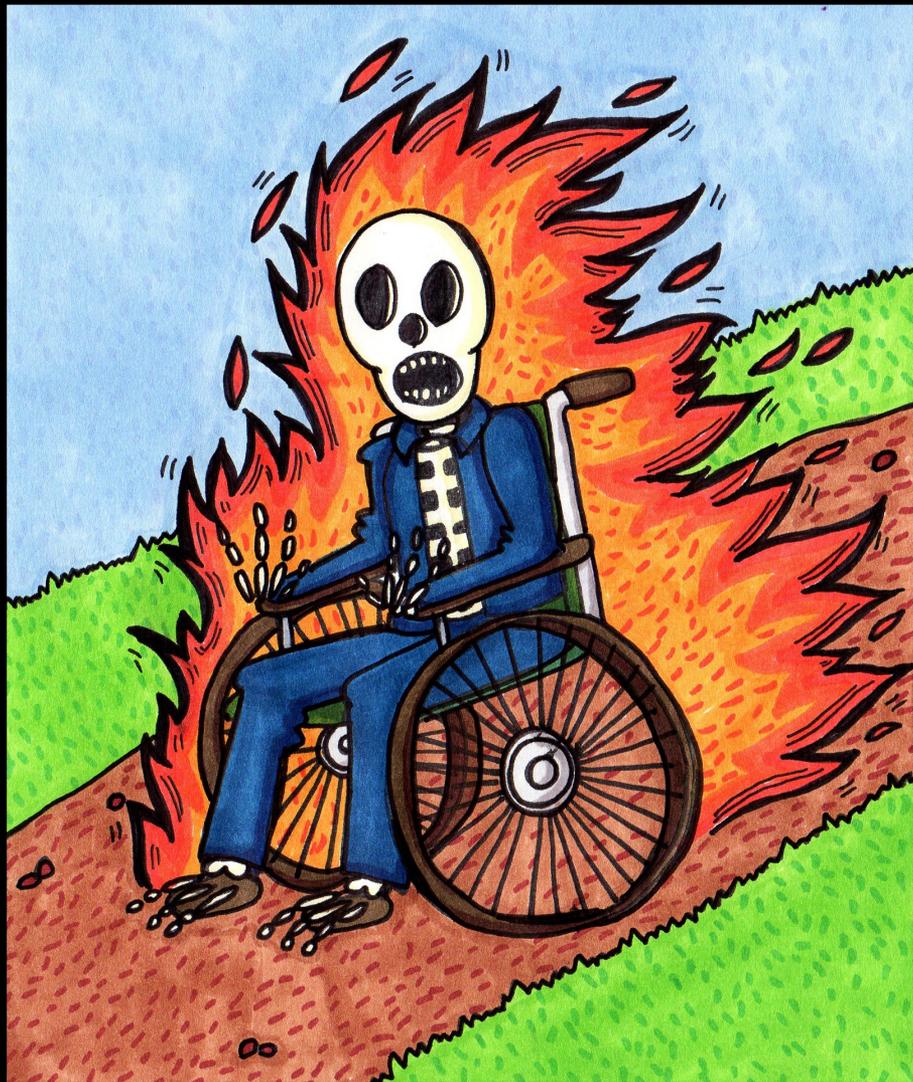


STOREREPRESENT



June 2021
vol. 13 issue 5



inside: daring the court to blink - shookiebyebies - mike on film - just a little help - a super awesome guide to doing disney world vegan - tim on film - pedal pushing - still poetry - record reviews - concert calendar



DARING THE COURT TO BLINK

Last month the Supreme Court of the United States declared that it would consider the constitutionality of a Mississippi law banning abortions after 15 weeks. The Mississippi law is just one law amongst many similar laws passed in recent months by conservative states. Texas Governor Gregg Abbott signed a law into order that prohibits abortion at SIX FUCKING WEEKS. If you are starting to panic you have every right to feel this way. This is the first true test of the Trump era Supreme Court calculus. 50 years of law is now up for discussion, and all indications are that the Faustian bargain the conservative movement made to elect Donald Trump will have finally paid dividends.

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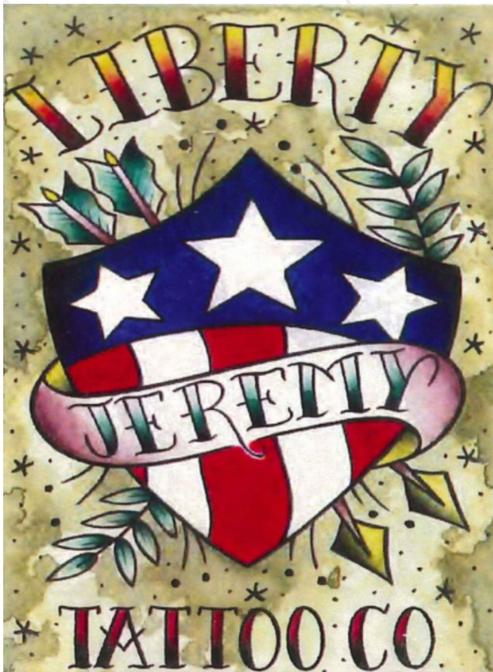
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What such Faustian bargain might this be? The one where Bible thumping family values promoting pro-life Christian conservatives backed the dark horse Donald Trump in the 2016 Republican Presidential Primary. Trump was known to have donated money to Democrats, was friends with the Clintons, and was a decidedly pro-choice areligious philanderer. But he indicated to fundamentalist leaders that he was sympathetic to their generations' long struggle to ban abortion. He not only assured these leaders he would, when called to appoint justices to the Supreme Court as president, make sure the judge candidates passed the abortion litmus test but he also gave these leaders a list of judges he was considering. These were not just for SCOTUS positions but for lower circuit judicial seats as well. While Trump as a cultural figure may have been unsavory he spoke to the true leaders of the conservative movement in words that were truly music to their ears.

And deliver he did. Three justices sit on the Court appointed by Trump: two conservatives replacing conservatives and one conservative replacing a liberal justice. The gamble paid off. The Court has a 6-3 conservative prejudice. Except, well, so far that 6-3 majority has not been 100% reliable. Chief Justice John Roberts has shown in recent rulings to be a swing vote and in a couple of other rulings Justice Bret Kavanaugh, whom we all assumed was making his place on the court as perhaps right of Clarence Thomas, has shown that he can also apply the law without prejudice when called upon to do so. These rulings were not abortion-related, however. This particular Supreme Court was packed *specifically* to rule upon the legality of Roe Vs. Wade. State legislatures have recently passed truly heinous illegal abortion laws to serve up the softball pitch for the Supreme Court to knock it out of the park and ban abortion once and for all.

