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INSIDE

— HEINEKEN —

CITY ARTS FEST

For the second year, Heineken City Arts Fest expands into the dark corners of Seattle's creative community, absorbs its juiciest bits and presents them back to the city under the banner of experimentation and collaboration. Call it the Unified Field Theory of Art: Everything is everything.



FOREVER 21

Born from pop-music ephemera and raised on the global stage, Robyn’s dancefloor confections are shiny, pretty—and built to last.

BY MICHAELANGELO MATOS

The late-’90s teen wave was supposed to be a disposable cultural moment but instead it maintains a durable shelf life. It’s today’s dominant paradigm, the source of current pop culture mega-brands from *Glee* to Gaga. All those New Mickey Mouse Club alumni have crossed into other areas: Ryan Gosling and Justin Timberlake thrive in the movies; *The Voice* has given Christina Aguilera a new TV career. People insisted, fulminating, that Britney would shrink from the spotlight, but more than a decade later, the only time she’s left it is to hit Starbucks again—followed, naturally, by paparazzi.

Swedish pop singer Robyn made her first American splash in 1997, right around the teen wave’s Year Zero. Her success was minor in comparison with the above-named, and there’s not much chance we’ll see her diversify outside music and music videos, unless Swedish TV plans to follow her around with cameras. Thankfully, she’s hasn’t done reality television and seems unlikely to travel with an entourage.

There was wariness in Robyn’s gaze from the start. “Show Me Love,” her hit from 1997’s *Robyn Is Here*, begins, “Always been told I’ve got too much pride.” The chorus tells a different story: “Show me life, show me what it’s all about.” It was aimed at the teen audience; Robyn herself was a teen, working with Max Martin, the ’90s Phil Spector. Eventually she took control of her own music, releasing two albums in Sweden that never got much traction as imports.

The import that piqued U.S. ears was her fourth album, 2005’s *Robyn* (for which I paid nearly \$30 at Tower Records in Lower Queen Anne, R.I.P.). It’s brisk, funny, no-bullshit, her first words spoken, not sung: “What are you, stupid? I told you, no eating in my Jacuzzi. What’s wrong wit’ you?” The songs are equally

individual, every bit as pop as “Show Me Love,” but with a twist. “Konichiwa Bitches” is the white-girl boast-rap of Ke\$ha and Uffie’s collective dreams (“Don’t even get me started on my boom-boom-boom”); “Handle Me,” written and produced by Klas Åhlund of Teddybears, is like an even meaner first draft of Beyoncé’s “Irreplaceable”: “You’re a selfish, narcissistic, psycho-freakin’, boot-lickin’, Nazi creep/And you can’t handle me.”

The word “Nazi” was backward-masked when *Robyn* was released in the U.S. three years later. The album had some extra tracks,

She’s broad and hooky while appealing to people who like things a little more homespun.

in particular “With Every Heartbeat,” with Swedish producer Kleerup—a big English hit. The label that finally took a chance in America was the Interscope subsidiary Cherrytree, whose roster ranges from Far East Movement to Feist, and Robyn was a canny addition. She’s as broad and hooky as “Like a G6,” while appealing to people who like things a little more homespun, but still forthright and persuasive—the “1234” crowd.

Robyn makes pop, no doubt about it. But her stylized persona gives her special appeal to rock fans, as do her forthright lyrics—even if she doesn’t write them. (Picking songs is an

art, as any fan of Elvis or Sinatra is aware.) *Robyn* is audacious, the work of someone who sees pop as a place to play and to make hits, but 2010’s *Body Talk* ups the ante. Listen to it once casually and you hear why Robyn wound up opening for Katy Perry, the bizziest ingénue since Alicia Keys. Concentrate and you’ll hear a lot more going on. And make no mistake, a lot is.

Body Talk—not the original EPs but the subsequent full-length that incorporated them and some extra material—is straight-up electro, notably so even for a catalog not shy on robotic texture. Its feel is very mid-’80s. Yet it doesn’t seem retro, even as it begins with “Dancing on My Own,” whose conceit goes back (at least) to Smokey Robinson’s “I’ve Got to Dance to Keep from Crying.”

“Dancing on My Own” is a perfect, from-memory cross between early Madonna and mature New Order, with a vocal to match, keening and mournful. The crystalline synths of “Call Your Girlfriend” could have been the work of a cult act like French producer Fred Falke, but here they’re secondary to the scenario: “It’s time you had the talk,” she admonishes her new man. She’s ready to make it serious, and he’d better be too.

She’s even more powerful at the other end of the spectrum. “Hang with Me” may be the first great pop song about the emotional reality of casual hook-ups. “Don’t fall heedlessly, recklessly in love with me,” she warns. If he does, she’ll break his heart. Her suitor’s reward: “If you do me right, I’m gonna do right by you/And if you keep it tight, I’m going to confide in you.” Seriously, who needs reality TV?

HEINEKEN CITY ARTS FEST 2011 LISTINGS

BY CITY ARTS STAFF



Q&A

DITA VOX of Thee Emergency

Since 2006, Thee Emergency has delivered three soul-saving albums of top-volume, deep-soul garage rock. Singer Dita Vox and guitarist Matt "Sonic" Smith fuel the group's motor, a quintessential onstage duo drenched in sweat and swagger. Vox—aka lady-about-town Zana Geddes, star of last year's \$5 Cover pseudo-documentary—talked to us on the eve of releasing the band's fourth record. JONATHAN ZWICKEL

Dita Vox versus Zana Geddes. What's the story?

Dita's a wild child. She's kinda vulgar—curses like a sailor and will challenge anyone to a spitting contest. She has all the qualities that my mother tried to train out of me.

What's your relationship like with Matt, onstage and off?

