heard about you could most likely find one of his/her/their records in the \$1 bin. You could take a chance on something completely unheard. Nowadays you can hear someone talk about someone cool then point your phone towards Youtube and hear it right away. Bowie was one of these artists. I had read in *Musician* (RIP—that was a cool magazine) an interview with Trent Reznor of Nine Inch Nails in 1992 that David Bowie's so-called "Berlin trilogy" was his favorite albums and they kept him from going Columbine on his southwest Pennsylvania townsfolk in high school. Seemed like a good enough reason for me to pay \$2 each for *Low*, "Heroes", and *Lodger*. And I tried. Boy, did I try to get into those records. But they are dense, alien creatures, full of bizarre sounds, fractured pop songs, proto-ambient/new age instrumentals...music that I had never heard before. And other than *Low*, I pretty much pushed those records away.

I cannot discount how important an album *Low* was for me. I can still put on my thinking cap and picture in my head listening to the second side of that album in the dark with the light from my R2D2-esque kerosene heater throwing hieroglyphics upon the wood paneled walls of my basement apartment. The hushed, dark, nearly classical tones of "Warszawa", the African marimbas in "Art Decade", the cigarette-stained cabaret elegance of "Subterraneans". This was ART MUSIC made without a single commercial care in the world. It took me somewhere else, away from that cold, shitty apartment to

somewhere else entirely in my mind.

There is a scene in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky where the characters hear

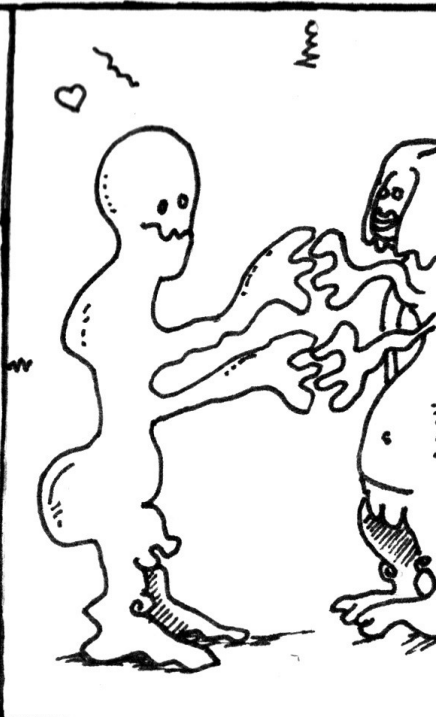
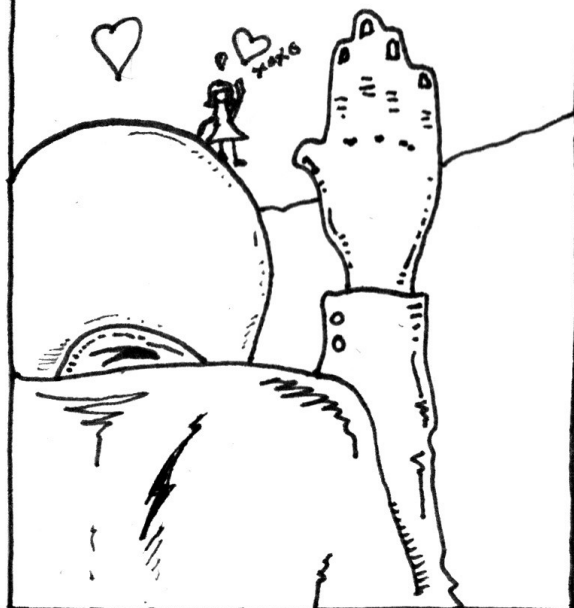
Bowie's "Heroes" on the radio late one night and pierces their hearts. The DJ never backsells the song, so the characters wait many years to find out who the song was by and what it was called. That song is perhaps Bowie's strongest moment. If you read the lyrics, they are asinine. When you put them together with the otherworldly wail of Robert Fripp's guitar as channeled through Brian Eno's synthesizer, the coked-out paranoia of Bowie screaming "and we kissed as though nothing could fall". It's pure feeling. Catching something so elusive via microphone and electronics, captured for posterity. It is a starkly beautiful seven minutes that few could ever hope to recreate. And that is outside of the context of punk rock, disco, The Osmonds on television, the Laurel Canyon denim post-hippie singer-songwriter hush, and the dinosaur plod of arena-sized hard rock. The impact of "Heroes" outside of its context for the book's characters rural Ohio in the 1980s or outside of mine own in the stripmine-blasted ruins of western Kentucky in 1992 does not lessen the power. Perhaps I wasn't wrong to argue against context.