How this plays out is anybody's guess. It is easy to believe that SCOTUS will put onerous regulation upon abortion rights. But it's also not pie in the sky to believe that the court won't rule against it or that published arguments won't open the door to unforeseen complications to the ruling. Basically, it is too soon to start laying track for the 21st Century Underground Railroad to abortion accessibility. But it is not too soon to start planning in the back of your mind what a post-Roe society might look like for women's health planning and how to seek it out. It's hard not to place enough emphasis on how important this ruling is. It may be, perhaps, along with Citizen's United and Obergefel V. Hodges, the most important ruling of the 21st century. If it goes the way conservatives designed it to go then the Trump experiment may go down in history as perhaps the greatest hail mary of all time. — KELLY MENACE



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MIKE ON FILM: BLOODSUCKER'S PLANET

JUST A LITTLE HELP

The title blares this is not going to be a heartwarming examination of middle-class suburbia – what it doesn't tell you is just how entertaining this independent film manages to be in its just over an hour running time.



Mark Beal is one of Bryan-College Station's own independent film makers who, in typical DIY fashion, writes the screenplay, recruits actors, directs, produces, runs the camera, does special effects, and creates many of the props. His films have won a number of festival film awards over the years. Beal has also done *Life Study*, a 2006 black & white drama, as well as 2012's *Bloodsucker's Handbook*, a decidedly-offbeat vampire movie of which this new film is a somewhat prequel of. What *Bloodsucker's Planet* is rather than a traditional prequel is

this: a marvelous homage to the science fiction movies of the late Fifties and Sixties (and beyond), replete with dated technology and offbeat touches (Toad licking? A stop-motion cockroach?), all done in a straight-faced campy fashion set to a wonderfully-original soundtrack courtesy of David Jack Skinner.

The story is simple: a spaceship gets a distress signal; its crew sets down on Mara, a "there's something in the mud" planet, and what you would expect from a film so titled ensues. However, Beal follows form only sporadically while playfully telling a skewed story through his actors and his visual flair.

Speaking of actors, just about everyone gets nice featured moments in the film. The spacecraft crew consists of Allen Menefee as Captain McDermott in a deadpan performance dotted with comic moments. Joel Jeremy Herrera plays Doc Condu, the eponymous "star" of the prequel and sequel, in a both understated and over the top role. Pilot Clarissa is Lexi Mex who loses more than her sanity in a nice turn. Also on the space crew is Adriene Dobson as Navigator Pauline who manifests an "Alien" Ripley twist. Mechanic Danvers is done straightforward by Logan Hooks, the unfortunate first crewman to discover Mara's awful secret as well as that space roach. On the planet itself, Joe Grisaffi is appropriately off-center creepy as Mr. Bartlett, but it is Jessica Bell as Arianna, the robot/android "gynoid" who is the most nuanced character in the movie . . . and the best dancer. The cast also includes appearances by Cory W. Ahre who issues the distress signal and Catalina Querida as the scary Mother Vampire.

If you're looking for the latest Marvel-esque CGI production values, *Bloodsucker's Planet* is not your cup of tea. However, if you enjoy quirky writing, engaged acting, and inspired creativity, this film is a real delight. It's available on Amazon.

One last treat: if you check out the director's commentary, Beal is joined by some of his cast and crew as they reveal some of the secrets of DIY filmmaking. You'll never look at Tupperware and yoga mats the same way again. — MIKE L. DOWNEY

"Just a little help"

"Nope"

"But Dad, they're hilarious. They'd make a great contribution to the galactic culture. Everyone will find them entertaining."

"Nope"

"Just some help with the physics. They're so inefficient. At this rate they won't leave the planet for a long time."

"Nope"

"Getting to space is just a side hustle for them. They barely even can reach into space. It's a hobby to them. They'll never make it with that kind of priority."

"Nope"

"Ok, fine. How about we help them maintain their planet? It's getting pretty bad."

"Nope"

"Just some help on cleaner energy, that's all. Simple chemistry changes here, change resource use over there."

The dad sighed and his gaze moved from the blue and green planet to his son. "They need to figure it out for themselves. They need to want it, and then achieve it. Without that desire and maturity and cooperation they wouldn't make it."

"But Dad... Without our help, or them figuring it out soon they might not make it."

"That's true my son, but that's the barrier they'll need to cross on their own. If they make it, then they'll make a great contribution out here with us. And if they don't make it, then it will be better than if we helped them out; helping them out would be like letting your three-year-old sister fly a spaceship. She's just not ready for that yet, so she would hurt herself and others. They might not make it, son, but it's a barrier they'll have to cross and achieve on their own."

"Dad. We can still cheer them on though, right?"

"Yes. We can wish them luck my son."

"Then I wish them luck." — STARKNESS



TIM ON FILM

Army of the Dead (2021)

You know what 2021 was missing? A big dumb movie. Seriously. Blockbusters seem to be rare right now, with theaters dipping their toes in the public water. Movie studios are hesitant to bring in their big winners for fear they may flop. But along with those big budget fun movies, you also get the big dumb ones. The ones that are action packed, and full on crazy you don't seem to care much about the story as it is barely a vehicle that is going to get you to the next big catastrophe.



Enter Zack Snyder's *Army of the Dead*. A movie that doesn't lie in its title, and gives you exactly what you are thinking you are going to get.

The movie opens when a military caravan carrying dangerous cargo collides with a newly wed couple on a highway outside Las Vegas. The cargo (surprise!) is a zombie who turns the rest of the bunch and then heads towards Las

Vegas. The rest of the story is told via musical montage as zombies overtake the city and the military walls it off to the rest of the world.

When Ward (played by Dave Bautista) is approached by a wealthy Casino owner Tanaka (Hiroyuki Sanada) to break in and steal some money in a safe, Ward assembles a team with the promise of a huge payday and the bad idea of the year begins to play out.

And that's pretty much what you get. Don't get me wrong, there are a few interesting things in the movie... a zombie tiger prowls the city. For some reason there are smart zombies who have a King and a Queen. There is a ritual involved when a coyote (human smuggler for those not in the biz) has to give a person as an offering to the zombies for safe passage... but it's not anything that's going to redefine the genre like *28 Days Later* did when

they introduced fast zombies...

But that's ok. Zack Snyder is perfectly in his element with a big dumb movie. He doesn't have to make four-hour movies that move in slow motion as his personal haiku (wait... haikus are short.) He just has to hide the ketchup bottle as he lets his monsters loose on his characters. It's fun, man. I can just picture someone pitching this in a board meeting some where... "Ok... just hear me out... OK? *Oceans 11*... but with zombies!"