Onstage, I have tunnel vision and never pay attention to what's going on with the other guys. Sometimes Matt and I will run into each other and try to play it off as some kind of sweet rock 'n' roll move, but usually I'm focused on keeping the audience engaged in the show. Offstage we're two halves of one head. He's the brain and I'm the mouth.

Was \$5 Cover your first acting gig? How was working with director Lynn Shelton?

Lynn was such a positive, free spirit. I'd hardly call what I did acting, but

I'd definitely like to give it another go. Being in front of the camera is slightly seductive.

What's it like to stand at the crossroads between fashion and rock 'n' roll?

I've always longed to be more involved in high-end, experimental fashion—fashion as art. It's hard for me to translate my love of couture into street- or stage-wear, especially on my budget. My band encourages me to take risks with my stage clothes and makeup and that gives me confidence to try more outrageous things.

You recently styled Taylor Swift's onstage crew at the Tacoma Dome. What was that like?

I learned more about myself and what I want my role to be in this industry. Getting things done behind the scenes is crucial, but I'd rather be the one in the spotlight.

MUSIC

Ryan Adams

See "Stripped Down," page 46.
Friday, 9 p.m.,
Benaroya Hall

Bryan John Appleby

A regular at Conor Byrne's Sunday night open mic, the hushed and gracious Bryan John Appleby stands out in a noisy room brimming with talent. This summer, the bearded balladeer released *Fire on the Vine*, a collection of beautiful, patient folk songs that will shut you up.
Friday, 8:15 p.m.,
Rendezvous

Big Spider's Back

As Big Spider's Back, Yair Rubinstein builds songs from forgotten effluvia like old Indian films and British library audio archives, over which he plays basic melodies and sings. BSB's latest, *Memory Man*, brings programmed drums into the mix, with danceable elements of dubstep, house and hip-hop.
Friday, 10 p.m.,
Chop Suey

Birthday Suits

Former members of beloved Minneapolis punk provocateurs Sweet J.A.P., Birthday Suits feature drummer Matthew Kazama banging out tribal rhythms beneath a flurry of black hair while Hideo Takahashi peels discordant riffs from his guitar.
Thursday, 9:45 p.m.,
Comet Tavern

Black Whales

Black Whales possess the spirit and sound of early-'70s

pop, sweetened by singer Alex Robert's anglophilic warble. This summer the band released *Shangri-La Indeed*, an album pushing into sonic experimentation while maintaining the melodic underpinnings of the Velvet Underground, the Beatles and Supertramp.
Friday, 9:45 p.m.,
Neumos

Blackalicious

It's time for the second coming of Blackalicious. A decade ago, Sacramento-based MC Gift of Gab and DJ Chief Xcel were leaders of the West Coast underground, making true-school hip-hop that students memorize to this day. It's been years since their last record, but a new one is expected in '12. This performance is an early stop on the road to their return.
Saturday, 11:30 p.m.,
Showbox Market

The Boxer Rebellion

A multinational rock band with members from Australia, London and Nashville, the Boxer Rebellion play clubs, but its anthemic sound—fluid pop songs that bounce, soar and sway with confidence—belongs in arenas.
Friday, 10:30 p.m.,
Crocodile

Blue Sky Black Death

Bay Area production team Blue Sky Black Death has worked with a long line of MCs in its eight-year history, including Wu-Tang affiliates and Jean Grae. The two-man crew is best known for its instrumental, orchestral hip-hop that

traverses from bleak to frenetic to sunny and back in the course of a single song.
Friday, 9 p.m.,
Chop Suey

Brain Fruit

Brain Fruit is head food. The Seattle duo plays a strangely cyborgian brand of psychedelic electronica, fusing deep, languid beatscapes with slick, spacious melodies. It's transporting stuff—music to massage your mind.
Friday, 8:15 p.m.,
Chop Suey

Built To Spill

Can we call Built to Spill underground if they're signed to Warner Brothers? Underrated if they sell out the Showbox every trip to Seattle? Indie if they jam? Let's simply agree that the smart, sinuous, guitar-centric rockers are one of America's Great Bands and have been for almost 20 years.
Friday, 9:30 p.m.,
Moore Theatre

Campfire OK

Soon after releasing its debut full-length at the beginning of the year, Campfire OK earned raves for its impassioned folk songs, propelled by a crack acoustic band and infinitely sing-along-able choruses penned by singer Mychal Goodweather.
Thursday, 10 p.m.,
Showbox Market

Canon Blue

Rumspringa, the most recent release by Nashville's Canon Blue, is the sound of globetrotting. Written during an international tour, the album of orchestral pop was

recorded in Denmark and Iceland. The lush, playful scores to everyday life have since been played across the U.S., including during a summer stint with Foster the People.
Friday, 8:30 p.m.,
Crocodile

Capsula

After tearing up the KEXP BBQ in August, the Buenos Aires-via-Bilbao, Spain trio Capsula returns to Seattle with more explosive garage rock and untamable onstage energy.
Saturday, 10:45 p.m.,
Comet Tavern

Cataldo

Cataldo creates textured pop tapestries of acoustic guitar strum, circling banjo-picking, running bass lines and ricocheting drum parts stitched together by Eric Anderson's high, desperate tenor.
Thursday, 8 p.m.,
Showbox Market

Cobirds Unite

Rusty Willoughby has popped and rocked Seattle for the last 30 years. After pairing with Visqueen siren Rachel Flotard, he discovered a talent for rootsier music and started Cobirds Unite, proving that great songs transcend genre.
Thursday, 9 p.m.,
Showbox Market

The Cops

On hiatus since 2008, the Cops returned to the Comet Tavern in late 2010 for one more set of driving rock 'n' roll filled with the sparring guitar work of Mike Jaworski and John Randolph. The show went so well that the band decided to write a new album's worth

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of material, some of which will debut here.
Thursday, 10:45 p.m., Comet Tavern

