

STORERPRESENT



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inside: a farewell to the killerbergs - gtfo out of my body - absolutely nothing - salacious crumbs - high 5s & back-slaps - todd on film - beto for governor - fading scars - on your path to womanhood - apologies - record reviews - concert calendar



BETO FOR GOVERNOR

The word has started to leak out that U.S. Congressman and failed U.S. Senate candidate Beto O'Rourke is likely to announce a run against Greg Abbott in the

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on the interwebz

<http://www.979represent.com>

redchapterjubilee@yahoo.com

materials for review & bribery can be sent to:

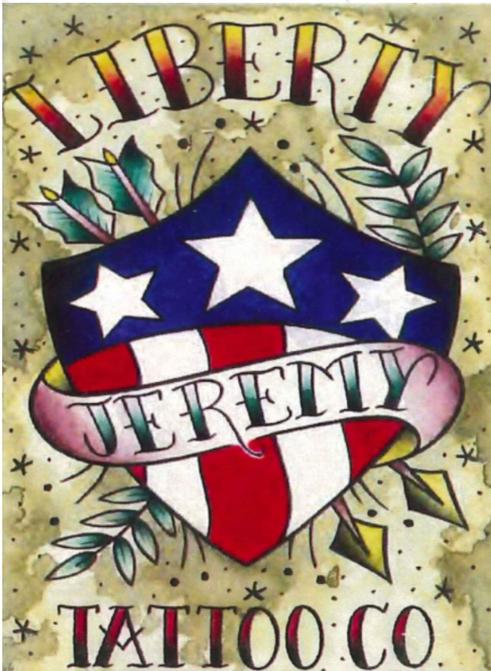
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101 s. texas ave.
bryan, tx 77801

2022 Texas Gubernatorial race. I have heard a whole lot of jibber-jabber from folks coming in from different angles about this bit of leaked news. Comments have run the gamut between "Man, Beto has a real shot" to "Dude couldn't even beat Ted Fuckin' Cruz, he can't beat ol' Wheels Abbott" and many points in-between. I tend towards the former rather than the latter point of view.

Let's go back in the way back machine, Sherman, to 2018. First off, that seems REALLY long ago in our advanced covid rate of time elapsation. Beto wore out dozens of pairs of Armani loafers walking his way across this state and trying hard to lay a serious network of support for a Democrat to win a statewide race again for the first time in decades. And he came close. Republicans do not like Ted Cruz. What's there to like? But Beto came up short and all them Texas Monthly evergreen articles they like to float out perennially about the "purpling of Texas" had to be laid away for another day. But a few things have changed in the state political landscape since 2018. Covid, J6, The Great Freeze of '21, and Texas State Bill 8. The first two may be national stories but they have real complicated ramifications for the state of Texas. For starters, the state response to Covid-19 has been about as bad as it could possibly have been. Texas is a real battleground for the war between science and politics, as well as the hypocrisy of personal rights when religion is involved. But let's get at the Covid part first. Abbott's refusal to announce mask and vaccine mandates killed Texans, endangered Texans' lives, and made Texas the poster child for personal rights above public safety. Even average Republicans have been squeamish about going unvaxxed or unmasked. The January 6 attack on the nation's capitol was certainly a national news event but many of the arrested perpetrators are Texans and have ties to Abbott and the state Republican party. Both have remained mum about that connection. Abbott and his cronies on the energy board fucked up the response to the Great Freeze mass power outages with people who froze to death making the ultimate sacrifice for record profits in the unregulated wild frontier of the Texas energy market. Abbott personally raked in millions from the crisis. And of course, while personal freedom to ignore public health does not extend to women's reproductive health, arming citizens to rat on other women seeking abortions to skirt federal law. Jesus takes the wheel for 'Rona prevention and inside a woman's womb as well.

This is a lot for Beto to run on. Much of this plays very poorly across the political spectrum for Greg Abbott. Take it, Beto is a Democrat and that's much more fatal for him than any of the current milestones hanging around the governor's neck. Were this strictly just a political ideological fight I would think that Beto has no chance whatsoever. However, the very real suffering Texans of all persuasions faced last winter put some hard reality to the ideological fight coming up next year. It's hard to duck away the millions of dollars Abbott made while Texans died in the cold and if Beto is smart he will hammer away at Abbott about it. And he may actually have a shot at sending Greg Abbott packing next year. —

KELLY MENACE



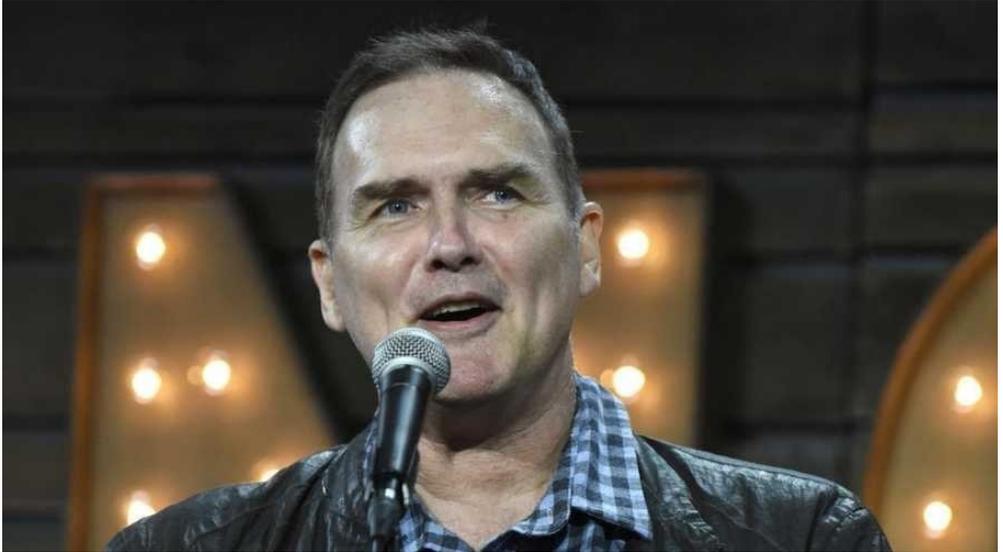
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IN MEMORIUM: NORM

I'm going to speak for Norm MacDonald. Now, I never met the guy, but I don't think he'd be too ires by the notion. Norm was the kind of guy to play along with the bit when he didn't know where it was going. He was open to the comedy like that. He let other things — and other people — speak for him all the time. It amused him

around?

There was something about Norm. He always seemed so present, but yet stood apart from any of his contemporaries with which he would share the stage or the screen — and they make a web of personalities that is



to no end, and you can see it in the playful attitude that dances out of his eyes even when his face is a mask of sobriety.

The thing about Norm is that there was something about Norm. He always seemed a step ahead. If you didn't laugh at him, you at least appreciated his ability to slip out of your sensemaking again. Norm made himself an endless question: was this guy for real? More than any person before or since, Norm blurred the lines between living and comedy to the point that it can only of him ever be said that he was the first to make a living out of doing comedy.

The reason Norm was so slippery is that his perspective never seemed to conform to any coherent standard. You'd expect to get a liberal answer out of the guy on one thing, he'd dismiss it with a wave and give you a tired conservative cliché in its place — but then he'd bring that cliché to life. And just when you think, "Oh, I get it, he's an old conservative making his jokes," he offers a biting critique of tradition that catches you out-of-left-field. But then he'll throw even that critique aside for a laugh, and you wonder if any of it meant anything to him or, God forbid: was Norm really just messing

about as distinct and refreshing as Norm's was. He got away with it. He knew it was all a joke. Cancer behind that smile for all these years, and he told NO ONE. And he did what he always did: he left himself open to the comedy, he found it funny, he fucked around with it, and he made friends.

Norm was always a little withdrawn, and now we know why. But that withdrawal from the world made him a unique voice that should be remembered, especially these days. In the middle of all the bullshit — and what more bullshit could there be than that life would part company with Norm, who got along with it so damn well — his voice was always human first, and it was here that he found his never-ending inspiration for comedy, because we humans do an unending amount of silly things every day. Norm, more than any of us, saw the comic gold.

So I say let's remember the guy, because he knew how to fuck around and he knew how to make friends in a world where that is increasingly hard to do; and he did it right there in front of us all, like it was no big deal, setting up a shining example for all of us that is always itself subject to the great comedy. The man would trade his legacy for the right laugh. Don't let him. For sure, though, when Norm died, he laughed. He knew something a lot of us don't. What a guy. — *NIC BRADLEY*

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GTFO OUT OF MY BODY & OTHER RAGE FILLED PURGES FROM A SINGLE MOM ON A FRIDAY NIGHT

Do you know what happens to an embryo when it is not aborted?

They grow. They grow so big your belly skin stretches out like the radial web of a spider's thread. Your body will never be the same. They are born. Both of you scream, as they enter the world. They are placed gently into your arms and you are told: "You have a beautiful _____. You should be very grateful". They grow. You both wear diapers now. They shit and piss through 10-100 a day. They explode yellow diarrhea so hard that you just throw the car seat away and buy a new one. You never stop bleeding. An emergency surgery is performed at six weeks postpartum. They grow. They eat every 30 minutes. They nurse so hard your nipples bleed and crack. You cry. They cry. It all begins again.