Context can also somewhat hinder an artist. After 1980's *Scary Monsters* Bowie stopped pushing the artistic envelope. The wild rush of stylistic changes from folky to metalhead to gay cabaret to blue-eyed soul to motorik to art-damaged hard rock would induce whiplash in even the most ardent fan. The 1980s were not kind to Bowie and most of the work, beyond *Let's Dance* is lazy and uninspired. In the '90s Bowie became a follower instead of a leader. His *Outside* LP sounds like he wanted to become Nine Inch Nails; *Earthling* took on the style of jungle and drum-and-bass that was so popular in English clubs in the late 90s. His last two albums seem to have come from a place where he just didn't give a damn anymore. I am somewhat ashamed to have not listened to them yet. But one in their 20s could be forgiven for not getting Bowie. If someone like Jorge within my own generational context only listens to Bowie post-mortem and takes the music purely on the music's value that person could miss why much of the English-speaking world mourned his death. For nearly all my British friends, losing Bowie was like losing one of our former presidents. Bowie begat punk rock. He was not single-handedly responsible for it, but there were few contemporary artists embraced by the ground zero of English punk rock aside from Bowie and Roxy Music (one cannot consider Bowie without considering his most frequent foil, Roxy Music's Brian Eno). This is not to mention those that grew up on the imagery of Bowie. His turn in in *Labyrinth* was well-remembered by many children of the '80s. I watched *Zoolander* the other night and forgot he played a bit part in that movie. There are a good two dozen films he has either acted or starred in.

In a very roundabout way I have become that older guy telling the younger dudes that perhaps context matters at least somewhat. In 20 years they will tell people the same when others will not comprehend why anyone should care about TV On the Radio or Vampire Weekend or The Arcade Fire. You can't just evaluate it on its own terms, you have to evaluate *the context, man*. Within context, David Bowie was a nuclear bomb. Outside of context, well, as Jorge said, perhaps Bowie the musician was maybe overrated. — KELLY MINNIS



Familiar-yet-new CAN be good...