Watching this, I am amazed how much times have changed over the years. The zombie movie genre was way played out for the last few years (not that I want it to come back please no). But just kind of smiling how things that I hated can also cleanse the palette... also kind of amazed at the news story saying they wanna nuke Las Vegas on July 4th and the president saying it

would be "really cool and the ultimate fireworks show" just brought me back to dumb things the 45th president would have said.

6 outta 10 chips please

The Woman In The Window (2021)

The Woman In the Window, I am told is a best selling novel in 2018. I didn't read it, 2018 I was focusing on completing my Vachh's collection as well as Star Wars Del Rey paperbacks. But a quick online search shows amazing reviews including one that says "Smart Suspenseful, and Cinematic" which is a shame, because the movie is anything but.

Anna Fox lives alone in her apartment after becoming separated from her husband. She cannot leave the house because she has agoraphobia, so she spends her time ordering in, watching old movies and watching people while taking medications and drinking alcohol (which she is repeatedly reminded she should not do).

Anna meets Ethan, the neighbor boy, and then his mom Jane, and eventually Alistair the father. One night, she hears commotion and goes to look at the window where she believes she sees Jane stabbed to death by Alistair.

She calls the cops, who do not believe her, and the Russells come over to sort things out where Anna meets... a different Jane.

As the movie unfolds, it is revealed Anna's husband and child are dead from a car crash that Anna caused and lived as the sole survivor. Her medications make her have hallucinations and conversations with people who aren't really there (she is having phone conversations with her husband the whole movie) and therefore is not a trusted witness or even main character.



With all that out of the way, Anna plans to commit suicide, Ethan reveals that HE murdered his mom, (his mom being Kate, not Jane) and is now planning to kill Anna. Hijinks ensue, and Anna pushes Ethan through a skylight to his death.

The movie closes months later with Anna finally leaving her apartment.

Here's the deal... The movie is based on a book with super high praise.... The cast is stacked. You got Amy Adams, Gary Oldman, Anthony Mackie, Julianne Moore and others, a soundtrack by Danny Freakin' Elfman.... but

all that is a waste of money because these actors are so wooden I know it's not the actors' fault but they way the movie is done.

It's almost like someone put a couple of movies into an A.I. Computer to see what kind of monstrosity would come out. I heard there were a lot of rewrites and reshoots because the original version was too muddled and confusing for test audiences. I almost want to see it because this was about as bland as the Midwest version of Mexican food.

2 outta 10 shrinks. — TIM DANGER

PEDAL PUSHING

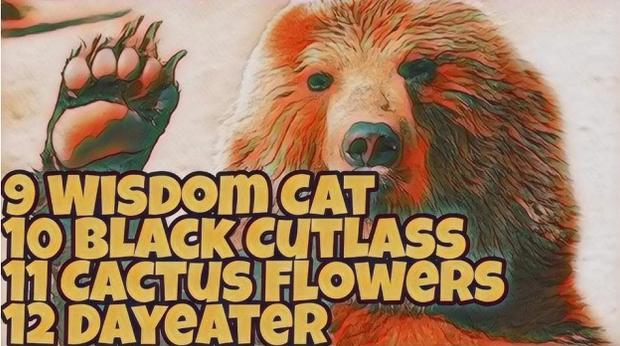
I tend to use all dirt pedals as big dirty boosts. Be it a fuzz, transparent overdrive, midhump overdrive, distortion, preamp, whatever. It's mainly used with a lot of volume and some dirt to punch the front end of my guitar amps. So I tend to like dirt pedals that don't pull out low end (like most Tubescreamers and Rats do) or don't have an inordinate amount of low end and attenuated highs (like fuzzes do). I love Klon Kloners, Timmy's, and most of the Xotic Effects flavored boosts. But when it comes to bigger overdrives/distortions it has largely been the "Kelly Rat" modified Rat pedal from Upstate Analog that I've used in that spot for the past ten years. Two summers ago I bought this **Small Sound/Big Sound Mini** on a whim. It has since become my go-to pedal for overdrive, distortion, and fuzz-like single line playing.



The Mini is an MXR enclosure sized version of SS/BS's Fuck Overdrive. The two are different enough that one isn't exactly like the other. The designer created the circuit as a reaction to how much he hated overdrive pedals. How better to react to hating a circuit than by building and perfecting your own version of it. The Mini is essentially a JFET overdrive with a ton of volume and gain on-tap, a treble boost, a bass cut, and a bias pot. Between these five controls one can find nearly every popular overdrive/distortion/fuzz style application anyone could need. Turn the bias all the way up, the gain all the way down, the treble low and the bass cut low and you have a clean boost; add gain, treble and bass cut for a good low gain transparent overdrive; if that's too transparent roll back the bias to make the overdrive compress; add more gain and less bias for distortion; roll the bias all the way back for sputtering germanium style battery starved fuzz. It is very much a jack of all trades dirt pedal. It is so successful at it that it's kind of a weakness at the same time. It is a tweaker's delight, and it takes time to get it to play the role you want it to play in your signal chain. On the way to finding that tone you will find a dozen other useful tones and get frustrated that you can't have a dozen other Minis so you can have all those tones on your board at the same time. I find myself at times wishing for a Mini+ as a 2-in-1 with a boost built in.

The SS/BS Mini is \$149 all day everyday, which is pretty cheap by boutique dirt pedal standards. It's great on bass guitar (which is why the designer included a bass cut) as well as regular guitar and as a standalone gain channel for a clean pedal platform amp as well as tailoring gain on an amp already breaking up. A pedal that compares favorably to the Mini is Idiotbox's Powerboost, though Matt's circuit doesn't work as well on the low gain end as the Mini. If you need a Swiss army knife of a dirt pedal picking up a Mini is money went spent. — KELLY MENACE