You start work again next week. They grow up. They learn to walk into traffic without holding your hand. They tell you NO and throw demon fits of rage when their shoes aren't red instead of pink. They need new shoes. Every six months. They grow up. They go to school. They need lunch packed every day. They need how many notebooks? Pencils? Backpacks? You don't know how you can afford it. They grow up. They need a babysitter because you have another shift added on Tuesday night. You wonder if you need a third job. They grow up. They get invited to go on a fancy school tour of an art museum. You can't afford it. You ask their father for help. He calls you a selfish money bitch whore. He hasn't paid child support in three years.

They grow up. They tell you that they wish they had never been born. They suffer through their own trauma. They tell you that they hate you on their fifteenth birthday. They grow and eat through seventeen boxes of cereal in one week. They crash your van into a tree the first time they attempt to reverse a vehicle. They grow up. They get sick. Sometimes their body hurts in the same space for over a year and you can't afford to get to a specialist to figure it out. Their teeth get cavities. So do yours. They need access to mental health care. So do you. They keep growing.

If you are a woman who has an embryo growing inside her body and you do NOT wish for it to grow up, here is a list of abortion access resources that you can use: (and if you are not a woman, DONATE)

AIDACCESS.ORG

International organization created by Dr. Rebecca Gomperts to support women who cannot access abortion or medical care. Consultations available. Educational resources for medical abortion pills.

PLANCILLS.ORG

Medical abortion access and education. This site provides details per state and offers education on how other women have navigated around restriction to abortion access. List of providers and resources.

ABORTIONFINDER.ORG

Online resource for abortion access per state. They have an exclusive "Are you getting an abortion in Texas?" page that provides an extensive resource list



including education about SB8 and how it affects women in Texas; a calendar to help women date their pregnancy; and information about local abortion providers. NAF (National Abortion Federation) Texas Concierge Hotline at 1-800-772-9100, ext. 1. Abortion funds local to Texas.

BUCKLE BUNNIES

Abortion fund helps pay for abortions throughout Texas. <https://www.bucklebunnies.org/>

STIGMA RELIEF FUND

Helps patients receiving care at Whole Woman's Health locations pay for medical costs. <https://www.wholewomanshealthalliance.org/the-stigma-relief-fund/>

LILITH FUND

Call (English): 1 (877) 659-4304
Call (español): 1 (877) 355-1461
<https://www.lilithfund.org/portfolio/need-help/>

TEXAS EQUAL ACCESS FUND

Call: 1 (888) 854-4852
Text: (844) 832-3863
<https://teafund.org/help/>

WEST FUND

Call or text (English): (915) 213-4535
Call or text (español): (915) 213-4578
<https://www.westfund.org/getfunded>

Practical Support Organizations in Texas to use or donate to:

FUND TEXAS CHOICE works to provide lodging and transportation assistance for patients throughout Texas. Call: 1 (844) 900-8908
<https://fundtexaschoice.org/>

JANE'S DUE PROCESS works to give free legal help to minors who are pregnant. These services include judicial bypass assistance. Hotline call hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Hotline text hours: 8:00A.M. - 11:00 P.M., 7 days a week. Call or text (English and español): 1 (866) 999-5263. <https://janesdueprocess.org/>

MARIPOSA FUND assists undocumented abortion seekers in paying for the care they need. Call: (505) 242-7512
<http://mariposafund.org/>

S.Y.S. (Support Your Sistah) provides childcare assistance, food, transportation, escorts to and from clinics, abortion and birthing doulas, and financial assistance. When calling, make sure to leave a voicemail with your full name, date of birth, ZIP code, and type of assistance needed. Hotline call hours: 8:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M., Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays Call: (469) 978-7710
info@supportingyoursistas.com
<https://www.theafiyacenter.org/>

Additional Texas resources to donate to:
NEEDABORTION.ORG is a website that's part of the Know Your Rights Campaign, run by the Lilith Fund and Avow Texas, and its goal is to help people access abortion care in Texas.
<https://needabortion.org>

TEXAS ABORTION ACCESS NETWORK

Texas Abortion Access Network is run by the Texas Abortion Access Network (TAAN) Collaborative. The TAAN Collaborative is working to support health access across Texas, with a focus on abortion. The organization is made up of a number of groups including ACLU of Texas, Texas Equal Access Fund, NARAL Pro-Choice Texas, Progress Texas, AFIYA Center, Texas Freedom Network, Whole Woman's Health Alliance, and Jane's Due Process.
https://txabortionaccessnetwork.org/about_us/

TRUST RESPECT ACCESS

Trust Respect Access is a coalition of leaders and organizations in the reproductive health, justice, and rights space working on policies that restore Texans' abilities to make their own reproductive healthcare decisions.
<https://www.trustrspectaccess.com>

'If all you want is a child born but not a child fed, not a child educated, not a child housed... That's not pro-life. That's pro-birth.' Sister Joan Chittister — HALEY RICHARDSON

ON YOUR PATH TO WOMANHOOD

A MARKETING BROCHURE FOR GIRLS EVOLVING INTO WOMEN IN 2021

You are on your way to adulthood. As you progress along this journey, you have so much to prepare and look forward to! Here are some things that you GET to experience:

FREEDOM

The world is dominated by men. Most men have a limited ability to learn and since they occupy the majority of the positions that make decisions, you get to be the recipient of a life that is enclosed within parameters that men will not have to endure. Your opinions will be questioned because the people who create legislation and sign your paycheck believe that you have moments of delirium brought to you in part by an antiquated book that explains that you are the sole cause of "sin" in this world that came in the form of a Magic Apple. This entitles you to benefits such as:

- Lower rate of pay
- Laws created by the Judiciary and Governing bodies of the Government regarding what you can and can't do with your body.
- Fancy a career in Sports Entertainment? You are entitled to weight checks for cheerleaders, approved and unapproved dissemination of your image and the respective intent of those images by people who claim to understand what is "sexy" and "suggestive."
- A reporting system for assaults in all manners united and dictated by a Statute of Limitations because Justice has an expiration date – for you.

SPORTS & OTHER ATHLETIC PURSUITS

The United States is Exceptional when it comes to women in sports. On your journey to excellence, if you're fortunate to start young, in the fields of Gymnastics, you will be provided with high end medical professionals that will use your injuries as an invite to fulfill the dark inappropriate fantasies under the disguise of "medical care." But why stop at Gymnastics? We have an exceptional National Soccer Team that is highly underpaid compared to their male counterparts (once again) – but Soccer is a Team sport. So your team will get to compete and train in sub par facilities! That's right! Why compete on real grass, when you can compete on artificial turf that causes excessive damage at the benefit of lower cost allocations for resources!

Fancy yourself a competitive Volleyball player perchance? Imagine yourself competing on the highest level, but being fined because you feel that the "uniform" is too scantily clad and implies a sexual nature to a sport that is meant to be competitive. On your

journey, you will be well prepared as even at the Colleague level your hard work and dedication will produce the necessary elements for your representative University to monetize your hard work for their benefit and potential exposure to new donors. PHILANTHROPY!

Your future will be shaky and indeterminate as corporate sponsors that supply vast sums of money to cities and sports team see very little to no value in your desire to showcase your skills and abilities on the field of competition. Imagine having a near difficult time finding a next level arena to continue your passion, while at the same time being ogled and commoditized for your physical attributes. All this with little to no security for a plan to retire comfortably. Go Team!!

EQUALITY

Humanity has been blessed/cursed with the gift of Reason. Reason under a broad brush stroke umbrella, states that equal input equates to an equal output. BUT NOT FOR YOU!!! In addition to unequal pay, unequal sports exposure, you get to be demonized because by the pursuit of equality, you will be categorized as:

- Man Hater
- Gold Digger
- Slut
- Whore
- Skank
- Bitch
- And much much more with new variants coming into existence every day!

Along this journey you will question your value, your moral set, and this questioning of credibility will be done to you as you don these responses on yourself. Imagine not only questioning your worth and values, but the outer influences passes judgment as well!

SOCIETY & CULTURE

Imagine a setting where you intend to go out and have a good time. Maybe it's a nice stroll through metropolitan area. Maybe it's a bar that you've heard serves great cocktails. Now understand that this is a modern day hunting ground where the prize is your Body! Similar to the Rhino Horns that are collected, ground up, and used as a Male Enhancement formula from nature, your body and the pleasure it can provide will be a moving target and in some cases exhibited as a trophy via all the popular platforms like:

- Twitter
- Instagram
- Facebook
- And a slew of private hard drives and Social Media platforms all in Development

Fancy yourself an Entrepreneur? Maybe you are militant and want to take the power back? No worries! Should you decide to undertake the retaking of your own power back, you will be provided a plethora of online trolls that have an unlimited sense of entitlement and rage to provide you with countless comments and jeers as every inch of your physical being is critiqued! Your safety, both physical and mental will be judged and attacked. You will never feel safe again!

But wait – are you saying that there has been no change since the days of Pioneering? Some things have changed for the "better," right? Absolutely!! In 1916, in the midst of the World War I, nurses were taken as Prisoners of War – much like their counterpart during that time period – Soldiers. Back in those antiquated times, Nurses were not considered essential or valued as they were taken as prisoners so their respective families were not provided a salary – even though soldiers families were. But that has changed! Yay!! Progress! And shortly after, women were granted the ability to participate and make their voices heard in the arena of Democracy. Your voice now makes up a whopping almost 30% of the governing body while you occupy 50.8% of the population! Look at representation (not) at work!