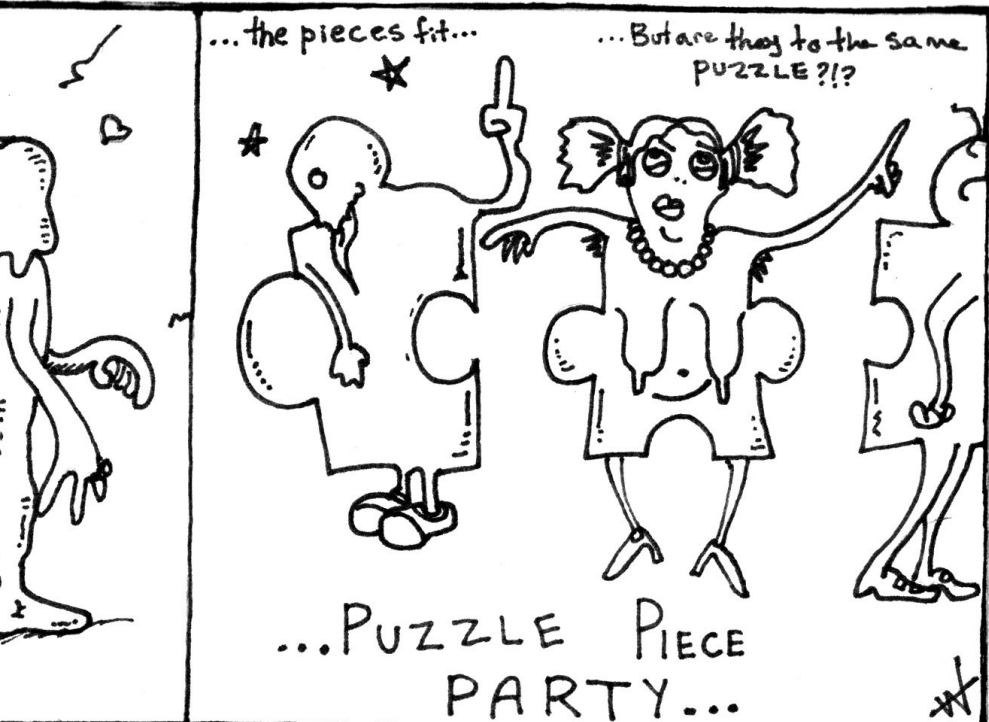


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# RECORD REVIEWS



**Bloodiest**  
Bloodiest

Bloodiest debuted their new self-entitled album January of this year, and to no disappointment topped their previous works by a landslide. The first song on the Bloodiest album is "Mesmerize". This song was released as a teaser. This was wise for Bloodiest. Catchy, deep, loud bass drums and a dirty guitar will have you begging for more. Those smooth high pitch vocals paired with the deep beat of the bass drum will have you on the edge of your seat. Towards the end of the song the vocals gain aggression long with the crescendo of the melody. It's a trance you don't want to escape from. "Mesmerize". "The Widow" is another favorite. It seems as though Bloodiest tapped into the adding lie of the bass drum, because this song thrives off of it, and the actual bass itself. There's also this classical acoustic undertone which slowly builds in a droning heavy guitar. There are choir-esque backing vocals, matched by front man Bruce Lamont. It sends an avant-garde, metal-religious chill up your spine. Throughout the entire song there are operatic points to pay attention to. The orchestrations of "The Widow" touch a special part of your drone loving soul. Lyrically, it's sorrow, heavy, and transcends you into a realm of wallow and beauty. There are so many layers to uncover to this single song, it's unreal. Brilliantly mixed, masterfully tuned, "The Widow" is the hit song of the album. Throughout *Bloodiest* there are tracks that focus on instrumentals more than actual lyrics. Songs like "Condition" have a very sentimental classical sound. It's sweet, simple, and at times you forget this is a band named Bloodiest coming through your speakers. Songs like "Mind Overlaps" bring you into a world of drone and distortion with that ever so famous classical music touch. Once you get comfortable with their

infamous classical rhythm, sound crashes with metallic guitar riffs, shaking bass lines, and their attack of snares and cymbals with Bruce's operatic screaming. It's gorgeous. Lastly, "Suffer", the most metal song of the album, has no ease. It's strictly heavy basslines, crunchy guitars, a hard floor tom, and that beautiful bass drum. Vocals are intense in an instant. There's no easing into "Suffer", which again, cleverly titled appropriately rhythmic wise. It's an interesting song, because if you listen to "Mesmerize", and then skip to "Suffer", they sound almost identical. Ending the album on almost the exact same note—except with a harder, faster pace—you began with was a surprise that is to be adored.

Only when I realized that this album is not focused on metal, but rather progressive rock, and avant-garde, with metal to sharpen its blade, did I understand this was a masterpiece of classical layers and distorted drone. Do not mistake this album for strictly metal because there will be a great amount of disappointment, and you will miss the opportunity to experience this brilliant trance. This album will be filed in with artists like Black Math Horseman, Sub Rosa, U.S Christmas, and even Holly Hunt.—**JESSICA LITTLE**



**Ringo Deathstarr**  
*Pure Mood*

The latest offering from this psychedelic dream-pop trio will likely satisfy their hard-core fans, but it's unlikely to garner any new converts. *Pure Mood* pulls together elements from their last two albums—*God's Dream* and *Mauve*—as well as a smattering from their best release, 2011's pop gem *Colour Trip*. Unfortunately, it's an uneven collection of those sounds.