FIRST FRIDAY a MURPHY'S LAW JUNE 4TH

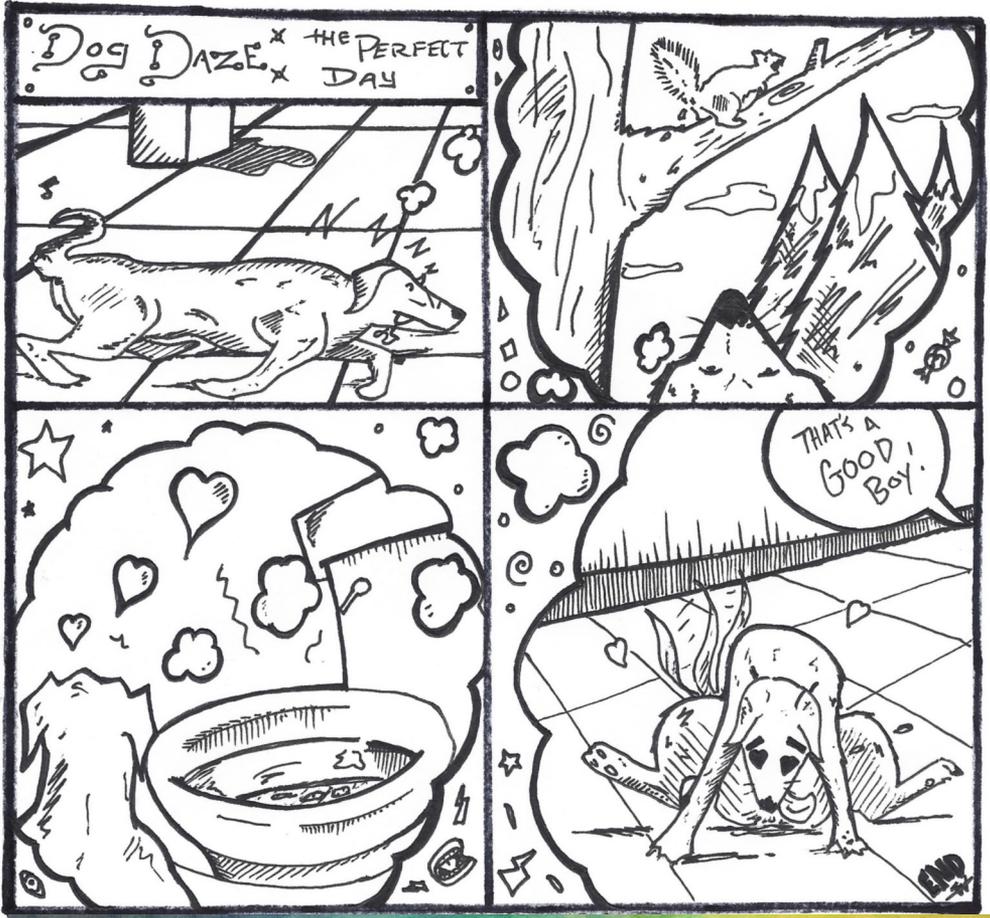


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A SUPER AWESOME GUIDE TO DOING DISNEY WORLD VEGAN

I love theme parks, they're one of my happy places. About once a year, I make my way down to the crazy, sunny state of Florida to visit my best friend Kate and hit up some of the best theme parks. This past April I decided to take a Disney trip and WOW was I impressed with how many options and accommodations they make for guests dietary restrictions!

First thing's first, when you're going to a theme park, you need to make sure you pack your bag with some essentials. I want to cover those first because I brought some pretty awesome stuff that I know Katie has mentioned in *Salacious Crumbs* before, but I want to remind you how awesome they are.

So what's in my bag?

- **Sun Bum SPF 30 sunscreen lotion** Smells like summer but keeps me looking as pale as the moon!
- **Hempz herbal lip balm** Just in case I want to smooch up on any of those Mouse Daddies!
- **A refillable water bottle and silicone or metal straw** Disney uses paper straws and while I think that's awesome, I really don't like them, so bring your own if you want something more sturdy.
- **Body Glide** I'm a girl with thighs, like most people, and I don't like chafing. Theme parks are all about walking around and discovering cool things. Don't skip this step.
- **Lume Deodorant** I love Lume — it's not just for your pits, but also anywhere else on your body that can cause odor. I brought a stick of this and applied in the morning and around lunch just to make sure I was extra fresh.
- **Lume Deodorant wipes** These wipes made sure that even in the muggy spring heat of Florida I stayed FRESH TO DEATH and ready to meet my prince charming.
- **First Aid Kit** I had bandaids, pain killers, etc.

Before your first day at Disney, you can head over to Disney Springs — a free shopping area that offers a touch of magic to all who visit. We made sure to catch dinner at a lovely place called **The Edison**, a 1920s gothic style restaurant with live music, classic cartoons projected on the walls, and a real industrial vibe. It was delightful. That night I ordered the trusty **Beyond Burger** with fries and enjoyed my **Mai Tai** for the perfect start to a vacation. There are tons of restaurants and shops located in Disney Springs with so many different options, so make sure to take a look — I know you'll find something you'll love.

Day One

On our first day at Disney World, we went straight for **The World of Pandora**. James Cameron's pride and joy is on full display. The landscaping and attention to detail was stunning — there were blue palms, strange plants, soothing music, strange animal noises, and rivers and waterfalls everywhere you look. It was truly breathtaking.

There are 2 rides in Pandora that are a must. The first is **Avatar: Flight of Passage**, which is a 3D flying simulator

where you travel through the world of Pandora on a Banshee. Lines for **Avatar: Flight of Passage** can be anywhere from 45 minutes to 2 hours, so you'll want to do this ride first. After you've taken your ride through Pandora on **Flight of Passage**, stop by the **Satu'li Canteen** for some delicious noms. I scooped up the **Chili-Spiced Crispy Fried Tofu Bowl**, which has super crispy fried tofu bites seasoned with a chili-spice and topped with crunchy vegetable slaw, all on top of rice and black beans, finished with boba balls and chimichurri sauce. This meal is packed with flavor and protein. I usually think of theme park food as being greasy, fried, and flavorless. This was only one of those, and I think fried tofu may be a gift to earth, so I was down to clown. For \$13.00 you get a lunch that will stick with you all day.

While you're busy doing some digesting, hop on over to the second ride in Pandora, the **Na'vi River Journey** ride — a slow, dark, relaxing ride where you can chill out, kick your peets up, and enjoy some AC. If you get a little hot wandering around in the sun, stop and grab some delicious adult beverages at the **Pongu Pongu Drink Stand**. I got a **Night Blossom**, which was made of limeade, apple, and pear flavors, with passion fruit boba balls and booze. It gives you some kind of sugar rush and alcohol pep that was perfect for midday in Florida.

We wandered around the park for a while, going on the **Mount Everest Ride**, seeing the **Bugs Life Show**, and just taking in all the sights and sounds that Disney has to offer. We got a bit hungry and stopped for a **Mickey Mouse Pretzel**, and I've got to admit, this pretzel did not disappoint. All Disney parks carry these Mickey Shaped Pretzels for about \$7. This can feed one hungry snacker or be shared. I think I ended up eating almost 3/4ths of this before Kate grabbed it out of my salt covered hands. If you need a quick nom, this pretzel has your back.