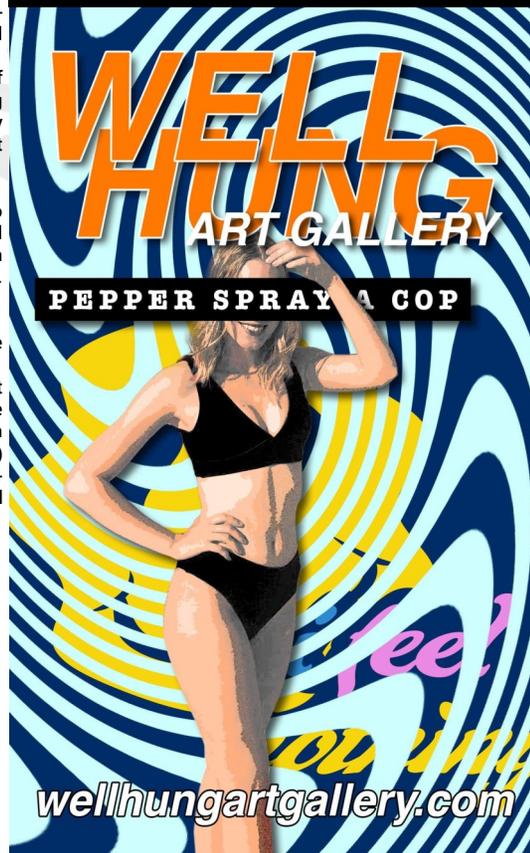
There are so many more examples of what you get to look forward to, but what fun would it be if I displaced all the mystery that is available and yet to come? With so much in flux, this brochure is soon to be antiquated. On the near future horizon are:

- Discussions of repealing Reproductive rights
 - Changes to the way communities vote through the power of Gerrymandering
 - More and More instances of Rape and Sexual Assault – Except in Texas where Gov. Greg Abbot believes he has the formula (maybe thru the Pre Cogs that were in Steven Spielberg's Minority Report starring Tom Cruise) to rid Texas of all Rapists (as in practice and historically, rape is a premeditated crime – and has affected all civilizations since the beginning of time).
- STEVEN NAM



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HIGH FIVES AND BACKSTABS

What makes a Best Friend? Well, truth be told, it's a complicated matter. Well, it can be anyway.

First things first: trust. You can't be Best Friends with someone who lied to you or ridiculed you in front of people or doesn't tell you how they are feeling. Well, that last one gets a little more complicated doesn't it.

Not everyone talks about their feelings. Not everyone is in touch with their feelings. Cool. OK, so nevermind that last one. Maybe that's just a preference. My preference anyway.

But why I start here with trust is that I believe that to be fully connected with someone, enough to call them your Best Friend, there's got to be trust. At least in the moment. You know, because it happens sometimes that you are Best Friends with someone and then something happens and then you aren't Best Friends with them anymore. It happens. Sometimes you stay friends for a long time, and sometimes you are Best Friends for a long time.

That's where acceptance comes in. At least for me. What I mean by that is that you look past the bullshit. Some bullshit is extra stinky, and you can't (and shouldn't) look past that. But some are not so bad. I mean, it's just grass and water really.

For example, you take Order 66 during *The Clone Wars (Revenge of the Sith)*. That broke the rule big time. Sure, that's an extreme example, but my point is, that's a huge one. Something that supersedes being true to a friend or confidant or fellow in arms. Will a Best Friend have something that might come up that would make them capable of ending that friendship at a moment's notice?

On the other hand, you take Harry and Sally (*When Harry Met Sally*). They knew each other, liked things and disliked things about each other, and they got along splendidly. They could trust each other, they were vulnerable with each other, they were authentic. There was an acceptance of each other, even though they disagreed on certain points. They could look to each other for companionship. So, a Best Friend is there at all times, and for whatever reason, be it for moving, being a shoulder to cry on, or just kissing on New Years (or whenever).

So, let's take Cypher (*The Matrix*) for another example. He maybe wasn't Besties with Neo...or Morpheus, but he was trusted by the crew, and so, his betrayal, akin to that

of Judas, was heavy and poignant. It didn't matter to him that Neo was or wasn't The One, all that mattered is that he be allowed to "forget" all the bullshit. I mean, that's legitimate for sure, but deeply untrustworthy, because he to communicate. That's bigtime. He also knew that E.T. knew the back end. He knew the behind the scenes. He was knowledgeable about all the secrets. So, a Best Friend is not someone who is so self centered and focused on themselves that they are able to put up walls and block you out.

Let's take E.T and Elliot. First off, Elliot tried super hard needed him. E.T. in all actuality didn't do that much to further the relationship, but even still, was grateful and appreciative. Truth be told, he would have died, or been anally probed if it weren't for Elliot and his brother, sister, and friends. So, out of this we have Elliot giving himself fully. That's an important aspect. To be a Best Friend, you must be willing and able to give all of you. Good, bad, ugly, scared, confused, etc.

Now let's take Lando and Han (*The Empire Strikes Back*). This was unexpected, and to be honest, never really felt like a true betrayal, but the fact is, Han and Lando had a history of revenge and battling each other, so it kinda made sense. Vader didn't give Lando a choice, although it was Lando who was saving his own butt and position in the Cloud City. So, NOT seeking revenge and keeping tabs on evil and wrongdoings. Or at least not holding it against them.

This turns later when Leia and Luke go all out to save Han, and subsequently Chewie (*Return of the Jedi*). They sacrifice themselves for this friend. *Star Wars* is chock full of friendships and betrayals. Pretty interesting that ol' George knew this subject matter would grab hold of us and keep us tied up. Because relationships are super important. And finding that specific Bestie is also huge. So, a Best Friend is someone who will follow you, have to fight a Rancor, wear a metal bikini, and escape a Sarlac pit, just to bring you back from your imprisonment. (be that what it might be)

J.D. and Turk (*Scrubs*) are one of my favorite examples of Best Friendship. Now, I don't know what happened after the show jumped the shark, but while they were rocking it, they rocked it. They had handshakes, super intense conversations, cared for each other, knew each other's preferences, might have been able to hear each other's thoughts, forgave each other, forgot grievances and walked through the bullshit together. Lovely. So, a Best Friend knows you. The Spanish word for that is

"Conocer" which breaks down to "co" (together) and "nosco" (to know).

Abed and Troy (*Community*) had a friendship that always got me in the feels. Akin to J.D. and Turk, these guys seemed unflappable in their Bestieness. There was the one episode with Evil Abed, but that's different. Kind of. These boys were there for each other, cared for each other, toiled for each other, would fight for each other, and truly accepted each other. They weren't the most accessible people in the college, and maybe that accounts for something. So, maybe Best Friends are bonded somehow by their uniqueness or their differentness. They have something that connects them deeply, and they entangle themselves with each other.

Another great friendship is Donkey and Shrek (*Shrek*). Sure, Shrek feels betrayed by Donkey because of the talk he had with Fiona, but that was a misunderstanding. And what it showed us was that Shrek really wanted...scratch that...needed Donkey as his confidant. Both in fact are loyal. Sure, Shrek let's his frustration get to him, but Shrek is always willing to forgive and forget. Shrek wanted Donkey around. Donkey obviously wasn't wanted

by anyone and saw that Shrek was a good person. So maybe part of this Best Friend thing is being about to see how big someone's heart is.

Forrest and Jenny (*Forrest Gump*) will always be a special friendship in my eyes. It spans decades, is rocky at times, and began with a dark trauma. She asks him to sit next to him when no one else would. She is his savior. He tries to be hers. There is a bond that happened when she asked him to pray with her in the field. Forrest would do anything for her. Anything. She uses him sometimes, manipulates him sometimes, has sex with him, but loves him ultimately. His love for Jenny never fails.

Maybe Best Friends can't be perfect. Maybe movies and TV portray Best Friends in a way that has made us go about searching for a Best Friend, or hoping for a certain kind of Best Friend, in the wrong way. I don't know how it happens, but it does. I've had some Best Friends. I've been betrayed deeply by a few of them. I have one who is helping me trust again. Helping me be able to give myself again. Helping me accept again. Helping me be me again.

I hope you have this person...or find this person. And that they NEVER betray you. - JORGE GOYCO

TODD (BRIEFLY) LIVES IN A FILM

I know everything about you and remember everything.

I remember you once spit in a critic's drink and thought you got away with it but then that critic became ill a week later and you wondered whether you were to blame.

I remember your recipe for French onion soup had too many onions in it (like seriously, way too heavy on the onions dude), but your taste buds weren't attuned enough to know when to stop.

I remember your 6th grade art teacher gave you a B in the class because you weren't able to distinguish different French Renaissance painters from each other.

I remember that Ron Washington started Michael Young at first base instead of Mike Napoli in the 2012 American League Wild Card game, then had to move Napoli to catcher after Geovany Soto got hurt, causing them to give up their designated hitter spot in the lineup.

I remember that ultimately at the end of every day you small and weak and merely a human who has no one to love and would throw down their apron for a simple hug.

Where is my pig? - TODD HANSEN



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APOLOGIES

"I'm so sorry."

As the words slipped from Jill's mouth, another blue Line of Apology on her arm disappeared in a searing — but brief — slice of pain. She only had ten Apology Lines left. Most people her age had blue streaks marking their arms all the way to shoulder.

As the pain in Jill's arm faded, so did the look of suffering on the young man's face. She reminded herself that Johnson had a much harder life than she did. His wife of five years had died in a horrible accident. She left him with an infant child to care for, when all he wanted to do was die with his spouse. Jill's apology wouldn't remove the hurt, but it would start the healing process.

"Thank you, Dr. Jackson," Johnson said. "That was very generous of you." A new blue line appeared on his hand. There wasn't any more room on his arm. He probably got dozens of apologies from friends at his wife's funeral, but none from a professional.