"Stare at the Sun" and "Acid Tongue" are the best of the lot. "Stare at the Sun" features

bassist Alex Gehring on vocals, and her dreamy tones are countered by the jangly guitars. "Acid Tongue" has set closer written all over it with its feisty rhythms and raging guitar from leader Elliott Frazier. "Show me the Truth of Your Love" also is a solid shoegaze tune with its interwoven vocals from Frazier and Gehring. It also boasts an odd fade with the last minute or so being a soft instrumental and an undercurrent of another song altogether. Weird, but it works. "Never" alternates the catchy and the atonal well.

What doesn't work as well are the tunes that don't have enough variety. "Big Bopper", "Guilt", and "Frisbee" (except for the instrumental fade) are pretty much the same tune. Gehring's lush vocals are enjoyable enough, but on "Dream Again", "California Car Collection", and "Old Again", the tunes aren't strong enough for her voice to carry the load. And I can't tell if "Heavy Metal Suicide" is supposed to be a joke or not—the band sure sounds like it's having fun playing it. Perhaps more of their fun pop would fit the bill, but hey, I'm just a fan. Maybe I'll look into a vinyl copy of *Colour Trip* instead... hmm.—**MIKE L.**

**DOWNEY**



**Baroness**  
*Purple*

With each new release since their 2007 debut, *Red*, Baroness has built a reputation for publishing better songs than albums. On their sophomore follow-up, *Blue* (2009), Baroness attempted a darker, heavier sound, blending influences of sludge and some kinda grind-type-thing that felt like a cartoonish sidekick to Mastodon's *Leviathan*. With *Yellow & Green* (2012), Baroness released two albums worth of slower, more emotive, methodically blended hard-rock that left most listeners wondering if Y&G was a conceptual project. The lack of cohesiveness across the packaged individual records, not to

mention the entire project, firmly answer the concept question, but so did the meandering musical rabbit trails that seemed to have no damn clue where certain songs wanted to go. How could listeners plant both feet into Y&G when the band—or maybe their producers—had not? Y&G is not a complete disaster; nevertheless, a double-album offering four of five good tracks is hardly worth admission price.

Still, I am a Baroness fan, and I enjoy aspects of all their albums. For this reason, I was glad to spend time with *Purple*, released December 18, 2015 from the band's own label, Abraxan Hymns. *Purple* negates the old Baroness

reputation: from cover to cover, with minor exceptions, *Purple* is a damn good album. Also, cohesively speaking, *Purple* works as a concept piece. It's impossible to fully engage *Purple* without considering the 2012 bus-crash that injured two members into early retirement and nearly stole guitarist/vocalist/artist John Baizley's ability to play and paint. After the crash, Baizley stated on the Official Baroness webpage: "I can say, after nearly 6 weeks of reflection, that I feel more resolute and passionate about our music than ever. I have come to realize the importance of time in this particular equation, that is, I have none to waste and none to spare." This urgency marks a primary hallmark of *Purple*'s success.

*Purple* opens explosively with "Morningstar", satisfying the band's Mastodon crush. "Dry your tears, my darling/There's a pistol-whipped look in your eyes/The captain was gentle/He left you alive." Baizley charges with an immediacy he's not yet possessed. His vocals contain greater diversity, even in a single track here, than he's previously challenged of himself. That being said, Baizley, at times on *Purple*, trades early Baroness screams for a more vulnerable singer-songwriter crooning that, even if it's not pretty, offers an authenticity that reminds listeners of what birthed this album. Such rawness can be heard on "Shock Me" (poppy finger-snapper) and "Kerosene" (cheesy hi-hat titter-tat opener bleeds into symphonic gang-chant: "When I am done/I'll lay in the sun". Super nice). These solid tracks are unfortunately