By mid-afternoon, we decided to head over to Epcot for the **Flower and Garden Festival**. While Epcot isn't home to many rides, it *is* the best place for foodies, and during the Flower and Garden Festival, vendors are placed throughout the park with specialty selections that are not offered during the year. The first stop was **Trowel & Trellis**, hosted by IMPOSSIBLE™ Foods. This was the first place we went to when we got into Epcot because I didn't want to miss out on having **Boneless Impossible**



Korean Short Ribs. WOW, okay, these ribs were phenomenal. Sticky gochujang veggie short ribs on top of cilantro-lime rice, with a crispy danmuji slaw and a vegan kim-chi mayonnaise. I had died and gone to heaven. I haven't had a lot of vegan Korean food, and if you know me, Korean food is my absolute favorite cuisine in the world, but sadly is very centered around animal protein. Getting the option to have plant-based Korean food was a real treat. I almost ordered more, but I knew there was a decent amount of food and alcohol coming my way in the next few hours, and filling up on the first stop would probably be a bad idea.

After starting out on a total high, I figured it would be hard to match that Korean deliciousness, but of course I was wrong. Why I doubt Disney's ability to amaze, impress and create an actual masterpiece of an experience is still beyond me. But here I am, still impressed every time I go!

The second stop was **Bauernmarkt Farmer's Market**. Here, I had crispy, fluffy, **Hot Potato Pancakes** topped with a house-made spiced apple sauce — it was like a warm hug. Right across from Bauernmarkt was a topiary of Donald and Daisy Duck, so we made sure to snap some photos before heading over to Mexico and going on the **Three Caballeros** boat ride. The rest of the evening was filled with beers, specialty drinks, popcorn, and other uneventful snacks. All in all, day one was a success — we did two parks in one day, which is something we would end up doing most of the time. Don't skimp on that Park to Park pass, you'll want it.

Day Two

Day 2 was Hollywood Studios, starting with **Galaxy's Edge** — I mean who doesn't love Star Wars?! We woke up at 6:55 AM so we could get in the virtual queue line for the new Star Wars ride, **Rise of the Resistance**, that opened at 7 AM. We got a spot on the ride and our time wasn't until around 9 AM, so we headed to breakfast in the hotel for some fruit, cereal, and a protein shake, then headed off to Hollywood Studios. Entering **Black Spire Outpost** is a real experience. All of a sudden the rest of the park disappears and you're transported to the planet Batuu. Cruisers and ships are parked on top of buildings, storm troopers are patrolling the area, signs appear to be in a language you don't understand, shops have strange patrons, and alien languages can be heard being spoken in the distance. Aside from the obvious crowds

in the area, it was a very immersive experience.

First, we rode **Rise of the Resistance**. I can't tell you much about the ride, but know that I was floored, in total awe, and I'm thoroughly convinced it's the best theme park ride currently in existence. What I will say is, I am very big into queue lines. Like, I love the design choices, the story they tell, how they slowly take you away from the crowds and create a personalized experience for you. This ride surpassed any queue line I had ever been in. At one point, I asked my friend how much longer till we start riding the ride. That's when she said, "We're on the ride now!", and I started crying because it was amazing. (Second Best Queue Line goes to **Escape from Gringotts** in Universal Studios, **Diagon Alley** in **Harry Potter World**, and Honorable Mention to **Skull Island: Reign of Kong** at **Universal Studios Islands of Adventure**.)

Of course, after **Rise of the Resistance**, we were ready to cool off and really soak in the scenery. We ordered some **Blue Milk**, a coconut-milk based drink, for pick up at the **Milk Stand** and wandered around watching storm troopers attempt to interrogate families on the whereabouts of those working with **The Resistance**, kids waving around their new lightsabers from **Savi's Workshop**, and people carrying around their new droids they built at **Droid Depot**. The **Blue Milk** was refreshing, and I can see why people like it, but to me it was just a fruity coconut drink.

We got in line for the **Millenium Falcon Smugglers Run** ride and weaved in and out of space ships, under the **Millenium Falcon**, through prep rooms, cargo holds, and loading docks until an hour later, we got on the ride. This ride is interactive and quite fun. I don't want to spoil it, so I will just say I had a great time!

For lunch we headed to **Ronto Roasters** — we would have loved to snag a spot for drinks at **Oga's Cantina**, but the reservations were full and we couldn't get in. At **Ronto's**, I had the **Zuchii Wrap**, which was grilled zucchini slices with a smoky chickpea-onion slaw, paired with creamy garlic-tahini sauce, and fresh cilantro wrapped in bread. It was like a spicy zucchini hotdog and I am about it. Lots of flavor, great portion sizes, and easy to walk and eat with if you're in a rush. 10/10 can't complain.

After spending time in **Galaxy's Edge**, it was time to take on the rest of Hollywood Studios and we went straight for the **Tower of Terror**. What I like most about **Tower of Terror**, aside from the obvious Twilight Zone throwback, is that it's programmed to be randomized so that each ride is different. You don't know how many floors you will drop, and it varies ride to ride. It's always a fun time.

If for some reason you're hungry after being terrorized by the tower and dropping a zillion floors, you must head over to **Rosie's All-American Cafe** for the **Plant Based Lobster Roll**. WOW, this was amazing and exactly what I needed — crisp, refreshing, light, but just packed with flavor. It was loaded with marinated hearts of palm, celery, sweet apples, and a creamy old bay dressing, and served with house-made crispy potato chips. I love lobster rolls and was so excited to get to experience

CONT.->

this plant-based version because it's been so long since I was able to fill that void. Whenever I'm back in Hollywood Studios, I will make sure to stop by and grab another one. It is added to my forever list for future Disney Trips.

Of course make sure to stop by all the beer stands, drink stands, and snack stands to grab popcorn, fruit, and pretzels. All of these options are vegan and perfect for a day at the park. Honestly, the popcorn option is the best deal you can get. You can buy one tub of popcorn and pay only \$2 to refill it the entire time you're at Disney. For a family with kids this is a life saver.

After we rode all the rides we wanted to at Hollywood Studios, we decided to pop over to the **Magic Kingdom** to ride **Pirates of the Caribbean** and **Splash Mountain** while the lines were low. Splash Mountain is about to be closed forever and remodeled for a **Princess and the Frog** ride, and if you ask me, it's been a long time coming. Feel free to look up more about Splash Mountain and how it has been outdated for a while. The ride itself is a log flume based on the 1946 animated movie **Song of the South**. While they have removed any directly offensive material from the ride, it is outdated and not needed. I remember this ride as a child and rode it one last time to say goodbye. I'm glad it's being changed, but I have good family memories on the ride.

We travelled around the Magic Kingdom at night a bit to see the castle all lit up. We were able to see some character parades, and I don't want to brag, but Aladdin waved to me specifically. He's dreamy! We also did some bathroom investigating. Theme park bathrooms are usually a mess, but Disney keeps a good handle on the cleaning and maintenance of their restrooms. We were able to find the most recently updated bathroom, done up in the style of Rapunzel. It's a very pretty bathroom and worth stopping by if you like the movie or you're nearby and have to pee! Just walk through **Cinderella's Castle** and walk to the left in Fantasy Land.