"You're welcome," she replied, standing to signal that Johnson's therapy session was over. He shook her hand as he left.

Jill caught Dr. Halper watching her in the cafeteria. She hurried to pay for her food. He was a doctor of mental health; she was just a therapist. They weren't even allowed to ride in the same elevator together.

He didn't seem to care about those things, though. Certainly not from the way he strode to her table. "Do you mind if I join you?" he asked.

"Of course not," she said, unable to hide her flush.

"Forgive me for interrupting your lunch," he said, sitting next to her, "but I noticed your last patient leaving. Johnson Willard? I've been regulating his medication and I wanted to ask how his therapy is going?"

"Better, I think," she replied as vaguely as possible. Why did he have to ask about Johnson, now? And why did his eyes keep straying to her sleeve. Her heart accelerated.

"Today he was the most engaged I've ever seen him. Just yesterday, I was thinking about upping the dose on his medication."

Jill hated the over-medicated zombies that shambled through their in-patient center. She couldn't stand the thought of Johnson turning out that way. "Dr. Halper--"

"Thomas."

Her eyes skipped from the table and back to him. "Thomas, I think we should give it some time. He might be turning a corner."

Thomas cocked his head. "Really?"

Her face grew uncomfortably hot again. "His demeanor is improved. He hasn't had a positive outcome yet, but I think he's headed in the right direction."

"And he's your patient," Thomas added.

"Excuse me?"

His hazel eyes settled on her in a serious way. "I've been checking your files. Not a single suicide. An unusually low rate of divorce..."

"I'm good at what I do." She stood to leave. To flee.

He stopped her with a hand on her arm. His touch was sweet. "You used your personal apologies to heal them."

It wasn't a question.

She looked around at the doctors and therapists in the room. Nobody was listening in. "Yes," she said softly.

"Is he the only one?"

Her eyes fell to the table.

"Let me see," he said.

She pushed up her sleeve and a sharp whistle slipped through his lips. "You have to stop this."

"I can't let them keep hurting."

"You can't keep giving away pieces of yourself to everyone who hurts," he countered. "You have--what? A dozen lines? Less? You have to save something to forgive yourself."

Jill remembered the very first apology she had ever received: the sense of calm, the flood of goodwill, and the purge of poison that had been her anger. From the

moment she got her first apology when she was twelve, she knew that all she wanted to do was be a therapist and help people feel better. Jill picked up her untouched tray and stood. "Thank you for the advice, Dr. Halper." She turned and felt his eyes on her as the left the room.

Jill managed to wait a week before she used another apology. Her ten o'clock Tuesday patient was listless and not improving. Jill feared she would hurt herself. Another Line of Apology spent in a moment of sympathy and pain.

She saw Thomas Halper in the cafeteria the next day and ate her lunch in her office. She stared at the few lines on her arms with dry eyes.

Friday, she started with a new patient. He was a soldier, an amputee, freshly home from war. She couldn't have denied him an apology if she wanted to. Just after she healed him, a weight settled on Jill's shoulders. It grew harder to get out of bed or to care about anything at all. She only went to the homeless shelter the next weekend out of habit. While she was there, she spent another apology. Her shoulders sagged. Her steps dragged.

None of the supervisors at work followed up on Thomas Halper's concerns. If she saw him in the halls or cafeteria, she hurried in the opposite direction. Two weeks passed without incident.

Another patient hovered on the edge of despair; another blinding slash of pain to heal her. An addict given hope. A child. A widow. They ran together in her mind. The pain wasn't physical anymore.

Jill only vaguely sensed hunger; she drifted instinctively to the cafeteria. She saw Dr. Halper across the room through a haze of indifference. He crossed the room to join her, but there was no quickening at the sight of him. She registered his concern like it was a mathematical formula and let him lead her to a table. His hands fumbled for her sleeve. She didn't care enough to stop him; nor did his audible groan concern her.

"Oh, Jill," he whispered. "I'm so sorry." He pressed his lips against her cheek in a way that she had once hoped he would. She didn't feel anything. — *STARKNESS*

FADING SCARS



I almost forget about them, but occasionally someone new will come around and eventually — "Dude, what happened to your arm?"

I used to give terrible excuses — "I fell in a pile of roof tin".

Then after a while they became better, more ambiguous —

(sheepish smile & hand wave)
"yeah, super dumb accident"
sudden topic change

Now I don't even try —

(half-effort shrug)
ignore all further inquiry

The truth is that in some of my darker moments I took a buck knife, heated the blade with a torch and began slicing into my arm. Once it got in deep enough I would then rock and twist the blade around just to make sure I got to the blank-out levels of pain.

That beautiful calm place where you don't think, you don't feel, and all you can see is blank white light inside your head while searing fire courses through every nerve in your body. I never knew pain could be so calming.

My head is a packed house party after the bands are done but literally everyone is drunk, screaming incoherently, and refusing to leave.

Then suddenly for a single minute or two, the house is completely empty, I am alone in silence, and I feel like I can catch my breath.

I have never spoken about this with anyone, I always felt like it was something to hide or be embarrassed about.

Lately though, I feel differently. These marks are the results of my own choices. That I made in my life. Regarding how I deal with my problems.

How other people feel in regards to them doesn't really matter at all.

It's not the healthiest method, and I now strive to deal with my issues in other ways. However, I know what I did, and I accept that I did it.

Fading scars.

I'm not proud of them, but I won't be ashamed of them either, drink about it. — *CAVAN THEISS*

Katie Killer, who has illustrated nearly every cover of this magazine since 2012 and has written her own column since 2016, and Wonko Zuckerberg, who founded this very magazine with myself, Atarimatt, and Niki Pistols in 2009, are leaving the Bryan/College Station area for the higher altitude of Fort Collins, Colorado this month. The two of them have been involved in countless artistic endeavors, have opened their home to numerous touring bands and parties, and have offered a social and artistic center for the B/CS community. Wonko has recorded dozens of local bands, played in many local bands, created much of the art, organization, and operation of LOUD-FEST, and operated Sinkhole Texas Inc. Records. Katie has inked many fliers, organized her very popular LOUD-FAEST brunches, played in numerous local bands, and converted many people to veganism through her Salacious Crumbs baking service. To say that their exit from the community is a massive gutpunch is an understatement. This month many 979Rep writers past and present line up to send off the Killerbergs in low style.

2006. Roasted Bean Coffee House. This was a place that was opened in one of the various shopping centers on the corner of Texas Ave. and Southwest Pkwy. It is long gone now. It was The Hangouts, Foreign Affairs, The Flak Jackets, and Machine Meets Land. There was this dude that looked like Zoot from the Muppets come to life, playing a fake Mosrite guitar with a rainbow guitar strap. He played really cool, echoey reverb-drenched guitar lines all night with two different bands. I thought, man, I'd like to play in a band with that guy. He plays cool stuff. Two years later I got my wish. Who knew that I wasn't just getting into a band with him. I was entering into a friendship of a lifetime.

Over the past 15 years Michael and I have driven thousands of miles around this country, deafened thousands of people (including ourselves), drank thousands of gallons of beer, and spent countless hours doing the coolest and funnest of things together. Sure, I make it all sound like it was roses and peaches or whatever, but I've only ever had one real argument with him (and if you've ever argued with Michael you know you cannot win...dude is maybe the smartest person I know) and I've thrown all kinds of crazy ideas and such at him over the years. I've never met a person more generous and giving than Michael. There are plenty of people in the Bryan/College Station music scene that have benefitted from his generosity. A donated guitar amp here, a donated guitar there, dozens of hours spent recording a band's album in exchange for a 6-pack of shitty beer, hundreds of hours sweating in the "SHTI sweatshop" garage over a screenpress, flicking spray paint by hand for thousands of LOUDFEST posters...there are just too many examples of Michael's selflessness to include here. Suffice it to say that if you are in need Michael will have a hand extended to you, no questions asked.

2010. Hot Topic, Post Oak Mall. They started letting people play live music in the store. The Hangouts, Atarimatt, great unwashed luminaries, even The Ex-Optimists got in on that action. There were cool people working there then. But there was this one person who was pretty quiet but always seemed really excited about what was going on. That was Katie Killer. Over the last dozen years Katie has made herself as much a lynchpin for the dirtbag arts and music scene in B/CS as Michael. Katie helped get Punk Rock Prom off the ground and it bore

A FAREWELL TO THE KILLERBERGS

her inimitable cartoonish art style. Katie, too, is an extremely selfless sort and has offered home, hearth, and hummus to hundreds of aftershow parties, LOUD-FAESTS, and wayward bands needing a piece of floor for the night. The more I got to know Katie the more I realized just how wicked and righteous her sense of humor is. Whether it's throwing up in a messenger bag in the back of the van somewhere between Memphis and Little Rock or vandalizing the walls of a shitty club in Kentucky, Katie always finds a wrinkle of humor in things. Katie learned to play bass and guitar after moving to B/CS and we watched her go from zero to 60 at an alarming pace, and for the past seven years she's grafted punk rock bass onto the Xops' boozy swooziness. Katie's local advocacy through gardening and veganism has turned a lot of folks onto the possibilities of living different and while I know she has never asked to be the poster child for any of it Katie has inspired many of us to contemplate a different path.