# CONCERT CALENDAR

**2/5—LUCA, Leavenworth** @ Village Café, Bryan. 8pm  
**2/5—Brazos Valley Derby Girl Art Show** feat. **Girlband, Mutant Love** @ Riddle Gallery, Bryan. 9pm

**2/10—Vox Vocis, And Then Suddenly, Forever Today, Luca, Electric Astronaut** @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 7:30pm

**2/12—The Sideshow Tragedy** @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

**2/13—Wonderbitch, No I'm the Leader, Electric Astronaut** @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

**2/18—DJ Spooky** presents **Peace Symphony** @ Rudder Theater, College Station. 7pm

**2/18—The Punknecks** @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

**2/20—LUCA, Exit Glaciers, First Thought Worst Thought, The Inators** @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

**2/23—DJ Jonny Cerveza** @ Revolution, Bryan. 9pm

**2/27—Odd Folks, Nominee, Corusco, Hand Me Down Adventure** @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 7pm

**3/12—The Ex-Optimists, A Sundae Drive, Slow Future** @ New Republic Brewing Company, College Station. 9pm

**3/25—David Ramirez, Daniel Gonzalez** @ New Republic Brewing Company, College Station. 8pm

followed by *Purple*'s weakest spot: the instrumental "Fugue", which invalidates its denotation while also detracting from the conceptual impact thus far. Odd choice. The other high point of *Purple* is the new percussive line-up. Sebastian Thomas on drums and Nick Jost on bass together add a layered foundation beneath most tracks. Thomas' punk quick roots surface during particular intros and outros, calling listeners back to his bizarre complexity in the track's body. Jost's background as a jazz bassist is found in his improvisational nature. More than a repetitive rhythm keeper, Jost stomps around the track adding emotional transitions between various hooks and breaks. Tracks like "Try to Disappear" and "The Iron Bell" showcase Thomas and Jost's benefit to the band.

Still, the guttural punch of *Purple* lands in track six, just over the half-way point. "Chlorine and Wine" is Baroness at their best. A simple, pretty drum and guitar instrumental opener erupts into a battered catharsis of thickly layered riffs and crashes topped with Baizley's Walt Whitman-urgent "yawp". Then verse two. Jost's bass line opens wide. Verse three. Then Baizley and Peter Adam's dual layered guitar solo, punctuated by hi-hat ellipses and Jost's piano interlude. And then the band's gang-chant finale: "Please/Don't lay me down/Under the rocks where I've found/My place in the ground/Home for the fathers and sons." This is a fucking good track. Goose-bumps and fist-pumps from open to end. Religious music. Healing music. A song wielded as a weapon and tear-gagging belly-romp laugh in the face of death. Not yet, sucker. There's more to be done. And these guys are doing it.—KEVIN STILL

## STILL POETRY

### COMPILATION

I like two types of songs: those that rally youth when my bones ache, and those that kindle wisdom when I wake with regret.  
 —KEVIN STILL

### OFF THE HOOK

My waitress—whose hair left her shoulders for the small of her back since we met—pointed to the Daniel Woodrell novel, and asked, "Doing a little reading?" I said, "Yeah. My semester begins Tuesday as well. If I don't start a good book now I'll spend my evenings glued to the TV." She nodded, saying something about Anatomy 2 and needing to make flashcards, and I realized we see words as differently as the bear and the worm see the fish.  
 —KEVIN STILL

### INTO THAT NIGHT

Old men die like campfires, fed by crisp branches of laughter and song, simmering into the chill of morning.

Young men die like Pabst bottles tossed from blurred windows, the shatter drowned by burning wheels off to the next retellable score.

I am somewhere in between: hot glass in a hurried hand, urgently recalling a punchline and who might find it funny.  
 —KEVIN STILL



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