Day Three

After spending night 2 icing our aching feet from walking over 40,000 steps, we strapped on our super cute Vegan Birkenstocks and headed back into the most magical place in the world, charging directly into **Tomorrowland** where we rode **Space Mountain**. Tomorrowland is a really fun throw back to what we all thought the future would be, home to the new **Tron** ride and, of course, **Walt Disney's Carousel of Progress**. After coming back down from space and having the hair nearly blown off my head on Space Mountain, we popped by **Joffrey's Cafe** for a coffee. Joffrey's is mediocre park coffee, but they offer almond and oat milk, and most of their syrups are vegan, so feel free to recharge and get jacked at any Joffrey's you find throughout the Disney Parks. You won't be blown away by it, and I wasn't disappointed, but don't take too much coffee advice from me – I usually drink tea.

We knew we had lunch reservations around 1PM, so we spent some time strolling through **Liberty Square** and **Frontierland**, taking in the sights and seeing some parades. We stopped by **Aloha Isle** in Adventureland and grabbed the coveted **Dole Whip**. If you don't know about Dole Whip, you're about to learn. Dole Whip is a Dole pineapple soft serve dairy-free frozen dessert. At Disney parks, you can get it with a non-vegan vanilla swirl, and of course you're more than welcome to BOOOOZE IT

UP! "I'll take 3 shots of rum in my Dole Whip Float, please!!!" (aka Dole Whip floating on pineapple juice and rum, it's heaven). All Disney Parks have a place to get Dole Whip, just like they all have Joffrey's coffee, so it's an absolute must for anyone going to Disney. Crisp, cool, refreshing, and just sunlight in a cup, don't forget to BYOS (bring your own straw) because those paper straws are not friends with your Dole Whip.

After boozing it up, we watched some more parades (we got to see almost ALL of the princesses!). Now it was time to get spooky. My absolute favorite ride at Disney, hands down, has to be **The Haunted Mansion**. The Haunted Mansion is another dark ride at Disney where you ride around in your cart and meet all the members of the mansion alive, and, well....dead. It's also one of the most popular places for people to sneak in human ashes to scatter during the ride. Because of this, even though you're in the dark while riding, you're actually being watched the entire time by security. It's become such a problem they even have a code for it at Disney (though they try to keep it under wraps). It's called a Code HEPA because they have to stop the ride and get out the HEPA filter vacuums and remove all the remains. This ride is full of fun – cheesy rhymes, singing ghosts, and a wild theory that when you ride it, you become a ghost in the end. It's all around just a spooky time. Plus it's perfect for midday because it's inside and very cold. Usually the line doesn't last too long either, so you can almost always get in in under 15 minutes.

After our spooky fun times, we made our way back over to Adventureland for our lunch reservation at **Jungle Navigation Co LTD Skipper Canteen**. This restaurant offers some amazing selections from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. We sat down at our table and ordered an African lager by Tusker, which paired perfectly with our meal of **Perkins Thai Noodles**, deliciously pan fried tofu, sauteed with seasonal vegetables and rice noodles, tossed in a spicy chili-garlic sauce. This meal was perfect. I honestly cannot express how blown away I still am when it comes to the quality of food provided at Disney. Sure, you can get regular popcorn and a pretzel, but you can also find carefully designed and mastered recipes that blow your mind with how flavorful they are.

The rest of the day at Magic Kingdom was really just walking around and being nostalgic. Of all the Disney Parks, Magic Kingdom is the one I've spent the most time in. It's the one with the iconic statue of Walt and Mickey holding hands. It's the park that makes kids "ooh and aaw" the most, home to the **Mad Hatter's Tea Party** aka the Tea Cup ride, **Dumbo's Flying Adventure**, **Prince Charming's Carousel**, and so much more. It's really hard to beat all the love and excitement I feel when I walk down **Main Street, USA** and see **Cinderella's Castle** basking in the glow of the Florida sunset. Seeing kids in their princess and character costumes race full speed at a Cast Member just so they can hug Tigger's shoe. The magic truly does live there.

This was my last day at Disney for my trip. I was sad to leave, but also desperately needed to prop my feet up and relax a bit. I'm so glad that there were so many vegan options at Disney for my trip. Not only was I well fed, but I was satisfied, and that can't be said for a lot of places. So if you're looking for a super awesome vacation for you, your friends, or your family, check out Disney Parks. They've got all the magic! – **KIRY JACKSON**

STILL POETRY

When I get to where the
sidewalk ends
where my heart sinks
into it's Self with grief
and despair over all of
Life's injustice
Where I can choose to jump
and leave it all behind
I sit
I sit down and dangle my
legs over the edge
I gaze out across the vast
expanse of unknown
I cry
I weep
I rage
I scream
I remember
I remember that I am not alone
That before too long another
will collapse in defeat beside me
and we can hold hands
In that moment
I will know that I have
been sitting and holding space
for You and you
will remember
that you are not alone too

— *HALEY RICHARDSON*



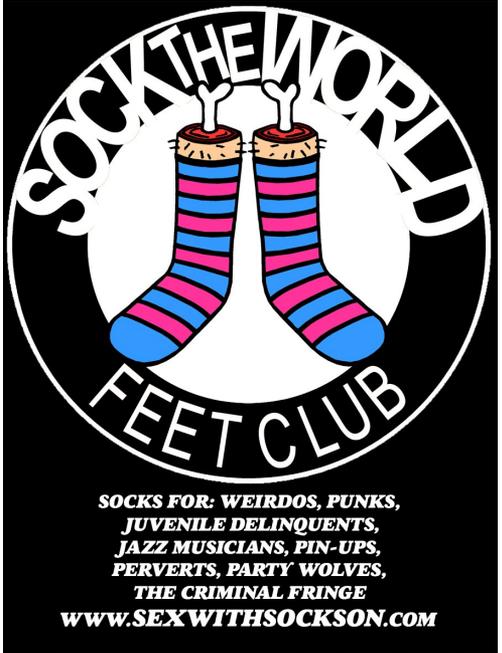
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Well, I expected it would happen, as it does with almost anything, and sure, it's a bummer, but it was always a transient and democratic entity.

SHOOBIEBYEBYES

unique cover. Play that thing loud and often. Some of you

The Shoobiedoobies are no longer.

No more scraping up Skittles from the bar floor, no more toilet paper hanging from the ceiling, no more pre-show huddle and cheer.

Things have just gotten crazy at the Shoob house. Some good, some not so good, but all toward the betterment of the fam.

Sure, Covid had something to do with it. We didn't have shows to look forward to or practice for. Live streaming just ain't the same.

But the girls got jobs, more friends, and into other things, and so, it was decided to let it go. Difficult mostly for me, but for the girls too. And we never ended up writing a song about the girls not wanting to quit for not wanting to disappoint their dad.