Together Michael and Katie, like Matt and Niki, are a major part of the reason that from 2008-2018 Bryan/College Station was a sort of utopian oasis in the middle of a bottom land of prejudice and bullshit. Many of you moved to this area and thought it was going to be awful and you'd never meet anyone like you. You were right, it was going to be awful, but on any given weekend night you could find shelter from that awfulness, and half the time that was because Michael and/or Katie were doing something extremely cool, welcoming, and inclusive either at Revs, The Stafford, or their home. Losing them to Colorado is the closing of a chapter. I think of it in terms less of losing them to B/CS and more like gaining a new territory for future adventures in the mountains with my best friends. It is always risky to rest your weight on nostalgia, but these were easily the times of my life spent in their company in these two shitty towns. I humbly thank them both for their generosity and advocacy, and personally for helping me to achieve a lifelong dream of belonging to something that *means* something. I love you both and will see you sometime in the mountains. Roof and Hall forever. — *KELLY MENACE*

It is said that you do not remember people, you remember the way that they make you feel. I don't remember the first time I met Katie but I do remember the smell of cinnamon and sweet and the warm comatoses feeling a heavy blanket gives you. I can't even remember the first time I shook hands with Michael but I remember the sticky, sweet brine of a beer hair mask the next day and 10% hearing capacity in my right ear.

I suspect on the day that Katie Killer was born, an angel farted. It is as it is in the realm of holy beings and I would bet my right tit that glorious toots of praise triumphed thru the heavens and hells, regaling what could only be the beginning of extraordinarily marvelous things.

We all know, Wonko is a mythical warlock bending time and illusion to create a cosmic bubble of anarchist harmony with his guitar. So naturally, when the two forces of beauty and chaos collided, that my fellows, is when the apocalypse began.

What? You don't believe me. Listen. I'm a witch. I can only speak the truth. The KillerWonkobergs feel like home. And if home is the rise of the morningstars into late stage capitalism and the collapse of society into a coalition of DIY or die punk kids, right now, home is a bit apocalyptic.

Tell me a time when a Katie or a Michael didn't radically change your world with a simple act of friendship and support. Think about every time you had a beer induced, late after midnight, explode your brains idea that M or K didn't both enthusiastically exclaim, "YES!!! DO IT!!!!" to. And you did. You didn't listen to fear or an arbitrary excuse to not move forward. You listened to their little voices inside your head and told your Self, yes do the things you love to do.

What about the way you feel after an Ex-Ops or Charm Bomb show? Has your body ever resonated for days and days on a frequency that didn't quite match the world around you? Were the words of mortals lost upon your ears as the siren of Michael's guitar wooed you beyond death, to punk rock pits everlasting? Have you found your Self mastering a new or impossible skill as Girlband jammed in your headphones?

Here we all were/are, at some point or another, revolving around 979, smashing into each other in pits, screaming into voids of too long guitar solos, arms thrown up in full support of another human's weight as they surfed along the tops of a sweaty, drunken crowd of punks, "LAST CALL" being hollered out as we all moan and wish the party would never end, and in the background of it all, a Katie and a Micheal, welcoming us back home.

They provided a space for wayward musicians and riff raff to share food, friendship and formulas for topping the infrastructure that threatens our existence and supports sustainable solutions for the uprising. Our memories with them are filled with delicious sweets and good things to eat and great music and belly filled laughs and secret butt cheek tattoos.

Do not grow weary with grief, my loves. Our comrades are off to inspire change and reVOLution in a new time space continuum that needs them more than we do now. Their work here isn't done but is burning beautifully. The fires they stoked among all of our hearts burns deep and true. We know our worth and what we will risk fighting for it. We know we are loved and supported. We have thrown elbows with the gods and survived. Let us all grow forth and create a new world worth burning this one down for.

This isn't goodbye. This is: thank you. Katie and

Michael, thank you for coming into our lives and radically shifting our worlds with so much love and kindness that we began to shift the worlds around us in return.

In the honorable words of my sweet son, Dawson Fawkes: I love you so much that I would do murder for you. — *HALEY RICHARSON*

For a man who creates some of the finest rock-n-roll the larger world has yet to hear, my favorite moments with Michael have been the quiet ones. Long hours absorbed in head-down tasks: wheeling rocks, screening posters, driving miles, watching documentaries. The Descendents were often in the background. Our own language resorted to monosyllabic grunts, the occasional offering and accepting of a beer, a wayward comment about some track playing or some live-version of it experienced. For a musical mastermind, I always found long silences with Michael something to be treasured. I've missed those projects, those multi-hour sessions of just doing something quietly together. I learned more in those times than I have words for now, and the best part of such moments was knowing that is just fine.

I am of the opinion that Katie Killer can do any damn thing she damn well-pleases, and she'll do it all top notch. She will never know the courage she gave me to write some new things, to try new things with words. Katie is perpetually looking at her life, her time, her energy, her interests and saying, "What else?" I love that about her. She's a walking bulwark of courage, of bold-fisted willingness to embrace the suck if it means reaching a new form of good. I need more of that in my life.

Wherever Michael and Katie arrive — residentially or recreationally — the environment notices. They are artists, creators, entrepreneurs, community-builders, engineers, and make-gooders. I refuse to focus on what is lost from Old Oaks. Rather, I take grateful inventory of what I've gained — the music, the foods, the shared tables and car-rides, the gifts, the parties, the Zoot hairs — and bless their next recipients. Fort Collins, watch the fuck out. — *KEVIN STILL*

Katie and Michael, you guys are truly some of the coolest people I've ever met. You are genuine, and accepting and you don't judge. Well, that's my experience. So many times your reaction to statements I've made made me realize that I was being mean or judgmental about something. In my recollection, you don't assume things, you are humble, and authentic. You are also super generous and truly care about your friends and having good times. There were so many conversations with you guys that inspired me to do more and better and cooler stuff. Your love for the dirtbag scene, music, people, and art is always eye opening and woke. Your encouragement of my parenting and how my kids were was always held in high esteem. I loved when you were impressed by something I did. And it wasn't flattery. It was honest, true intentions of heartfelt feelings. Pretty cool peeps you two are. Katie and Michael: keep it up. I'm proud of you guys, and super happy for you. You guys have made really good decisions, and I know you will keep doing that. Enjoy all the stuffs! — *JORGE GOYCO*

CONT.->

How do I start? My friendship with Michael and Katie, as is true for most of us, started by becoming friends with each of them separately. When I met either of them, I knew somehow that I didn't have to worry about being weird, or insecure or hold in my dumb jokes anymore... although I probably went a little overboard with making things about butts sometimes.

I met Michael because I met AtariMatt first. I convinced him to do a Shitty Misfits cover band for Halloween back in...2010? I can't even remember now. Tim Horn was our drummer as Artie the Strongest Man In the World (I remember going to the mall to American Eagle with him to find his shirt) and Michael played bass. The show was at the Shea's house with The CroFags (Jonny's CroMags band with Adrians ride cymbal that had the huge bell). I was nervous as shit because I didn't know any of you people yet, but what fixed the show in my memory and was coincidentally my origin as a Dirtbag, was when we started "Where Eagles Dare". Michael played the opening riff in the wrong key and it wasn't until Matt got his attention when things got back on track. We repeated The Shitty Misfits years later with Kelly on the skins at Punk Rock Prom and it was a jam. Also...The House, Star Wars, Simpson, The Back Porch, The Tree Chair, The Couch and The Cheeseburger Pillow by Michael Lewis Frazier. If you know, you know.

I don't exactly remember the first time that Katie and I met, but I remember our first true interaction being at her apartment because I brought her one of my first 8BitBob pieces...Princess Toadstool made out of layered foam-board. That poor princess has seen her share of miles and is not sturdy or robust as far as quality goes (er...Princess Toadstool...not Katie, but that's as may be, I don't know [HA!! Snuck in a Genesis lyric]). My absolute favorite is when she does the little dance where she rotates about an axis for a full revolution. Katie was and continues to be the absolute model of sweetness, niceness and overall genuine goodness and I will always consider her the standard. Fight me if you think differently.

Then, K&M found each other and decided that they provided the missing pieces for each other's jigsaw puzzles. Katie moved into The House, then they moved out of The House and moved into The Other House. A new event called Loud!Feast began as a hangover cure for Loud!Fest. They are both a lesson in quick wit, puns and dumb jokes that are somehow funny even without alcohol.

Katie honed her baking skills into Salacious Crumbs and baked my Megaman birthday cake (and let me tell you, I can appreciate how much of a pain in the ass pixelated cutting is by hand...also tattooing, but Jeremy Rasmussen can tell you about that) and the awesome blood-filled Friday the 13th proposal cake for Jess and me (which I butchered with a burger spatula dressed as Bob Belcher). Then she done went and learned how to play guitar and bass and was part of Girlband, Charm Bomb and The Xops (in a nod to Katherine O'Hara playing Tina Weymouth).

Michael became one of the most well-informed gear-heads and home recording dudes I've ever known. When I started venturing into home recording, I always felt like I was bugging him asking for advice on this mic/that mic, EQ, etc...but found out that he loves nerding out about sonic architecture just as much as I do. He is a

true example of self-education, doing your fucking homework and making it "look easy".

Collectively, the two of them have the most of my 8Bit-Bob stuff I've made. In a way, I like to think that I was responsible for bringing them together. Ahhhh, I'm just kidding...I just wanted positive affirmation and to see smiles on my friends faces.

To cut this short, cuz I know I'm taking a lot of room (but I love to gush...just put me in front of a microphone), Michael and Katie were responsible for me finding myself, my family away from family and understanding what finding my other half is all about. Matt and Niki are responsible for that too...but that's a different story. When they move, that piece of my heart/soul/being is going with them. It will hurt at first, but I'll know I'm always there. I'm crying as I write this.