Crypts

Crypts create dark industrial songs, droning out melodies and then cutting them up with rapid-fire bursts from its Roland CR-8000 drum machine. Call it Witch House if you must; we call it good music.
Thursday, 10:15 p.m., Showbox SoDo

Crystal Castles

Ethan Kath, producer for Toronto's Crystal Castles, pounds icy electronic beats and furious synths layered with euphoric Gameboy beeps while Alice Glass punctuates disinterested vocals with cathartic yelling. The duo's live shows are famously tumultuous, one recently ending with Glass breaking her ankle onstage.
Thursday, 11:30 p.m., Showbox SoDo

Daydream Vacation

Asya from precocious Seattle pop duo Smoosh returns with party-starter Dave Einmo in dance-pop outfit Daydream Vacation. Always front and center with his band Head Like a Kite, Einmo cedes vocal duties to Asya here, creating skittering dance tracks for his young bandmate to sing over.
Thursday, 9 p.m., Chop Suey

Disco Doom

Disco Doom calls Switzerland home, but the slacker pop on latest album *Trux Reverb* is a child of America's indie underground, recorded by Built to Spill's Jim Roth in Seattle and filled with songs that recall early-'90s greats like Pavement and Superchunk.
Friday, 8:30 p.m., Moore Theatre

DJ Riz

Best known for the sprawling audio experiences he creates on KEXP's "Expansions," DJ Riz is an anchor, guiding light, urban shaman and sonic innovator with a deep love for soulful house beats.
Friday, 6:15 p.m., Triple Door

Don't Talk to the Cops

Backed by fresh, old-school breaks and non sequitur movie-dialogue samples, DTtC revisits that long-ago era of hip-hop when the DJ was the star and the music was made solely to provoke ridiculous moves at the dance club.
Saturday, 8:45 p.m., Showbox Market

Dyno Jamz

Featuring a three-piece horn section, two drummers, guitars, keys and two emcees, Dyno Jamz is a monstrous force on stage, mixing '50s cool jazz with the late-'80s alternative hip-hop of De La Soul.
Saturday, 8:35 p.m., Showbox SoDo

Shelby Earl

Shelby Earl emerged at the beginning of 2011 with her solo debut *Burn the Boats* and immediately found a place on the city's singer-songwriter rolls. Earl's deft lyricism and world-weary voice, plus production by John Roderick, yield an album that sounds like the work of an old pro.
Thursday, 8:30 p.m., Crocodile

Elk and Boar

Kirsten Wenlock and Travis Barker (not that one) will be joined by other musicians when they perform as Elk and Boar, but you will only notice the couple from Tacoma. No discredit to their rotating band, but the folk music created by

Q&A

DK PAN (and NKO) of Free Sheep Foundation

DK Pan and Nko are captains of mischief. Pan is the soft-spoken Butoh dancer, installation artist, curator of Sound Transit's "Red Wall" on Capitol Hill and subject of a domestic terrorism investigation into allegedly illegal gambling that took place during one of his projects. Nko is the graffiti artist and member of experimental theater company Implied Violence. As founders of the Free Sheep Foundation, they are responsible for *Bridge Motel* in Fremont and the *Tubs Memorial Project* in the U-District. On Thursday, Oct. 20, will curate Heineken City Arts Fest's Culture Club with a show inspired by transgression. LEAH BALTUS

What does transgression mean to you?

DK A breach of limits, law. Traversing terrains in violation.
NKO A crossing of boundaries without permission.

Why use it as the theme of your show?

DK As a response to desire for understanding.
NKO As social and visual representation of the act.

What are you able to express as a curator that you aren't able to express as an artist?

DK The opening of spaces to failures/fabrications/fantasies.
NKO A love of objects created by others.

How did you find and select the artists for this exhibition?

DK By hook and by crook. By reputation and infamy.

NKO A roll of the dice...

Why is it good to push people's buttons?

DK The only button we wish to push is labeled "on".
NKO The exhibition is an invitation, not a taunt.

How does this exhibition relate to previous work by Free Sheep Foundation?

DK For us, this exhibition is a transgressive act.
NKO As subversion of the democratic ideal.

Creatively, what are you most excited about right now?

DK St. Genet and State v. Pan... *Vignettes*, Mandy Greer, Susan Robb, Ego and Ononos.
NKO Gold leaf, blood, cum, shit, ashes, wine and wax.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY NATE WATTERS



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FLY MOON ROYALTY

Elk and Boar is rooted in the couple's breath-taking harmonies.
Thursday, 9 p.m., Rendezvous

Exohxo
Exohxo's live show promises the curious mix of orchestral bombast and endearing pop songcraft found on its latest EP, which bears the fittingly dramatic title *The Pitfalls, the Possibilities, the Peril and the Promise*.
Thursday, 10 p.m., Rendezvous

Fastbacks
After a nine year hiatus, Seattle's legendary Fastbacks returned to play the West Seattle Summerfest. That was fun, but the poppy punk trio (plus famously rotating drummer) was meant to be seen in a rock club.
Saturday, 11:30 p.m., Neumos

The Felice Brothers
The Felice Brothers are equally infamous for recording in a chicken coop, wrecking their instruments on stage, and playing soulful, lyrically vivid roots music. The upstate New Yorkers' latest album set them apart from the neo-folk crowd by putting an electronic spin on rustic Americana.
Thursday, 10:30 p.m., Crocodile

Fences
See the interview with Chris Mansfield on page 51.
Friday, 11:45 p.m., Neumos

Fly Moon Royalty
One of the more adventurous duos from the fertile 206 hip-hop scene, Fly Moon Royalty's charismatic DJ Action Jackson and frontwoman Adra Boo mix soulful beats and organic-sounding electronica into a mix of modern R&B that's intelligent, erotic and utterly addictive.
Thursday, 7:30 p.m., Triple Door

Freestyle Fellowship
In the early '90s, the five-man Freestyle Fellowship came together from a slew of different backgrounds and L.A. neighborhoods to set the West Coast standard for hyper-stylized, hyper-melodic, jazz-inflected hip-hop. This fall, they release *The Promise*, their first record in over a decade. Bow down.
Saturday, 10:15 p.m., Showbox Market

The Fucking Eagles
The Fucking Eagles play gritty garage rock steeped in R&B and readied for crowd-sourced handclaps and shout-along choruses. It's been two years since the Tacoma band released its last slab of soulful rock 'n' roll; word is new material is on the docket.
Saturday, 8:15 p.m., Chop Suey

Rebecca Gates
Since the release of the final Spinanes album in 1998, singer Rebecca Gates diversified her

show your stripes



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"Why would we do it?" he asked in an August interview with *Rolling Stone*. "The only reason we would ever do it would be to get paid. We're not going to recapture anything."