Truth is, it was the most fun and the best band I have ever been in. And our fam...you guys...were just the best. Always so supportive and protective and encouraging. You guys have to know that I wanted the girls to have a cool experience, and you guys made it so much more than I could have even planned for.

You gave them advice, you hugged them, you made sure creepy dudes didn't get too close, you listened to them, you laughed with them, you moshed and crowd surfed and applauded and cheered for them, you loved them, and I love you for that.

They will always remember this, but mostly they will remember you. So will I.

I don't really think I can expect anything like The Shoobiedoobies ever again. Other cool things, sure, but nothing like this. I will always cherish it. It was so fucking amazing.

It all started at a LOUDFEST when Livie came up on stage while I played guitar over some witch house. She screamed and danced on stage with me. Then I taught her a doom metal beat on the drums, and then we started getting shows, playing alongside the coolest bands around. Then we added Sofie on bass and started doing actual songs.

Our cool little dirtbag culture allowed for our evolution, and encouraged it. And we loved you for it. We saw every song we made as a gift for you. Something that we hoped you would enjoy and be moved by.

Some of you have some merch to remind you of us, and that's amazing. Some of you have a CD with a cool

have those bloody, creepy stuffed animals we gave away. Hug them tight...you obviously earned it if you got

one. Some of you have hand drawn posters from the early days. Put those up on your walls. Some of you have one of a kind set lists from a show. Those things are so cool and they were fun to make. Some of you have button down Goodwill shirts with the Shoobs logo on it. Wear them proudly. Some of you will see Shoob stickers around town or on trains or cars or street signs. Some of you put them there. Awesome.

We actually still have some merch we need to give away (posters stickers and bracelets). We will get to that at some point. We will probably drop them off at The 101...keep an eye out.

But we will all have our memories of doing something crazy during a show: humping the bass drum, having a sword fight, throwing grapes at us, stuffing the tip jar with toys and money and drugs, singing along, watching weird visuals, looking at Sofie's socks, hoping Livie would complain and yell bad words.

Or needing to leave because Livie kept pushing the fog machine button. Or hoping no one knew I was revealing secrets about you during "You're Scared We Know". (I was.) Or feeling loved while yelling "I like you, I think you're cool".

Whatever your memory of The Shoobiedoobies, we want to thank you for being part of our memories, and making it all worth it. We were just a bunch of dorks without you.

We will miss playing for your beautiful sweaty faces.

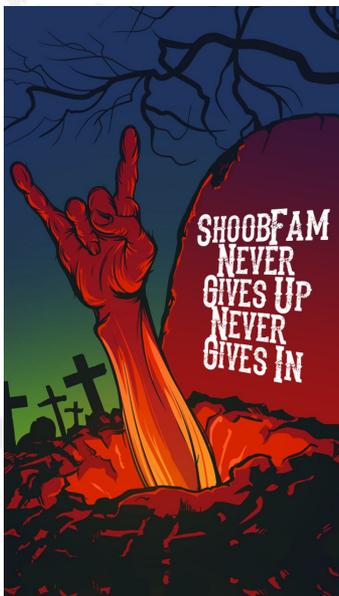
Thank you for supporting us. Thank you for singing along. Thanks for being there. Thanks bartenders for loving us like you do. Thank you all for being big sisters and big brothers and moms and dads to the girls. That has melted my heart, and I will always cherish that. I never would have thought that would be possible, but you guys loved them and showed them your hearts. You guys are the fucking best.

We were always floored by your love and generosity and good heartedness.

We're still here, and we will be seeing you around, and looking forward to hugging you.

And who knows about the future. But one thing is for sure: No one had a hold on us, not like you did.

Thanks ShoobFam. — JORGE GOYCO



RECORD REVIEWS



John Lodge
B Yond

I know – that album title is beyond precious, but that's part of the Moody Blues oeuvre.

As a longtime fan of the Moodies, I have long since stopped trying to apologize for enjoying their music the past half century, but that doesn't mean I completely love everything they put out. That includes this fairly-eccentric "greatest hits" collection by Lodge, the bassist and vocalist still performing with the band.

An aside – The Moody Blues were noteworthy in the Sixties and Seventies for having five songwriters and four vocalists for its Core Seven albums. Their harmonies – along with their optimism – were a marvel to this non-musician. Their albums had decent rock, thoughtful ballads, introspective lyrics, spoken word and oddball arty tunes (at least one per album), even sound effects.

Back to the review – on the plus side for Lodge's double album, he has included three of the Moodies' best songs, two rockers he wrote and sang lead on: "I'm Just a Singer (In a Rock and Roll Band)" and "Ride my See-Saw." These are recent live versions with good sound, easily worth listening to on their own merits.

Lodge also includes a cover of his late friend and bandmate Ray Thomas' stellar "Legend of a Mind" that is best known for its chorus: "Timothy Leary's dead/No, no, he's outside/Looking in." Lodge does a credible job updating the hippie flavor of the original while keeping its singular charm.

The British musician includes three other of his Moody Blues songs, also live, but oddly enough, they are not what this longtime fan would consider the cream of what Lodge could have chosen from. Perhaps the artist isn't the best judge of his top material, but then it's his work. Maybe striving for deep cuts? It's not bad, but it could have been better.

Lodge improves the version of his 1977 song "Street Café" with an updated sound. He also does a great turn on the best song from his 1975 collaboration with fellow Moody Justin Hayward – "Blue Jays" – with a soaring "Saved By the Music."

The new and unreleased tunes, unfortunately, reveal why some songs are not released. They sound fine, but compared to the quality material elsewhere on these two discs, they just seem like filler, which is not what one expects on a "greatest hits" assemblage.

All in all, this is not a bad compilation of the songs Lodge has written and performed over the decades. It just could have been considerably richer. Like the album's title, it's a B. — MIKE L. DOWNEY



Cannibal Corpse
Violence Unimagined

Of all the death metal bands in history, Cannibal Corpse (CC) is one who needs no introduction in the least. Since the last album, CC unwillingly parted ways with their guitarist, Pat O'Brien, who ran into serious legal troubles, gaining the legendary guitarist and vocalist of Hate Eternal, the one and only Erik Rutan. I reviewed their previous record, *Red Before Black* four years ago, and it's now time to crawl back down into CC's dungeon to see what horrors await with their latest offering, *Violence Unimagined*.

One thing that Erik brings to this album is his signature riffs. What's more is that a pre-release interview with CC's bassist, Alex Webster, revealed that the record took many of its queues from the very first CC record, *Eaten Back to Life*, which was heavily influenced by thrash. Then there is the band's notorious artwork. This time, the band opted for something both monstrous and gory, which looks akin to Milena from Mortal Kombat after performing a fatality. With a veteran death metal guitarist acquired, and a penchant for early death metal nostalgia in mind, it's easy to see that the groundwork for

Violence Unimagined was mature and methodical.