I love you both, and may all your favorite bands stay together. — *BOBBY BROWNING*

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It's hard for me to think about Bryan without thinking about Michael and Katie, two people so integral to the scene and broader community, and also two really great friends. I don't even know the first time I met either of them; I'm sure it must've been at Revs seeing a show or at a Team Dinner organized by Tim. Then as I started getting more involved with bands and shows they were both always there and always happy to see you. Side note: Michael and I figured out years later that we were both in the same "History of Rock and Roll" course at A&M back in 2007. Michael brought his threemin to class one day after the prof had lectured about *Pet Sounds*, and he let anyone who wanted to come up and play around with it (naturally I was too shy to do so). Also, turns out you *don't* need a class to learn about rock'n'roll.

Their hospitality has always been unparalleled, whether you want to borrow a guitar, come hang out and watch *Top Gear*, record an album over several weekend sessions that take up a bunch of their time, stay overnight because all the hotels are sold out for a sportsball game, sit on their roof, and so on and so on. Loud!Feast alone was something of a minor miracle, hosted by them without asking for anything in return. The nights hanging out with Michael and Katie (and whoever else was awake) in their kitchen after a show have always been the best. Once when I was up at their place for a weekend and about to head back to Houston on Sunday afternoon, they asked me if I wanted to watch the first episode of some new show called *American Vandal*; we were laughing so hard I ended up staying for the next six hours and binging the whole season with them. Often when I came over the first thing Michael would do is hand me a glass and say "Hey, you need to try this beer". Every time I came back we always picked right back up where we left off.

I have to briefly mention Michael's influence on me as a musician. When I was putting together Golden Sombro (and had no idea what I was doing), I reached out to Michael, sent him a couple demos and asked if he wanted to play bass in a band with me. He loved the demos but asked if he could play guitar instead; that change made all the difference, as both the Sombro sound and my songwriting were forever altered thereafter by putting

together tunes with Michael's powerful amplifier in my head. Just before I moved away from Bryan I got to play drums with Michael, Katie, and Kelly in the late-great Lightning Briefs; I was not very good but had a lot of fun being asked to make noise with them. The hardest part of leaving town was not being able to play with my friends anymore.

In the recent spurt of online giveaways offered to friends, the one that caught my eye was the old brown cushiony couch; it had occupied one of the guestrooms of their current place, but previously was the prime living room couch at their former house on Nagle St. I couldn't begin to estimate how many times I've sat or slept on that thing (one of the best sleeping couches of all time), but it was always available for you. I'm sure Michael and Katie will continue to be there when you need them or just want to hang out if you're going out Colorado way. — **TODD HANSEN**



*Nasim & Joe Black, Nagle House Roof, who knows what year.
Photo by Joshua Siegel*

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I don't know Michael and Katie that well. That's more on me than them. They have always been unfailingly kind to me in small ways for years though: a nod during a high-volume show, a gentle smile in a Loudfest crowd.

The one thing I have noticed without fail over those years is the high regard that so many hold Michael and Katie. Heck, I remember the days before they became a couple. However, their shared bent humor, rock and roll souls, and good hearts certainly make them a good match.

I told Kelly once that I felt like I was on the fringes of the rock and roll scene in B/CS — hey, I have kids old as some of you — but it is a great fringe due to folks like them.

Now that rock and roll scene is stretching from the Carolinas to Colorado now. B/CS will miss them, but I wish them great fortune and fun in the Centennial State. — **MIKE L. DOWNEY**

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Michael came to our first Friendsgiving, we became friends from that day on and many wrasslings and fun drunk nights and bandmates and LOUDFESTS later. Katie and I worked at Hot Topic together but we didn't really become friends until I nudged Michael to talk to her at a show at Stafford because I told him she was cool as fuck, then she and I started hanging out and we formed Girlband. I have so many fun memories with those two, hanging out, shows and tours. I'm gonna miss you both so much, we love you guys! — **NIKI PISTOLS**

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Off the bat, I just want to say that this is all your fault.

I typed that with the intention of making some sort of "Guy-from-[insert noun/bigtimhornmood]" joke, but I feel you two should take some responsibilities for your actions.

Michael and Katie, I accuse you of helping create and foster a community so many of us love. Michael and Katie, I blame you both for helping me make memories,

build friendships and gain a greater ability to identify what is and is not a ladder.

I want to thank you for always being hospitable. When I first met you guys, you invited me over after a show and I made a lot of great friendships on your roof. You guys hosted the 979 Holiday Party, Loud!Feasts, and a whole bunch of other nice stuff. You make the great musics — and help others make and put out the great musics too.

You guys and what you do are a big part of why I love Downtown Bryan — and did not look to leave as soon as I could. I have really enjoyed becoming friends with you guys over the years, and am proud to be Guy From Bar.

Also! Crumbs!! The crumbs deserve a shout! Katie, you make such tasty things. Jack Fruit, Crumbs Mix, assorted deliciousness. I always enjoy snacking when you have folks over.

Imma try to wrap up rather than babble. I love the both of you. I love and appreciate everything that you have contributed to this community. And, I am so jealous for the folks in Fort Collins who are getting two amazing people. Love you both. I will miss you, and I am so excited to see all the things you do up there. — **JOSHUA SIEGEL**

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Michael and Katie! I love these people! Whenever I go to the 101, I get SUPER STOKED when I see them rounding the corner! It's like Christmas morning and Santa ACTUALLY remembered me this year! Michael is one of the funniest, wittiest and talented persons I've ever met. Never a dull conversation with him around. Katie is so full of life, laughter and just so excited about everything!!! She's the Sun you needed on the darkest day of the year!

The first time I went to their house, surprise birthday party for Steph Heath, Chelsie and I showed up for the party together. They were so gracious and offered the most delectable vegan treats Chelsie told me to "jump up" on her back and piggy backed me in circles around their house. Whiskey kicked in and we rounded their front room and took quite the spill!! Landed right in front of Michael and Katie's gorgeous guitar collection! My head landed 2' from the impeccable array of

CONT.->

stringed instruments. I was SO GRATEFUL we didn't take them out! Michael and Katie didn't even throw us out or even chastise us for being reckless and juvenile. Instead they laughed with us. I believe Michael touched the guitars as of to check they were still ok. They were but.....i haven't been back since.

Awesome humans, I wish them the BEST OF EVERYTHING EVER!!!! – *KHRYSTENE KENNEY*

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I don't remember the first time I met The Killerbergs. You see, B/CS has always been this weird second home to me, and while I haven't visited as much as I should have this last year and change (thanks pandemic), I can only tell you that my roots with the B/CS musical community stretches well over a decade.

In that amount of time, I have grown to call many in that town and scene friends. I don't say that lightly. B/CS had something I couldn't find in my hometown. They had a willful unruly group of folks that put out zines, screen printed show posters, booked shows, ran sound, and even put out CD's for scuzzy little garage bands who lived hours away. I was (and still am) in love with this core group of people.

Wonko and Katie were no exception.

I can't tell you when I first met them, but I can tell you they have always offered a place for Brea and I to stay. I can tell you that if I needed to record an EP, Wonko always made time for us to do so. (there is an unreleased TSS EP just floating about in the ether). If I had to tell you anything, I can tell you that like the core group of folks I mentioned I always associated them with, they are selfless, kind and always willing to help

I can't tell you when I met them, but I can share a few tidbits of what my alcohol rattled brain can remember: When TSS first formed, we played a brewery. I was nervous as hell, never played bass before (I was always a front man) I wrote down some cheat notes in my set list to help me remember the song. In the dimly lit room, somewhere around song 3, I leaned down to squint my eyes at my shoddy handwriting in the dark. I saw my writing turned to an amber mush as I looked up and noticed beer drowning this now soggy piece of paper. "Here let me help you... your set list needs a drink" Wonko said as I watched his beer flow over my unreadable set list. I shrugged and just did the best I could, it's just punk rock after all. I never stressed over playing bass again. The first time I think I stayed at their place with the band (maybe it was the luchadores) I woke up early and walked to the kitchen. It's weird being the early riser in a house after a show. My work won't let me sleep. I kind of just walked around admiring the art on the walls. When I stopped to look on their fridge I read notes upon hand written notes from bands all across the country who thanked them for their hospitality. I knew they were good people. Brea and I made it a point to always give bands who needed it a place to stay, you could even say our house that we own now, was bought with musicians in mind. I never forgot that kindness. One night after a show, Wonko or Kelly put on Jawbreaker. An aftershow dance party ensued. Breakfast buffets were always amazing the next morning Katie drew our cats once. With battle vests. That art still proudly hangs in our house today. I often contribute to this rag called

979, Katie often sends me any issues I miss. (I'm a sucker for things I wrote in physical form).

I don't know, there's tons of stuff I can remember. Star Wars convos, recording music (you can call me Timmy two takes), trying to open that damn death star cookie jar, watching Zoot navigate tile... But I think what I will miss most is the passing of yet another milestone. Nothing lasts forever. Sooner or later the landscape of B/CS has to change. There are many pillars of the B/CS music and art community, but to pretend like two really big chunks of that aren't leaving will be criminal. So I am acknowledging it now.

Our friendship won't end, but things will change. It will be a little harder to pop in last minute to a Christmas party unannounced... B/CS will have to pick up the slack that the Killerbergs helped sustain. But it's not the work that bothers everyone. They say you never know what you have till it's gone, and I think we're all gonna feel that a little more now.