So what's a fan to do when the members of his favorite band refuse to honor their own legacy? Honor it for them. That's what filmmaker Gorman Bechard did in the documentary *Color Me Obsessed*—a film unlike any other rock doc—which will play at Northwest Film Forum during Heineken City Arts Fest.

Staying true to his inspiration's form, Bechard did something few filmmakers would dare: He made a movie about the Replacements that features no interviews with the band members, no music by the band and no photos of the band. This is a portrait painted with the words of Replacements fans, including famous ones like Finn and the Decemberists' Colin Meloy alongside many more unknowns. *Color Me Obsessed* is a fascinating look at the power the Replacements wield over individual lives and the mythology that's born from that power.

After listening to people talk about the Replacements' music for an hour and a half, you will likely want to hear the music. Better yet, you'll want to hear it live, in a bar, surrounded by drunk people singing along. The Replacements won't give you the pleasure, but the

band's musician fans will. A number of them will take the stage at the Comet Tavern on Friday, Oct. 21, paying tribute to the Replacements by playing their songs live. Performers range from the old (51-year-old Fastback Kurt Bloch) to the young

(19-year-old folk singer Ben Fisher), but every one has been inspired by the pounding sound of that big, bleeding heart and will do whatever they can to keep it beating.

They recorded some of the best pop music of the '80s and played some of the worst live shows in history.

underground music scene that needed it desperately. They recorded some of the best pop music of the '80s and played some of the worst live shows in history. They were revered for both, which is why questions about a return persist.

"I'm hesitant about dragging the name out there and what damage we could do to the legend," frontman Paul Westerberg told *Billboard* following rumors that the band might reunite for the Coachella Music Festival in 2007. Bass player Tommy Stinson, who has since gone on to play in Guns N' Roses, has been even more blunt in his assessment.

The Band That Wasn't There

The Replacements won't come back on their own. So we bring them back ourselves. BY MARK BAUMGARTEN

A few years ago, reunion tours of underground bands from indie rock's formative era were all the rage. Now they're the norm, which would lead you to believe that one of the last great hold-outs, the Replacements, would return any day now. But anyone who knows anything about the Replacements knows the band was never interested in the norm. They weren't keen on being all the rage, either.

"I remember the liner notes to *Sorry Ma*," the Hold Steady's Craig Finn says in Jim Walsh's 2007 Replacements oral history *All Over But the Shouting*. "You know, 'Could have been better if we tried harder.' It was the first time, as a kid, I remember rock 'n' roll that was self-deprecating."

The Replacements introduced a big, sloppy, bleeding heart into a self-serious



portfolio by making visual art, curating land-art exhibitions and editing an audio magazine, all while continuing to craft upbeat pop songs delivered in her aching alto. **Friday, 8 p.m., Benaroya Hall**

Grand Archives

Over three records, Grand Archives have transitioned from twangy alt-country to rose-tinted harmony-pop—though their songs are still haunted by lonely ghosts and lost love. On stage, Mat Brooke ringleads a circle of friends in what usually feels like a Northwest love-in. **Saturday, 9 p.m., Neptune**

Grand Hallway

The voice of Grand Hallway bandleader Tomo Nakayama is one of the most singular in Seattle. It wafts eerily, gently above his band's elegant, Fleetwood Mac-gone-folk compositions, often backed by a small orchestra of strings and horns. Grand Hallway deserve to be more than a well-kept secret. **Saturday, 9:30 p.m., Crocodile**

Noah Gundersen

After wandering in the woods of blues rock with his band the Courage for two years, Noah Gundersen and his violin-playing sister Abby recently returned to their roots with *Family*, a collection of stripped-down

folk songs fraught with emotion, populated with everyday problems and brought to life with Noah's hushed delivery. **Saturday, 7:30 p.m., Triple Door**

Daniel G. Harmann

On his debut full-length *Risk*, Seattle's Daniel G. Harmann plays transcendent pop songs grounded in a blue collar lifestyle, filling them with hooks that are as undeniable as the work ethic of the battered construction workers and fried electricians he sings about. **Friday, 9 p.m., Neumos**

The Helio Sequence

The Helio Sequence's most recent album for Sub Pop, 2008's *Keep Your Eyes Ahead*, shines in its diversity. The Portland duo deepens its usual upbeat, guitar-driven electro-rock with heart-on-sleeve gospel upswing and hyper-literate Dylanisms. Should make an appropriately ecstatic show at the FREAKIN' LASER DOME. **Friday, 11:15 p.m., Laser Dome**

Helluvastate

"All I wanna do is smoke weed and make music," Helluvastate's MC Tay Sean raps over TH's underwater-funk groove on "Brain Champagne," a stand-out from the group's self-released debut.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 45

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Seapony
Go With Me
Featured track: "Dreaming"

Seapony Recommends...
Craft Spells – *From the Morning Heat*
Shimmering Stars – *Dancing to Music I Hate*
Honeydrum – *Not Much for the Living*



Toro y Moi
Freak Out
Featured track: "All Alone"