Like any good CC record, *Violence Unimagined* kicks off with a fast-paced, frantic brutalizer titled "Murderous Rampage." The riffs are very fast and thrashy, as they are on other tracks like "Necrogenic Resurrection" and "Inhuman Harvest." It is in these songs, in particular, that the listener will notice Erik Rutan's guitar work, but what is notable is that he did not attempt to turn CC into Hate Eternal; his riffs were created specifically for CC, and they fit very well. However, the band offers some slower tempos, and some very groovy songs with tracks like "Surround, Kill, Devour", "Follow the Blood", "Bound and Burned", "Slowly Sawn", and "Cerements of the Flayed." No matter the tempo change, Erik manages to incorporate some almost comical guitar hooks that bring an instant smile to my face. When listening to the album as a whole, I can't help but feel that *Violence Unimagined* has the same ethos as *Kill*, a record CC fans adored, but one I was not impressed with due to its reliance on speed and aggression. However, I get the sense that this record is sort of a *Kill* done better. The difference in the album's pacing of the songs, and the variety of tempo changes doesn't pulverize the listener into oblivion.

As much as I like *Violence Unimagined*, it still has its setbacks. Songs like "Condemnation Contamination" and "Ritual Annihilation" feel very much like filler songs with nothing special about them. There are also other filler tracks like "Necrogenic Resurrection" and "Overtorture" that showcase speed so much that it comes off as annoying. Don't get me wrong, I do love fast and aggressive death metal songs, but in comparison to other CC albums which have multiple speed tracks like *The Wretched Spawn* wherein each song was strategically placed and given a "personality," CC simply didn't deliver in this particular aspect. These songs could have been good if a little more care was given to make them unique and more distinguishable.

I cannot gripe too much, as this is a CC record; what you see is what you get. Despite any criticism I may be able to levy at this album, one thing I know is that I can always count on CC to put out music that never deviates from what they do best and that they will always be an uncompromising band that doesn't venture off into prog like so many of their fellow death metal musicians have

done over the decades. Despite not loving this release, I did like it; most of the songs are good, the vocals are spot on, and the lyrical content is what I expect, so it's a worthy entry into CC's discography, even if it hasn't topped my favorites. *Violence Unimagined* gets a 4.5 from me. — CALEB MULLINS



St. Vincent
Daddy's Home

Much has been written in recent months of the story behind Annie Clark's new setting and scene for St. Vincent. Gone is the robotic dominatrix of the previous seven years and in its place an Elvira Hancock-esque character as a Chelsea Hotel denizen circa 1972. The tones are earthy, warm, nostalgic, meant to evoke the post-hippie pre-punk/disco NYC of nascent drag decadence. Oh, and it's supposed to tell her truth of her father's white collar crime bilking folks out of millions and the ten years of prison time he just served.

This is a lot to take in before one even listens to a single byte of the music. I suppose when anyone is setting up a new character and world then backstory is necessary. That said, it seems like Annie Clark spent far more time with the setup and execution than she did on the material because *Daddy's Home* is the first largely unmemorable St. Vincent album.

True, the album *does* sound warm and vintage. Annie has largely left the synthesizers and drum machines behind for electric pianos, sitars, and towel dampened drums. There are gospel/soul styled backing vocals everywhere. But for the most part, with a couple of exceptions, the hooky, catchy songwriting was sacrificed in favor of the ambience. The two exceptions, "Down" (a bubbly analog synth line leading to a massive sing along chorus with a Bowie "Fame" style call and repeat) and the outlandishly funky lead single "Pay You Way In Pain", stand out against the mostly somnambulant and hazy backdrop of *Daddy's Home*. Other snatches stick out mainly

because they are cribbed from more familiar material. The already-mentioned "Pay Your Way..." is reminiscent of Wendy & Lisa's "Crack In the Pavement"; "Live In the Dream" (as others have mentioned) borrows profusely from Pink Floyd's "Us and Them"; "Somebody Like Me" grabs the first little melody from "Lay Lady Lay"; and the biggest culprit, "My Baby Wants a Baby", steals so liberally from the melody and lyrics of Juice Newton's "Morning Train" that I can hear the skritch/scratch of lawyers applying pen to the copyright lawsuit as I type.

It's not to say that the album doesn't have its moments. Lyrically, Clark seems very concerned with a woman's role in society, either as a mother's child ("I got your eyes and your mistakes" she sings in "My Baby Wants a Baby"), a socialite ("I went to the park just to watch the little children/the mothers saw my heels and said I wasn't welcome"), and as a bride-to-be ("Dress up in white/slip on the ring/walk straight down the aisle to violin strings/does it make you a genius or the fool of the week/to believe in somebody like me?"). The pre-release claim that the album's central theme is her dad's conviction and 10-year sentence for a banking crime might be more a connection than a literal theme.

Aside from a few oblique references in the title track there isn't a real narrative nor does Annie Clark really seem to be working anything out. It almost seems like it was just something to use as a part of the scene setting. She's not the reveal your trash as a way to sell your records kind of artist.

An artist this good and talented should get a bye for putting out an album that isn't necessarily up to the high standards that said artist has set with previous outings. And this is the case for *Daddy's Home*. It's not a failure by any stretch, nor is it a true departure to a new direction. It seems like, in a way, Annie Clark got bored and had gone about as far as she could in the direction she began laying out with her second album *Actor* and followed through to *MASSEDUCTION*. Is this a new beginning and St. Vincent is gaining its sea legs? Or is this merely a genre exercise to cleanse the pallet before launching in a completely different direction? It is very hard to say. Either way, the sepia and beige St. Vincent depicts herself in for the album's cover and her clothing in her videoed live appearances to promote the album are appropriate. *Daddy's Home* is just kinda beige. I'd rather hoped for a little more color than that. —

KELLY MENACE

CONCERT CALENDAR

6/4 — Bryan Turner Band , Linda Gail Thompson @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 7pm

6/4—Dayeater, Black Cutlass, Wisdom Cat, Cactus Flowers @ Murphys, Bryan. 8:30pm

6/12—Torin Franklin @ The 101, Bryan. 9pm

6/17—Americana Showcase with Mary-Charlotte Young, Dustin Brown @ The 101, Bryan. 8pm

6/19—Jay Satellite (solo) @ The 101, Bryan. 9pm

7/25—The Ex-Optimists, Middle Tiger @ The 101, Bryan. 3pm

9/25—Colony House, Fluerie @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 7pm

10/15-10/17—LOUDFEST XIII @ The 101, Bryan.

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