Good luck guys. Give em hell. – *TIM DANGER*

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The other day Michael saw my collection of the historical Loudfest posters, and saw I was missing a couple of years. He immediately went and found those two years and told me to pick them up whenever. That was just after Katie presented to me a beautiful handmade Triple Butt Bandit sculpture as a housewarming gift. If that's not the perfect summarization of those two observant, creative, and thoughtful dirtbag kids, then I don't know what is. I'm honored to have the memories with them that I do and to have their art all over my house and to have heard them making music all these years. From peeing in kiddie pools to fairytale butterfly mountain moments to alcohol-stained memories to not ladders to holiday parties and birthday parties to the awkward work parties... There's definitely bittersweet feelings with this end of an era. But it's hard to stay sad about it when I think of all the Colorado adventures to come. So many more hikes and farts to be had! No matter what, when, or where, it's always a good time with those whose. I love you both, friends. Get home safe, see you soon. – *CHELSIE SCARPINATO*

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It isn't often you meet people as genuine and as kind as Michael and Katie. I spent some time today thinking about when we first met them and it amazed me to think that it felt like I've always known them. They are the type of people that once they come into your lives they sew themselves into every story. They feel like home or like the warmth you feel when you bite into a fresh loaf of bread. These are all terrible descriptions for our friendship but honestly I'm not sure words really suffice. Every time we make the trek up to Bryan, whether it be to simply visit friends, play a show, or record, they ALWAYS had our back and made their home a second home for us. We knew we would be met with delicious food, a comfortable place to stay, and kindness. I'm going to miss the hell out of you guys..... I know this isn't goodbye but it sure feels close. I love both of you so hard! Best of luck on your future endeavors and know you always have a place to stay in Victoria! – *BREA LARA*



**WHEN DARKNESS WELCOMES HALLOWE'EN -
AND OWLS HOOT LONG AND LOW.
THE WITCHES IN THE DEEP RAVINE
MOVE WILDLY TO AND FRO.**

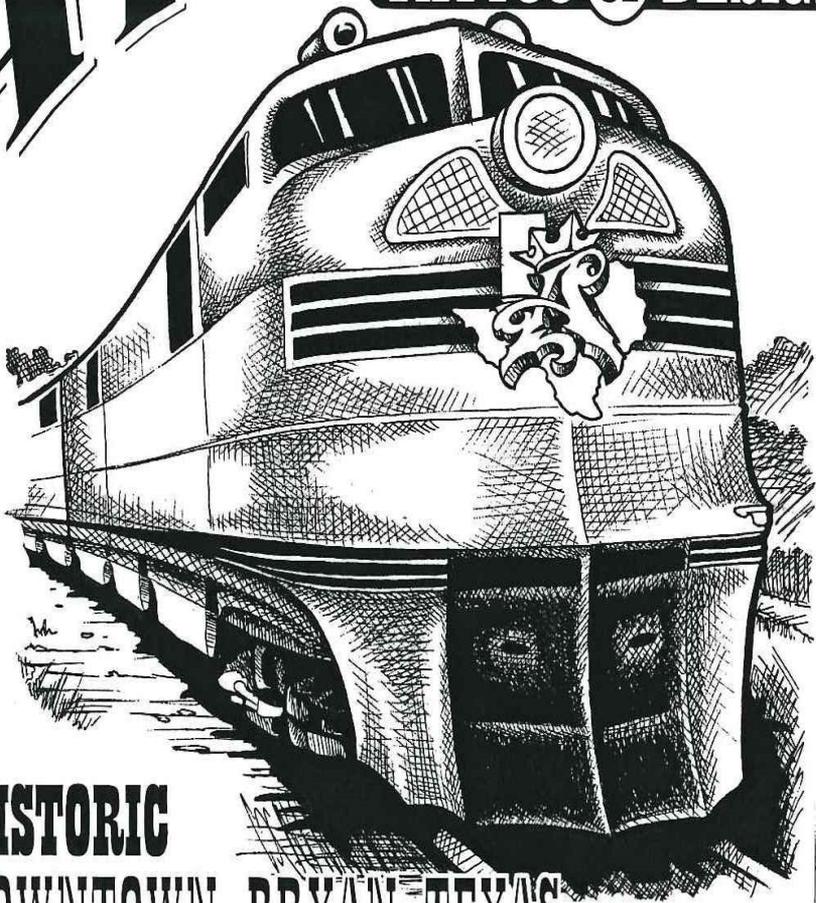
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TODD ON FILM



Fair warning, this review has plenty of spoilers.

Again – SPOILER ALERT.

For a movie that so clearly wants to surprise its viewers and be not what you're expecting (as evidenced during the opening number when Sparks leaves the studio mid-song to join the principal cast for a tuneful stroll down the sidewalks), *Annette* is surprisingly ordinary and predictable. A man and woman are star performers and fall in love. They have a child, the titular character. Turns out the man's an asshole, which we already surmised pretty early on. He begins having an existential crisis because his star fades and hers continues to rise. Far from the shallow now, they charter a boat to the ocean and he's negligent in her death. He's haunted, figuratively and literally. The child reminds him of her. He sinks deeper. Maybe the one surprising thing is that there's no redemption for him at the end. Maybe if the kid had actual superpowers things would've gotten more interesting (can't believe this has me asking for more superhero movies).

If you haven't seen it, Adam Driver plays a standup comedian named Henry, Marian Cotillard plays an opera singer named Ann, and their daughter Annette is played by a puppet for most of the film. After Ann's death, her ghost channels her singing voice into Annette, who in turn becomes a worldwide sensation once Henry chooses to exploit her for his financial gain. There's also a composer played by Simon Helberg who is revealed to be Ann's secret lover before Henry. When the film is good, it plays with fourth wall-breaking through manifestation of interaction between normally non-conversing parties. The best examples are when the crowd asks questions or exclaims back at Henry while he's on stage, though strangely the director seldom takes advantage of this setup and instead opts for boring far away shots of Henry going through methodically dull paces. Why these stagnant choices are deployed is a mystery, particularly when all of the principal and supporting actors are quite game for the movie's premise and strangeness. There are some good moments of surprise, such as whirlwind shots around direct address from the accompanist/conductor or singing and swarming paparazzi, but in most other places of the film were full of stillness.

Also, the music by Sparks is..... not very good, which is particularly painful in a musical that's mostly sung

through. The recurring motifs and reprises are not particularly compelling, and the lyrics are either overly silly or downright bad – most of the time telling the viewer "This is the exact thing I am doing right now / And this is why I'm doing it." Only two of the song sequences in the musical were arresting visually and sonically: (1) Ann's performance at the opera that opens up with a portal to a forest behind the stage; (2) and Henry's trial which shows him alone in a crowded room while singing to a memory of his wife. Most of the time a song started I was soon ready for it to end by halfway through the verse.

Worst of all, whatever *Annette* is trying to say about its ideas on fame, love, parenthood, society, etc. are extremely half baked, non-cohesive, and simplistic. There's one number in the first hour that discusses how six women have come forward with very similar stories about abuse allegations against Henry (of course we know this because they say it repeatedly as the song's chorus) which seems to be introduced only to let us know that Henry is Not A Good Dude. Then their story

(ies) are never mentioned again for the remaining runtime, thereby never really impacting the outcome of anything. Likewise, several other plot points or emotions are just said directly rather than being shown by experience or given room to develop in a natural way.

I actually grew to like the puppet serving as the titular character. The first few scenes with it are jarring, but as she is aged slightly it works well for the movie's whimsy. The last scene of the film when the old switcharoo is pulled to sub in Annette the human child for Annette the puppet is far from gratifying and leaves us with the continual sting of painful listening to a child sing during a duet (with Adam Driver who is trying his best but also not good). In my opinion, it would have been far more effective to keep the puppet during the duet and switch in the human child at the very end for some actual emotional weight.

Occasionally there were some clever visual jokes and setups (such as the Hyperbowl halftime show introduction – complete with the football players apparently participating in the ceremonies on one knee around the stage rather than preparing for the second half in the locker room), but all in all *Annette* isn't weird enough to be interesting and not bad enough to be good. – TODD

HANSEN





RECORD REVIEWS



Earthshine

My Bones Shall Rest Upon the Mountain

As the first leaves begin to wither and fall from the trees, and the breeze chases away the searing heat that is Texas summer heat, one knows that autumn is not far behind, and winter is beginning to awaken. Shorter days, longer nights, and cooler air only signal one thing for a metalhead like me: it's time for black metal! While there have been many exquisite black metal records this year, such as those released by mysterious one-man black metal projects like Kanonenfieber, Runespell, and Harkener, as well as the new EP from Finland's highly praised Havukruunu, the band I have chosen to inaugurate this fine October month is Earthshine under their captivating sophomore release epically titled, *My Bones Shall Rest Upon the Mountain* (*My Bones...* from here on out).

Earthshine is a two-man—specifically, brothers—blackened atmospheric doom metal outfit from Victoria, Australia. I happened upon this band while scrolling through Black Metal Promotion's YouTube channel, and that artwork immediately caught my eye, which is *Knight at the Crossroads* by Viktor Vasnetsov; it was then that I knew I just had to listen. Normally, I am not one who regularly listens to any form of doom metal, as the slow pace tends to bore me in a hurry, however, this is something special. The overall sound of *My Bones...* immediately hits the listener right in the solar plexus; it drips with sorrow, loss, and longing for better days in the context of Tolkien-esque short stories, such as those featured in "Conquer thy Mountain" — a tale of a dying warrior accepting one final challenge — and "Shadows on the Wall" — a story of a hero contemplating his inevitable end. However, it should be noted that even though there are fantasy elements in this record, it is not as obvious as what one might find in Blind Guardian; rather, it is very

subtle and could easily be understood as allegory for dealing with real-life issues.