Toro y Moi Recommends...
Motor City Drum Ensemble – *Basement L.O.V.E.*
Kanye West and Jay-Z – *Niggas in Paris*
Azari and iii – *Manic*



Ivy
All Hours
Featured track: "Distant Lights"

Ivy Recommends...
Hot Chip – *Boy From School*
Kanye West – *Love Lockdown*
Tahiti 80 – *Easy*



William Fitzsimmons
Gold in the Shadow
Featured track: "Tide Pulls From The Moon"

William Fitzsimmons Recommends...
Ellie Goulding – *Lights*
Bon Iver – *Perth*
The Head and the Heart – *Lost in My Mind*



Peter Murphy
Ninth
Featured track: "See Saw Sway"

Peter Murphy Recommends...
Mew – *And the Glass Handed Kites*
Brian Eno – *Another Day on Earth*
Jessie Mayer – *December Sea*



Male Bonding
Endless Now
Featured track: "Bones"

Male Bonding performs live, Saturday, Oct. 22 at Chop Suey with Unnatural Helpers, Virgin Islands and The Fucking Eagles



The Head & The Heart
The Head & The Heart
Feature track: "Lost in My Mind"

The Head & The Heart performs live, Friday, Oct. 21 at the Triple Door with Mortal Chocolate and DJ Riz



Shabazz Palaces
Black Up
Featured Track: "Swerve"

Shabazz Palaces performs live, Friday, Oct. 21 at the Triple Door with Mortal Chocolate and DJ Riz



Fleet Foxes
Helplessness Blues
Featured track: "Lorelai"

Fleet Foxes performs live, Friday, Oct. 21 at the Triple Door with Mortal Chocolate and DJ Riz



The Submarine
Love Notes/Letter Bombs
Featured track: "Birds"

The Submarine Recommends...
Bon Iver – *Halocene*
Cults – *Oh My God*
Eleanor Friedberger – *My Mistakes*



Ladytron
Gravity the Seducer
Featured track: "White Elephant"

Ladytron Recommends...
Virgo 4 – *It's a Crime* (Caribou remix)
Koudlam – *Tonight*
Teeth – *Carebear* (Dreamtrak Diamond remix)



Tinariwen
Tassili
Featured track: "Imidiwan Ma Tenam" (feat. Nels Cline)

Tinariwen performs live, Saturday, Oct. 22 at Chop Suey with Unnatural Helpers, Virgin Islands and The Fucking Eagles



St. Vincent
Strange Mercy
Featured track: "Cruel & Surgeon"

St. Vincent performs live, Saturday, Oct. 22 at Chop Suey with Unnatural Helpers, Virgin Islands and The Fucking Eagles



Francisco Mela & Cuban Safari
Tree of Life
Featured track: "Yadan Mela"

Francisco Mela & Cuban Safari performs live, Saturday, Oct. 22 at Chop Suey with Unnatural Helpers, Virgin Islands and The Fucking Eagles



Donald Harrison
This is Jazz
Featured track: "I Can't Get Started"

Donald Harrison performs live, Saturday, Oct. 22 at Chop Suey with Unnatural Helpers, Virgin Islands and The Fucking Eagles



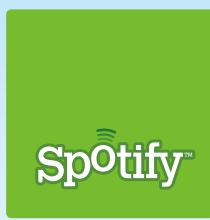
Kenny Werner
Institute of Higher Learning
Featured track: "Second Love Song"

Kenny Werner performs live, Saturday, Oct. 22 at Chop Suey with Unnatural Helpers, Virgin Islands and The Fucking Eagles




Randy Brecker
The Jazz Ballad Song Book
Featured track: "All or Nothing At All"

Randy Brecker performs live, Saturday, Oct. 22 at Chop Suey with Unnatural Helpers, Virgin Islands and The Fucking Eagles



Got a Spotify account?
Visit www.cityartsfest.com/spotify to listen to select tracks from these artists and find out what they're listening to! If you don't have an account, visit www.spotify.com to learn how to get started. Once you've checked out the music, head on over to Silver Platters for...

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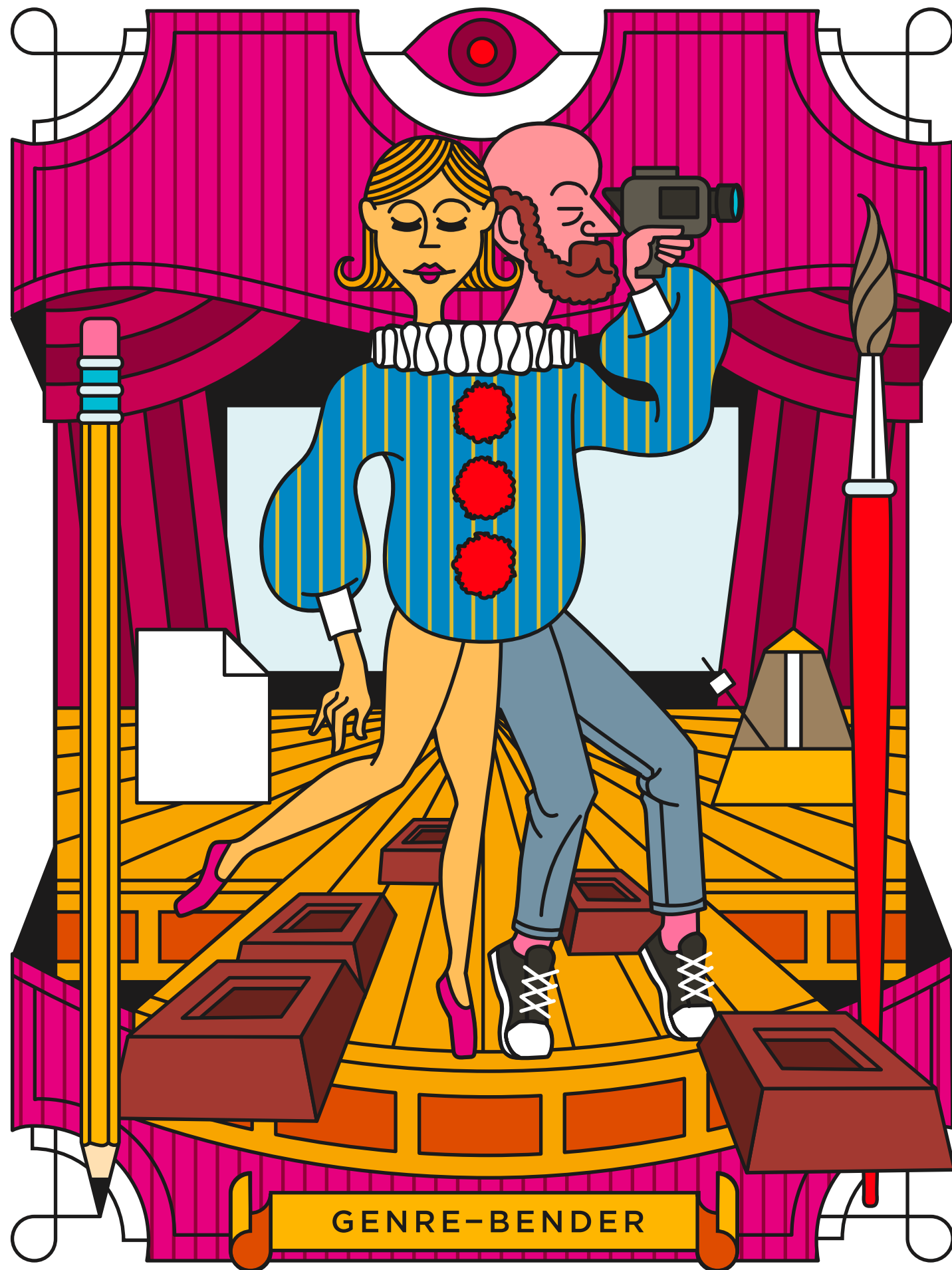


ILLUSTRATION BY SHAWN WOLFE

COLLABORATION FRUSTRATION

In which a disillusioned theatre dude searches for worthwhile artistic partnerships

BY BASIL HARRIS

In the early '90s, before theatre became estranged from rock 'n' roll, before the rent got too high to be a dirty, important artist in Belltown, collaboration happened because it had to. We put on shows to pay the electric bill and the town was slutty with artists hungry for a joyride with something different.

There was enough creative rigor for theatres like AHA! and Annex to form (mostly) friendly rivalries; their stages crackled with frenetic brilliance and glorious failure just blocks from each other. People risked heading west on Blanchard from the Crocodile down a poorly lit street to see improv—*improv*—at Belltown Theatre Center. Was that a homeless dude? Or was it a Cornish grad doing inspired Pirandello for 12 people and beer money? It was often a life-or-death risk to see and create art in parts of this city.

Then something changed. Tech money slowed to a trickle. Fewer Microsofties retired early to be angel-donors for small arts groups. Theatres closed and the gap between acting in a hovel and performing in a 3,000-seat house became vast. Praise arrived from out of town and made us lazy with pride.

We had a lot more time on our hands to talk. I'd come home from a night of stimulating conversation only to realize nothing would come of it except a hangover and less beer money. I hated myself for talking so much and doing nothing. At some point collaboration become synonymous with idle talk, with the surrender of artistic responsibility. "Ensemble" became code for art-by-committee.

It's not healthy to hang on to these injuries. Deep down, an artist is nothing if not hopeful. Perhaps I've been isolated too long, rehearsing in windowless rooms with black-painted walls bemoaning Seattle's lack of edge while ignoring the fact that the city is still in its cultural adolescence, beyond entry-level but not fully developed.

This is what pulls at me, even as I become that crotchety artist who talks about the old days. I'm hopeful that there are viable examples of collaboration around Seattle and I'm curious to witness them for myself.

The City Arts Fest showcase called *Genre-Bender*, for example, features a roster full of credentials: dance luminaries Mark Haim,

Amy O'Neal and Rainbow Fletcher, sculptor Casey Curran, visual artist Sean Johnson, poet Karen Finneyfrock, musician Evan Florey-Barnes, performance artist Mike Pham, filmmaker Wes Hurley and installation artist Joanna Lepore, who also runs the confectionary at Theo Chocolate. Organizers paired them up, locked them in a room and ordered them not to come out until they've made something amazing. Their work will be revealed on Oct. 21 at the Can Can, where the assembled crowd will ultimately decide between throwing rotten tomatoes or confetti.

I was tasked with luring some of them out for beers at Vermillion on Capitol Hill (an art gallery inside a bar, or maybe vice-versa) to talk about their plans. As agent provocateur and skeptic within the ranks, I figured I'd toss

"She refused to be a part of performance art about chocolate-smeared body exploration."

out some incendiary questions about the perils of collaboration and the current DEFCON state of the arts and *voilà*, table-banging would commence.

The group assembled includes two-thirds of the artists taking part in the showcase. They're much more sober and clean-shaven than I expected, but I know enough to watch out for the quiet ones. As the conversation progresses and the beer flows, I think I might be getting pulled deeper into one of those conversations I'll regret the next day.

But then Finneyfrock says, "I think it's time for me to challenge myself like this," while decidedly not banging a table.

"At one point during a brainstorming meeting, we leveled with each other," she continues, motioning toward Lepore, her *Genre-Bender* cohort. "I said our collaboration

could not include poetry about sweetness. She refused to be a part of performance art about chocolate-smeared body exploration. So that's something we took off the table right away."

Ace choreographer and dance ninja O'Neal arrives late, looking pissed, her dolomite countenance inviting anyone who takes her lightly to go fuck themselves. She drops into her seat holding an over-poured glass of red wine, which she all but slams onto the table, takes a deep breath and digs into the conversation mid-stream: "Sorry. What are you guys talking about?"