Sam's and Connor's vocals feature a range of techniques from guttural death-like growls, agonized gang vocals, mournful cleans featured in songs like "A Warm Place with No Memory" and "When I Die I Shall Return," to the disturbingly haunting clean vocals found in "Slaves of Misery." Every track has a perfect layer of white noise that rests like a cloak draped over each song, the bass has an extremely deep drone providing that doomy heaviness, and the tremolo picking of the guitars blends so well with the aforementioned elements that it's hard to distinguish if the strings are being rapidly picked or given one single pass which is held until the next strum. What I like particularly about this guitar approach is that it adds a layer of mystery that accentuates the bands blackened doom approach.

I suppose that the most outstanding thing that is a bit of a downer is that *My Bones...* lacks what many would consider "true" black metal vocals. Rarely, if ever, are there any icy shrieks, and I was hoping to have at least some featured on an album that has styled itself as being atmospheric blackened doom. On the other hand, though there are obvious black metal influences in *My Bones...*, the artwork and the sound do not strike me as being a product of winter; rather it screams autumn. With that in mind, perhaps it is appropriate that icy shrieks are absent. Nonetheless, a few well-placed traditional black metal vocals would have been a nice touch.

All in all, Earthshine has created something that is emotionally moving and musically heavy, but what I truly appreciate is that as sorrowful as *My Bones...* can get, it never delves into the totally nihilistic hopelessness that is depressive suicidal black metal. There is definitely light at the end of the tunnel, and I can easily spin this record without feeling...well...doomed. In addition, Earthshine is a band who has managed to finally get me to spin a doom record and love it, and I consider that an accomplishment in and of itself; for these reasons, it gets a 4.8/5. — **CALEB MULLINS**



Yaupon

Heartbeat In Tow

Houston band Yaupon is several years into things now and *Heartbeat In Tow* is the band's second EP release. The artwork would make you think you might be picking up a jazz album or perhaps some 60s-inspired garage rock fuzz bomb. Instead, when pushing play for the first time, you will be confronted with a lot of clean-sounding '00s alt-country influenced bar rock. This is not a bad thing.

The term "bar rock" has at times been lifted up on high and deified and at other times dismissed as boring and unimaginative. In this particular case, the Yaupon brand of bar rock is less NRQB and J. Geils, less Atlantic City, and more Deer Tick and Middle Brother, with some tinges of Wilco weirdness on the very edges. There are hand claps, callopie organs, bright acoustic guitar strums, overt Big Star references (I'm looking right at you, "Fall In Love (Every Nite)"), bluesy guitar breaks, and space-age synthesizer flourishes ("Hold Tight"). It's all held together with the clean-living Tom Verlaine lead vocals of Todd Hansen. The vocal approach is very uptown in comparison to some of the more down and dirty bands we've seen Todd blast through BCS over the years.

The band gets things started with a bright two chord vamp with ballpark organ and snappy drums. "Run around the carousel for the right swan until all the careful made plans erupt" Todd sings in EP opener "Carousel". An oblique covid years reference? Perhaps. But at times the absence of that cynical voice and the winsome heart on the sleeve narrative inherent in both "Taco Pretty" and "Fall In Love (Every Night)" definitely show a bent towards the coziness of new love. It's with the closer, "Hold Tight", that Yaupon reach for something different and unique, from Cody Wilhem's analog synthesizer burlles and whooshings,

Victor Powell's Lindsey Buckingham-esque lead guitar lines, and Bobby Browning's showy 6-over-4 drum fills, while Todd asks cheekily to show his lover "all his weak sides": The band sounds completely in abandon, playing their guts out, stretching for something right beyond their reach and grabbing it. I want to drink at *that* bar with Yaupon every night. — **KELLY MENACE**



Naked Raygun

Over the Overlords

This is the first full album of new material from Chicago punk veterans Naked Raygun since 1991. A band returning to action after sitting out for 30 years is usually a bad idea. (To be fair they have put out a few singles since then and have had the obligatory reunion shows — both really good). If we are being completely honest, most punk bands do not age very well. Fortunately *Over the Overlords* holds up against Naked Raygun's previous material. Their punk pop sound — punk pop in the sense of the Buzzcocks and Stiff little fingers; not Warped tour "punk" bands — remains largely unchanged. They have horns/keyboards on a few songs but it still sounds like classic Naked Raygun. "Living in the Good Times", the single (i.e., the one they made a video for), is an anthemic song addressing information overload and life during the pandemic with a call for evolution rather than revolution. Their dry sense of humor has also remained intact. The song "Superheroes" has the protagonist bragging about his heroic greatness while still not being able to get the girl with the so stupid it is clever line "I'm flown high with eagles soaring. I killed kings and Herman Goering".

The best complement I can give the songs on *Over the Overlords* is that if they were playing live (fingers crossed) I wouldn't go to the bar to get a drink when they played their "new songs". — **RENTED MULE**

CONCERT CALENDAR

10/1—The Selfless Lovers @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 7:30pm

10/3—Big Gay Drag Brunch @ The 101, Bryan. 3pm

10/3—Thundertank, Kill The Lizard, Sykotic Tendencies @ The 101, Bryan. 9pm

10/8—Glasseater, Lunatics, Sykotic Tendencies @ The 101, Bryan. 9pm

10/15—Don't Call Me Shirley, Robot Ex-Optimists @ The 101, Bryan. 9pm

10/16—Deez Nuts, Truck Month, Skullfucker @ The 101, Bryan. 9pm

10/17—Big Gay Drag Brunch @ The 101, Bryan. 3pm

10/22—Vacation Manor, Night Traveler @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 8pm

10/23—North By North, Mutant Love, Skunk Money @ The 101, Bryan. 9pm

10/24—Drag Movie Night @ The 101, Bryan. 8pm

10/29—KANM Benefit feat. Skunk Money, Dirty Binum, Michael Saint & The Dead Meadows, Sykotic Tendencies @ The 101, Bryan. 9pm

10/30—Billy King & The Bad Bad Bad, Jasper, Tongue Punch @ The 101, Bryan. 9pm

11/4—Rightfield @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 7:30pm

11/5—Rickshaw Billie's Burger Patrol, Mutant Love @ The 101, Bryan. 9pm

11/7—Big Gay Drag Brunch @ The 101, Bryan. 3pm

11/12—Hello Monica @ The 101, Bryan. 9pm



Gaspard Auge
Escapades

Let's get one thing straight from the outset: producer and electronic musician Gaspard Auge is *very* European — French, in fact. He is not American. He wears a Speedo, eats baguettes while smoking, and carries a photo of Catherine Deneuve on his person at all times — even while wearing a Speedo. I do not know if any of those things actually are true, but I visually infer them all from one listen to Auge's debut solo album, *Escapades*, which is so unapologetically eccentric I

don't know how to critique it with my South Arkansas twang intact. *Escapades* sounds like the pre-techno fallout from a time capsule aimed at preserving every possible use of a synthesizer known to European man during the 1970s. Did a decade's worth of such sounds fit into a single time capsule? Yes, they did. And those contents can be previewed in full over the 42 minute playtime of *Escapades*.

Let's also get this straight: If you've enjoyed the recent spree of aurally soothing, synth-heavy soundscapes of the synthwave, vaporwave, darkwave, ambient, or good old fashion trance varieties, Auge's record is most likely not for you. Americans appear to enjoy electronic dance music (or EDM) for two primary reasons: A.) to convince themselves of the intellectual stimulation that is their working life or (B.) to accompany the Molly they take to blissfully trade out pronouns with total strangers. Europeans approach electronic music differently, consuming it like

audible carbohydrates. Imagine the musical equivalent of cake at birthdays, candy at Halloween, or hidden booze at Thanksgiving — that's the relationship Europeans have to electronic music.

So what are we hearing in *Escapades* other than absolutely everything synth-like ever? That's an excellent question. You're hearing the disco chimes of ABBA ("Hey!" and "Captain"), the prog-rock bass lines of *Dark Side* era Pink Floyd ("Europa"), the percussions of The Who ("Casablanca"), the space-fancies of Bowie ("Pentacle"), the giddy funkadelic silliness of ELO's *Xanadu* soundtrack ("Captain"), and the dreary Berlin School cinematics of Tangerine Dream ("Vox" and "Reverie"). But you're also hearing loads upon loads — maybe too much? — of Giorgio Moroder and Daft Punk worship (most notably in "Force majeure" and "Rocambole"). There's even some gosh-dang Michel Legrand orchestrations

sprinkled into most tracks for extra carbs. I'm telling you, this record is a veritable Who's Who board game of European synth-elites.

Escapades is a lot to consider, especially in a single, straight listen. It offers little cohesion, no stand out tracks, and nothing much in the way of a low-end pulse to ground all that flightiness. It sounds like a musical jigsaw puzzle, an amplifier shooting a barrage of trivia night "Name That Influence" noise-clips faster than listeners can hit the buzzer. Still, all of that — even the unapologetic eccentricity of the whole thing — might be its ultimate charm. Personally, I love this record. I'm not fully sure what to do with it, but I'd be exceedingly glad to add *Escapades* to my library for those times I'm feeling emotionally "extra" and I need a sonic agreement. Gaspard Auge's *Escapades* gets a solid 4

framed Deneuves out of 5 from this reviewer. I want more, even though it already is. — KEVIN STILL

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