Her knitted brow melts into a grin as she opens a spigot of sunshine on her partner, filmmaker Wes Hurley. "I'm really excited to work with Wes on this. I can't wait to see what we come up with!" I can't tell if Hurley's grin is reciprocal enthusiasm or if he's crafting an exit strategy. He's a quiet one.

I ask the genre-benders if they think this region's interest in mixing disciplines is unique. Curran shakes his head. "It's everywhere," he says. Flory-Barnes disagrees, describing a recent session at a local jazz club.

"We were playing like crazy, moving across styles and genres whenever we felt like it," he says. "Soul to blues to so-called jazz, different players coming in and out, usually all within the same number. There were these musician cats from New York watching that night and afterwards they came up to us shaking their heads. 'Y'all here in Seattle... y'all just don't give a fuck, do you?'" Flory-Barnes leans back and chuckles. Seattle's geographical isolation, he says, allows for a feeling of unsupervised play. General consensus follows.

For a moment, I balk. Nothing's changed, I think. We're all going to agree ourselves to death. My cynical brain screams for a bloody battle against mediocrity that leaves only the greatest ideas standing. Right here, right now, tonight—let's tear everything down and start over. But my rational brain whispers something about cultural evolution in the postmodern era. These artists aren't just talking about their work, they're talking about their world: boundless, confounding, dangerous, playful and conscientious, filled with potential. The yin and yang of risk and safety in constant flux. This is what used to make my heart race about art.



the Voice of Reason

*When that little voice in your head tells you to save money by taking Sound Transit, you are not crazy.**

**Please disregard if voice asks you to wrestle alligators or wear a tiger costume to a petting zoo.*



SOUNDTRANSIT
RIDE THE WAVE

For fare and scheduling information visit soundtransit.org.

Apparently, focus is the key to hip-hop so cool it shivers, so laid-back it's horizontal.
Thursday, 9 p.m., Neumos

Hi-Life Soundsystem
Featuring West Seattle MCs B-Flat and Khingz, whose 2009 LP *From Slaveships to Spaceships* is one of the decade's best, Hi-Life Soundsystem aims to ignite a dance party on the floor and the synapses in your head.
Saturday, 9:30 p.m., Showbox Market

The Hold Steady
The Hold Steady bandleader Craig Finn writes true-rock tales about booze-fueled hook-ups, hungover mornings, sketchy drug deals, tedious cross-country drives for dubious purposes, and unexpected parking-lot epiphanies, and sings about it all with abandon. This band might be your life.
Saturday, 10:15 p.m., Neptune

The Horde and the Harem
Amongst folk-influenced quintets in town, the Horde and the Harem is the most punk. They're tattooed, tattered, and ragged, punctuate songs with gritty electric guitar solos and belt out beautiful four-part harmonies.
Thursday, 11 p.m., Rendezvous

Joseph Giant
It's not just a name. Joseph Giant leader Joe Syverson is, in fact, a big dude. Also a talented one, penning upbeat acoustic pop songs and delivering them with a raspy twang that rests on the brain like a penny on the tongue.
Friday, 9 p.m., Rendezvous

Katie Kate
The good-girl's bad girl, Katie Kate raps with the tone of a

teacher's pet and the mouth of a reprobate. On record, she's backed by low-key bedroom beats for an ethereal, late-night vibe but, like any good performer, knows how to kick up the volume and energy onstage.
Thursday, 10 p.m., Neumos

Gill Landry
A busker from the streets of Louisiana, Gill Landry helped form the old-timey Kitchen Syncopators and has contributed guitar and vocals to Old Crow Medicine Show. A few years ago, he struck out on his own to write lonely, hopeless songs sung in a gumbo of jazz, blues and country.
Thursday, 9:30 p.m., Crocodile

Lemolo
An incredibly efficient band, Lemolo crafts Seattle's dreamiest pop with only two members, singer and guitarist Meagan Grandall and drummer Kendra Cox. The band has been playing a year but has built a moving live experience and amassed an audience to go with it.
Saturday, 8:30 p.m., Crocodile

The Long Winters
See interview with John Roderick on page 60.
Thursday, 11 p.m., Showbox Market

Lovesick Empire
Though his musical roots are in bass and drums, Jason Lajuenesse has transitioned nicely to guitar in his project with smoky-voiced Alicia Amiri. With a sensual swing evocative of PJ Harvey's relaxed moments and emphasis on unexpected arrangements, Lovesick Empire's disarming beauty and sinister charm are all its own.
Saturday, 9 p.m., Neumos



Q&A

EMILY POTHAST of Midday Veil

Emily Pothast is multimedia manifest: An MFA in printmaking first brought her to Seattle, but these days she fronts Midday Veil, creates site-specific installation performances as Hair and Space Museum, curates visual art exhibitions for TaRLA Transdimensional Art Portal, writes a smart art blog called Translinguistic Other, runs a record label and organizes events as a member of the Portable Shrines Collective. This month she's entering the studio with Midday Veil to record the band's second full-length with renowned Northwest producer Randall Dunn, and sifting through live audio improvisations the band recently recorded at the Integratron, a wooden dome built on a geomagnetic vortex in the middle of California's Palm Desert. LEAH BALTUS

What's it been like to go from being a visual artist to being a musician?
I'm still an artist, but the scene is different. I've become friends with a completely different crowd and most of my artist friends don't even see what I'm doing [with music] unless I perform at a visual art event.

The main difference is the relative degree of involvement and isolation experienced by musicians and artists. With some exceptions, music is generally a very collaborative activity, whereas most of the magic associated with producing visual art occurs while toiling in isolation. There are many local artists who are working to break this pattern of isolation and be more promiscuous with their collaborations, like musicians. I think this is great.

How does your work in each of those arenas influence each other?
Both of my bands have a strong visual

component, so in a way we're still making visual art when we design projections or make music videos or design album packaging. But I'm interested in taking that natural connection a step further and setting up performances that double as visual art environments.

What do you enjoy most about performing?
When you're making an object—an album, a painting, a film, whatever—you get to think things through and deliberate over your decisions right up until the object is ready to go have a life of its own. But when you give a performance, everything that happens has to unfold in that precise moment. Either it works or it doesn't...there are no edits, no overdubs. Performance is the only way I know how to occasion a moment that breaks free from its own space and time, and fills the whole of eternity.



Stripped Down

Ryan Adams does what he wants. BY MARK BAUMGARTEN

When Ryan Adams takes the stage of Benaroya Hall for the first time ever this month, he will be alone, surrounded by only his instruments. To his left will be a guitar; to his right, a simple, upright console piano that might look out of place on an orchestra stage accustomed to the majesty of a grand piano. But this tour is not about what's possible—it's about what's comfortable.

"I've made the mistake of sitting at a nice piano before," Adams says over the phone from his California home. "I like consoles. I just like the smaller tones. I think they're easier. Plus, I'm a marginal piano player. If someone said, 'play an A,' I don't know what it is. I only know the songs I've written."

There's a long list of those, from which the North Carolina native will construct an evening based on his whims alone. Adams will choose songs from a solo

career that spans 11 years and millions of records sold. Each selection will be stripped bare, held up only by Adams' playing, his lonesome poetry and his sandpaper delivery.

"All of these songs were written to be unaccompanied at some point," he says. "All the songs that have remained with me are the ones that, before there was talk of ever doing a record, they worked on their own."

"All of these songs were written to be unaccompanied at some point."

Adams' week-long West Coast tour is his first since early 2010, when he broke up with the Cardinals, a band with which he recorded and released five country-rock albums in five years. The split marked the end of an incredibly consistent streak for a prolific artist well-known—and critically dogged—for his polyamorous musical passions. The breakup wasn't amicable, but neither was it calamitous. Adams was having

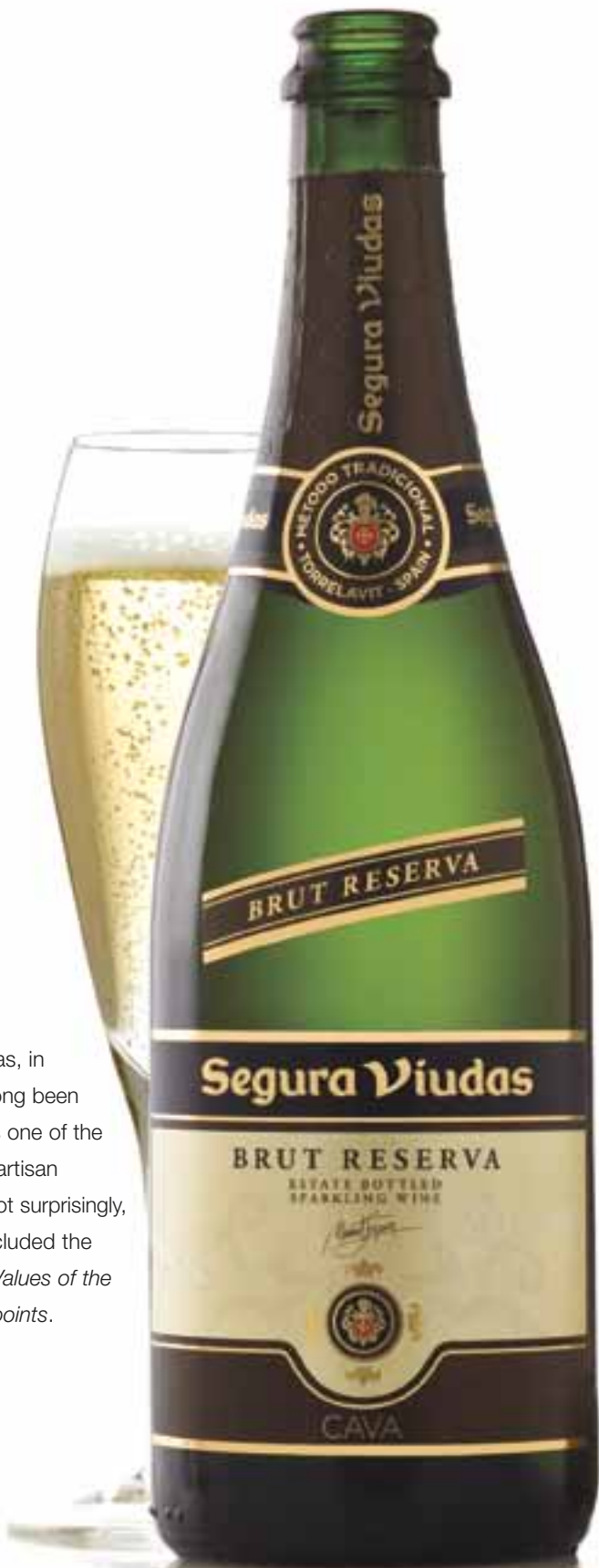
trouble with his ears. He needed a break from the loud rock band. He took it, focused his energies on his young marriage and released a few albums he had previously recorded with the Cardinals, including a heavy metal release, *Orion*.

In March, Adams returned to the studio. Through an entirely analog process with famed producer Glyn Johns, he recorded *Ashes & Fire*, his 13th album in as many years and one that sounds more like his debut, *Heartbreaker*, than any since. Adams' return to his strong suit was a result of liberated expectations.

"In the last 10 years I've had really good times and really bad times," Adams says of his relationship with his critics. "I didn't even have to try to get to this really healthy place where I don't think about it anymore. I just wanna be happy and make great work that I feel is honest to who I am."

● Read the rest of the interview at cityartsonline.com

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